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IAS SELF STUDY GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ECONOMY	2
II. ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT	11
III. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES	19
IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	27
V. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS	38
VI. POLITY	50
VII. HISTORY & ART AND CULTURE	71
VIII. STATES	75
IX. Miscellaneous	80

I. ECONOMY

1. Which one of the following is **not** among the eight core industries which comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production?

- (a) Cement
- (b) Refinery Products
- (c) Natural Gas
- (d) Electronics

Solution: d.

The eight core industries:

- Coal
- Natural Gas
- Refinery Products (weight: 28.04%)
- Electricity
- Crude oil
- Fertiliser (weight: 2.63%)
- Steel
- Cement

[http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175089;](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175089)

[http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/eight-core-sectors-grow-68-in-november/article22346815.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/eight-core-sectors-grow-68-in-november/article22346815.ece)

2. Non-debt creating capital receipts

1. Are those receipts which the government obtains by borrowing
2. Include proceeds from the sale of PSUs and corporate tax collections

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: d.

- **Fiscal deficit** is the difference between the government's total expenditure and its total receipts excluding borrowing
- **Gross fiscal deficit** = Total expenditure – (Revenue receipts + Non-debt creating capital receipts)
- **Non-debt creating capital receipts** are those receipts which are not borrowings and, therefore, do not give rise to debt. Examples are recovery of loans and the proceeds from the sale of PSUs (corporate tax is a tax revenue receipt, not capital receipt).

Chapter 5, Macroeconomics, NCERT Class 12;

[http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/on-the-ledger/article22354014.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/on-the-ledger/article22354014.ece)

3. A worsening fiscal gap

1. May pose inflationary risks
2. May indicate ineffectiveness of fiscal consolidation policies undertaken by Governments
3. Reflects a downward trend in collection of non-debt capital receipts

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.

The fiscal gap has widened in spite of a healthy jump in non-debt capital receipts, which include the ₹17,357 crore the government received from the public listing of state-run insurance companies... With monetary authorities at the RBI having reiterated the inflationary risks that a worsening fiscal gap would pose, and private investment still struggling to gain traction, policymakers would do well to try and regain their footing on the crucial path of fiscal consolidation.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/on-the-ledger/article22354014.ece;>

4. A rapid increase in the rate of inflation is sometimes attributed to the “base effect”. What is “base effect” ?

- (a) It is the impact of drastic deficiency in supply due to failure of crops.
- (b) It is the impact of the surge in demand due to rapid economic growth.
- (c) It is the impact of the price levels of previous year on the calculation of inflation rate.
- (d) None of the statements (a), (b) and (c) given above is correct in this context.

Solution: c.

The **base effect** refers to the impact of the rise in price level (i.e. last year's inflation) in the previous year over the corresponding rise in price levels in the current year (i.e., current inflation): if the price index had risen at a high rate in the corresponding period of the previous year leading to a high inflation rate, some of the potential rise is already factored in, therefore a similar absolute increase in the Price index in the current year will lead to a relatively lower inflation rates. On the other hand, if the inflation rate was too low in the corresponding period of the previous year, even a relatively smaller rise in the Price Index will arithmetically give a high rate of current inflation.

http://www.arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Base_Effect;

Q28, CS(P) 2011: [https://www.gktoday.in/solution-of-the-upsc-prelims-2011-general-studies-paper/;](https://www.gktoday.in/solution-of-the-upsc-prelims-2011-general-studies-paper/)

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/gdp-growth-seen-slowing-to-4-year-low-of-65-in-2017-18/article22378942.ece;>

5. Consider the following statements:

1. A “tight” labour market has more workers than jobs
2. The manufacturing sector and transport services absorbed majority of the new jobs created in non-farm sectors in rural areas between 2004-05 and 2011-12

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.

- Construction employment grew at a remarkable rate from 1999-2000 onwards. While it employed only 17 million in that year, the number jumped to 26 million by 2004-5. However, what happened after that was totally unprecedented. It grew to 51 million by 2011-12, which is a doubling in seven years or a tripling in 12 years from the turn of the millennium. This sector (construction) absorbed 74% of the new jobs created in non-farm sectors in rural areas between 2004-05 and 2011-12.
- A **“tight” labor market** has more jobs than workers. In a **“slack” labor market**, the reverse is true. Landless labour and small and marginal farmers’ households had benefited the most from the tightening of the labour market that had ensued in rural and urban areas because of rising construction jobs between 2004-05 and 2011-12.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-map-of-rural-deprivation/article22413880.ece>;

6. The ‘World Social Protection Report’ is a flagship report of the

- World Bank
- World Economic Forum
- International Labour Organisation
- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Solution: c.

- Universal social protection is essential for realizing the human right to social security for all, advancing social justice and promoting inclusive growth, and accelerating progress towards achieving the globally agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.
- This **ILO flagship report (World Social Protection Report)** provides a global overview on recent trends in social protection systems, including social protection floors.
- Social protection floors are nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that should ensure, as a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/still-a-raw-deal-for-many/article22444629.ece>;

7. Lending by commercial banks consists mainly of

- Cash credit
- Short-term loans to private investors
- Banks’ investments in government securities

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- Lending by commercial banks consists mainly of cash credit, demand and short-term loans to private investors and banks' investments in government securities and other approved bonds (Government securities made up about 82% of commercial banks' total investments in the year ended March 2017, and about 84% for state-run banks.)

Money and Banking, Introductory Macroeconomics, Class 12 NCERT;

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/OtRiteE8cxFjH49naqtpGL/Bonds-slide-as-RBI-says-banks-must-manage-own-interest-rate.html>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/face-the-inevitable-the-spike-in-bond-yields/article22451651.ece>;

8. Recently, expectation of the Central government breaching its fiscal deficit target lead to

- (a) A fall in sovereign bond prices
- (b) A rise in sovereign bond yields
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

- Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Viral Acharya's observation about the size of the banking sector's balance-sheet exposure to Government Securities spooked the bond markets recently.
- Acharya noted that the interest rate risk on government securities is high in an absolute sense, and that this risk cannot be managed over and over again by the regulator.
- Yields on Government Securities (G-Secs) jumped in response, while bond prices fell. Bond prices and yields are inversely correlated.
- "The regulator, in the interest of financial stability, is caught in such situations (of episodic phases of sustained rise in G-Sec) between a rock and a hard place, and often obliges," said Acharya. "However, the trend of regular use of ex-post regulatory dispensation to ease the interest rate risk of banks is not desirable from the point of view of efficient price discovery in the G-Sec market and effective market discipline on the G-Sec issuer. Nor does it augur well for developing a sound risk management culture at banks."

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/rbi-officials-remark-on-banksgsec-exposure-spooks-bonds/article10035793.ece>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/face-the-inevitable-the-spike-in-bond-yields/article22451651.ece>;

9. Which among the following conclusions has **not** been drawn by Oxfam's latest report 'Reward Work, Not Wealth'?

- (a) Around 82 per cent of money generated last year went to the richest 1 per cent of the global population
- (b) Worldwide, 42 people now own as much wealth as the poorest half
- (c) The top 1 per cent income earners in India today receive 22 per cent of national income
- (d) The richest 1 per cent in India cornered around 73 per cent of the wealth generated in India last year

Solution: c.

Statement 'c' refers to the World Inequality Report findings (by the World Inequality Lab) released late last year – "Income inequality in India has reached historically high levels with the share of national income accruing to India's top 1 per cent earners touching 22 per cent in 2014.."

Oxfam report findings:

- The richest 1 per cent in India cornered 73 per cent of the wealth generated in the country last year. Besides, 67 crore Indians comprising the population's poorest half saw their wealth rise by just 1 per cent.
- The situation appears even more grim globally, where 82 per cent of the wealth generated last year worldwide went to the 1 per cent, while 3.7 billion people that account for the poorest half of population saw no increase in their wealth.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/indias-richest-1-corner-73-of-wealth-generation-oxfam-report/article10045632.ece>;

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-42745853>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/flawed-fiscal-policy-favours-the-affluent/article22486501.ece>;

10. Consider the following statements:

1. Following the financial crisis of 2007-08, key central banks adopted a hawkish stance
2. The IMF predicts India will be the fastest-growing major economy during the financial year 2018

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.

What does 'Dove' mean? (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/dove.asp>)

Dove refers to an economic policy advisor who promotes monetary policies that involve low interest rates, based on the belief that low interest rates increase employment... Doves prefer low interest rates as a means of encouraging economic growth because they tend to increase demand for consumer borrowing and spur consumer spending. As a result, doves believe the negative effects of low interest rates are relatively negligible.. On the other hand, a 'hawk' generally favours relatively high interest rates in order to keep inflation in check.

In the news (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/a-risky-recovery/article22500298.ece>): "It is no secret that since the 2008 financial crisis the global economy has been propped up mainly by the unprecedented easy money policies adopted by global central banks... Such a recovery comes with the inherent risk of being derailed whenever easy monetary conditions that fuelled it cease to exist.. the possible end to the era of abundant liquidity and debt-fuelled economic activity is likely to cause disruption by affecting asset prices.. it seems the day of reckoning may not be too far as consumer price inflation begins to push central banks to rethink their dovish stance.."

Regarding Statement 2 (<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/9fx4v1xGMkvCk05WLP78GO/IMF-sees-India-GDP-growth-at-74-in-2018-Chinas-at-68.html>) : In 2017, China's GDP growth rate of 6.8% was ahead of India's at 6.7%, giving the former the tag of being the fastest growing emerging economy. The Indian economy, which grew at 7.1% in 2016, slowed in 2017 due to demonetisation in November 2016 and GST rollout on 1 July 2017.. In its latest World Economic Outlook update released on Monday ahead of the World Economic Forum in Davos, the IMF projected India's GDP growth rate at 7.4% in 2018 and 7.8% in 2019.

11. The recently unveiled bank recapitalisation plan includes a reforms package across six themes. Which among the following is **not** one of the themes?
- (a) Deepening financial inclusion
 - (b) Modern HR management
 - (c) Credit off-take
 - (d) Responsible banking

Solution: b.

The reform agenda is aimed at EASE – Enhanced Access and Service Excellence, focusing on six themes of

- customer responsiveness,
- responsible banking,
- credit off take,
- PSBs as Udyami Mitra,
- deepening financial inclusion & digitalisation and
- developing personnel for brand PSB.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175850;>

12. A certain part of grants from the Union Government to sub-national governments is utilised to create durable assets. In the calculation of which among the following measures of government deficit are such assets considered to be productive in nature?
- (a) Fiscal deficit
 - (b) Revenue deficit
 - (c) Primary deficit
 - (d) Effective revenue deficit

Solution: d.

- While revenue deficit is the difference between revenue receipts and revenue expenditure, the present accounting system includes all grants from the Union Government to the state governments/Union territories/other bodies as revenue expenditure, even if they are used to create assets. Such assets created by the sub-national governments/bodies are owned by them and not by the Union Government. Nevertheless they do result in the creation of durable assets. According to the Finance Ministry, such revenue expenditures contribute to the growth in the economy and therefore, should not be treated as unproductive in nature.
- Grants for creation of capital assets, as a concept, was introduced in the FRBM Act through the amendment in 2012. The Act defines grants for creation of capital assets as grants-in-aid given by the Central Government to sub-national governments for creation of capital assets (productive assets) which are owned by them. In short, Effective Revenue Deficit is the difference between revenue deficit and grants for creation of capital assets.

<http://www.arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Effective Revenue deficit;>

Improvisation: [http://164.100.117.97/WriteReadData/userfiles/Budget%20e-Book%2009%20jan.pdf;](http://164.100.117.97/WriteReadData/userfiles/Budget%20e-Book%2009%20jan.pdf)

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175914;>

13. Consider the following statements:

1. Presently, every central ministry presents a preliminary outcome budget every year to the Ministry of Finance
2. The outcome budget contains proposals for what various ministries intend to achieve with outlays that are to be revealed in the forthcoming budget

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.

- From the fiscal year 2006-07, every Ministry presents a preliminary Outcome Budget to the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for compiling them.
- The Outcome Budget is a progress card on what various Ministries and Departments have done with the outlays in the previous annual budget.
- It measures the development outcomes of all Government programs and whether the money has been spent for the purpose it was sanctioned including the outcome of the fund usage.

<http://164.100.117.97/WriteReadData/userfiles/Budget%20e-Book%2009%20jan.pdf>;

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175914>;

14. Banks placed under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework

1. Enables RBI to supersede the bank's board
2. Will utilise funds to be received under the recently announced banking recapitalisation package primarily for investment in growth capital

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.

The bank recapitalisation plan will follow a differentiated approach for PCA banks and non-PCA banks. The recapitalisation amount for PCA banks would be used for support to maintain their regulatory capital requirements, and to strengthen their governance and operations. The amount for non-PCA banks is to be used for investment in growth capital.

About PCA (<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/prompt-corrective-action-for-banks/article18519755.ece>):

The PCA is invoked when certain risk thresholds are breached. There are three risk thresholds which are based on certain levels of asset quality, profitability, capital and the like.

- PCA norms allow the regulator (RBI) 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.

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/govt-unveils-details-of-bank-recapitalisation-and-reform-plan/article22509373.ece>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/banking-on-good-faith/article22545428.ece>;

15. Consider the following statements about the Indian Commodity Exchange Limited:

1. The exchange is a public-private partnership
2. The world's first diamond futures exchange began operations under its aegis

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.

- Indian Commodity Exchange Limited is a nation-wide on-line trading platform in commodity derivative. The Exchange is a public-private partnership with MMTC Ltd, Indian Potash Ltd, KRIBHCO, IDFC Bank Ltd, Reliance Exchangenext Ltd (Reliance Capital) and Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd as prominent shareholders.
- The Indian Commodity Exchange Ltd (ICEX) commenced the world's first diamond futures exchange trading operations last year.
- "We have seen a healthy growth in trading volumes, which shows that it has emerged as a good investment option for common investors, enabling them to diversify their portfolio," said the chief executive officer of ICEX.

<https://www.icexindia.com/static/organization-profile.aspx>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/diamonds-make-the-cut-with-domestic-investors/article22580502.ece>;

16. According to the latest economic survey, India must continue improving the climate for rapid economic growth on the strength of the only "two truly sustainable engines" that are

- (a) Public and private investment
- (b) India's demographic dividend and low-skilled manufacturing
- (c) Private investment and exports
- (d) Innovation and consumption

Solution: c.

“Citing job creation and education as key priorities, the Survey sets out a plan for rapid economic expansion by recommending that policymakers keep their sights trained on strengthening “the only two truly sustainable engines — private investment and exports.”

[http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/economic-survey-cautious-optimism/article22579781.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/economic-survey-cautious-optimism/article22579781.ece)

Chapter 1, State of the Economy, Economic Survey 2017-18;

II. ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

1. Species of the genus *Nyctibatrachus* are endemic to

- (a) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- (b) Eastern Himalayas
- (c) Western Ghats
- (d) River Ganga

Solution: c.

In the news: A new frog from Kerala is the latest contribution to the spurt in amphibian discoveries across India: scientists have just discovered the Mewa Singh's Night frog, belonging to a genus endemic to the Western Ghats, from Kozhikode's Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Frogs in the genus *Nyctibatrachus*, commonly known as night frogs, are found only in the Western Ghats mountain range.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/malabar-sanctuary-home-to-new-night-frog/article22333739.ece>;

2. 'Global Temperature Potential' is, most appropriately, a measure of

- (a) The relative impact of different greenhouse gases on the Earth's warming
- (b) The cyclical impact of increasing global temperatures and rising instances of forest fires on Earth's warming
- (c) The impact of countries not following through on commitments made by them to reduce carbon emissions
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

GWP is a measure of how much energy the emissions of 1 ton of a gas will absorb over a given period of time, relative to the emissions of 1 ton of carbon dioxide (CO₂). The larger the GWP, the more that a given gas warms the Earth compared to CO₂ over that time period.

The scientific community has developed a number of other metrics that could be used for comparing one GHG to another. These metrics may differ based on timeframe, the climate endpoint measured, or the method of calculation.

The **Global Temperature Potential (GTP)** is one such alternative. It is a measure of the temperature change at the end of that time period (again, relative to CO₂). The calculation of the GTP is more complicated than that for the GWP, as it requires modeling how much the climate system responds to increased concentrations of GHGs.

<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials>;

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42555568>;

3. Which among the following statements is **incorrect**?

- (a) The ozone molecule is harmful to air quality everywhere in the troposphere
- (b) The ozone molecule is harmful to air quality everywhere in the troposphere
- (c) Ozone is the main ingredient in smog
- (d) Emissions from industrial facilities and electric utilities are some of the major sources of ground level ozone

Solution: d.

- The ozone molecule (O₃) is harmful to air quality, outside of the ozone layer.
- Ground level or “bad” ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is created by chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the presence of sunlight. This happens when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources chemically react in the presence of sunlight.
- Ozone at ground level is a harmful air pollutant, because of its effects on people and the environment, and it is the main ingredient in “smog.”

<https://www.epa.gov/ozone-pollution>;

<https://www.epa.gov/ozone-pollution/basic-information-about-ozone#what%20where%20how>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-much-neglected-pollutant/article22399237.ece>;

4. Consider the following pairs:

<i>Tiger Reserve</i>	<i>State in which it is found</i>
1. Simlipal	: Odisha
2. Bor	: West Bengal
3. Kalakkad Mundanthurai	: Kerala

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

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

Solution: a.

- Bor Tiger Reserve – Maharashtra
- Kalakkad Mundanthurai – Tamil Nadu

<https://www.gktoday.in/gk/tiger-reserves-of-india/>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mankidia-denied-habitat-in-simplipal/article22392195.ece>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/fatal-crossings-tigers-in-26-reserves-under-threat/article22388295.ece>;

5. Consider the following statements:

1. Soil organic matter, of which soil organic carbon (SOC) is a component, is composed of ‘living’ and ‘dead’ components
2. Reducing soil erosion can increase SOC content in soil
3. Greenhouse gases emitted by soils include only methane and carbon dioxide

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

Justification for Statement 1: **Soil organic matter (SOM)** is mainly composed of carbon (referred to as SOC), hydrogen and oxygen but also has small amounts of nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorous, sulphur, potassium, calcium and magnesium contained within organic residues. It is divided into 'living' and 'dead' components. Less than 15% of below-ground soil organic matter such as roots, fauna and microorganisms is 'living'

Justification for Statement 2: CO₂ from soil is emitted back into the atmosphere when SOM is decomposed by microorganisms. Carbon is also partly exported from soils to rivers and oceans as dissolved organic carbon (DOC) or as part of erosion material... Approaches to increase SOC include reducing soil erosion, no-till-farming, use of cover crops, nutrient management, applying manure and sludge, water harvesting and conservation, and agroforestry practices.

Regarding Statement 3: The carbon-based GHGs emitted by soil are CO₂ and methane (CH₄) which are two of the most leading anthropogenically emitted GHGs. Another form of GHG is nitrous oxide (N₂O), the emission of which has become increasingly anthropogenically driven, largely from agricultural soils and livestock facilities.

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/soil-carbon/what-soil-organic-carbon>;

<https://www.fao.org/3/a-i6937e.pdf>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-new-weapon-in-the-carbon-fight/article22445785.ece>

6. Consider the following statements:

1. The year 2017 is regarded as the warmest year on record without an El Niño event
2. "Pre-industrial" levels, seen often in the context of climate change discourse, refers to the period 1750-1800

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 question on "pre-industrial" levels has earlier been posted here. It refers to the period **1850-1900**.

- Last year was the second or third hottest year on record – after 2016 and on a par with 2015, the data shows. But those two years were affected by El Niño – the natural phenomenon centred on the tropical Pacific Ocean which works to boost temperatures worldwide. Take out this natural variability (in fact, we've been going into cooler La Niña conditions) and 2017 would probably have been the warmest year yet, the researchers say.
- Figures were published by the world's three main agencies monitoring global temperatures: the UK Met Office and the two US organisations – the US space agency (NASA) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NASA rates 2017 the second hottest year, and NOAA and the Met Office judge it to be the third hottest since records began in 1850.
- The World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General said the long-term temperature trend was far more important than the ranking of individual years. "That trend is an upward one," he said. "Seventeen of the 18 warmest years on record have all been during this century, and the degree of warming during the past three years has been exceptional."

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42736397>;

Explained Page, 19th January 2018, Indian Express;

7. Consider the following statements:

1. The CCAMLR (Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources) was established in response to increasing commercial interest in Antarctic krill resources
2. Antarctic krill makes up an estimated biomass more than that of the global population of humans

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.

About CCAMLR (<https://www.ccamlr.org/en/organisation/about-ccamlr>):

- The **Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)** was established by international convention in 1982 with the objective of conserving Antarctic marine life.
- This was in response to increasing commercial interest in Antarctic krill resources, a keystone component of the Antarctic ecosystem and a history of over-exploitation of several other marine resources in the Southern Ocean.

About Antarctic Krill (<https://www.ccamlr.org/en/fisheries/krill-fisheries-and-sustainability>):

- In the Southern Ocean, one species, the Antarctic krill, makes up an estimated biomass more than that of the global population of humans.
- Of this, over half is eaten by whales, seals, penguins, squid and fish each year, and is replaced through reproduction and subsequent growth of the krill population.
- They are important in the food chain because they feed on phytoplankton, and to a lesser extent zooplankton, making nutrients available to other animals for which krill make up the largest part of their diet. For this reason krill are considered a keystone species in the Southern Ocean ecosystem.

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42795208>;

8. Into the waters of which among the following seas did one of the biggest icebergs ever recorded break away from Antarctica's Larsen C Ice Shelf last year?

- (a) Weddell Sea
- (b) Ross Sea
- (c) Cosmonauts Sea
- (d) Davis Sea

Solution: a.

The Larsen C Ice Shelf is located on the Antarctic Peninsula (the Antarctic arm which sticks out towards South America.)

From 2017: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-40321674>

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42795208>;



9. Which among the following releases the biennial Environmental Performance Index report?
- Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum
 - Cornell University and INSEAD the World Health Organisation
 - Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation and World Bank
 - United Nations Environment Programme

Solution: a.

The EPI is produced jointly by Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

In the news (<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/india-ranks-177-out-of-180-in-environmental-performance-index/article22513016.ece>): India has plummeted 36 positions from 141 in 2016 to 177 in 2018 in the Environment Performance Index. While India is at the bottom of the list in the environmental health category, it ranks 178 out of 180 as far as air quality is concerned. Its overall low ranking—177 among 180 countries—was linked to poor performance in the environment health policy and deaths due to air pollution categories... Of the emerging economies, China and India rank 120 and 177 respectively, reflecting the strain population pressures and rapid economic growth impose on the environment.

10. Which among the following Strategic Goals of Aichi Biodiversity Targets include the target associated with invasive alien species?

- (a) Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services
- (b) Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use
- (c) To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity
- (d) Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society

Solution: b.

The **Global Register of Invasive Species (GRIS)** was developed as a concept and prototype by the **IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)** in **2006** as part of a project undertaken for the Defenders of Wildlife on the Regulation of Live Animal Imports into the United States. This concept was revisited and expanded by the ISSG to address Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 and support its achievement- with the development of the **Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species (GRIIS)**.

- **Strategic Goal B** (<https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>; Targets 5-10): Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use
- **Target 9:** By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42835528>;

11. Consider the following statements:

1. The 'Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species (GRIIS)' has been developed and is hosted by IUCN
2. All parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are partners of the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership (GIASI Partnership)

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.

(Explanation continuing from previous question's solution) .. GRIIS hosted by the ISSG compiles annotated and verified country-wise inventories of introduced and invasive species. Development and population of the GRIIS was undertaken by the ISSG within the framework of activities of the Information Synthesis and Assessment Working Group of the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership (GIASIP).

About the GIASI Partnership (<https://www.cbd.int/invasive/giasipartnership/>): The GIASI Partnership is intended to support Parties to the CBD who are committed to the effective implementation of Article 8(h), Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 (invasive alien species), and the various decisions under the CBD pertaining to the prevention, eradication, and control of invasive alien species.

About ISSG (<http://www.issg.org/about.htm>): The Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) is a global network of scientific and policy experts on invasive species, organized under the auspices of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It aims to reduce threats to

natural ecosystems and the native species they contain by increasing awareness of invasive alien species, and of ways to prevent, control or eradicate them.

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42835528>;

Source for statement 2: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/ais/iasws-2014-01/other/iasws-2014-01-presentation-05-en.pdf>

12. In which among the following ways do plastics raise the risk of disease outbreaks on coral reefs?

- (a) Plastic debris stress corals through blocking out light and oxygen, thereby giving pathogens a chance to take hold
- (b) Pathogens in the ocean thrive on plastic surfaces, thereby increasing their numbers and the vulnerability of corals with elevated levels of plastic pollution around reefs
- (c) Coral organisms get infected by sharp plastic fragments that cut them, following which the disease spreads across the coral colony
- (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

- Billions of pieces of plastic pollution are snagged on coral reefs, sending disease rates soaring, new research has revealed. The discovery compounds the damage being done to a vital habitat that already faces an existential threat from the warming caused by climate change.
- Scientists examined 125,000 corals across the Asia-Pacific region, home to half the world's reefs, and found 89% of those fouled by plastic were suffering disease. On plastic-free reefs, only 4% of the corals were diseased.
- The correlation between plastic pollution and high rates of disease was very striking and the researchers think sharp plastic fragments cut the coral organisms, while plastic fabrics smother them and block out light and oxygen.
- Once a coral is infected, disease usually spreads across the colony. Said the project lead, "Corals are animals just like me and you – they become wounded and then infected.. Plastics are ideal vessels for microorganisms, with pits and pores, so it's like cutting yourself with a really dirty knife.. It's like getting gangrene on your toe and watching it eat your body. There's not much you can do to stop it. If a piece of plastic happens to entangle on a coral it has a pretty bad chance of survival."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/25/billions-of-pieces-of-plastic-on-coral-reefs-send-disease-soaring-research-reveals>;

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42821004>;

13. 'Day Zero', a probable scenario that is being referred to with respect to a South African town, will have been caused due to

- (a) A severe drought
- (b) A meteor shower
- (c) A volcanic eruption
- (d) A sudden pressure leading to explosive cyclogenesis

Solution: a.

- Cape Town, home to Table Mountain, African penguins, sunshine and sea, is a world-renowned tourist destination. But it could also become famous for being the **first major city in the world to run out of water.**

- A severe drought has forced Cape Town's municipality to limit water consumption to 50 litres per person per day in an effort to delay what has become known as Day Zero, which has been set for 12 April (revised down once already from 21 April), when the water supply will be shut. Failure to stick to the limit only means one thing: Day Zero will get even closer in the city of more than four million people.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-42626790>;

http://www.bbc.com/news/video_and_audio/headlines/42866178/why-cape-town-is-shutting-off-its-water-supply;

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42836560>;

14. The Coco Channel separates an Indian island from

- A Myanmarese island
- Sumatra (Indonesia)
- A Maldivian island
- Thailand

Solution: a.

Coco channel separates North Andaman and Myanmar's Coco Islands (where the Chinese have military presence).



Additional Information: Narcondam is a small volcanic island located in the Andaman Sea. It is part of the Andaman Islands. It home to the endangered **Narcondam Hornbill**.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco_Islands#Geography;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/narcondam-hornbills-edge-back-from-the-brink/article22334830.ece>;

III. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES

1. Swayam Prabha', a Government of India initiative, is a project for
 - (a) Online training of Yoga and Meditation practitioners
 - (b) Promoting entrepreneurship by way of the Government setting up state of the art skilling centres in collaboration with the private industry
 - (c) Identifying new digital technology innovations to solve the many social problems faced by the poor and vulnerable in urban setups
 - (d) Providing high quality educational content through DTH channels to teachers, students and citizens across the country

Solution: d.

The same question was posted here earlier.

From July 2017: The Centre will formally launch **Swayam Prabha - a project for telecasting 'High-quality educational programmes'** through **32 DTH channels** on Sunday at a National Convention on Digital Initiatives for Higher Education.

Every day, there will be content of four hours that will be repeated six times, thus covering all 24 hours of the day. This will allow the student to choose a time of his own convenience," said an official. "The channels will cover curriculum-based course content covering arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences, engineering, medicine, law, agriculture, etc."

<http://www.thehindu.com/education/schools/coming-direct-to-home-coaching-for-students-iit-aspirants/article19240986.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/more-channels-to-train-teachers/article22339416.ece>;

2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is the administrative ministry for which among the following programmes/initiatives?
 1. 'India Organic' logo
 2. National Programme for Organic Production
 3. 'Jaivik Bharat' logo

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had recently issued regulations that required food companies selling organic produce to get certified with one of the two authorities — **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)** or the **Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India)**.
- For nearly two decades now, organic farming certification had been done through a process of third party certification under the NPOP. It was run by the Ministry of Commerce and was used for certifying general

exports. Nearly 24 agencies were authorised by the NPOP to verify farms, storages and processing units and successful ones got a special 'India Organic' logo.

- The **PGS-India programme**, in contrast, had been around for only two years and — unlike the top-down approach of the NPOP — involves a peer-review approach. Here, farmers played a role in certifying whether the farms in their vicinity adhered to organic-cultivation practices. This programme was implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture through the National Centre of Organic Farming.
- The FSSAI has introduced the '**Jaivik Bharat**' logo; this one is among a few special logos on packaging of foods that is used to identify foods as organic.

<http://www.fssai.gov.in/home/about-us/introduction.html>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/label-mandatory-for-food-certified-as-organic-from-july/article22378459.ece>;

3. The Union Health Ministry's Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP) aims to

- (a) Detect and respond to outbreaks of epidemic prone diseases
- (b) Verify unusual health events being reported on social media
- (c) Establish surveillance units at the block level so as to prepare decentralised plans for effective localised medical response systems over time
- (d) Specifically prevent and control Avian Influenza outbreaks

Solution: a.

The objective of the IDSP is to strengthen/maintain decentralized laboratory-based IT enabled disease surveillance system (at centre, state and district level) for epidemic prone diseases and to monitor disease trends and to detect and respond to outbreaks in early rising phase through trained Rapid Response Team (RRTs).

From 2013: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=98405>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/food-poisoning-a-common-outbreak-in-2017/article22392234.ece>;

4. 'SFOORTI' application of the Government of India will help

- (a) Plan traffic flows and optimise freight operations of the Indian Railways
- (b) Provide employment opportunities to more than 3 lakh artisans belonging to minority communities
- (c) Citizens access central government services in a time-bound manner
- (d) Citizens participate in policy formulation and programme implementation to usher in an era of direct participatory democracy

Solution: a.

In a major digital initiative to help plan the traffic flows and optimize freight operations, **Ministry of Railways** have launched **Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information (SFOORTI) App** for Freight Managers which provides features for monitoring and managing freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) Views and Dashboard. Both passenger and freight trains can be tracked over Zones/Divisions/Sections can be viewed through this application.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175545>;

5. National Youth Day marks the birth anniversary of

- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (b) Rukhmabai Raut
- (c) APJ Abdul Kalam
- (d) Swami Vivekananda

Solution: d.

[http://pibregional.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1516468;](http://pibregional.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1516468)

6. The simplified 'Make-II' procedure, recently cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council, will

1. Enable the industry as well as start-ups to put forth suggestions for defence projects
2. Reduce the total time taken to place orders from the proposal stage by 50 per cent

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 **salient features** of the **new 'Make-II' procedure** (which will amend the existing 'Make Procedure' in Defence Procurement Procedure – 2016) include the following:

- The industry can suggest projects, especially among those items which are currently being imported. Start-ups or individuals can also suggest proposals.
- There will be no limit to the number of industries who may respond to the EoI (Expression of Interest) for development of prototypes subject to meeting the minimum qualification criteria.
- The case will be progressed even if there is single entity offering an innovative solution.
- 'Make-II' procedure reduces the total time from in-principle approval to placing of order by 50 percent.
- Projects involving developmental cost of less than three crores will be reserved for MSME.

[http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175681;](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175681)

[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/make-ii-promise-for-arms-firms/article22458134.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/make-ii-promise-for-arms-firms/article22458134.ece)

7. The 'City Liveability Index' was recently launched by

- (a) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- (b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- (c) Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- (d) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Solution: a.

The same question was posted here earlier.

- The Ministry of Urban Development (now Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) has launched the City Liveability Index. The index will be used to measure 116 cities, which include smart cities, state capitals, and cities with a population of above one million.
- The index will be a common minimum reference framework that will help cities know where they stand in terms of quality of life. It would also help cities to understand the interventions required to improve these standards.
- The cities will be assessed on a set of 79 parameters which would capture the extent and quality of infrastructure. These include availability of roads, mobility, education and health care, employment opportunities, emergency responses, mechanisms for grievance redressal, level of pollution, and availability of open spaces.

<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/MPR/MPR-%20June%202017.pdf>;

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=166859>;

In the news: "Centre compiling liveability index", News Page, The Hindu;

8. The Dam Safety Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)

1. Is a South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP) aided project
2. Is being run in some states including Maharashtra
3. Aims to strengthen the institutional capacity for ensuring structural safety and operational efficiency of old dams

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

About DRIP and Dam Safety Conferences:

- Dam Safety Conferences are organized as an annual event under the Dam Safety Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) being run by the **Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWR, RD & GR)** in the seven states of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand.
- Launched in the year 2012 with a financial outlay of Rs. 2100 Crores, this World Bank-aided project aims at the rehabilitation of old dams in the country that may be experiencing distress and are in need of attention for ensuring their structural safety and operational efficiency. The project also aims to strengthen the institutional capacity and project management in this area.
- As part of this exercise, DRIP has been engaged in bringing greater awareness on dam safety issues and finding novel solutions to address them by pooling the best technologies, knowledge and experience available around the world. In this direction, Dam Safety Conferences are being organized as annual events in the different DRIP states.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175798>;

9. For the introduction of a new vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme, in what sequence must approval be granted by the following bodies?

1. National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation
2. Empowered Programme Committee (National Health Mission)
3. Mission Steering Group (NHM)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

India's NTAGI (<http://www.nitag-resource.org/uploads/media/default/0001/01/6706ca25a105266e834edb78f7f81cec124420ec.pdf>):

- The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) was established in August 2001 by the Department of Family Welfare. The NTAGI was intended to provide technical advice to inform decision-making on both technical and operational matters pertaining to immunisation and choice and scheduling of existing and planned vaccines.

Procedure for introduction of a new vaccine in UIP

(<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=168805>):

- **NTAGI** reviews disease burden and epidemiology of a particular vaccine preventable disease and vaccine availability along with its cost effectiveness before making recommendations for any new vaccine introduction. The Health Ministry introduces new vaccines only when NTAGI recommendations are subsequently approved by the empowered programme committee and Mission Steering Group (<http://nhm.gov.in/monitoring/mission-steering-group.html>).
- **Empowered Programme Committee** (<http://nhm.gov.in/monitoring/empowered-programme-committee.html#>) is an **Executive Committee** constituted under **National Health Mission (NHM)**. All the Proposals brought before the MSG are first placed for examination before EPC.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/hpv-vaccine-gets-immunisation-nod/article22514484.ece>

10. The 'Bharat Parv' event is being organised by the Government of India at the Red Fort as part of the Republic Day 2018 celebrations. The nodal ministry for the event is the

- (a) Ministry of Culture
- (b) Ministry of Tourism
- (c) Ministry of Railways
- (d) Ministry of Human Resource Department

Solution: b.

- The 'Bharat Parv' event is being organized by the Government of India at the Red Fort, Delhi from 26th to 31st January, 2018 as part of the Republic Day 2018 celebrations. The prime objective of organizing the event is to generate a patriotic mood, promote the rich cultural diversity of the country and to ensure wider participation of the general public.

- The Ministry of Tourism has been designated as the nodal Ministry for the event, the highlights of which include among others, display of Republic Day Parade Tableaux, performances by the Armed Forces Bands.

[http://www.insightsonindia.com/2018/01/25/insights-daily-current-affairs-25-january-2018/;](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2018/01/25/insights-daily-current-affairs-25-january-2018/)

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175834;>

11. Which of the following are regarded as some of the issues that confront the government's target to achieve an all-electric fleet of vehicles by 2030?

1. Presently, no government – centre or state – has invested in the setting up of charging infrastructure
2. Most of the charging stations being installed across the country offer Alternating Current charging and not Direct Current
3. The GST regime makes a distinction between electric and hybrid vehicles

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: b.

Regarding Statement 1: There are several initiatives, by both the government and the private sector, to enhance the required charging infrastructure. The Centre has begun pilot projects in this regard, having already installed 25 charging stations in Bengaluru, and planning to expand this to other metros.

Regarding Statement 2 and additional information:

- Very few global carmakers have brought their electric variants into India.
- The government has also made a distinction between EVs and hybrid vehicles under the GST regime is seen as a problem. While EVs are to be taxed at 12%, hybrid vehicles are taxed at 28% plus a 15% cess. The view among carmakers is that people are still sceptical about the shift to all-electric vehicles since they fear the charge duration of the batteries. As such, they are more likely to try hybrid vehicles, but that sector is not being encouraged by the current tax structure.
- The other issue has to do with the charging stations themselves. EVs charged at home using AC power would take about 5-8 hours for a full charge. DC chargers, on the other hand, can do the same in a fraction of the time. Most of the chargers being installed across the country, however, are AC chargers.

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/electric-vehicles-charging-infrastructure-needs-a-jolt-to-meet-2030-target/article22544900.ece;>

12. Which among the following statements correctly differentiate the National Achievement Survey (NAS) from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)?

1. While NAS is a school-based effort, ASER is a household survey
2. Whereas NAS is a representative sample of children who are enrolled in government or aided schools, ASER is a representative sample of all children
3. NAS focusses mainly on foundational skills like reading and arithmetic, while ASER looks at a wider variety of skills

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

There are now two new sources of data available on children's learning. Recently, ASER 2017 and the district report cards from the National Achievement Survey (NAS) were released.

- Both exercises, one by the government and the other done by non-governmental organisations, indicate a significant shift in thinking about children's learning. In their own ways, both point to the importance of considering stage-wise learning outcomes, a move which will contribute towards a much-needed rethinking of class-wise curricular expectations.
- They are also the only two sources of data that are repeatedly available (whether periodically in the case of NAS or annually in the case of ASER).
- ASER is a household survey and NAS is a school-based effort. ASER conducts its assessment one-on-one, while NAS is a pen-paper test.
- ASER is aimed at a representative sample of all children (whether in school and attending or out of school) whereas NAS is a representative sample of children who are enrolled in government or aided schools.

Regarding Statement 3: ASER focusses mainly on foundational skills like reading and arithmetic, while NAS looks at a wider variety of skills.

[http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/three-milestones-in-education/article22581769.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/three-milestones-in-education/article22581769.ece)

13. The recently launched UMANG service

1. Offers multiple services of Central as well as state and local government bodies
2. Supports feature phones without internet connectivity
3. Has been developed by the Ministry of Science and Technology

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) has been developed by **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)** to drive **Mobile Governance** in India.

- It provides a single platform for all Indian Citizens to access pan India e-Gov services ranging from Central to Local Government bodies and other citizen centric services.
- It intends to provide major services offered by Central and State Government departments, Local bodies and other utility services from private organizations.

- It provides a unified approach where citizens can install one application to avail multiple government services.
- UMANG service has been made available on multiple channels like mobile application, web, IVR and SMS which can be accessed through smartphones, feature phones, tablets and desktops.

[https://web.umang.gov.in/web/#/;](https://web.umang.gov.in/web/#/)

Improvisation: [http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/govt-has-curbed-inflation-kovind/article22581809.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/govt-has-curbed-inflation-kovind/article22581809.ece)

IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Consider the following statements:

1. All cryptocurrencies are based on Blockchain technology
2. Altcoins refer to a class of alternative cryptocurrencies that were launched after the success of bitcoin

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.

"Cryptocurrencies may or may not emerge as a useful tool, especially since the government may not want to encourage the proliferation of anonymous, non-flat currencies as its anti-black money fight intensifies. But blockchains, basically digital ledgers of financial transactions that are immutable and instantly updated across the world, are worth looking at as aids to ease doing business. They have the potential to greatly streamline payment mechanisms and make them transparent."

Not all cryptocurrencies are based on Blockchain technology. For instance, 'IOTA'

(<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/609771/a-cryptocurrency-without-a-blockchain-has-been-built-to-outperform-bitcoin/>) is one such Cryptocurrency. Instead of a blockchain, IOTA uses a **mathematical "tangle."**

Altcoins (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/altcoin.asp>) are the alternative cryptocurrencies launched after the success of Bitcoin. Generally, they project themselves as better substitutes to Bitcoin.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/the-money-trail/article22347525.ece>;

2. NASA uses a device called 'MinION' to

- (a) Sequence DNA aboard the International Space Station
- (b) Identify the five Lagrange points in our celestial neighbourhood
- (c) Understand a process called magnetic reconnection which powers the green-blue auroras (polar lights)
- (d) Measure wind speeds over Earth's oceans, increasing the ability of scientists to understand and predict tropical cyclones

Solution: a.

- **From 2016** (https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/research/news/dna_sequencing): For the first time ever, DNA was successfully sequenced in microgravity as part of the Biomolecule Sequencer experiment performed aboard the International Space Station. The ability to sequence the DNA of living organisms in space opens a whole new world of scientific and medical possibilities. Scientists consider it a game changer.
- With a way to sequence DNA in space, astronauts could diagnose an illness, or identify microbes growing in the International Space Station and determine whether or not they represent a health threat.
- A space-based DNA sequencer would be an important tool to help protect astronaut health during long duration missions on the journey to Mars, and future explorers could also potentially use the technology to identify DNA-based life forms beyond Earth (Samples need not be returned to earth for testing).

Additional Information:

- NASA's **Genes in Space-3** was a collaboration to collect, sequence and identify unknown organisms, entirely from space.
- Another device called the **miniPCR** was employed along with the MinION. The miniPCR (mini-polymerase chain reaction) is an instrument which replicates DNA in order to have enough to analyse.

https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/research/experiments/2181.html;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/unknown-microbes-identified-in-space/article22347447.ece>

3. Consider the following statements about the GenomeAsia 100K initiative:

1. The initiative will help accelerate East Asian population-specific medical advances
2. Its founding members include an Indian company

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.

MedGenome, is a founding member of the **GenomeAsia 100K** (a non-profit consortium), is a genomics-based diagnostics and research company from India with global offices in California.

About GenomeAsia100K (<http://www.genomeasia100k.com>): "We are a mission driven non-profit consortium collaborating to sequence and analyze 100,000 Asian individuals genomes to help accelerate Asian population specific (both, South and East Asian, therefore statement 1 is correct) medical advances and precision medicine."

<http://www.genomeasia100k.com/partners/>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/towards-a-genomics-revolution/article22361004.ece>;

4. In what ways can extracting the genetic information of different Indian groups (genome sequencing) be beneficial?

1. The information can be utilised to help decrease the country's disease burden
2. The application of this information will contribute to India becoming a knowledge based-economy

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.

- **Knowledge-based Economy:** Knowledge is now recognised as the driver of productivity and economic growth, leading to a new focus on the role of information, technology and learning in economic performance.

The term “knowledge-based economy” stems from this fuller recognition of the place of knowledge and technology in modern economies.

- To gain fully from the genomics revolution, India needs to collect information about the genetics of its population and train manpower capable of interpreting it. The information that is needed has to come from a large and sustained collection of data — fully sequenced individual genomes along with medical histories for the individuals who volunteer for this effort. This knowledge could then also be quickly applied to the task of managing diseases as well as be used for genetic counselling that could reduce their incidence in future generations. As an example elsewhere, the founder group of Ashkenazi Jews have almost eliminated Tay-Sachs disease from their population by such means.

Q45, CS(P) 2017: <http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/06/19/answer-key-upsc-civil-services-prelims-exam-2017-general-studies-paper-1/>;

We are just providing the source for definition of KBE, no need to refer to it: <https://www.oecd.org/sti/sci-tech/1913021.pdf>;

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/towards-a-genomics-revolution/article22361004.ece>;

5. ‘Geolocation’ uses which of the following technologies/techniques to assess and specify geographical locations of devices?
- (a) Global Positioning System
 - (b) Internet Protocol address
 - (c) Cell site triangulation
 - (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

Geolocation is the process of finding, determining and providing the exact location of a computer, networking device or equipment. It commonly uses Global Positioning System (GPS) and other related technologies (cell site/tower triangulation, wi-fi positioning) to assess and specify geographical locations.

Besides GPS, geolocation also may be identified through an **Internet Protocol** (IP) address, **media access control** (MAC) address, **radio frequency** (RF) systems, **Exchangeable Image File Format** (EXIF) data and other wireless positioning systems.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/192803/geolo.html>;

<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/1935/geolocation>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/enabling-a-law/article22378707.ece>;

6. Which among the following assets can be regarded as the most dependable platform for a second-strike, given the country’s “no first use” policy on nuclear weapons?
- (a) Sukhoi Su-30MKI
 - (b) INS Arighat
 - (c) INS Vikrant
 - (d) Agni-IV surface-to-surface missile

Solution: b.

From the given list, option ‘b’ is most appropriate.

India has an ambitious plan to build a **ship submersible ballistic nuclear** (SSBN) fleet, comprising five Arihant-class vessels.

- INS Arihant, India's only operational ship submersible ballistic nuclear (SSBN) asset, is its most dependable platform for a second-strike, given the country "no first use" on nuclear weapons. The other options, land-based and air-launched, are easier to detect.
- Arihant has been immobilised even as the second ballistic missile submarine, Arighat, was launched on November 19 for sea trials. The launch was kept a low-profile event.
- INS Arihant and other nuclear launch platforms — land-based missiles and designated aircraft — are operationally handled by the Strategic Forces Command, and report to the Nuclear Command Authority chaired by the Prime Minister.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/arihant-top-gun-for-second-strike/article22393318.ece;>

7. Which among the following developments/technologies have been influenced/evolved out of Nobel Laureate Har Gobind Khorana's contributions to biotechnology?

1. DNA sequencing of unknown microbes in space
2. CRISPR Cas9
3. miniPCR

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 '**miniPCR**' device copies targeted pieces of DNA in a process known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR). This device is used aboard the ISS for NASA's 'Genes in Space' projects. Genes in Space-1 successfully demonstrated the device could be used in microgravity to amplify DNA, a process used to create thousands of copies of specific sections of DNA.

Khorana is credited with making the **first synthetic genes** by cutting and pasting different bits of DNA together. This is considered a forerunner to the method called Polymerase Chain Reaction that is among the methods used to commercially read the unique genetic structures of organisms today. He further placed the lab-made gene in a living bacterium and was, in that sense, a founding father of biotechnology. The **CRISPR/Cas9 system**, which is among the latest tools used to alter the functioning of certain genes, references the work of Khorana as a key influence.

[https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/research/news/genes_in_space3/;](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/research/news/genes_in_space3/)

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-pioneer-in-biotechnology/article22413588.ece;>

Solution to Q4, [http://www.insightsonindia.com/2018/01/02/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-02-january-2018/;](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2018/01/02/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-02-january-2018/)

8. Consider the following statements about Synthetic-Aperture Radar (SAR) satellites:

1. They can capture images of earth's surface at night and even through cloud
2. The European Union's Copernicus programme makes use of such satellites
3. ISRO is currently developing such a satellite in collaboration with NASA

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

- We have earlier framed questions on NISAR (NASA-ISRO SAR) and the Copernicus programme (an Earth Observation programme headed by the European Commission in partnership with the European Space Agency).

About SAR satellites/missions: Unlike optical systems that rely on reflected solar radiation or thermal radiation emitted by Earth, imaging radar instruments work independently of light and heat. Radar is an active system that transmits a beam of radiation in the microwave region of the electromagnetic spectrum.

- SAR can provide day-and-night imagery of Earth.
- In addition, clouds, fog and precipitation do not have any significant effect on microwaves, so images can also be acquired independent of weather conditions.

<https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/nasa-isro-synthetic-aperture-radar-nisar/>;

[http://m.esa.int/Our Activities/Observing the Earth/Copernicus/SAR missions](http://m.esa.int/Our_Activities/Observing_the_Earth/Copernicus/SAR_missions);

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42648391>;

9. Which among the following is/are regarded as COTS products?

- MinION DNA sequencer
- miniPCR DNA amplifier
- Microsoft Word

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: c.

About Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products/components: A COTS product is usually a computer hardware or software product tailored for specific uses and made available to the general public. Such products are designed to be readily available and user friendly. A typical example of a COTS product is Microsoft Office or antivirus software.

Says the CEO of Finnish start-up ICEYE (a new space company) about using COTS components on satellite missions, "Space-rated components may have tremendous reliability, but they're very immature in their capability.. When you move to COTS, you're suddenly a decade ahead. You get access to the very latest capabilities.. And the change comes both in cost and in size because COTS components have been miniaturised to fit inside your phone, literally. We are using the same components."

There is the extra risk in not using parts that have been built specifically, and proven, to operate in space. The environment in space is harsh and unforgiving.

The **MinION** and **miniPCR devices** used by NASA on its '**Genes in Space**' projects, related to which we have framed a couple of questions earlier this month, are **COTS** components.

<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/1444/commercial-off-the-shelf-cots>;

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42648391>;

10. With reference to ISRO's PSLV-C40 co-passenger payloads, consider the following statements:

1. This PSLV is the first to carry ISRO's nanosatellite technology demonstrator
2. A satellite from Finland's new space company ICEYE was aboard this PSLV

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.

"It is the two other Indian satellites in the payload that have generated much excitement. Both are called technology demonstrators, indicating significant strides in miniaturisation. Of the two, one is a microsatellite of the 100 kg class. "This is a technology demonstrator and the forerunner for future satellites of this series," the ISRO said. The other one, a nanosatellite, named Indian Nano Satellite (INS) – 1C, is the third in its series; its predecessors were part of the PSLV-C37 launch of February 2017.."

ISRO's PSLV C-40 included Finland's new space company ICEYE's Proof of Concept 1 (POC-1) payload (ICEYE plans to deploy a plan to deploy a constellation of radar-imaging satellites employing synthetic aperture radar (SAR) to image the Earth's surface in near-real-time.)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42648391>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/isro-successfully-launches-its-42nd-pslv/article22427172.ece>;

<https://spaceflight101.com/pslv-c40/iceye-x1/>;

11. This family of widely used insecticides was recently identified to be impairing the growth, swimming ability and reproductive systems of fish. They are known to attack the nervous system in the same way as nerve agents like sarin and also have been blamed for the deaths of several children in India in the past. The insecticide being referred to is

- (a) Organophosphates
- (b) Organochlorides
- (c) Neonicotinoids
- (d) Ryanoids

Solution: a.

We have earlier framed questions on Neonicotinoids. But the statements given in the question here refer to Organophosphates.

Three common and widely used farm pesticides can harm endangered salmon and jeopardize their survival, according to a new report by the U.S. **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)**. The pesticides belonging to the family of organophosphates — chlorpyrifos, malathion, and diazinon—also threaten orcas (the killer whale), because they eat salmon, the

agency said.. The findings are included in a biological opinion that NOAA's fisheries experts wrote for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Neonicotinoids (frequently appearing in the news in recent past): <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/britains-honey-is-contaminated/article22439915.ece>;

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/pesticides-threatened-salmon-whales-study/article22437338.ece>;

From 2013: <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/07/130718-organophosphates-pesticides-indian-food-poisoning/>;

12. Consider the following statements:

1. The metal cobalt has most often been extracted as a by-product of nickel and copper mining activities
2. Most of the world's supply of cobalt comes from Chile
3. Cobalt is a key raw material for the manufacture of electric vehicles

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- The **Democratic Republic of Congo**, supplier of **two-thirds of the world's cobalt**, aims to more than double royalty charges. That's bad news for electric cars: the metal is a key battery ingredient. But the move could backfire in the long-term by accelerating an already frantic search for alternatives.
- Cobalt has been at the heart of the green fever in metals markets over the last year. Like lithium, nickel and even copper, its outlook has been transformed by ambitious forecasts for the growth of electric vehicles. The price of what was once an **ingredient for aerospace superalloys** has gone from under \$35,000 per tonne a year ago to over \$75,000
- **Cobalt is usually not mined alone**, and tends to be produced as a **by-product** of nickel and copper mining activities. (Cobalt naturally occurs in nickel bearing laterites and nickel-copper sulfide deposits and, thus, is most often extracted as a by-product of nickel and copper.)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cobalt>;

<https://www.lenntech.com/periodic/elements/co.htm>; <https://www.thebalance.com/metal-profile-cobalt-2340131>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/cobalt-tax-grab-will-send-carmakers-on-a-diversion/article22436916.ece>;

13. The Dodd-Frank Act passed by the US Congress in 2010 has a section that declares certain minerals as 'conflict minerals'. Which one of the following minerals is NOT one among them?

- (a) Cobalt
- (b) Tungsten Raut
- (c) Tin
- (d) Gold

Solution: a.

This is relevant due to **the increasing demand for cobalt** (which in turn is due to the increasing demand for green technologies). There has been a demand over the past few years for this mineral to be included in the conflict mineral list under the Dodd-Frank act. US is one of the world's major consumers of electronics; naturally, including this mineral on the list will in all likelihood have positive implications (for ethical/sustainable cobalt mining).

On July 21, 2010, President Barack Obama signed the **Dodd-Frank financial-reform bill**, an 848-page behemoth that included a special section on **conflict minerals**. The law called for publicly listed American companies to disclose whether any of their products included minerals from mines controlled by armed groups in or around Congo. Though Dodd-Frank did not explicitly ban corporations from using Congo's conflict minerals, it made big companies worry about being linked with what is arguably the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

The US Congress enacted this section of the Act because of concerns that the exploitation and trade of conflict minerals by armed groups is helping to finance conflict in the Congo region and is contributing to an emergency humanitarian crisis. Under the Act, those minerals include **tantalum, tin, gold or tungsten**.

Improvisation (<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/cobalt-tax-grab-will-send-carmakers-on-a-diversion/article22436916.ece>): "The decision to double cobalt mining royalty charges... also aggravates miners' and investors' anxiety about working in the DRC, one of the world's poorest countries, where questionable practices in smaller mines already create headaches.."

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/10/conflict-minerals/gettleman-text>;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/batteries/congo-cobalt-mining-for-lithium-ion-battery/>;

US SEC: <https://www.sec.gov/opa/Article/2012-2012-163htm—related-materials.html>;

About the Dodd-Frank Act: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/dodd-frank-financial-regulatory-reform-bill.asp>;

14. Which of the following statements is/are correct about 'orphan crops'?

1. They are typically grown in Africa, Asia and South America
2. Maize is an example of an 'orphan crop'

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.

- **Orphan crops** are those that **aren't traded internationally**, and therefore tend to get less attention in terms of research of agricultural training and extension, such as **cassava** and **millets**.
- They're typically grown in **Africa, Asia**, and/or **South America** and eaten as part of **local diets**. They are incredibly important where they're grown – they **provide income** for the poorest farmers and **serve as staples in the local diet**.
- They are **the forgotten crops**. When we talk about food production and food security, we usually think about just a handful of the main grains: wheat, rice and maize. But there are a great many more neglected and underused crops that are often more nutritious, and which grow better in many places. They could also help fight climate change, because they often need less water and tolerate higher temperatures and droughts.

- Because they get less research attention, the breeding technology for orphan crops is lagging way behind modern technology. Though this has hurt their resilience, especially to pests and disease, they are uniquely adapted to the environment in which they are grown.

<http://www.mssrf.org/content/call-remember-forgotten-crops-ms-swaminathan>;

<http://www.rtb.cgiar.org/blog/2015/11/05/orphan-crops-what-they-are-why-they-matter-and-whats-being-done/>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/agriculture/take-a-grain-check-theres-more-to-the-indian-diet-than-polished-rice-and-wheat/article22429984.ece>;

15. The 'Cobweb phenomenon' can occur in the case of which among the following crops?

1. Tomatoes
2. Tur dal
3. Red Chillies
4. Potatoes

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

The same question was posted here earlier.

The cobweb phenomenon: After the prices of a particular agricultural commodity shoots through the roof during a season of scarcity, farmers resort to boosting the production of this commodity on the premise of the pre-existing demand and prices, leading to a problem of plenty and the resultant price crash. This can happen in the case of any crop.

From 2017: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/glut-ruins-farmers-trapped-in-cobweb-phenomenon/article18404845.ece>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/problem-of-plenty-on-devising-a-sound-agricultural-policy/article22444683.ece>;

16. With reference to Agni-V Missile, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a supersonic cruise missile
2. It has a range that can cover most parts of Asia
3. It has been successfully flight-tested in its deliverable configuration which enables launch with a very short preparation time

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- India recently successfully conducted the “first pre-induction trial” of its over 5,000-km range Agni-V intercontinental ballistic missile, which brings the whole of Asia and China as well parts of Europe and Africa within its nuclear strike envelope.
- The over 50-tonne Agni-V is designed to carry a 5-tonne nuclear warhead.
- This was the fifth test of the missile and the third consecutive one from a canister (deliverable configuration) on a road mobile launcher. All the five missions have been successful.
- The canister-launch version makes it deadlier because it gives the armed forces the requisite operational flexibility to swiftly transport and fire the missile from anywhere they want. “Since the missile is already mated with its nuclear warhead before being sealed in the canister, it drastically cuts down the response or reaction time for a retaliatory strike...only the authorized electronic codes have to be fed to unlock and prime it for launch,” said a source.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-test-fires-nuclear-capable-icbm-agni-v/articleshow/62550347.cms>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/agni-v-extends-its-reach/article22467760.ece>;

17. The ‘Mahia Peninsula’ opens out to the

- Pacific Ocean
- Indian Ocean
- Atlantic Ocean
- Mediterranean Sea

Solution: a.

The **world’s first** ‘*private orbital launch site*’ is located on this peninsula in **New Zealand**. It is owned by the Los Angeles-based commercial spaceflight company Rocket Lab. The company recently launched its electron vehicle successfully for the first time.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42780872>;

From 2016: <https://www.space.com/34195-rocket-lab-opens-private-launch-site-new-zealand.html>;



18. The ‘Humanity Star’, recently in the news, is

- An international campaign that urges people to give their trash/waste new life (reduce, reuse and recycle)
- An object that was launched purely for its reflective properties (to make the object visible to the naked eye)
- An India-based international NGO that utilises hundred per cent of public donations for funding clean water accessibility projects
- A NASA mission which is the largest airborne survey of Earth’s polar ice

Solution: b.

- A highly reflective sphere has been placed in orbit by the America-based start-up Rocket Lab, whose Electron boosters operate from Mahia Peninsula in North Island, New Zealand (this is not the first time an object has

been launched purely for its reflective properties). Akin to a giant “disco ball”, the object should be visible to the naked eye as it sweeps across a twilight sky.

- The company said its “Humanity Star” was an attempt to create a shared experience for everyone on Planet Earth. “No matter where you are in the world, or what is happening in your life, everyone will be able to see the Humanity Star in the night sky,” said Rocket Lab CEO Peter Beck in a statement. “My hope is that all those looking up at it will look past it to the vast expanse of the Universe and think a little differently about their lives, actions and what is important for humanity.”

[http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42808180;](http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42808180)

V. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

1. The USA has **not** designated which among the following countries as one of its Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA)?
- (a) Australia
 - (b) Afghanistan
 - (c) India
 - (d) Pakistan

Solution: c.

- Major non-NATO ally (**MNNA**) is a designation given by the United States government to close allies who have strategic working relationships with US armed forces but are not members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. While the MNNA status does not automatically include a mutual defense pact with the United States, it does confer a variety of military and financial advantages that otherwise are not obtainable by non-NATO countries.
- The MNNA status provides a range of privileges, such as eligibility to participate in cooperative research and development programmes, expanded bilateral training opportunities and eligibility for priority delivery of defence articles.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_non-NATO_ally;

<https://www.gktoday.in/major-non-nato-ally-status-to-afghanistan/>;

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/22/120.32>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/money-talks/article22360932.ece>;

2. Which among the following is **not** an official language of the United Nations?
- (a) Arabic
 - (b) Spanish
 - (c) German
 - (d) Russian

Solution: c.

There are **six official languages** of the UN. These are **Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish**. The correct interpretation and translation of these six languages, in both spoken and written form, is very important to the work of the Organization, because this enables clear and concise communication on issues of global importance.

- A delegate may speak in any official UN language. The speech is interpreted simultaneously into the other official languages of the UN.
- At times, a delegate may choose to make a statement using a non-official language. In such cases, the delegation must provide either an interpretation or a written text of the statement in one of the official languages.
- Most UN documents are issued in all six official languages, requiring translation from the original document.

Additional Information:

- Minister Sushma Swaraj said the process required a two-thirds majority vote, and that other countries using Hindi should share the expenditure incurred in making the language an official one.

- Though there are six official languages in the U.N., only two — English and French — were working languages.

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/official-languages/>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/what-is-the-purpose-of-hindi-as-an-official-language-in-un-asks-tharoor/article22357862.ece>;

3. Which one of the following countries is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)?

- (a) Liberia
- (b) Uganda
- (c) Angola
- (d) Botswana

Solution: a.

A map-based question. The only African country from the list which is “West African” is Liberia. Angola is a member of the **Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC)**.



Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-liberian-example/article22399212.ece>;

4. The 'AC-21' law passed by the US Congress governs
- Grant of security assistance to friendly nations for the purpose of military training and counter-terror operations
 - Corporate taxation, of which the latest amendments are expected to hurt the prospects of the "Make in India" programme
 - The extension of H-1B visas beyond the six-year limit
 - Defense agreements such as LEMOA that are in force between India and the USA

Solution: c.

A spokesperson of the **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** under the Department of Homeland Security that administers the non-immigrant, temporary worker visa programme said in a statement: "....USCIS is not considering a regulatory change that would force H-1B visa holders to leave the United States by changing our interpretation of section 104(c) of AC-21, which provides for H-1B extensions beyond the 6 year limit." AC-21 or the American Competitiveness in the Twenty First Century Act is the law passed by the U.S Congress in 2000, which also governs the extension of H-1B visas.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/relief-for-indian-techies-as-us-says-no-change-in-h-1b-extension-policy/article22403055.ece>;

5. Which one of the following statements is correct about the reference made to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the India-Israel joint statement from the first visit to Israel by an Indian Prime Minister (2017)?
- It referred to the two-state solution
 - It mentioned the status of Jerusalem
 - It called for an early resumption of the Israel-Palestine peace process
 - It underlined the need for the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Israel-Palestine region

Solution: d.

Narendra Modi's visit to Israel last year, the first by an Indian Prime Minister, stood out for his decision not to visit the Palestinian territories... The decision, India had said, came from a determination to "de-hyphenate" relations with Israel and Palestine. This was underlined in the India-Israel joint statement, which didn't refer to the two-state solution, didn't mention the status of Jerusalem, and didn't even call for an early resumption of the Israel-Palestine peace process.

From the joint statement

<http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28593/IndiaIsrael+Joint+Statement+during+the+visit+of+Prime+Minister+to+Israel+July+5+2017>):

"The two Prime Ministers discussed the developments pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. They underlined the need for the establishment of a just and durable peace in the region. They reaffirmed their support for an early negotiated solution between the sides based on mutual recognition and security arrangements."

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-road-still-runs-through-ramallah/article22422860.ece>;

6. The #FreePeriods campaign was first launched to end 'period poverty' in
- United Kingdom
 - Nepal
 - UAE
 - India

Solution: a.

A mains-oriented/GK question.

“On a cold London morning last year, 17-year-old Amika George was at the breakfast table when a news story caught her attention. It was about young girls, some just 10 years old, in the northern English city of Leeds missing a week of school every month because their families couldn’t afford to buy them sanitary napkins.. A Leeds school had, in fact, sought help from a charity that provided hygiene products to women in Kenya, the report went on to say.”

“Shocked, Amika knew she had to do something. She launched the #FreePeriods campaign, and prepared a petition that quickly garnered support, with over 1,33,000 signatories. Last month, a thousand protesters, including politicians, activists and models, gathered outside Downing Street to ask for the government’s help to end ‘period poverty’ in the U.K. — by providing free sanitary napkins to the poorest students.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/society/kerala-girl-at-centre-of-period-poverty-campaign-in-london/article22435221.ece>;

7. Consider the following statements:

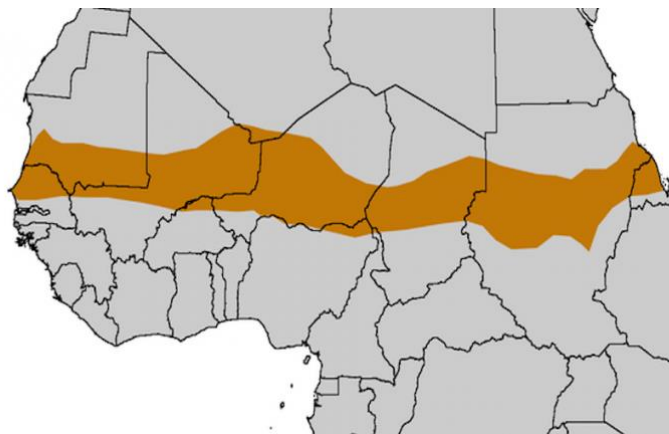
1. A series of uprisings of people in the recent past referred to as ‘Arab Spring’ originally started from Tunisia
2. Tunisia lies in the Sahel region of Africa

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 Arab Spring is a misnomer used by the media to describe the uprising that the self-immolation of Mohammad Bouazizi unleashed in **Tunisia** on December 18, 2010 in protest against police corruption and ill-treatment — a spark that ignited into wildfire and spread to Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen and to other countries. (The uprising in Tunisia is specifically referred to as the Jasmine Revolution.) Sahel is a semiarid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to The Sudan. It forms a transitional zone between the arid Sahara (desert) to the north and the belt of humid savannas to the south.



Q1 CS(P) 2014: <http://mrunal.org/2014/08/answerkey-csat-2014-international-relation-defense.html>;
<http://www.britannica.com/place/Sahel>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/after-the-spring-the-seventh-anniversary-of-the-jasmine-revolution/article22444684.ece>;

8. Consider the following statements:

1. Turkey is presently a member of NATO but not of the European Union
2. Syria shares its borders with Turkey and Saudi Arabia

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.

Syria is bounded by Turkey to the north, by Iraq to the east and southeast, by Jordan to the south, and by Lebanon and Israel to the southwest.



<https://www.britannica.com/place/Syria>;

6th January, 2018: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/erdogan-turkey-tired-eu-membership-process-180105213814481.html>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/long-game-in-syria/article22458054.ece>;

9. The Drake Passage is a deep waterway connecting two oceans between

- (a) Cape Horn and the South Shetlands
- (b) Cape York Peninsula and East Timor
- (c) Cape Town and Cape Agulhas
- (d) Greenland and Marion Island

Solution: a.

Drake Passage is a deep waterway 1,000 km wide, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans between Cape Horn (the southernmost point of South America) and the South Shetland Islands, situated about 100 miles (160 km) north of the Antarctic Peninsula. The Drake Passage defines the zone of climatic transition separating the cool, humid, subpolar conditions of Tierra del Fuego (an archipelago at the southern extremity of South America) and the frigid, polar regions of Antarctica.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Drake-Passage;>

Improvisation:

The Hindu;

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/insv-tarini-crosses-designated-point-all-woman-crew-hoists-tricolour/articleshow/62565356.cms>);

“Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini crossed **Cape Horn**, its designated point, early on Friday morning, following which its all-woman crew hoisted the tricolour to mark their accomplishment.”



10. Consider the following statements:

1. Becoming a member of any three multilateral export control regimes (MECR) guarantees a time-bound entry into the fourth
2. India is a member of three multilateral export control regimes

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.

India is a member of three out of four Multilateral Export Control Regimes – The Australia Group most recently, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Statement 1 is incorrect.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-admitted-to-australia-group/article22475433.ece>;

The four Multilateral Export Control Regimes: <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/policy-guidance/multilateral-export-control-regimes>;

11. Which among the following Multilateral Export Control Regimes is Pakistan a member of ?

- (a) Australia Group
- (b) Wassenaar Arrangement
- (c) Missile Technology Control Regime
- (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

<http://www.wassenaar.org/participating-states/#HU>;

<http://mtcr.info/partners/>;

<http://www.australiagroup.net/en/participants.html>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-admitted-to-australia-group/article22475433.ece>;

12. With reference to the second “High Level Global Conference on Road Safety” hosted by the Government of Brazil in 2015, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The ‘Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2016-2025’ was adopted at this conference
2. This conference was supported by the World Health Organisation
3. To halve road traffic deaths and injuries by 2020 is a target common to the Brasilia Declaration and Sustainable Development Goal 3

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

Solution: b.

- Hosted by the Government of Brazil in 2015 in Brasilia, and co-sponsored by WHO, the 2nd Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety represented a historic opportunity to chart progress at the mid-point of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.
- At the close of the Conference, the delegates adopted the “**Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety**” through which they agreed ways to halve road traffic deaths by the end of this decade – a key milestone within the new **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.6**.

Additional Information about the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety:

- It is a call to rethink transport policies in order to favour more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and using public transport.
- It highlights strategies to ensure the safety of all road users, particularly by improving laws and enforcement; making roads safer through infrastructural modifications; ensuring that vehicles are equipped with life-saving technologies; and enhancing emergency trauma care systems.
- It encourages WHO and partners to facilitate the development of targets to reduce road traffic crashes and fatalities, and support the definition and use of indicators linked to the SDG targets related to road safety.

http://who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_traffic/Brasilia_Declaration/en/

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/making-our-roads-safe/article22500313.ece>;

13. India’s Act-East Policy emphasizes the 3C’s as the focus areas of action for a greater ASEAN-India integration. The “3C’s” does **not** include

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| (a) Culture | (b) Commerce |
| (c) Collaboration | (d) Connectivity |

Solution: c.

The Act-East Policy emphasizes Connectivity, Commerce and Culture as the focus areas of action for a greater ASEAN-India integration.

[http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/ASEAN India August 2017.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/ASEAN%20India%20August%202017.pdf);

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/more-connectivity-needs-less-nationalism-and-populism-asean-coordinator/article22491820.ece>; <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-asean-cultural-ties-a-living-link-sushma-swaraj/article22500069.ece>

14. Which among the following countries is an ASEAN member state?

- (a) Papua New Guinea
- (b) Taiwan
- (c) South Korea
- (d) Myanmar

Solution: d.

ASEAN member states include

- Myanmar,
- Malaysia,
- Singapore,
- Brunei
- Darussalam,
- Indonesia,
- Vietnam,
- Cambodia,
- Laos,
- Thailand and
- Philippines.

Source/Improvisation:

India-ASEAN developments frequently appearing in the news (25th anniversary of dialogue relations)



15. Which among the following regional organisations is regarded as a bridge between South Asia and South East Asia?

- (a) Association for South East Asian Association (ASEAN)
- (b) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- (c) Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)
- (d) Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

Solution: a.

The same question has earlier been posted here.

In the news (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-arc-to-southeast-asia/article22515403.ece>:

“Though the Modi government’s ‘Act East’ policy is aimed at enhancing India’s strategic profile in East and Southeast Asia, New Delhi’s main focus remains on South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. There has been a shift in emphasis, of course, with India moving away from SAARC to BIMSTEC..”

- South Asia as a geographical region comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Myanmar too is included sometimes.
- The sub-regional organization BIMSTEC (<http://bimstec.org/overview/>) came into being in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It constitutes seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand. The regional group constitutes a bridge between South and South East Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.
- BIMSTEC has also established a platform for intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.
- BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization (it presently has 9-focus sectors).

16. Which among the following Central Asian Republics share their borders with Afghanistan?

1. Tajikistan
2. Turkmenistan
3. Uzbekistan
4. Iran

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

- Iran is not a Central Asian Republic.
- Central Asia constitutes five republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Improvisation:

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/afghanistan-on-a-slow-fuse/article22515400.ece>;



17. Consider the following pairs:

	Region often in news	Country
1.	Afrin	: Syria
2.	Idlib	: Turkey
3.	Raqqqa	: Iraq

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Solution: a.

All regions refer to cities in Syria.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/more-fire/article22515398.ece;>

18. The 'Marawi Siege' refers to the battle waged by

- (a) Nigerian armed forces against Boko Haram in the neighbourhood of Nairobi
- (b) Philippines' military forces against Islamic State terrorists in the southern Philippines island of Mindanao
- (c) Free Syrian Army against the YPG forces in northwestern Syria
- (d) Saudi Arabian-led military forces against the Houthi-led rebels in western Yemen

Solution: b.

"President Duterte conveyed his deepest appreciation for the \$500,000 assistance that was provided by India to resettle victims of the Marawi siege," said Preeti Saran, Secretary in Charge of Eastern Affairs, highlighting the support that Philippines received from India to counter the Islamic State (IS) terrorists who had taken over the city of Marawi in Philippines where a battle was waged by the Philippines' military forces.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/delhi-declaration-calls-for-joint-fight-against-terror/article22524961.ece;>

19. Members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership presently do **not** include

- 1. India
- 2. United States of America
- 3. Brunei

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: b.

- The members of the CPTPP include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and Japan.
- The accord will cover about 14% of global gross domestic product (considerably less than the 40% it would have covered had the U.S. stayed on board) and involve the livelihoods of about 500 million people.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/from-tokyo-with-love-for-global-trade/article22539384.ece>;

20. Which among the following provinces of China opens out to the seas of the Pacific Ocean?
- Xinjiang
 - Xizang
 - Qinghai
 - Liaoning

Solution: d.

Tibet is known as 'Xizang'. These provinces of China have been in the news in recent times (Xinjiang and Tibet are frequently in the news; Liaoning was in the news last week and Qinghai in today's newspaper).

Additional Information (See map): Two provinces of China share their borders with India – Xinjiang and Xizang.



PROVINCES:
 AH Anhui, FJ Fujian, GD Guangdong, GS Gansu, GZ Guizhou, HA Henan, HB Hubei, HE Hebei, HI Hainan, HL Heilongjiang, HN Hunan, JX Jiangxi, JS Jiangsu, JL Jilin, LN Liaoning, QH Qinghai, SC Sichuan, SD Shandong, SN Shaanxi, SX Shanxi, YN Yunnan, ZJ Zhejiang, GX Guangxi Zhuang, NM Nei Mongol, NX Ningxia Hui, XJ Xinjiang Uygur, XZ Xizang (Tibet).
AUTONOMOUS REGIONS:
 SC Sichuan, SD Shandong, SN Shaanxi, SX Shanxi, YN Yunnan, ZJ Zhejiang, GX Guangxi Zhuang, NM Nei Mongol, NX Ningxia Hui, XJ Xinjiang Uygur, XZ Xizang (Tibet).
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MUNICIPALITIES:
 Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin.
SPECIAL AUTONOMOUS REGIONS:
 Hong Kong, Macau.

http://www.china-mike.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/chinese_provinces_map1.jpg;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/the-fortune-hunters-of-qinghai/article22334344.ece>;

21. Consider the following statements:

1. India has a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with the country that has the world's largest Lithium reserves
2. India has a PTA with Australia

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.

- Electric car batteries need **lithium**, which is plentiful in Qinghai. In fact, **China** holds the second-largest reserves of the mineral, with **Chile** standing on the top of the tree.
- Lithium today is primarily used in pharmaceuticals, ceramics and glass, metallurgy and lubrication industry, though in much smaller quantities than what is required for manufacturing lithium-ion batteries. The resource endowment is limited to only nine countries and 95% of global lithium production comes from **Argentina, Australia, Chile** and **China**.
- India has long-term trade relations with lithium-producing countries in Latin America through preferential trade agreements (PTAs). A recent extension of the PTA with **Chile** provides India some tariff concessions for **lithium carbonate imports**. India needs to further diversify the supply risk by including lithium in existing PTAs or establishing new PTAs with other lithium-producing countries.
- **India and Australia** are currently discussing a **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement**, and no PTA is in force between them.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/getting-charged-up/article19519844.ece>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/india-australia-to-soon-hold-talks-on-fta/article17915106.ece>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/the-fortune-hunters-of-qinghai/article22334344.ece>;

VI. POLITY

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Preamble lists establishment of a secular state as an objective of the constitution
2. Though the words 'secular state' were not explicitly mentioned in the original constitution, Articles 25 to 28 leave no doubt that the Constitution-makers wanted to establish such a state

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.

- Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are the objectives of the constitution, as specified in the Preamble.
- **Nature of Indian state:** The Preamble declares India to be of a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic and republican polity.
- The term '**secular**' was added by the **42nd** Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976. However, as the Supreme Court said in 1974, although the words 'secular state' were not expressly mentioned in the Constitution, there can be no doubt that Constitution-makers wanted to establish such a state and accordingly **Articles 25 to 28** (guaranteeing the fundamental right to freedom of religion) have been included in the constitution. The Indian Constitution embodies the positive concept of secularism ie, all religions in our country (irrespective of their strength) have the same status and support from the state.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-secular-condition/article22347527.ece>;

2. With reference to provisions of the National Medical Commission Bill, consider the following statements:

1. The National Medical Commission (NMC), the proposed successor of the Medical Council of India, will be overseen by an independent Medical Advisory Council (MAC)
2. No member will be common to both, the MAC and the NMC

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.

One of the bill's goals is to rein in corruption in the MCI through greater distribution of powers. This is sought to be accomplished through an independent Medical Advisory Council to oversee the National Medical Commission, the proposed successor of the MCI. But all members of the NMC are members of the Council, undermining the latter's independence.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/questionable-remedy/article22354009.ece>;

3. Consider the following pairs:

<i>Device of Proceedings in Rajya Sabha</i>	<i>Feature</i>
1. Special Mention	: A matter which cannot be raised during question hour
2. Question Hour	: Members ask questions to ministers and/or private members
3. Zero Hour	: Members can raise matters without any prior notice

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

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

Solution: d.

All three pairs are correctly matched.

- In addition to the ministers, the questions can also be asked to the private members. Thus, a question may be addressed to a private member if the subject matter of the question relates to some Bill, resolution or other matter connected with the business of the House for which that member is responsible.
- Unlike the question hour, the zero hour is not mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Thus it is an informal device available to the members of the Parliament to raise matters without any prior notice. The zero hour starts immediately after the question hour and lasts until the agenda for the day (regular business of the House) is taken up.
- Special Mention is a matter which is not a point of order or which cannot be raised during question hour, half-an hour discussion, short duration discussion or under adjournment motion, calling attention notice or under any rule of the House can be raised under the special mention in the Rajya Sabha.

Chapter 'Parliament', Indian Polity 5th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rajya-sabha-creates-record-completes-entire-zero-hour-agenda/article22351848.ece>;

4. The Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993 provides for

- 1. The creation of not only the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) but also a State HRC at the state level
- 2. The establishment of exclusive Human Rights Courts in every district

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.

- The Protection of Human Rights Act (1993) provides for the establishment of Human Rights Court in every district for the speedy trial of violation of human rights.

- These courts can be set up by the state government only with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court of that state.
- For every Human Rights Court, the state government specifies a public prosecutor or appoints an advocate (who has practiced for seven years) as a special public prosecutor.

State Human Rights Commission, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-no-exclusive-human-rights-courts-yet-supreme-court-asks-states/article22367101.ece>;

5. 'Local Complaints Committee' under the Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act, 2013 will address complaints where

1. The complaint is against the employer himself
2. The complainant belongs to a workplace that employs less than ten people

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.

Some provisions of the original bill

(<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Sexual%20Harassment/Bill%20Summary.%20Sexual%20Harassment.pdf>):

- A 'Local Complaints Committee' is required to be constituted in every district.
- An additional 'Local Complaints Committee' shall also be constituted at the block/ ward level to address complaints (i) where the complainant does not have recourse to an Internal Complaints Committee (applicable in cases where the workplace employees less than 10 people); (ii) where the complaint is against the employer himself.
- Members to each LCC shall be nominated by the District Officer.

However, following Parliamentary deliberations, the following amendment to the above provisions (related to the LCC) were made before the bill was passed by the Parliament

(<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Sexual%20Harassment/Comparison%20of%20Bill,%20Act%20and%20Standing%20Committee%20Recommendations.pdf>):

- The District Officer shall constitute a LCC at the district level to receive complaints from workplaces which do not have ICC (less than 10 workers) or if the complaint is against the employer.
- The District Officer shall designate one nodal officer in every block, taluka and tehsil to receive complaints and forward it to the concerned LCC within seven days (no provision now for the constitution of exclusive block/ward level LCCs.)

Improvisation and in the news (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/notice-to-govt-on-law-for-working-women/article22369086.ece>): The Supreme Court asked the government to respond on a petition questioning the lack of implementation of the various provisions of the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2013**... The 2013 statutory law had replaced the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in the historic **Vishaka case judgment**. The petition by the NGO Initiatives for Inclusion Foundation pointed out that governments at the State level had not even bothered to appoint district officers or local committees under the Act.

6. The outcomes in cases such as *Suresh Kumar Koushal* and *K.S. Puttaswamy* among others have a bearing on citizens'
- Right to die with dignity
 - Right to early childhood care and education
 - Right to information
 - Right to sexual privacy

Solution: d.

The **right to privacy** is valued and cherished for it involves the most intimate decisions and choices. The individual is absolutely autonomous in her territory. She is free to err, resolve and experiment. She is informed and independent to make her own decisions. Privacy is freedom giving as well as empowering in this sense. The right to engage in sexual intercourse is an intrinsic part of the right to privacy. Privacy has to invariably contain the right to bodily integrity, self-determination and sexual autonomy.

- In *S. Puttaswamy* (2017) ... Justice J. Chelameswar in clear terms held, "I do not think that anybody would like to be told by the state as to what they should eat or how they should dress or whom they should be associated with either in their personal, social or political life." Likewise, it seems to follow that individuals must be free from the interference of the state in matters of their sexual choices, or even in choosing their sexual partner.
- The judgment in *Suresh Kumar Koushal* (2013) upholding the criminalisation of voluntary sexual intercourse between those of the same sex remains a serious blow to the right to sexual freedom.

[http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/this-too-is-a-right/article22378799.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/this-too-is-a-right/article22378799.ece)

7. Which among the following is an/are issues that Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code – recently in the news – has brought to the fore?
- The provision discriminates against women
 - It discriminates against men
 - It is violative of the right to sexual privacy

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Joseph Shine v. Union of India, the petition challenging the constitutional validity of the criminal prohibition on adultery under Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, has now been referred to the Constitution Bench by the Supreme Court.

The petition was admitted by the court with the preliminary observation that the provision attacks the independent identity of the woman and is archaic in its nature. As widely argued, on the intuitive grounds of both directly discriminating against men and indirectly discriminating against women, there are overwhelming reasons why the apex court should strike down this provision.

However, there is much less discussion on another significant aspect of adultery law: the right to sexual privacy... The problem is with the fact that adultery is made a penal offence. Adultery covers sexual intercourse between consenting adults. What is under challenge is a punitive provision that existed since 1860, which crystallised

Victorian notions of sexuality. To prescribe a criminal penalty for a voluntary sexual activity is strikingly disproportionate.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/this-too-is-a-right/article22378799.ece>

8. Consider the following statements:

Assertion (A): No Departmental Standing Committee (DSC) works under the Rajya Sabha

Reasons (R): The main objective of a DSC is to secure particularly more financial accountability of the Executive to the Parliament

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) A is correct and R is the correct explanation for A
- (b) A is correct but R is the NOT the correct explanation for A
- (c) A is incorrect, R is correct
- (d) A and R both are incorrect

Solution: c.

On the recommendation of the Rules Committee of the Lok Sabha, 17 Departmentally-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) were set up in the Parliament in 1993. In 2004, seven more such committees were setup, thus increasing their number from 17 to 24.

The main objective of the standing committees 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 members of the Lok Sabha are nominated by the Speaker from amongst its own members, just as the members of the Rajya Sabha are nominated by the Chairman from amongst its members. 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://www.thehindu.com/news/national/concern-over-lack-of-teachers/article22392226.ece>;

9. Consider the following statements:

1. Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are spread over every Indian state
2. PVTGs are regarded as being more vulnerable among the tribal groups
3. The Forest Rights Act is not applicable to PVTGs

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

- PVTGs are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a major chunk of the tribal development funds, because of which PVTGs need more funds directed for their development.
- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). PVTGs have some basic characteristics -they are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, social institutes cast in a simple mould, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change etc.
- PVTGs are spread over 17 states and one Union Territory (A&N Islands).
- **THE Forest Rights Act (FRA)** is also known as the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. Section 3(1)(e) of the Act provides for rights including community tenures of habitat and habitation for primitive tribal groups (also known as PVTGs) and pre- agricultural communities. Orissa has the distinction of having the largest number of PTGs (13 out of 75 identified across the country).

<http://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/scheduled-tribes-welfare/primitive-vulnerable-tribal-groups;>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mankidia-denied-habitat-in-simlipal/article22392195.ece;>

No need to refer, we are just providing the source:

http://www.fra.org.in/document/FRA%20AND%20PTG_%20Final.pdf;

10. Key issues that have been raised with reference to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 include

1. A civil wrong being treated as a criminal act
2. The utilisation of Waqf funds for payment of subsistence allowance to the estranged wife
3. The potential for misuse of the law against Muslim men due to the non-cognizable nature being assigned to the offence of pronouncing triple talaq

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

The Opposition has raised three concerns:

- whether a civil wrong, mainly a breach of a marriage contract in an arbitrary manner, ought to be treated as a crime;
- whether it is not a contradiction of sorts for the law to jail a husband for pronouncing instant talaq and also mandate that he pay a subsistence allowance to the wife; and
- whether making it a cognizable (one for which a police officer may arrest an accused person without warrant) and non-bailable offence would lead to it being misused against Muslim men.
- Further, some see an internal contradiction in the way the law is sought to be framed. On the one hand it says instant triple talaq in any form is void, thereby declaring that the marriage continues to subsist; but it also talks of issues such as the custody of children and maintenance, which would arise only after a divorce.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/re-examine-the-bill/article22392015.ece;>

11. Consider the following statements:

1. A 'whip' of a political party's parliamentary body makes sure that the party's members in Parliament turn out for important votes
2. The first All India Whips Conference was organised following the introduction of the Anti-Defection Law

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 whip is an important member of a political party's parliamentary body, having a central role in 'Floor Management' in both the Houses of Parliament and is responsible for discipline within the party.
- Their main job is ensuring that their members in Parliament and legislature vote in line with the party's official policy on important issues and make sure that the members turn out for important votes.
- Such an importance of Whips in the Parliamentary system had been acknowledged by organizing the First All India Whips Conference at Indore in 1952, in the very first year of general elections to the First Lok Sabha.

[http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175448;](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175448)

12. "Neither the Supreme Court (SC) nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which is referred to a tribunal set up under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act." Under which article of the Constitution then is the Cauvery water dispute being heard by the SC?

- (a) Article 142
- (b) Article 137
- (c) Article 136
- (d) Article 132

Solution: c.

From 2007: "Over the years, several inter-State river water disputes have come up before the Supreme Court with reference to a variety of issues such as the competence of the Tribunal to deal with a request for an interim allocation (Cauvery); the non-implementation of an Order of the Tribunal (Cauvery); failures on the environmental and rehabilitation fronts (Narmada); the constitutionality of an Act of a State Legislature terminating all past water accords (Punjab); etc. In each of these cases, what went before the Supreme Court was not the water-sharing issue, which had been adjudicated or was under adjudication by a Tribunal, but some other related legal or constitutional issue. For the first time in the history of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act 1956 as amended in 2002 (ISWD Act), the SLPs (Special leave to appeal by the SC, Article 136) in the Cauvery case have brought the Tribunal-adjudicated water-sharing issue itself before the Supreme Court."

[http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/The-Supreme-Court-amp-river-water-disputes/article14772734.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/The-Supreme-Court-amp-river-water-disputes/article14772734.ece)

Improvisation: [http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cauvery-verdict-in-four-weeks-supreme-court/article22405369.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cauvery-verdict-in-four-weeks-supreme-court/article22405369.ece)

13. Which among the following statements with reference to the Flag Code of India is **incorrect**?

- (a) No national flag of India that may be waved by the public shall be made of either plastic or paper
- (b) When the flag is damaged, it shall be destroyed as a whole in private, preferably by burning
- (c) When used on occasions like unveiling of a statue, the flag shall be displayed distinctly and separately and it shall not be used as a covering for the statue
- (d) a, b and c are all correct

Solution: a.

The flag made of paper may be waved by public on occasions of important national, cultural and sports events. However, such paper flags should not be discarded or thrown on the ground after the event. As far as possible, they should be disposed of in private, consistent with the dignity of the flag.

When the flag is in a damaged or soiled condition, it shall be destroyed as a whole in private, preferably by burning or by any other method consistent with the dignity of the flag.

Flag Code of India, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

IN BRIEF



Bar on national flags made of plastic

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday urged the public not to use national flag made of plastic, and asked the States and the Union Territories to ensure compliance with the Flag Code of India. The Home Ministry said plastic flags did not decompose fast and ensuring their disposal in keeping with the dignity of the flag was difficult. PTI

14. The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 is an act to prevent insults to which among the following national symbols?

- 1. National anthem
- 2. National emblem
- 3. Constitution of India
- 4. National flag

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

From Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth: The Verma Committee on Fundamental Duties of the Citizens (1999) identified the existence of legal provisions for the implementation of some of the Fundamental Duties. They include among others the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act (1971)** prevents disrespect to the Constitution of India, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

Additional Information: Apart from non-statutory instructions issued by the Government from time to time, the display of the national flag is governed by the provisions of the **Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950** and the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**. The **Flag Code of**

India, 2002, is an attempt to bring together all such laws, conventions, practices and instructions (that are related to the National Flag) for the guidance and benefit of all concerned.

The Act:

http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/pdf/Prevention_Insults_National_Honour_Act1971.pdf;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/not-by-diktat-alone/article22413876.ece>;

15. Which among the following subjects do both, the 42nd and 156th report of the Law Commission of India, deal with specifically?

- (a) Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)
- (b) Section 498A of the IPC
- (c) The Code of Criminal Procedure in its entirety
- (d) The IPC in its entirety

Solution: d.

- The **42nd report of the Law Commission (1971)**, with some hesitation, recommended retention of adultery provision as in its view, the time was not yet ripe to repeal it but it did recommend making the law gender neutral and reduction of punishment of imprisonment from five years to two years. In its 156th report, the Law Commission (1997) favoured the legislative initiative in reforming adultery law but, surprisingly, the commission preferred retention of five years imprisonment.
- The **Justice Malimath Committee (2003)** too strongly favoured preservation of matrimonial sanctity and thus justified retention of a gender neutral adultery law. In 2006, the National Commission for Women recommended that adultery be decriminalised.

<http://www.lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/main.htm#a7>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/not-a-criminal-act/article22413886.ece>;

16. In contrast with the Medical Council of India, the proposed National Medical Council will

1. Centralise all powers from advising universities on curriculum to disciplining errant doctors
2. Include among its members non-doctors like patient-rights advocates and ethicists

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.

- In contrast with the MCI, which does everything from advising universities on curriculum to disciplining errant doctors, the NMC distributes powers among four autonomous boards — those for undergraduate education, postgraduate education, medical assessment and rating, and ethics and registration. Also, unlike the MCI, the commission includes non-doctors like patient-rights advocates and ethicists, in line with the medical regulators of the U.K., Australia and Canada.
- Where the NMC bill trips up is in how it chooses the members of the new regulator. The NMC Bill's solution to the pitfalls of the MCI electoral process is for the central government to select most of the commission's

members... The Bill also misses an opportunity to plan for India's rural health-care needs (especially the issue of shortage of doctors) in the coming decades.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/prescription-for-the-future/article22413556.ece;>

[http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-national-medical-commission-bill-2017-5024/;](http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-national-medical-commission-bill-2017-5024/)

17. With reference to the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill, 2018 consider the following statements:

1. The New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) will include at least one Supreme Court judge as a member
2. Members of NDIAC will be eligible for reappointment
3. NDIAC will promote research and provide training in alternative dispute resolution matters

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- The Bill seeks to provide for the establishment of the NDIAC to conduct arbitration, mediation, and conciliation proceedings.
- The International Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ICADR) is a registered society to promote the resolution of disputes through alternative dispute resolution methods (such as arbitration and mediation). Through this bill, the ICADR will be transferred to the government. The government will then notify the takeover of ICADR by the NDIAC.
- Under the Bill, the NDIAC will consist of seven members including among others, a Chairperson who may be a Judge of the Supreme Court or a High Court, or an eminent person with special knowledge and experience in the conduct or administration of arbitration.
- The key objectives of the NDIAC include among others, promoting research, providing training and organising conferences and seminars in alternative dispute resolution matters.

[http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/ND%20International%20Arbitration/Bill%20Summary%20-%20NDIAC.pdf;](http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/ND%20International%20Arbitration/Bill%20Summary%20-%20NDIAC.pdf)

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/professionalising-arbitration/article22422443.ece;>

18. The definition of the term 'State' under Article 12 of our Constitution can be applied to

- (a) Fundamental rights
- (b) Directive Principles of State Policy
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

- Article 12 is included in Part III of the Constitution
- (Fundamental Rights: [http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/Const.Pock%20Pg.Rom8Fsss\(6\).pdf](http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/Const.Pock%20Pg.Rom8Fsss(6).pdf)).

- 'State' under this article has been defined in a wider sense so as to include all its agencies. It is the actions of these agencies that can be challenged in the courts as violating the Fundamental Rights. According to the Supreme Court, even a private body or an agency working as an instrument of the State falls within the meaning of the 'State' under Article 12.
- According to Article 36, the term 'State' in Part IV has the same meaning as in Part III dealing with Fundamental Rights.

Chapters 'Fundamental Rights' and 'DPSP'; Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/tackling-government-litigation/article22444640.ece>;

19. On which one of the following grounds can the Supreme Court **not** issue the writ 'certiorari' to a High Court either to transfer a case pending with the latter to itself or to squash the order of the latter in a case?

- Excess of jurisdiction
- Lack of jurisdiction
- Overlap of jurisdiction
- Error of law

Solution: c.

In the literal sense, it means 'to be certified' or 'to be informed'. It is issued by a higher court to a lower court or tribunal either to transfer a case pending with the latter to itself or to squash the order of the latter in a case. It is issued on the grounds of excess of jurisdiction or lack of jurisdiction or error of law.

Fundamental Rights, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sc-orders-maharashtra-govt-to-hand-over-documents-related-to-judge-loyas-death-to-petitioners/article22449174.ece>

20. The real purposes of Public Interest Litigations (PIL) are to

- Maintain the rule of law
- Facilitate effective access to to the socially and economically weaker sections of society
- Accelerate the pace of realisation of the fundamental rights

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Statements are self-explanatory.

Public Interest Litigation, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth (5th Edition);

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sc-questions-pil-plea-on-bofors-guns-pay-off-case/article22452511.ece>;

21. Which among the following statements with reference to Aadhaar is **incorrect**?

- (a) The Aadhaar Act 2016 specifically prohibits UIDAI from collecting and maintaining any information about the purpose of authentication either by itself or through any entity
- (b) Aadhaar is an identifier, not a profiling tool
- (c) Non-Resident Indians are eligible to get Aadhaar, but are exempted from linking it with various services
- (d) 'eAadhaar' from UIDAI website is as legally valid as original Aadhaar and hence no agency can refuse to accept it

Solution: c.

- Statements 'a' and 'b' are linked.
- Regarding statement 'c': Aadhaar is only for residents of India. NRIs are not eligible to get Aadhaar; they are exempted from linking Aadhaar with various services.

UIDAI full-page FAQs, The Hindu (17th January, 2018);

22. The Malimath Committee Report of 2003, recently in the news, pertains specifically to

- (a) Prudent fiscal policy and a fiscal discipline framework
- (b) Reforms in the criminal justice system
- (c) Analysis of the Kargil conflict of 1999
- (d) Enhancing the accountability and transparency of the Judiciary

Solution: b.

A 2003 report of a **Committee on reforms in the criminal justice system** that recommended admissibility of confessions made before a police officer as evidence in a court of law is being revisited by the Centre, a senior government official said.. The Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System, or the **Justice Malimath Committee**, was constituted by the Home Ministry in 2000.

[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/government-to-revisit-malimath-report/article22452298.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/government-to-revisit-malimath-report/article22452298.ece)

23. Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution authorises the Prime Minister to seek the opinion of the Supreme Court (SC) on any question of law or fact of public importance which has arisen
2. The SC may tender or may refuse to tender its opinion on both categories of matters relating to which the SC can be consulted under Article 143

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.

Power of President to consult Supreme Court (<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/210155/>):

- If at any time it appears to the President that a question of law or fact has arisen, or is likely to arise, which is of such a nature and of such public importance that it is expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court upon it, he may refer the question to that Court for consideration and the Court may, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report to the President its opinion thereon
- The President may, notwithstanding anything in the proviso to **Article 131**, refer a dispute of the kind mentioned in the said proviso (any dispute arising out of any pre-constitution treaty, agreement, covenant, engagements, and or other similar instruments) to the Supreme Court for opinion and the Supreme Court shall, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report to the President its opinion thereon.

Advisory Jurisdiction of Supreme Court, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/no-extra-year-for-maithripala-sirisena/article22458271.ece>;

24. Consider the following statements about the 'ASER Centre':

1. It's flagship activity is the Annual Status of Education Report
2. It is a part of the People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network, which is spread across Africa, Asia and North America
3. It implements research studies across a variety of domains both in education and in other social sectors such as health

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: d.

- Established in 2008, ASER Centre is Pratham's autonomous research and assessment unit.
- ASER Centre's flagship activity is the Annual Status of Education Report (commonly known as the ASER report), a household-based survey that collects information on children's schooling status and basic learning outcomes in almost every rural district in the country.
- Estimates of children's schooling and learning status are generated at district, state and national levels.
- ASER is the only annual source of data on children's learning outcomes available in India today, and is often credited with changing the focus of discussions on education in India from inputs to outcomes.
- The ASER model has been adapted for use by thirteen other countries across three continents (North America, Africa and Asia). These countries came together organically to form the People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network, with a secretariat housed in Nairobi.
- In addition, ASER Centre implements large- and small-scale research studies addressing a variety of domains both in education and in other social sectors such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation.

<http://www.pratham.org/programmes/aser>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/left-behind-on-the-right-to-free-compulsory-education/article22458272.ece>;

25. Consider the following statements:

1. The phenomenon of “honour killings”, done in the name of tradition and honour, is exclusive to societies belonging to countries of South Asia
2. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 prohibits same gotra (sagotra) 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: d.

- The so-called ‘honour killings’ or ‘honour crimes’ are not peculiar to our country. It is an evil which haunts many other societies also. The belief that the victim has brought dishonour upon the family or the community is the root cause of such violent crimes. Such violent crimes are directed especially against women. Men also become targets of attack by members of family of a woman with whom they are perceived to have an ‘inappropriate relationship’.
- The report of the Special Rapporteur to U.N. of the year 2002 concerning cultural practices in the family that are violent towards women indicated that honour killings had been reported in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, United Arab Republic, Turkey, Yemen and other Persian Gulf countries and that they had also taken place in western countries such as France, Germany and U.K. mostly within migrant communities. According to the UN Commission on Human Rights, there are honour killings in the nations of Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, India, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Sweden, Turkey and Uganda. The practice of honour killing “goes across cultures and across religions”.
- The Hindu Marriage Act (1955) does not prohibit sagotra or inter-caste marriages.

Law Commission of India Report #242: <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report242.pdf>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/protecting-marriages-across-castes/article22467728.ece>;

26. Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution permits the State to make any law which imposes reasonable restrictions on citizens’ right to freedom of speech and expression in the interest of public order
2. The grant of a certificate by the Central Board of Film Certification denudes the State of the power to prevent the exhibition of a film

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.

“...summary bans on films violate the freedom of speech and expression enshrined in **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution. Such a right is subject to reasonable restrictions on some grounds, including public order. However, the use of the threat of violence and other forms of intimidation cannot give the state an oblique reason to stifle fundamental freedoms by voicing apprehensions and invoking its powers to maintain peace. In the past, the

Supreme Court has made it clear that it cannot give anyone a virtual veto over a certificate issued by the Central Board of Film Certification, a statutory body, by threatening violence. The court has reiterated that the grant of a certificate by the CBFC denudes the state of the power to prevent the exhibition of a film."

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/dual-duty-the-decision-to-stay-notification-of-states-prohibiting-padmaavat-release/article22466601.ece;>

[https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1218090/;](https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1218090/)

27. Consider the following pairs:

	Article number	Subject matter
1.	99	: Oath or affirmation by Members of Parliament (MPs)
2.	102	: Decision on questions as to disqualifications of members
3.	105	: Powers and privileges of MPs

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: c.

Knowing Article 102 or 103 will help you eliminate three options.

Article 102 (<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/390434/>) – Disqualifications for membership;

Article 103 (<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/41049/>) – Decision on questions as to disqualifications of members:

- (1) If any question arises as to whether a member of either House of Parliament has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in clause (1) of Article 102, the question shall be referred for the decision of the President and his decision shall be final
- (2) Before giving any decision on any such question, the President shall obtain the opinion of the Election Commission and shall act according to such opinion;

[http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/office-of-profit-what-the-why-5032038/;](http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/office-of-profit-what-the-why-5032038/)

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/profit-and-loss/article22486454.ece;>

28. The salaries of which of the following constitutional functionaries are determined by the Parliament?

- 1. Supreme Court judges
- 2. Election Commissioners
- 3. Attorney General of India
- 4. Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

- The remuneration of the Attorney General is not fixed by the Constitution. He receives such remuneration as the President may determine.
- Regarding CAG's salary (<http://www.cag.gov.in/content/dpc-act-cags-duties-powers-and-conditions-service#chapter2>) : As per the CAG (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971 "there shall be paid to the Comptroller and Auditor-General a salary which is equal to the salary of the Judge of the Supreme Court.."
- By the "Election Commission (Condition Of Service Of Election Commissions And Transaction Of Business) Act, 1991", the salary of the chief election commissioner is the same as salary of a Judge of Supreme Court of India.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

In the news: <http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/high-court-and-the-supreme-court-judges-salaries-and-conditions-of-service-amendment-bill-2017-5012/>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/pay-hike-for-poll-panel-soon/article22459586.ece>;

29. Consider the following statements:

1. The 42nd Amendment Act, 1976 gave effect to the recommendations of Swaran Singh Committee
2. The Swaran Singh Committee recommended that the duty to pay taxes should also be a fundamental duty of the citizens

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 42nd Amendment Act, 1976 is the most comprehensive amendment made so far to the Constitution; it is known as 'Mini-Constitution'; it gave effect to the recommendations of **Swaran Singh Committee**. Certain recommendations of the Committee (with respect to Fundamental Duties) were not accepted by the Congress Party and hence, not incorporated in the Constitution. These include:

- The Parliament may provide for the imposition of such penalty or punishment as may be considered appropriate for any non-compliance with or refusal to observe any of the duties.
- No law imposing such penalty or punishment shall be called in question in any court on the ground of infringement of any of Fundamental Rights or on the ground of repugnancy to any other provision of the Constitution.
- Duty to pay taxes should also be a Fundamental Duty of the citizens.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation (letter to The Hindu): <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/minister-on-evolution/article22492822.ece>;

30. The 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 made provisions to

1. Make elementary education a fundamental right
2. Limit the size of Council of Ministers
3. Strengthen the anti-defection law

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: b.

The 91st Amendment Act, 2003 made provisions to limit the size of Council of Ministers, to debar defectors from holding public offices, and to strengthen the anti-defection law.

Constitutional Amendments at a Glance, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/profit-and-loss/article22486454.ece>): “..Mr. Kejriwal should have been mindful of the growing perception, as evident in several judicial decisions, that the post of parliamentary secretary is a way of getting around the constitutional limit on the size of ministries..”

31. The Supreme Court in *Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab* dealt with which among the following subject matters?

- (a) Power of the presiding officer to decide on any question regarding disqualification arising out of defection
- (b) The principle that the Governor is guided by the aid and advice of Council of Ministers
- (c) Power of the Election Commission to stay the transfer of officials by a State Government before the poll code of conduct comes into force
- (d) Remission of life sentence by a State Government in a case investigated by a central agency

Solution: b.

- The position and power of the Governor vis-à-vis the Council of Ministers has always been an area of dispute in determining the extent of the discretion of the Governor. This question has been dealt extensively in the landmark case of *Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab*.
- “In *Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab*, the Supreme Court quoted the opinion of the first Attorney General of India, M.C. Setalvad, that the principle that the President (or the Governor) is guided by the aid and advice of the Cabinet covered every function ‘whether it relates to addressing the House or returning a Bill for reconsideration, or assenting or withholding assent’..”

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/at-whose-discretion/article22500190.ece>;

32. To facilitate simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies, a constitutional amendment would have to be

1. Introduced in the Rajya Sabha only
2. Cleared by both Houses of Parliament by simple majority followed by ratification of half of the state legislatures

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: d.

Neither statements are correct.

- A constitution amendment bill can be introduced in either House of Parliament (and not in state legislatures).
- Such a bill (to facilitate simultaneous elections) would have to be cleared by both Houses of Parliament by special majority followed by ratification of half of the state legislatures.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ec-pulled-up-for-backing-simultaneous-polls/article22491823.ece>

33. The initiation of the process of impeachment for the removal of a judge of the Supreme Court requires, first,

- (a) The President to refer the matter of apparent misbehaviour or incapacity of the judge to the Speaker/Chairman
- (b) The Constitution by the Speaker/Chairman of a three-member committee headed by a distinguished jurist to investigate into the charges
- (c) The judge to present his views before the House in advance of the matter being investigated
- (d) A removal motion to be signed by 100 members in the case of Lok Sabha or 50 members in the case of Rajya Sabha to be given to the Speaker/Chairman

Solution: d.

“To move an impeachment motion, the CPI(M) will have muster the signatures of at least 50 Rajya Sabha members or 100 Lok Sabha members. In the Lok Sabha, the CPI(M) and the Trinamool with its 33 MPs will have to be on the same side to reach the figure of 100. In the Rajya Sabha, the Congress has 57 members and can easily help the CPI(M) get the motion accepted..”

Supreme Court, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/congress-yet-to-decide-on-proposal-to-impeach-cji/article22524665.ece>;

34. Electoral bonds are interest-free bearer instruments in the nature of promissory notes. Consider the following statements about the electoral bonds scheme:

1. Any citizen of India or a body incorporated in India will be eligible to purchase electoral bonds
2. Any registered political party is legally permissible to accept donations in the form of electoral bonds

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.

Regarding Statement 2: Every party that is registered under section 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and has secured at least one per cent of the votes polled in the most recent Lok Sabha or State election will be allotted a verified account by the Election Commission of India. *Electoral bond transactions can be made only via this account.*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/the-hindu-explains-what-is-an-electoral-bond-and-how-do-we-get-one/article22367124.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-vote-for-state-funding/article22545432.ece>;

35. The concept of office of profit originates from

- (a) Britain
- (b) Germany
- (c) USSR (now Russia)
- (d) France

Solution: a.

The concept of office of profit originates from Britain where, during the conflicts between the Crown and the Parliament in the 16th century, the House of Commons disqualified members from holding executive appointments under the Monarch. The underlying principle behind this is the doctrine of separation of powers. The office of profit rule seeks to ensure that legislators act independently and are not lured by offers from the executive.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-path-to-executive-power/article22579951.ece>;

36. In a parliamentary democracy like India's, holding the government to account is the role of

- (a) The President
- (b) The Supreme Court
- (c) The opposition in the lower house
- (d) The entire lower house

Solution: d.

From the given options, 'd' is most appropriate.

"In India's parliamentary system, contesting elections to the legislature is primarily seen as a path to exercise executive power. It is often ignored that holding the government to account is not only the Opposition's role but also that of the entire legislature."

Collective Responsibility: This is the bedrock principle of parliamentary government. The ministers are collectively responsible to the Parliament in general and to the Lok Sabha in particular (Article 75). They act as a team, and swim and sink together. The principle of collective responsibility implies that the Lok Sabha can remove the ministry (i.e., council of ministers headed by the prime minister) from office by passing a vote of no confidence.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-path-to-executive-power/article22579951.ece>;

37. The application of the roman law doctrine *res extra commercium* could directly impinge upon which among the following fundamental rights?

- (a) Abolition of untouchability and prohibition of its practice
- (b) Equality of opportunity in public employment
- (c) Right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business
- (d) Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions

Solution: c.

- The Indian government is pushing the Supreme Court to apply a rarely used doctrine that would strip the tobacco industry's legal right to trade, an effort aimed at deterring tobacco companies from challenging tough new regulations.
- New Delhi has for the first time asked the top court to classify tobacco as "*res extra commercium*", a Latin phrase meaning "outside commerce". If applied, the doctrine – which harkens back to Roman law – would have far reaching implications: in denying an industry's legal standing to trade, it gives authorities more leeway to impose restrictions.
- For example, the Supreme Court's application of the doctrine to alcohol in the 1970s paved the way for at least two Indian states to ban it completely and allowed courts to take a stricter stance while regulating liquor – something constitutional law experts say could happen with tobacco if a similar ruling was made.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-tobacco-exclusive/exclusive-with-roman-law-doctrine-india-moves-to-stub-out-tobacco-industry-rights-idUSKBN1FI2SQ>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/with-roman-law-precept-india-steps-to-stub-out-tobacco-industry-rights/article22597369.ece>;

38. The President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons in which of the following situations/occasions?

1. Commencement of first session after each general election to the House of the People
2. Commencement of the first session of each year
3. During joint sittings invoked under Article 108

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: b.

- **Article 87(1) of the Constitution provides:**— "At the commencement of the first session after each general election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first session of each year the President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons."
- For a joint sitting to be invoked (under **Article 108**), the President summons both the Houses to meet in a joint sitting for the purpose of deliberating and voting on the bill. The Speaker of Lok Sabha presides over a joint sitting of the two Houses.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikant;

<http://www.parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/intro/p3.htm>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/frequent-polls-a-burden-president/article22581811.ece>;

39. The National Medical Commission Bill, 2017 recently introduced in the Lok Sabha,

1. Seeks to replace the Medical Council of India with a new body
2. Calls for a joint sitting of the National Medical Commission and bodies that regulate the Indian Systems of Medicine at least once a year

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.

Both statements are correct. The bill:

- calls for a joint sitting of the National Medical Commission, the Central Council of Homoeopathy and the Central Council of Indian Medicine at least once a year “to enhance the interface between homoeopathy, Indian Systems of Medicine and modern systems of medicine.”
- has also proposed that specific educational modules or programmes for developing bridges across the various systems of medicine and promotion of medical pluralism, can be done with the approval of all the members present in the joint sitting.

Bodies that regulate the Indian Systems of Medicine:

- The Central Council of Indian Medicine is the statutory body constituted under the Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970. It has been framing and implementing various regulations relating to the Indian Systems of Medicine of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Sowa-Rigpa.
- Under the Homeopathy Central Council Act, 1973, the Central Council of Homeopathy was constituted to regulate the Indian system of medicine of Homeopathy.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-medicine-system-doctors-may-be-allowed-to-practice-allopathy-bill/article22333244.ece>;

VII. HISTORY & ART AND CULTURE

1. The Bhima-Koregaon battle was a part of which among the following wars?

- (a) Third Carnatic War
- (b) Fourth Anglo-Mysore War
- (c) Third Anglo-Maratha War
- (d) World War II

Solution: c.

- The **Koregaon Ranstambh** (victory pillar) is an obelisk in Bhima-Koregaon village commemorating the British East India Company soldiers who fell in a battle on January 1, 1818, where the British, with just 834 infantrymen — about 500 of them from the **Mahar community** — and 12 officers defeated the 28,000-strong army of **Peshwa Bajirao II**. It was one of the **last battles of the Third Anglo-Maratha War**, which ended the Peshwa domination.
- Babasaheb Ambedkar's visit to the site on January 1, 1927, revitalised the memory of the battle for the Dalit community, making it a rallying point and an assertion of pride.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/the-legend-of-the-1818-battle-of-bhima-koregaon/article22352514.ece>;

2. Har Gobind Khorana, an Indian-American who recently was honoured by Google with a doodle, was one among three who were jointly awarded the Nobel prize in Physiology or Medicine 1968

- (a) For their discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells
- (b) For their interpretation of the genetic code and its function in protein synthesis
- (c) For their discoveries concerning genetic recombination and the organisation of the genetic material of bacteria
- (d) For their discoveries concerning genetically determined structures on the cell surface that regulate immunological reaction

Solution: b.

Dr. Khorana conducted research at universities in England, Switzerland, and Canada, and it was at the University of Wisconsin that he and two fellow researchers received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1968. Together, they discovered that the order of nucleotides in our DNA determines which amino acids are built. These amino acids form proteins, which carry out essential cell functions.

https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1968/press.html

9th January doodle: <https://www.google.com/doodles/har-gobind-khoranas-96th-birthday>

3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Buddhism was the basis for an early form of globalisation
- 2. The “Nalanda Proposal” – which ultimately led to the reestablishment of the Nalanda University – was formulated by Singapore

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.

Justification for Statement 1: “The journey of Buddhism as a pan-Asian creed and later a worldwide following began 2,500 years ago right here in Bihar. That voyage of Buddhism to the rest of the Asian continent carried more than just the Dharma-Dhamma tradition. It carried a rich cargo of knowledge and learning. It carried arts and crafts. It carried meditation techniques and even martial arts. Eventually, the many roads that the determined monks and nuns – those men and women of faith – carved out came to carry both culture and commerce. They became among the earliest transcontinental trade routes.. Long before the term became popular, Buddhism was the basis for an early form of globalisation – and of interconnectedness in our continent.”

Justification for Statement 2: Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, while addressing the Bihar State Legislative Assembly, in March 2006 mooted the idea of reviving the university.. Almost simultaneously, a proposal termed the “Nalanda Proposal” was forwarded to Government of India by Singapore.. The State Government of Bihar quickly adopted the visionary idea and consulted the Government of India on the way ahead.. Since the hallmark of the ancient Nalanda was its internationalism, the Government of India decided to share this proposal with the leaders of the East Asia Summit.

About Nalanda: <https://www.nalandauniv.edu.in/about-nalanda/history-and-revival/>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175551>;

4. Consider the following statements with reference to the Tamil Sangam literature:

1. It is the earliest literature of South India
2. Sangam poems revolve mainly around two themes – love and war
3. Some poems suggest that while there were differences between rich and poor, those who controlled resources were also expected to share them
4. It is largely silent on religious practices

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

Statements 1 and 2 are self-explanatory.

Justification for Statement 3: Poems included in the Tamil Sangam anthologies often illuminate **social and economic relationships**, suggesting that while there were differences between rich and poor, those who controlled resources were also expected to share them.

Justification for Statement 4: Sangam literature, especially the earlier works, has been a touchstone for the Dravidian movement. The poetry of the Sangam canon evokes the inner world of feelings and the outer world of activity, but is largely silent on religious practices or even God. Many scholars aver that there is no trace of Vedic Hinduism in the verses, and almost nothing of the caste system or Brahmins. To many proponents of the Dravidian movement, the early Sangam era represents an ideal non-Brahmin, non-caste past, and gives them their separate identity.

Kinship, Caste and Class; Themes in Indian History – I, Class 12 NCERT;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/the-ghosts-of-adichanallur/article22431890.ece>;

5. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958) which originally instituted conservation measures and banned construction activities near protected monuments, is now sought to be amended so that 'public works' could be allowed within the 100 m prohibited zone. 'Public works' includes
1. The construction of any infrastructure that is financed and carried out by the central or respective state government for public purposes
 2. Infrastructure that must be necessary for public safety and security
 3. Such infrastructure for which there is no reasonable alternative to carrying out construction in the prohibited area

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: b.

Definition of 'public works': The Bill introduces a definition for 'public works', which includes the construction of any infrastructure that is financed and carried out by the central government for public purposes. This infrastructure must be necessary for public safety and security and must be based on a specific instance of danger to public safety. Also, there should be no reasonable alternative to carrying out construction in the prohibited area.

<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Ancient%20Monuments%20and%20Archaeological%20Sites/Bill%20Summary%20-%20Ancient%20Monuments%20%28Amendment%29%20Bill,%202017.pdf>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/historians-oppose-monuments-bill/article22437352.ece>;

6. Which among the following works is **not** authored by Kalidasa, a Sanskrit poet and dramatist of ancient India?
- (a) *Abhijnanashakuntala*
 - (b) *Ratnavali*
 - (c) *Malavikagnimitra*
 - (d) *Meghduta*

Solution: b.

- King Harsha is widely believed to be the author of three Sanskrit plays ***Ratnavali***, ***Nagananda*** and ***Priyadarsika***.
- The tallest figure in the sphere of epic poetry is **Kalidasa** (between A.D. 380-A.D. 415).
- Kalidasa is the most distinguished dramatist and his treatment of the rasa of love in all its possible manifestations in the three plays ***Abhijnanashakuntala*** ("The Recognition of Shakuntala"), ***Vikramorvashi*** ("Urvashi Won by Valour"), and ***Malavikagnimitra*** ("Malavika and Agnimitra") is unparalleled;
- He authored two great epics – the poems ***Raghuvamsha*** ("Dynasty of Raghu") and ***Kumarasambhava*** ("Birth of the War God"); and
- He also authored the narrative lyric poem ***Meghaduta*** ("Cloud Messenger").

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

Improvisation (passing reference to Kalidasa): <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=175683>;

7. Which among the following is **not** an ancient Ayurveda text?

- (a) *Charaka Samhita*
- (b) *Ashtangahridaya*
- (c) *Surya Siddhanta*
- (d) *Sushruta Samhita*

Solution: c.

- *Surya Siddhanta* is a Sanskrit treatise on astronomy from ancient India.
- The *Ashtangahridaya* was the work of *Vagabhatta*. Another important work ascribed to the same author is the *Astangasamgraha* which too is an Ayurveda text.

Source: <http://ccrtindia.gov.in/readingroom/nscd/ch/ch13.php>;

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175799>;

8. *Tasawwuf* is to Islam as

- (a) *Brahmanism* is to Hinduism
- (b) *Tantrism* is to many religions
- (c) *Bhakti* tradition is to Hinduism
- (d) *Shramana* tradition is to Buddhism

Solution: c.

- The most appropriate answer from the given options is 'c'. The Bhakti and Sufi traditions have certain similarities but also dissimilarities.
- To be able to compare the two traditions, refer to the 'Bhakti-Sufi Traditions' chapter from the Class XII NCERT Themes in Indian History Part-2.

Improvisation (passing reference to tasawwuf): <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/a-calligraphed-200-year-old-padmaavat-preserved-for-posterity/article22538540.ece>

VIII. STATES

1. Which among the following states was the first to launch a price deficit compensation scheme that seeks to address rural-agrarian distress?
- (a) Haryana
 - (b) Karnataka
 - (c) Madhya Pradesh
 - (d) Uttar Pradesh

Solution: c.

- Rattled by the rural-agrarian distress across regions where the party is in power, BJP governments at the Centre and states are seeking a viable mechanism to address the problem of depressed domestic agricultural commodity prices ahead of the 2018 Budget. One of the models being seriously looked at is the **Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana** launched by the BJP government in **Madhya Pradesh** in October in the wake of simmering discontent among farmers in the state that led to protests in Mandsaur in June.
- Under the scheme, farmers are paid the difference between the government's MSP for a crop and its corresponding Modal Rate (MR) during a particular month of sale. The price difference, assuming that MR will be lower, is credited directly into Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts of farmers.
- Apart from the Centre, many states have shown interest in replicating the Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana. They include not just the BJP-ruled states of Maharashtra, UP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, but also Karnataka, Odisha and Telangana. Inspired by the scheme, the [Haryana](http://www.insightsias.com) government recently launched a similar price deficit compensation scheme, Bhavantar Bharpayee Yojana, to ensure that vegetable farmers are protected against a fall in crop prices.

[http://indianexpress.com/article/india/eye-on-rural-distress-centre-and-states-look-at-mp-crop-price-scheme-5006552/;](http://indianexpress.com/article/india/eye-on-rural-distress-centre-and-states-look-at-mp-crop-price-scheme-5006552/)

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/haryana-to-safeguard-vegetable-growers/article22334988.ece;>

2. Along with which other territory (ies) was Goa constituted as a union territory by the 12th Constitution Amendment Act, 1962?
- (a) Dadar and Nagar Haveli
 - (b) Daman and Diu
 - (c) Puducherry
 - (d) Chandigarh

Solution: b.

Goa, Daman and Diu India acquired these three territories from the Portuguese by means of a police action in 1961. They were constituted as a union territory by the 12th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1962. Later, in 1987, Goa was conferred a statehood. Consequently, Daman and Diu was made a separate union territory.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-liberation-of-goa/article22339624.ece;>

3. Construction of the Zojila tunnel will provide all weather connectivity between
- (a) Ladakh and Dapsang valley
 - (b) Srinagar, Kargil and Leh
 - (c) Chamba valley and Pangi Valley
 - (d) Kullu valley, Lahaul valley and Spiti Valley

Solution: b.

The Cabinet recently gave its approval for the construction, operation and maintenance of 2-lane bi-directional **Zojila Tunnel** connecting NH-1A at Km 95.00 and at Km 118.00 in **Jammu & Kashmir** on **Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode**. The construction of this tunnel will provide all weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh and will bring about all round economic and socio-cultural integration of these regions. The project has strategic and socio-economic importance and shall be an instrument for the development of the economically backward districts in Jammu & Kashmir.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1515174>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ccea-approves-over-6800-cr-zojila-tunnel-project/article22360209.ece>;

4. Dalit Panthers, a militant organisation of the Dalit youth, was formed in
- (a) Maharashtra
 - (b) Gujarat
 - (c) Uttar Pradesh
 - (d) Rajasthan

Solution: a.

By the early nineteen seventies, the first generation Dalit graduates, especially those living in city slums began to assert themselves from various platforms. **Dalit Panthers**, a militant organisation of the Dalit youth, was formed in **Maharashtra** in **1972** as a part of these assertions. In the post-Independence period, Dalit groups were mainly fighting against the perpetual caste based inequalities and material injustices that the Dalits faced in spite of constitutional guarantees of equality and justice. Effective implementation of reservations and other such policies of social justice was one of their prominent demands.

Activities of Dalit Panthers mostly centred around fighting increasing atrocities on Dalits in various parts of the State. As a result of sustained agitations on the part of Dalit Panthers along with other like minded organisations over the issue of atrocities against Dalits, the government passed a comprehensive law in 1989 that provided for rigorous punishment for such acts. The larger ideological agenda of the Panthers was to destroy the caste system and to build an organisation of all oppressed sections like the landless poor peasants and urban industrial workers along with Dalits.

Politics in India since Independence, NCERT;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/state-of-conflict/article22369262.ece>;

5. The 'Cancer train' is synonymous with a majority of passengers belonging to the state of
- a) Punjab
 - b) Jharkhand
 - c) Madhya Pradesh
 - d) Andhra Pradesh

Solution: a.

The “**cancer train**” commences from the Bathinda station every day to reach **Rajasthan’s Bikaner**, where patients undergo treatment at the Acharya Tulsi Regional Cancer Treatment and Research Centre. A majority of the patients are from the Malwa region of Punjab.

Experts say this “cancer train” symbolises the adverse **impact of the Green Revolution on public health** in **Punjab**. The rise in cancer cases in the region can be attributed to the indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/on-board-cancer-train-with-hope-prayer-on-lips/article17411376.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/a-law-for-the-indian-farmer-pesticide-management-bill-5010575/>;

6. Which among the following states of India is/are members of the ‘Under2 Coalition’?

1. Telangana
2. Andhra Pradesh
3. Chattisgarh
4. Kerala

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

- The Under2 MoU is a commitment by sub-national governments to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions toward net-zero by 2050.
- Central to this is the public commitment by all signatories to reduce their GHG emissions by 80-95% on 1990 levels.
- The Under2 Coalition provides a global forum for sub-national governments to work together to get on a trajectory consistent with 2050 carbon neutrality. The Under2 Coalition sets the tone for bold climate leadership and provides an effective global partnership model for parties to the UNFCCC.
- The Climate Group acts as Secretariat to the Under2 Coalition and works directly with government signatories and partners of the Under2 MOU.

About The Under2 Coalition: <https://www.theclimategroup.org/project/under2-coalition>;

About The Climate Group: <https://www.theclimategroup.org/about>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-sum-of-contributions/article22391950.ece>;

7. Which among the following states does **not** organise state-sponsored bird festivals?

- (a) Karnataka
- (b) Uttar Pradesh
- (c) Nagaland
- (d) Gujarat

Solution: c.

A mains-oriented question (linking this up with tourism and so on).

State-sponsored bird festivals in India include Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. The Hornbill festival in Nagaland is not a bird festival.

<https://thewire.in/87727/up-bird-festival/>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/goa-bird-festival-to-offer-pelagic-avian-tour/article22406441.ece>;

8. Which state/part of India was the first to hold an election based on universal adult franchise in independent India?

- (a) Junagadh
- (b) Jammu and Kashmir
- (c) Manipur
- (d) Travancore

Solution: c.

Before 15 August 1947, peaceful negotiations had brought almost all states whose territories were contiguous to the new boundaries of India, into the Indian Union. The rulers of most of the states signed a document called the 'Instrument of Accession' which meant that their state agreed to become a part of the Union of India. Accession of the Princely States of Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Manipur proved more difficult than the rest.

A few days before Independence, the Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhachandra Singh, signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government on the assurance that the internal autonomy of Manipur would be maintained. Under the pressure of public opinion, the Maharaja held elections in Manipur in June 1948 and the state became a constitutional monarchy. Thus Manipur was the first part of India to hold an election based on universal adult franchise.

Chapter 'Challenges of Nation Building', Politics in India since Independence, NCERT;

Improvisation: <http://pibregional.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1516426>;

9. Recently the government of this state came up with a unique way of preserving trees, which is in consonance with an age-old tradition of promoting amity between man and nature, by encouraging people to forge a relationship of brotherhood or sisterhood with trees through a practice locally known as **Mith/Mit** or **Mitini**. The state in question is

- (a) Meghalaya
- (b) Sikkim
- (c) Tripura
- (d) Chattisgarh

Solution: b.

A recent notification by the Forests, Environment & Wildlife Management Department, Government of Sikkim titled **Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules 2017** states that the "State government shall allow any person to associate with trees standing on his or her private land or on any public land by entering into a **Mith/Mit** or **Mitini** relationship."

To read about it in detail: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/sikkim-allows-people-to-forge-fraternal-ties-with-trees/article22437418.ece>;

10. Nagaland shares its borders with which among the following states?

1. Mizoram
2. Assam
3. Tripura
4. Arunachal Pradesh

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.



Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/3-ne-states-go-to-polls-in-february/article22467844.ece>;

11. The nomadic Agariyas are commonly associated with which one of the following regions?

- (a) Garjhat Hills
- (b) Assam Valley
- (c) Zanskar
- (d) Little Rann of Kutch

Solution: d.

The Agariya tribe derives its name from the word agar, meaning salt farms. They start arriving by October, when the monsoon leaves behind the Little Rann of Kutch as a mud desert. They keep coming till April to mine salt in this 5,000-sq. km marsh in the west of Gujarat, the State which produces roughly three-fourths of the salt that India consumes.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/in-photos-the-rann-of-the-agariyas/article22334079.ece>;

IX. Miscellaneous

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Line of Control is under the operational control of the Border Security Force
2. Ceasefire violations along the Line of Control have increased by over 200 per cent in 2017 compared to 2016
3. The least number of incidents of left-wing extremism in affected states has been declining since 2009

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

A mains-oriented Question.

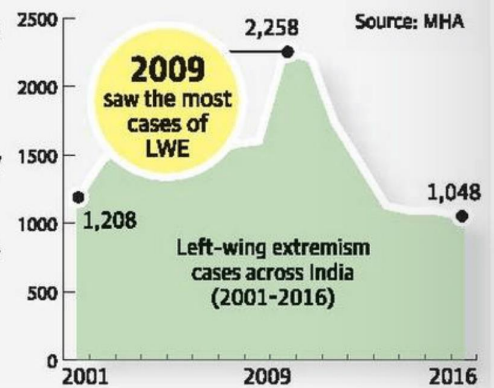
- The 740-km LoC is under the operational control of the Army and the 192 km International Boundary (IB) in Jammu is manned by the Border Security Force (BSF). Ceasefire violations along the Line of Control have increased by over 230 per cent in 2017 compared to 2016.
- For the first time in more than a decade, in 2017 the incidents in left-wing extremism (LWE) affected States remained below the 1,000 mark. A senior official of the Union Home Ministry attributed the decline to "attrition of various level cadres of Maoists" and the other to the possibility of Maoists "deliberately lying low."

TH (28th December, 2016): <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/loc-intrusions-touch-4-year-high/article22290010.ece>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/incidents-of-maoist-violence-reduce-in-2017-govt-data-show/article22339697.ece>;

On the wane

There has been a steady decline in cases of left-wing extremism as many cadres left Maoist organisations. As per official data, 851 incidents were reported in 2017 till December 15



2. "Time's Up" is a recently-launched Hollywood-project that will

- (a) Fund legal support for both female and male victims of sexual harassment at work
- (b) Identify, deter and prevent cross-border human trafficking
- (c) Campaign to promote the use, by judiciaries across the world, of latest scientific research in adjudicating child abuse cases
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

- More than 300 actresses, writers and directors have launched a project to help fight sexual harassment in the film industry and other workplaces... The initiative, which is called Time's Up, was announced via a full-page advert printed in the New York Times... The Hollywood project is described as a "unified call for change from women in entertainment for women everywhere" ... It comes in the wake of sexual abuse allegations by high-profile actresses against film producer Harvey Weinstein.

- The money raised will be used to fund legal support for both female and male victims of sexual harassment at work.
- The project is aimed primarily at those who are unable to meet the payments to defend themselves, such as agricultural or factory workers, caretakers and waitresses.
- It also calls for “gender inequality and the imbalance of power” to be addressed, stressing the need for more women to gain positions of authority and parity of pay.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42534124>;

3. The argument put forth by the tobacco industry against the use of 85 per cent packaging space on tobacco products for pictorial warnings is that
- (a) It is tantamount to an intellectual property right infringement
 - (b) It breaches the germane bilateral investment treaties
 - (c) It goes against the will of the people as a Parliamentary Standing Committee recently recommended only 50 per cent plain packaging norms
 - (d) It violates their fundamental right to do business

Solution: d.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal for the tobacco industry said effects of tobacco were horrible. “So, let the government ban tobacco products,” he submitted.. Instead of a ban, the government is using “absolutely horrifying” pictures with no named source or scientific value on the tobacco packets.

He submitted that the use of such pictures on 85% packaging space is a violation of their fundamental right to do business under **Article 19 (1)(g)** and that a parliamentary standing committee has already recommended pictorial warnings on 50% space and this should be adopted till March 31, 2018, when the issue would be re-examined.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sc-for-larger-warnings-on-cigarette-packs/article22400143.ece>;

4. As defined by the World Bank, ‘tertiary education’ includes
1. Public and private universities
 2. Technical training institutes
 3. Vocational schools

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.

A mains-oriented question. Higher education, also known as tertiary education in some countries, refers to all post-secondary education, including both public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/tertiaryeducation>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/thinking-beyond-quotas/article22413537.ece>;

5. Consider the following pairs:

Border India shares with	Border guarding force
1. Pakistan	: Border Security Force
2. China	: Assam Rifles
3. Bhutan	: Sashastra Seema Bal

Which of the pairs given 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.

- Bangladesh and Pakistan borders – BSF;
- China border – ITBP;
- Myanmar border – Assam Rifles;
- Nepal and Bhutan borders – Sashastra Seema Bal;

Besides, Indian army guards land borders along the LOC on Pakistan border and LAC on China border. The Indian Navy and Coast Guard are vested with the responsibility of coastal borders, where the State (Marine) Police act as the second line of defence.

Annual Report, MHA: <http://mha.nic.in/annualreports>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/open-trafficking/article22452922.ece>;

6. Consider the following statements:

1. Under international Freedom of Navigation laws, aircraft carriers are recognised as sovereign territories in almost all of the ocean
2. India's first aircraft carrier was purchased from erstwhile Soviet Union

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 is correct.

- India's first indigenous aircraft carrier IAC-I Vikrant is named after India's first aircraft carrier INS Vikrant – purchased from the UK (and which was decommissioned in 1997). It is being built by Cochin Shipyard.
- India currently operates INS Vikramaditya procured from Russia.
- Like INS Vikramaditya, Vikrant too would employ the STOBAR (Short Take-Off But Arrested Recovery) mechanism with a ski-jump and arrestor cables to launch and recover aircraft.

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/aircraft-carrier.htm>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/navy-confident-of-commissioning-aircraft-carrier-vikrant-in-two-years/article22474986.ece>;

7. Consider the following statements:

1. India has less than one doctor per thousand population
2. The World Health Organisation prescribes a minimum doctor-population ratio of 3:1000

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.

From July 2017 (<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/less-than-one-doctor-for-1000-population-in-india-government-tells-lok-sabha-4760892/>) : Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said as per information provided by the Medical Council of India, there were a total 10,22,859 allopathic doctors registered with the state medical councils or Medical Council of India as on March 31 this year.

“Assuming 80 per cent availability, it is estimated that around 8.18 lakh doctors may actually be available for active service. It gives a doctor-population ratio of 0.62:1000 as per current population which is estimated to be of around 1.33 billion,” she said during Question Hour.

The WHO prescribes a doctor population ratio of 1:1000.

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/capacity-building-for-primary-health-care/article22486460.ece>;

8. Consider the following pairs:

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting	Theme
1. 2018	: Responsive Leadership
2. 2017	: Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World
3. 2016	: Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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

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

Solution: c.

Knowing the theme of the WEF 2018 summit will help you eliminate three options.

- 2018 – Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World;
- 2017 – Responsive Leadership;
- 2016 – Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution;

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175790>;

9. 'KEVAT', a programme launched for the first time in India by Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), is
- (a) A navigation programme for patient care
 - (b) A cancer screening programme of tobacco users among school children for pre-cancers of respiratory tract
 - (c) An effort to establish uniform standards of patient care for treatment of cancer across India
 - (d) A collaboration between the Department of Atomic Energy and TMC for the indigenous development of medical equipment related to radiation technology

Solution: a.

A GK question.

About Patient Navigation

- Patient Navigation is a rapidly growing and evolving healthcare profession. The aim of initiating a patient navigation program is to create a trained taskforce to facilitate patient's journey right from entry to the Hospital to follow-up and getting back to normalcy; taking care in addition of emotional, economic and various other needs in a holistic way.
- This Patient Navigation Program – KEVAT, initiated by TMC (a grant-in-aid institution under the Department of Atomic Energy) is one of the first in India to focus on an emerging patient navigation model that can be applied across all cancer care institutions. The course will address the need for a structured patient support system for cancer care that will form a bridge between patients and access to care.

Need for such a course

- The increasing burden of the disease of cancer coupled with diversity of patient population and multi-disciplinary and complex nature of cancer-care necessitates creation of a dynamic network for efficient patient navigation for addressing diverse patient needs. With the ever-increasing number of patients visiting hospitals each year, it is impossible to do justice to every interaction a doctor has with a patient.

<https://tmc.gov.in/index.php/kevat-patient-navigator>;

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=175799>;