

ANSWERS & EXPLANATIONS

GENERAL STUDIES (P) TEST – 4711 (2025)

Q 1.C

About Special Category Status(SCS) :

- SCS is a classification given by Centre to assist in development of those states that face geographical and socio-economic disadvantages.
- **It was first introduced in 1969 on recommendations of Fifth Finance Commission (FC). Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- In 1969, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Assam and Nagaland were granted SCS.
 - Later, Sikkim, Tripura etc. were given SCS.
- SCS States used to receive grants based on Gadgil-Mukherjee formula.
- **Constitution does not include any provision for categorisation of any State in India as SCS state. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - However, a wide range of special provisions are available to as many states that have been listed under Article 371, 371-A to 371-H, and 371-J.
- Following the recommendations of the 14th FC, SCS cease to exist and thus no SCS has been granted to any State.

Benefits of Granting SCS to states:

- In SCS States, Centre-State funding of centrally sponsored schemes is divided in 90:10, far more favourable than 60:40 or 80:20 splits for general category States.
- **SCS states are exempted from customs duty, corporate tax, income tax and other taxes to attract investment. Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- **Special category states have the facility that if they have unspent money in a financial year; it does not lapse and gets carry forward for the next financial year.**
- **30 percent of the Centre's gross budget also goes to special category states.**
- **These states can avail the benefit of debt-swapping and debt relief schemes.**

Q 2.C

- **Article 140 of the Indian Constitution of 1950 gives the Supreme Court the power to grant additional powers that are necessary for the court to perform its duties. These powers are called ancillary powers and are essential for the court to function as an independent and impartial institution.**
- **Article 148 under Part V of the Constitution of India provides for an independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). He is the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department, the guardian of the public purse, and the entire system the country at both: the Centre and the state levels. Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**
- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said that the CAG shall be the most important Officer under the Constitution of India.**
- **Article 142 of the Constitution empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or order necessary for doing complete justice in any case or matter pending before it.**
- **Article 143 confers that the President can ask for the opinion and the advice of the Supreme Court on matters of public importance or certain laws that act as expedient to the Constitution. The opinion or the advice of the court is NOT binding on the President.**

Q 3.D

- **Article 39A of the Constitution of India provides for free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of society and ensures justice for all. Articles 14 and 22(1) of the Constitution also make it obligatory for the State to ensure equality before the law and a legal system which promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity to all.**
- In 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted by the Parliament which came into force on 9th November 1995 to establish a nationwide uniform network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society on the basis of equal opportunity. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to monitor and evaluate the implementation of legal aid programmes and to lay down policies and principles for making legal services available under the Act.
- **In every State, a State Legal Services Authority and in every High Court, a High Court Legal Services Committee have been constituted. District Legal Services Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees have been constituted in the Districts and most of the Taluks to give effect to the policies and directions of the NALSA and to provide free legal services to the people and conduct Lok Adalats in the State.**
- Supreme Court Legal Services Committee has been constituted to administer and implement the legal services programme insofar as it relates to the Supreme Court of India.
- **Functioning of NALSA:**
 - NALSA lays down policies, principles, guidelines and frames effective and economical schemes for the State Legal Services Authorities to implement the Legal Services Programmes throughout the country.
 - Primarily, the State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees, etc. have been asked to discharge the following main functions on regular basis:
 - ✓ **To Provide Free and Competent Legal Services to the eligible persons;**
 - ✓ **To organize Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes and**
 - ✓ **To organize legal awareness camps in the rural areas.**
- **The Free Legal Services include:**
 - Payment of court fee, process fees and all other charges payable or incurred in connection with any legal proceedings;
 - Providing service of lawyers in legal proceedings;
 - Obtaining and supply of certified copies of orders and other documents in legal proceedings.
 - Preparation of appeal, paper book including printing and translation of documents in legal proceedings.
- **Persons eligible for getting free legal services includes:-**
 - **Women and children;**
 - **Members of SC/ST**
 - **Industrial workmen**
 - **Victims of mass disaster, violence, flood, drought, earthquake, industrial disaster.**
 - **Disabled persons.**
 - **Persons in custody**
 - **Persons whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 1 lakh (in the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee the limit is Rs. 5,00,000/-).**
 - **Victims of Trafficking in Human beings or begar.**
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 4.C

- **Statement 1 is not correct:** National Informatics Centre (NIC) is an executive authority under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. National Informatics Centre (NIC) was established in 1976, and has since emerged as a “prime builder” of e-Government / e-Governance applications up to the grassroots level as well as a promoter of digital opportunities for sustainable development.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** It provides network backbone and e-Governance support to Central Government, State Governments, UT Administrations, Districts and other Government bodies. It offers a wide range of ICT services including Nationwide Communication Network for decentralized planning, improvement in Government services and wider transparency of national and local Governments. NIC assists in implementing Information Technology Projects, in close collaboration with Central and State Governments, in the areas of (a) Centrally sponsored schemes and Central sector schemes, (b) State sector and State sponsored projects, and (c) District Administration sponsored projects. NIC endeavours to ensure that the latest technology in all areas of IT is available to its users.

- **Statement 3 is correct:** Some of the major initiatives of the NIC include -:
 - data.gov.in - A platform for supporting Open Data initiative of Government of India
 - **Public Financial Management System - Facilitating Transparency and Accountability in the use of Public Funds**
 - Manav Sampada -An electronic Human Resource Management
 - e-Vidhaan - To automate the functioning of legislative assembly
 - Darpan - Dashboard for Analytical Review of Projects across the nation
 - **MyGov - Citizen Engagement Platform Virtual Place for Public to Interact with Government**

Q 5.C

- **Recent Context:** Japan has seen a notable increase in Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS) cases, attributed to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, leading to more social interactions and a general rise in GAS infections.
- **About Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS)**
 - STSS is a **severe bacterial infection caused by Group A Streptococcus (GAS) bacteria, not by a virus**. The infection is known for its rapid progression, capable of causing death within 48 hours if not treated promptly. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - Symptoms and Severity
 - STSS begins with initial symptoms such as fever, chills, muscle aches, nausea, and vomiting. These symptoms can escalate within 24 to 48 hours to more severe conditions including:
 - Low blood pressure
 - Organ failure
 - Rapid heart rate
 - Fast breathing
 - In adults, particularly those over 50, it can lead to severe symptoms like limb pain, swelling, fever, and low blood pressure, quickly worsening to tissue death, breathing problems, organ failure, and sometimes death.
- Mechanism of Spread
- **STSS is highly contagious and spreads through respiratory droplets or direct contact with an infected person.** Group A Streptococcus bacteria can also spread through improperly handled food. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- Causes and Pathophysiology
- The infection occurs when GAS bacteria enter deep tissues and the bloodstream, releasing toxins that cause a rapid and dangerous response in the body. These toxins lead to widespread tissue damage, severe inflammation, and rapid tissue necrosis (flesh-eating), resulting in extreme pain and shock.
- Preventive Measures
- Preventing STSS involves maintaining good hygiene practices such as:
 - Regular hand washing
 - Covering mouth while coughing and sneezing
 - Prompt treatment of any skin injuries

Q 6.D

- **Article 327 grants the Parliament of India the authority to make provisions for the conduct of elections to the State Legislatures. This includes laws regarding the electoral process, the preparation of electoral rolls, and any other matters related to the elections to the Legislature of each State. Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- These laws ensure that elections to State Legislatures are conducted in a uniform and regulated manner across the country. Accordingly, the Parliament enacted: Representation of People Act 1950, Representation of People Act 1951, Delimitation Commission Act, 1952 (provides for the readjustment of seats, delimitation and reservation of territorial constituencies and other related matters).
- **Article 328 provides State Legislatures with the power to make laws concerning certain aspects of elections to their own respective legislatures. This includes matters such as the delimitation of constituencies and the qualifications and disqualifications of candidates for state elections. Hence statement 3 is correct.**
- While State Legislatures can make provisions related to their elections, these laws must be consistent with the laws made by Parliament under Article 327. This ensures that state-specific regulations do not conflict with or override the central laws governing elections.

- **Article 324 of the Indian constitution empowers, the Election Commission of India to conduct, supervise, and regulate elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures. Hence statement 1 is correct.**

Q 7.C

GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2024-

- **The report is released by World Economic Forum (WEF). Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.**
- It is based on the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) which annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity based on 14 indicators across four key dimensions.
- Key findings
 - Global- Among 146 countries, Iceland, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, and Sweden are the top five countries.
 - The share of women in parliamentary positions has shown an almost uninterrupted positive trajectory since 2006. At the current rate of progress, it will take 134 years to reach full parity.
 - Women constitute 28.2% of the STEM workforce and 47.3% of the non-STEM workforce.
- **India- Overall, India was ranked 129th (ranked 127 in 2023), and 5th in South Asia after Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.**

Q 8.C

- **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)**
 - **Legal Backing:** The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was established on 20th February 1997 by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.
 - **Objectives of TRAI:**
 - ✓ TRAI's mission is to create and nurture conditions for the growth of telecommunications in the country.
 - ✓ TRAI regulates telecom services including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services which were earlier vested in the Central Government. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - ✓ It also aims to provide a fair and transparent policy environment that promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.
 - **Headquarters:** The head office of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is located in New Delhi.
 - **What is the Composition of TRAI?**
 - **Members:** The TRAI consists of a Chairperson, two whole-time members, and two part-time members, all of which are appointed by the Government of India.
 - **Tenure of Members:** The **Chairperson and other members shall hold their office for a term of three years or till the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. Hence statement 2 is correct.**
 - **Chairperson:** The Chairperson has the powers of general superintendence. He/She presides over the meetings of the TRAI.
 - **Vice-Chairperson:** The Central Government may appoint one of the members of the Authority as the Vice-Chairperson of TRAI. The vice-chairperson exercises and discharges the powers and functions of the Chairperson in his/her absence.
 - **Removal of Members:** The Central Government is empowered to remove any member of the TRAI.

Q 9.D

- The **Union Public Service Commission** consists of a **chairman and other members appointed by the president** of India. Usually, the Commission consists of nine to eleven members including the chairman.
- The **chairman and members** of the Commission hold **office** for a term of **six years** or until they attain the **age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The chairman and members can **relinquish** their **offices** at any time by addressing their **resignation to the president. Hence, statement 4 is correct.**
- The **chairman or a member** of the UPSC can be **removed** from office **by the president** only in the manner and on the grounds mentioned in the Constitution. Therefore, they **enjoy security of tenure. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The **President can remove the chairman** or any other member of UPSC from the office under the following circumstances:
 1. If he is adjudged an **insolvent** (that is, has gone bankrupt);
 2. If he engages, during his term of office, in any **paid employment** outside the duties of his office; or

3. If he is, in the opinion of the president, **unfit to continue in office** by reason of infirmity of mind or body.
4. The president can also remove the chairman or any other member of UPSC for **misbehaviour**. However, in this case, the president has to **refer the matter to the Supreme Court** for an enquiry. If the Supreme Court upholds the cause of removal and advises so, the president can proceed with the removal. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Q 10.B

- **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act)** lays down the requirements for **registration of a political party with the Election Commission of India (ECI)**.
 - Any political party that seeks registration should submit a copy of its memorandum/constitution.
 - Such document should declare that the party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India.
 - It should also bear allegiance to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy, and uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.
- **The Representation of People Act does not confer explicit powers on the ECI to de-register any political party if it fails to contest elections, conduct inner-party elections or lodge requisite returns. Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
 - **The Supreme Court in Indian National Congress versus Institute of Social Welfare & Ors (2002) had held that the ECI does not have power to de-register any political party under the RP Act.** It may de-register only under exceptional circumstances like registration being obtained by fraud or the political party ceasing to have allegiance to the Constitution or if it is declared unlawful by the Government.
- Under Paragraph 16A of the Symbols order, the ECI has the power to suspend or withdraw recognition of a recognised political party for its failure to observe MCC or follow lawful directions of the Commission. It has probably been used only once for three weeks in 2015 when the recognition of the National People's Party was suspended for failure to follow the directions of the ECI. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Q 11.B

- **Official Language**
 - **Part XVII** of the Constitution deals with the official language in Articles 343 to 351. Its provisions are divided into four heads—The language of the Union, Regional languages, the Language of the judiciary, and texts of laws and Special directives.
 - **The Constitution contains the following provisions in respect of the official language of the Union.**
 - ✓ Hindi written in Devanagari script is to be the official language of the Union. However, the form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union has to be the international form of Indian numerals and not the Devanagari form of numerals.
 - ✓ However, for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution (i.e., from 1950 to 1965), the English language would continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used before 1950. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
 - ✓ Even after fifteen years, the Parliament may provide for the continued use of the English language for the specified purposes.
 - ✓ At the end of five years, and again at the end of ten years, from the commencement of the Constitution, the president should appoint a commission to make recommendations about the progressive use of the Hindi language, restrictions on the use of the English language, and other related issues. Hence statement 1 is correct.
 - ✓ A committee of Parliament is to be constituted to examine the recommendations of the commission and to report its views on them to the president.
 - Accordingly, in 1955, the president appointed an Official Language Commission under the chairmanship of B.G. Kher. The commission submitted its report to the President in 1956. The report was examined by a committee of Parliament constituted in 1957 under the chairmanship of Gobind Ballabh Pant. However, another official Language Commission (as envisaged by the Constitution) was not appointed in 1960.
 - Subsequently, the Parliament enacted the **Official Languages Act in 1963**. The act provides for the continued use of English (even after 1965), in addition to Hindi, for all official purposes of the Union and also for the transaction of business in Parliament.

- **Official Languages Act (1963)** lays down that English should be used for purposes of communication between the Union and the non-Hindi states. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Q 12.D

- **Bandung Conference (1955):** The Bandung Conference, also known as the Asian-African Conference, was held in Bandung, Indonesia, from April 18 to 24, 1955. This **landmark event marked the first large-scale meeting of Asian and African states, most of which had recently gained independence from colonial rule.**
- **The conference laid the groundwork for the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which formally came into existence in 1961.** NAM aimed to create a bloc of countries that were not formally aligned with either the United States or the Soviet Union during the Cold War.
- **Tashkent Agreement (1966):** India and Pakistan signed the Tashkent Agreement on January 10, 1966, as a peace treaty to end the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 and to normalize diplomatic and economic ties.
- **Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1971):** The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and the Soviet Union was signed on August 9, 1971, establishing a strategic partnership and mutual cooperation in political, economic, and military fields amidst rising regional tensions.
- **Shimla Agreement (1972):** The Shimla Agreement, signed on July 2, 1972, between India and Pakistan, was aimed at establishing durable peace and normalizing relations following the 1971 war, with commitments to respect the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 13.D

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) is a demand driven wage employment scheme launched in 2005 **by the Ministry of Rural Development** which provides for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- MGNREGA is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world. **It provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.** As of 2022-23, there are 15.4 crore active workers under the MGNREGA. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- As per the Para 15 of Schedule-II of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, “Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at **least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women** who have registered and requested for work. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
- In MGNREGA, Wages must be paid according to the statutory minimum wages specified for agricultural labourers in the state under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
- The most important part of MGNREGA’s design is its legally-backed guarantee for any rural adult to get work within 15 days of demanding it, failing which an ‘unemployment allowance’ must be given.
- The act mandates Gram sabhas to recommend the works that are to be undertaken and at least 50% of the works must be executed by them.

Q 14.D

- **The E-Government Development Index (EGDI) is a survey conducted annually and whose reports are published every two years by the United Nations Public Administration Programme (UNPAP).** It ranks 193 UN member states on basis of their performance on mainly three dimensions or e-governance development index (EGDI):
 - **online service index (OSI),**
 - **telecommunication infrastructure index(TII), and**
 - **human capital index (HCI).**
- Along with an assessment of the website development patterns in a country, the E-Government Development index incorporates the access characteristics, such as the infrastructure and educational levels, to reflect how a country is using information technologies to promote access and inclusion of its people.

- The E-Government Survey, 2018 had ranked India at 96 positions for its performance in the development and execution of information technologies, up from 107 in 2016 and 118 in 2014 —a massive leap over the years.
- **Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 15.C

- **Biopharmaceutical Alliance:**
 - **South Korea, India, the United States, Japan, and the European Union (EU)** have come together to launch an alliance to put joint efforts into building a resilient supply chain in the biopharmaceutical sector. China is not a member nation of the alliance. **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**
 - The **inaugural meeting of the Biopharmaceutical Alliance, held in San Diego during the Bio International Convention 2024**, had representatives from government officials and bio and pharmaceutical companies from the participating countries, South Korea's *Yonhap* news agency reported.
 - The participants emphasized the importance of a reliable and sustainable supply chain and agreed to coordinate the respective countries' bio policies, regulations, and research and development support measures.
 - They acknowledged that the production of essential raw materials and ingredients is concentrated in a few countries and agreed to work together to build a detailed pharmaceutical supply chain map.
 - The alliance was launched in response to the drug supply shortages experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - South Korea and the U.S. agreed to form the alliance during their dialogue on core emerging technologies in December and expanded it to include Japan, India, and the EU, the report said.

Q 16.B

- **Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a set of guidelines laid down by ECI to govern the conduct of political parties and candidates in the run-up to an election to ensure free and fair elections. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- This is in keeping with Article 324 of the Constitution, which gives ECI power to supervise elections to Parliament and State legislatures.
- **MCC does not have statutory backing and it is more a consensus-driven code. It is not enforceable by law**, but some provisions are enforceable through corresponding provisions in statutes like Representation of People Act, 1951, etc. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- It is operational from the date that the election schedule is announced till the date that the results are announced.
- **In 1960, MCC was first introduced in state assembly elections in Kerala. Hence statement 3 is correct.**
- **Activities prohibited after implementation of MCC:**
 - Candidates cannot announce financial grants. Moreover, the government cannot launch new projects.
 - No promises from authorities related to infrastructure development like roads, etc.
 - Prohibition of any ad-hoc appointments in government or public undertakings.
 - Ministers or candidates cannot sanction grants or payments from discretionary funds.
 - Ban of government resources like transport, machinery, etc. for campaigning.

Q 17.A

- **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**
 - It was set up in 1963 by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Later, it was transferred to the Ministry of Personnel and now it enjoys the status of an attached office. The Special Police Establishment (which looked into vigilance cases) set in 1941 was also merged with the CBI.
 - The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964).
 - The CBI is not a statutory body. It derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, of 1946.
- **Tenure**
 - The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2021 introduces changes to the tenure of the Director of the CBI. While the CBI Director initially had a fixed two-year term under the CVC

Act, of 2003, the amendment now permits the central government to extend the tenure to up to five years.

- The extension can occur annually, with a maximum of three such extensions, and no further extension is possible after completing a total of five years, including the initial two-year period.
- **Appointment of Director**
 - **3-member committee:** PM (Chairperson) + Leader of Opposition (LS) + CJI or Judge of SC (nominated by him).
 - In case of no recognized leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha would be a member of that committee.
- **What Types of Cases are Handled by the CBI?**
 - **Anti-Corruption Crimes:** for investigation of cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act against Public officials and the employees of the Central Government, Public Sector Undertakings, Corporations, or Bodies owned or controlled by the Government of India. **Hence option 1 is correct.**
 - **Economic Crimes:** for investigation of major financial scams and serious economic frauds, including crimes relating to Fake Indian Currency Notes, Bank Frauds, and Cyber Crime, bank frauds, Import Export & Foreign Exchange violations, large-scale smuggling of narcotics, antiques, cultural property and smuggling of other contraband items, etc. **Hence option 2 is correct.**
 - **Special Crimes:** for investigation of serious and organized crime under the Indian Penal Code and other laws on the requests of State Governments or on the orders of the Supreme Court and High Courts - such as cases of terrorism, bomb blasts, kidnapping for ransom, and crimes committed by the mafia/the underworld.
 - **Suo Moto Cases:**
 - ✓ CBI can suo-moto take up investigation of offenses only in the Union Territories.
 - ✓ The Central Government can authorize CBI to investigate a crime in a State but only with the consent of the concerned State Government.
 - ✓ The Supreme Court and High Courts, however, can order the CBI to investigate a crime anywhere in the country without the consent of the State.
 - **NOTE: The Directorate of Enforcement** is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with the investigation of offenses of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws. **Hence option 3 is not correct.**

Q 18.B

Various Committees Established for Police Reforms

Several bodies were constituted from time to time to go into the question of police reforms. These were:

- Dharma Vira Commission
- Gore Committee on Police Training (1971-73)
- Ribeiro Committee on Police Reforms (1998)
- Padmanabhaiah Committee on Police Reforms (2000)
- Group of Ministers on National Security (2000-01)
- Malimath Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System (2001-03)
 - **Dharma Vira Commission:** The Government of India appointed a National Police Commission headed by Dharam Vira in 1977, as it felt that “far-reaching changes have taken place in the country” since independence but “there has been no comprehensive review at the national level of the police system after independence despite radical changes in the political, social and economic situation in the country”. The Commission even drafted a model Police Bill which could be enacted. Its recommendations, however, received no more than a cosmetic treatment at the hands of the Government of India. **Hence, option 4 is correct.**
 - **Gore Committee on Police Training (1971-73):** This Police Reform was set up to review the training of the police from the constabulary level to IPS officers.
 - **Ribeiro Committee:** The Ribeiro Committee was set up by the Supreme Court while it was deliberating over the Public Interest Litigation filed for police reforms. This Police Reform recommended the setting up of Police Performance and Accountability commissions at the state level and also the constitution of a District complaints Authority, replacement of the Police Act, 1861 with a new act. **Hence, option 3 is correct.**
 - The **Padmanabhaiah Committee** examined the requirements of policing in the new millennium. The Group of Ministers examined the reports of various Committees which were set up in the wake of

Pakistan's aggression in Kargil, including the one dealing with internal security, and suggested comprehensive measures to strengthen the internal and external security apparatus. **Hence, option 2 is correct.**

- Recently, The High level Committee on Simultaneous Elections constituted under the **Chairmanship of Shri Ram Nath Kovind**. **Hence option 1 is not correct.**

Q 19.D

- The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 is a landmark legislation in India that empowers citizens to access information from public authorities.
- Key Provisions of the RTI Act, 2005
- **Scope:** The Act applies to all constitutional authorities, including the executive, legislature, and judiciary, as well as anybody or institution established or constituted by an act of Parliament or a state legislature. It covers government companies, societies, or trusts in which the government has a controlling stake.
- **Information Disclosure:** The Act mandates the disclosure of information held by public authorities to citizens upon request. Certain categories of information are exempted from disclosure, such as those related to national security, commercial confidence, and personal information.
- **Procedure for Obtaining Information:** Citizens can submit RTI applications to the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the concerned public authority, along with a nominal application fee. The PIO must provide the requested information within 30 days or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay.
- **Exemptions:** **The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, has specific provisions that exempt certain types of information from disclosure. These exemptions are outlined in Section 8 of the Act. Organisations related to Intelligence and security established by the Central Government are also exempted, like:**
 - **Intelligence Bureau.**
 - Research and Analysis Wing of the Cabinet Secretariat.
 - Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.
 - Central Economic Intelligence Bureau.
 - **Directorate of Enforcement**
 - **Narcotics Control Bureau**
 - Aviation Research Centre.
 - Special Frontier Force.
 - Border Security Force.
 - Central Reserve Police Force.
 - **Indo-Tibetan Border Police**
 - **National Security Guards etc.**
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 20.C

- **97th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2011- The following three changes were introduced:**
 - Established the right to form cooperative societies as a fundamental right (Article 19). **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - Introduced a new **Directive Principle of State Policy** on Cooperative Societies (**Article 43-B**).
 - **Added a new Part IX-B** to the Constitution titled "The Co-operative Societies" (**Articles 243-ZH to 243-ZT**). **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
 - Empowered Parliament to enact laws governing multi-state cooperative societies (MSCS) and delegated authority to state legislatures for other cooperative societies. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**
 - The state legislature could adopt measures for the formation, regulation, and dissolution of cooperative organizations based on the principles of democratic member control, voluntary formation, members of an independent auditor who will audit autonomous functioning, and economic participation
 - The provisions of this part might apply to the Union Territories. But, the President might direct that the provisions of this part shall not apply to any Union territory (UT) or part thereof as he may specify in the notification.
 - **Note:** Cooperatives are a state subject under the Constitution, meaning they come under the state government's jurisdiction. **Hence statement 4 is not correct.**

Q 21.A

- **Article 326 of the Constitution of India grants the right to vote to every citizen of India who is 18 years or older**, subject to disqualifications imposed by the Constitution or any law made by the appropriate legislature.
- **The Representation of the People Act, 1951, specifies certain conditions under which a person may be disqualified from voting. These include being of unsound mind, non-residence, and certain criminal convictions.**
- **Prisoners:**
 - **Section 62(5) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, explicitly disqualifies prisoners from voting.** This includes:
 - ✓ **Persons under a sentence of imprisonment:** Those who are confined in prison under a sentence of imprisonment are not entitled to vote.
 - ✓ **Persons in lawful custody:** Those in police custody are also disqualified from voting.
 - However, **the Act makes an exception for individuals under preventive detention. These individuals are allowed to vote, acknowledging that their detention is preventive rather than punitive.**
- **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q 22.A

- The Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) is a high powered body to advise the government on management and top level appointments of central Public Sector Enterprises. It has been set up with the objective of evolving a sound managerial policy for the Central Public Sector Enterprises and, in particular, to advise Government on appointments to their top management posts. **Hence, statements 1 and 2 are correct.**
- **Specific functions assigned to the P.E.S.B include the following:**
 - To be responsible for the selection and placement of personnel in the posts of Chairman, Managing Director or Chairman-cum-Managing Director (Level-I), and Functional Director (Level-II) in PSEs as well as in posts at any other level as may be specified by the Government;
 - To advise the Government on matters relating to appointments, confirmation or extension of tenure and termination of services of the personnel of the above mentioned levels;
 - To advise the Government on the desired structure at the Board level, and, for senior management personnel, for each PSE or group of PSEs;
 - To advise the Government on a suitable performance appraisal system for both the PSEs and the managerial personnel in such enterprises;
 - To build a data bank containing data relating to the performance of PSEs and its officers;
 - To advise the Government on formulation and enforcement of a code of conduct and ethics for managerial personnel in PSEs;
 - To advise the Government on evolving suitable training and development programs for management personnel in PSEs.
- **Constitution of the Board:** The P.E.S.B shall consist of a part-time or full-time Chairperson and three full-time Members. The Chairperson and Members shall be persons who have had a long and distinguished career in management of public or private corporations or public administration and have a proven record of achievements, preferably, in the field of personnel, finance, production or marketing. The three full-time Members of P.E.S.B shall be:
 - A distinguished serving or former Chief Executive of a Public Sector or Private Sector or Joint Sector Enterprise.
 - A distinguished person with experience in selection of Top Management personnel.
 - A distinguished serving or former Civil servant with experience in management of PSEs or in areas of finance, industry or economic affairs.
- **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

Q 23.D

- Social accountability has been **defined as an approach towards ensuring accountability that relies on civic engagement**, i.e., in which ordinary citizens and citizen groups participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability.
- Social accountability mechanisms can contribute to improved governance, increased development effectiveness through better service delivery, and citizen empowerment. In recent years, the expanded use

of participatory data collection and analysis tools, combined with enhanced space and opportunity for citizen and civil society engagement with the state, has led to a new generation of social accountability practices.

- These methods and tools are being increasingly used across different parts of India are:
 - **Participatory Planning and Policy Formulation ;**
 - **Participatory Budget Analysis**
 - **Participatory Expenditure Tracking System ;**
 - **Citizens' Surveys/Citizen Report Cards**
 - **Citizen Charters;**
 - **Community Scorecards**
 - **Social audits etc.**
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 24.A

- CSR(Corporate Social Responsibility) is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.
- A company satisfying any of the following criteria during the immediately preceding financial year is required to comply with CSR provisions:
 - Net worth of rupees five hundred crores or more,
 - or Turnover of rupees one thousand crores or more,
 - or Net profit of rupees five crores or more.
- These companies are required to spend a minimum of 2% of their average net profit for the preceding three financial years amount on CSR activities. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- Non-compliance with CSR provisions has been decriminalized by shifting such offenses to penalty regimes. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
- CSR spending is applicable to every company incorporated in India, including its holding or subsidiary, and a foreign company having its branch office or project office in India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

Q 25.B

- In the **early 1990s**, women in **rural Andhra Pradesh** took it upon themselves to fight against liquor dependency among their men and the subsequent verbal, physical and emotional abuse that followed. They had just one simple demand: **“no drinking or selling liquor”**. Led by a woman called Sandhya, the movement began as a dharna at the collectorate followed by the demand to stop sale of liquor in the village. The slogan of the anti-arrack movement was simple - prohibition on the sale of arrack. But this simple demand **touched upon larger social, economic and political issues of the region that affected women's life**. The women led struggle ultimately led to a statewide ban on liquor in 1995. **Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**
- The **Gulabi Gang is a vigilante group**. The group first appeared in Banda district, **Uttar Pradesh**, as a **response to widespread domestic abuse and other violence against women**. This group did not just limit their activities to a fight against gendered social evils, but rather battled against several wrongdoings such as hoarding, bribery, caste discrimination and several others. **Wearing pink sarees and carrying bamboo sticks**, they frequently resorted to violence in order to make their voices heard.
- The **Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** is a women's trade union that was started by women workers in Gujarat under the guidance of **Smt. Ela Bhatt in 1972**. Originally borne out of the Textile Labor Association (TLA), India's oldest and largest union of textile workers, SEWA is now a **globally recognized trade union of women workers** in the informal economy.
- Concerned with the preservation of **ecological balance**, the **Chipko movement in the state of Uttarakhand (then Uttar Pradesh) started in the early 1970s**. The protests were against the government's policy of handing out contracts to industrial giants to utilise forest produce for making profits. In the absence of men, it was the women of the village who took it upon themselves to step out of their homes and face the industrialists head on. This incident sparked off similar movements in other parts of **the sub-Himalayan region**.

Q 26.C

- Social Audit is the examination and assessment of a programme/scheme conducted with the active involvement of people and comparing official records with actual ground realities. Social Audit is a powerful tool for social transformation, community participation and government accountability. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- In India, the initiative of conducting social audits was taken by Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO), Jamshedpur in the year 1979. It gained significance after the 73rd amendment of the constitution relating to Panchayat Raj institutions. In India, social audits were first made statutory in the 2005 Rural Employment Act and the government also issued the Social Audit Rules in 2011 under the MGNREGA Act.
- **In the context of MGNREGS, Section 17 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) mandates the gram Sabha to monitor the execution of works, providing a legal basis for social audits. Social Audits are periodic assemblies convened by Gram Sabhas where all the details of a project are scrutinized. Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- Meghalaya has become the first state in the country to implement The Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2017, which makes social auditing of government programmes and schemes a standard practice. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**

Q 27.D

- **Recent Context:** Eight years after concluding the general framework of cooperation on the Chabahar port in Iran, India and Iran signed a 10-year contract for its operation. The long-term agreement was signed between Indian Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL) and Port and Maritime Organisation (PMO) of Iran, enabling operation of the Shahid-Behesti terminal.

About:

- **Chabahar is Iran's oceanic port nearest to India. It is situated in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, on the Makran coast. It lies in the Gulf of Oman. Moreover, Chabahar is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean. Hence both statements 1 and 2 are correct.**
- Chabahar Port project has two main ports called the Shahid Kalantari Port and the Shahid Beheshti Port.



Fig: Chabahar Port

- Iran had offered India the project of developing the Shahid Beheshti port which was well received by India. Progress and Updates Regarding the Chabahar Port Deal: India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the development of the Chabahar port in May 2015.
- In May 2016, India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement to establish the International Transport and Transit Corridor, also known as the Chabahar Agreement. This agreement aimed to improve transportation and trade connectivity between the three countries by utilising the port of Chabahar in Iran as a key transit point.
 - However, the finalisation of the long-term agreement has been delayed by several factors including differences on some clauses in the pact. The point of disagreement was the location of arbitration for disputes. India preferred a neutral country, while Iran insisted on its own courts or a favourable one.
- Now, both parties have agreed on a compromise that satisfies their respective interests. The contract stipulates that any disagreements should be settled through open communication and cooperation between the leaders of both countries. This fresh long-term agreement aims to supersede the initial contract, spanning a duration of 10 years with automatic renewal provisions.

Q 28.C

- **Context:** Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud assures President Droupadi Murmu that the Supreme Court is constantly working to simplify legal processes and reduce prison overcrowding.
- The FASTER initiative version 2.0 recently launched by SC ensures the immediate transfer of judicial orders of release to jail authorities electronically. The Supreme Court has been addressing cases related to prisoners' rights and overcrowding. Additionally, the Court aims to improve prison conditions through a research project.
- The FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records) system proposes transmission of e-authenticated copies of the interim orders, stay orders, bail orders and record of proceedings to the duty-holders for compliance and due execution, through a secured electronic communication channel.
- On 16 July 2021, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India N.V. Ramana announced a scheme called 'FASTER' or 'Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records' by which the Supreme Court would instantly, directly, securely and electronically transmit bail and other orders to jail authorities, district courts and High Courts.
- The Court took this initiative after people given bail by courts, even by the Supreme Court have to wait for days before prison authorities release them. Prison authorities who insist on receiving by hand the "authentic" hard copy of the bail order regardless of the fact that the personal liberty of people suffers. The Supreme Court asked State governments to file their reports about the Internet connectivity in their jails to prevent technical glitches in future.
- **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**

Q 29.C

At present (2016), a party is recognised as a state party in a state if any of the following conditions is fulfilled:

- If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned; and, in addition, it **wins 2 seats** in the assembly of the state concerned; or
- **If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or**
- **If it wins three per cent of seats in the legislative assembly at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned** or 3 seats in the assembly, whichever is more; or
- If it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
- **If it secures eight per cent of the total valid votes polled in the state at a General Election to the Lok Sabha from the state** or to the legislative assembly of the state. This condition was added in 2011.

Q 30.C

- The Prime Minister's Awards for excellence in Public Administration were instituted in 2006 by the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. They were not instituted on the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC). The 2nd ARC recommended similar awards for recognizing good performance at the State and district levels. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- It is aimed at acknowledging, recognizing and rewarding the extraordinary and innovative work done by officers of the Central and State Governments. All officers of Central & State Governments individually or as a group or as organizations are eligible for consideration. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The awards are given every year for Excellence in **implementing identified Priority Programmes** of Government of India and **extraordinary and innovative work** done by the Organizations of Central/ State Governments/ Districts in public governance. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

Q 31.A

- At the time of India's independence in 1947, the Indian subcontinent was a patchwork of British-controlled territories and 562 princely states, which were autonomous regions ruled by local monarchs under the suzerainty of the British Crown. The integration of these princely states into the newly independent Indian Union was a complex and critical task, crucial for the political and territorial consolidation of India. a few important Princely States and Their Unification:
- **Hyderabad:** Ruled by Nizam Osman Ali Khan. The Nizam of Hyderabad initially sought independence and refused to accede to India.
 - **After a prolonged stand-off and growing internal unrest, the Indian government launched "Operation Polo" in September 1948, a police action that led to the incorporation of Hyderabad into India.**

- **Kashmir:** Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir hesitated between joining India or Pakistan, leading to a standstill agreement. However, following a tribal invasion from Pakistan, he chose to accede to India in October 1947, seeking military assistance.
 - The Instrument of Accession was signed, but the region remains a point of contention between India and Pakistan.
- **Junagadh:** The Nawab of Junagadh opted to join Pakistan, despite the state being predominantly Hindu.
 - This decision led to civil unrest. **The Indian government intervened, and after a plebiscite in February 1948, where the majority voted to join India, Junagadh was integrated into the Indian Union.**
- **Travancore:** The Maharaja of Travancore declared his intention to remain independent.
 - Following negotiations and pressure from Indian leaders, Travancore acceded to India on July 1, 1949.
- **Mysore:** Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar signed the Instrument of Accession on August 9, 1947, integrating Mysore into the Indian Union smoothly.
- **Manipur:** Manipur had its own constitution and elected assembly and was initially hesitant to join India.
 - **After intense negotiations and a brief period of political unrest, Maharaja Bodhchandra Singh signed the Instrument of Accession in September 1949, leading to Manipur's integration into India.**
- **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q 32.B

- **Pravaah Portal:**
 - The Pravaah portal is one of the three major initiatives unveiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor. This initiative was earlier announced as part of the RBI's bi-monthly Statement on Development and Regulatory Policies.
 - **The main purpose of the Pravaah portal is to provide a convenient online platform for individuals and entities to apply for various regulatory approvals. This aims to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the processes related to granting regulatory approvals and clearances by the RBI. Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**
 - It is designed to make it easier for any individual or entity to apply online for regulatory approvals in a seamless manner.
 - This is intended to improve the efficiency of the regulatory approval process, making it more accessible and less time-consuming for applicants.
 - The functionality of providing retail investors with access to government securities is actually covered by the "Retail Direct Mobile App," another initiative unveiled by the RBI. This app aims to provide seamless and convenient access to the retail direct platform for transacting in government securities (G-Secs).

Q 33.A

- **The Representation of the People Act, 1950 primarily deals with the allocation of seats and the delimitation of constituencies for elections, the qualifications of voters, and the preparation of electoral rolls. Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- The Representation of the People Act, 1951, on the other hand, provides for the conduct of elections to the Houses of Parliament and to the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State, the qualifications and disqualifications for membership of those Houses, and the corrupt practices and other offenses at or in connection with such elections.
- **The general electoral roll in India refers to the list of eligible voters residing in a particular constituency, prepared by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for parliamentary and assembly elections. Some key points about the general electoral roll:**
 - **It includes all eligible voters who are ordinarily residing in the constituency, regardless of their religion, race, caste, or gender.**
 - **The Representation of the People Act, 1950 provides the legal framework for the preparation and revision of general electoral rolls.**
 - Eligible voters can get their names included, deleted or transposed in the general electoral roll by applying to the Electoral Registration Office.
- Special electoral rolls are maintained for specific categories of voters. These include:
 - **Overseas Electors:** Indian citizens residing outside the country can register as overseas voters and are included in a special roll for voting in their home constituency.

- **Service Voters:** Members of the armed forces and other designated government employees can register as service voters, allowing them to vote while stationed away from their home constituencies.
- **Voters in Teachers' and Graduates' Constituencies:** In certain states, special rolls are prepared for voters in constituencies reserved for teachers and graduates for legislative council elections.
- Hence, the Act does not explicitly define "General" and "Special" electoral rolls, **the general electoral rolls encompass all eligible voters in a constituency, while special electoral rolls cater to specific categories of voters, such as overseas electors and service voters. Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- **Legal framework:**
 - **The categorization of electoral rolls into general and special rolls is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India.** However, the Representation of the People Act, 1950 provides the legal basis for the preparation of electoral rolls for parliamentary and assembly constituencies.
 - **The Act empowers the ECI to prepare and revise the electoral rolls, and also allows for the inclusion of certain categories of voters like overseas electors and service voters in special rolls.**
 - **Article 324: Empowers the Election Commission of India to supervise, direct, and control the preparation of electoral rolls and conduct elections.**
 - **The Constitution and the Act together provide the legal framework for the ECI to maintain general and special electoral rolls for the conduct of elections in India. Hence statement 3 is correct.**

Q 34.D

- The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is an index that scores and ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as assessed by experts and business executives. The CPI generally defines corruption as an "abuse of entrusted power for private gain". The index is published annually by the non-governmental organisation Transparency International since 1995.
- The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories around the globe by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, **scoring on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).** Over two-thirds of countries score below 50 out of 100, which strongly indicates that they have serious corruption problems. The global average is stuck at only 43, while the vast majority of countries have made no progress or declined in the last decade. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- **India ranked 93 out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2023 as compared to ranked 85 in 2022.** Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, and Sweden are perceived as the least corrupt nations in the world, ranking consistently high among international financial transparency, while the most apparently corrupt are Syria, South Sudan, and Venezuela (scoring 13), as well as Somalia (scoring 11). **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**

Q 35.B

- In order to encourage, promote and assist voluntary action in rural development with a focus on Injecting new technology inputs for enhancement of rural prosperity, the Government, set up the council for the Advancement of people's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). It is a registered autonomous body under the Ministry of Rural Development.
- **Objectives of CAPART:**
 - To encourage, promote and assist voluntary action for the implementation of projects intending enhancement of rural prosperity. **Hence, option (c) is correct.**
 - To strengthen and promote voluntary efforts in rural development with a focus on injecting new technological inputs.
 - To act as a catalyst for the development of technology appropriate for rural areas. **Hence, option (a) is correct.**
 - To promote, plan, undertake, develop, maintain and support projects/schemes aimed at all round development, creation of employment opportunities, promotion of self-reliance, generation of awareness organisation and improvement in the quality of life of the people in rural areas through voluntary action. **Hence, option (d) is correct.**
- CAPART's initiatives are not channelised through State Departments/District Administration. Monitoring, evaluation and selection of NGOs is done directly by CAPART Headquarters and its regional offices. **Hence, option (b) is not correct.**

Q 36.D

- To address the challenges like criminalization of politics, the influence of money and muscle power, voter apathy, and the need for greater transparency in political funding., numerous committees and commissions

have been formed, each providing significant recommendations aimed at reforming the electoral system. These bodies have examined various aspects of the electoral process, from candidate selection and campaign finance to voter registration and election management.

- Key among these are the **Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms**, the **Vohra Committee**, the **Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections**, the **Law Commission**, and the Election Commission of India's proposed reforms, among others.
- **The Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990):**
 - Introduction of Proportional Representation: Suggested implementing a proportional representation system to make elections more representative and reduce the influence of money and muscle power.
- **The Vohra Committee Report (1993):**
 - Combating the Criminalization of Politics: Highlighted the criminal-politician nexus and recommended establishing a nodal agency to address this issue and safeguard the political process.
- **The Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections (1998):**
 - State Funding of Elections: Advocated for partial state funding to reduce political parties' dependence on private donations and curb money power in politics.
- **The Law Commission Report on Reform of the Electoral Laws (1999):**
 - Disqualification of Candidates with Criminal Backgrounds: Proposed disqualifying candidates with serious criminal charges framed against them from contesting elections.
- **The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2001):**
 - Simultaneous Elections: Suggested holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies to minimize election-related disruptions and costs.
- **The ECI – Proposed Electoral Reforms (2004):**
 - Introduction of Totalizer Machines: Recommended using totalizer machines for counting votes to ensure ballot secrecy and prevent voting pattern identification.
- **The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008):**
 - Ban on Post-Poll Alliances: Recommended banning post-poll alliances to maintain electoral transparency and respect the electorate's mandate.
- **The ECI Proposed Electoral Reforms (2016):**
 - Regulation of Political Parties' Finances: Suggested stricter audit mechanisms and transparency in political party funding to reduce the influence of illicit money in elections.
- These recommendations reflect the ongoing efforts to refine and strengthen India's electoral framework, ensuring that the world's largest democracy remains fair, transparent, and inclusive. Implementing these reforms can help address the systemic issues in the electoral process, thereby enhancing public trust in democratic institutions.
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 37.D

- **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**
 - It is a specialized body set up under the National Green Tribunal Act (2010) for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources. The Tribunal's dedicated jurisdiction in environmental matters shall provide speedy environmental justice and help reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts **Hence statement II is correct.**
 - NGT is mandated to dispose of applications or appeals within 6 months of filing the same.
- **What is the Structure of NGT?**
 - The Tribunal comprises the Chairperson, the Judicial Members, and Expert Members. They shall hold office for a term of three years or till the age of sixty-five years, whichever is earlier, and are not eligible for reappointment.
 - The Central Government appoints the Chairperson in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
 - The central government shall form a Selection Committee to appoint the Judicial Members and Expert Members.
 - There are to be at least 10 and a maximum of 20 full-time Judicial members and Expert Members in the tribunal.

- The Tribunal has jurisdiction over all civil cases involving substantial questions relating to the environment (including enforcement of any legal right relating to the environment).
- As per SC, the role of the NGT is not simply adjudicatory; it has to perform equally vital roles that are preventative, ameliorative, or remedial.
- Being a statutory adjudicatory body like Courts, apart from the original jurisdiction side on the filing of an application, NGT also has appellate jurisdiction to hear appeals as a Court (Tribunal).
- The Tribunal is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, but shall be guided by principles of 'natural justice'.
- While passing any order/decision/ award, it shall apply the principles of sustainable development, the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle.
- Note: The Supreme Court had said that the National Green Tribunal or NGT is subordinate to the high court in so far as territorial jurisdiction is concerned.
- In May 2022, the Supreme Court ruled that the NGT Act of 2010 does not take away the jurisdiction of high courts. The court stated that Sections 14 and 22 of the NGT Act do not take away the jurisdiction of high courts under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution. The court also ruled that the remedy of direct appeal to the Supreme Court from NGT decisions under Section 22 of the NGT Act is valid, but the remedy under Articles 226 or 227 before the high court remains. **Hence statement I is not correct.**
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 38.C

- **Recent Context:**
 - Recent reports have brought to light allegations against the tech giant Apple, accusing it of using "blood minerals" in its products. This term refers to minerals that are mined under conditions of severe human rights abuses, often in conflict zones. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been at the center of these allegations due to its rich deposits of **tantalum, tin, tungsten, and gold, collectively known as 3TG.**
- **What are "Blood Minerals"?**
 - "Blood minerals" are minerals that are mined in areas where armed conflict, human rights abuses, and violence are rampant. These minerals are typically extracted in regions where the local population suffers from severe exploitation, including forced labor, child labor, and other forms of coercion and abuse. **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**
- **The Situation in the Eastern DRC**
 - The eastern region of the DRC is rich in 3TG minerals but has been plagued by violence and conflict for decades. Rebel groups, such as the March 23 Movement (M23), and various armed factions benefit from the mining and trade of these minerals. The United Nations and other entities have accused Rwanda of supporting these rebel groups to control the mineral-rich areas, exacerbating the conflict and human suffering.

Q 39.B

- **The ICC T20 World Cup:**
 - The **T20 World Cup**, first played in 2007, is an international cricket championship, usually held once every two years.
 - The inaugural men's Twenty20 edition, featuring 12 teams, **was held in South Africa.** The **Indian cricket team**, led by MS Dhoni, was crowned the champions after beating Pakistan by five runs in the final at Johannesburg.
 - **So far, in nine editions, India, England, and the West Indies have emerged as the joint-most successful nations with two titles each. Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**
 - **Australia, the most successful team in the men's ODI World Cup with five titles, has got to lift their first and only T20 World Cup in 2021.**
 - England first won the T20 World Cup in 2010 in the Caribbean, winning the final by seven wickets against Australia. The England cricket team claimed the 2022 title in Australia after beating Pakistan by five wickets in the final.

- With this 2022 victory, England became the first team to simultaneously hold both men's World Cups - the 2019 ODI World Cup and the 2022 T20 World Cup.
- **West Indies, meanwhile, were the first team to win the T20 World Cup twice**, courtesy their victories in the 2012 edition in Sri Lanka and 2016 in India. The Caribbeans beat Sri Lanka by 36 runs in the 2012 final while sealing a four-wicket win against England in the 2016 final.
- **India's Virat Kohli is the leading run-getter in the T20 World Cup history with 1292 runs in 35 matches, since his debut in 2012.**
- **Meanwhile, Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is the top wicket-taker in the T20 World Cup**, recording 50 scalps in 43 matches between 2007 and 2024.
- **While the T20 World Cup began as a 12-team competition in 2007, it was expanded to 16 teams from the 2014 edition. The 2024 edition had 20 sides competing.**

T20 World Cup winners list

Year	Winner	Runners-Up	Hosts
2007	India	Pakistan	South Africa
2009	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	England
2010	England	Australia	West Indies
2012	West Indies	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
2014	Sri Lanka	India	Bangladesh
2016	West Indies	England	India
2021	Australia	New Zealand	UAE and Oman
2022	England	Pakistan	Australia
2024	India	South Africa	USA and West Indies

Q 40.B

- **NITI Aayog**
 - Planning Commission was replaced by a new institution – NITI Aayog on January 1, 2015, with an emphasis on the 'Bottom–' approach to envisage the vision of Maximum Governance and Minimum Government, echoing the spirit of 'Cooperative Federalism'.
 - It is supported by an attached office, the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Organisation (DMEO), a flagship initiative, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), and an autonomous body, the National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD).
 - **The Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO)** is an attached office of NITI Aayog. As the apex monitoring and evaluation (M&E) office in the country, DMEO supports the Government achieve the national development agenda through M&E of government policies and programs. **Hence option 2 is correct.**
 - **The National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development**, the only Institute of its kind, was established by the Government of India, in 1962. It's a Central Autonomous Organisation under the NITI Aayog, Ministry of Planning, Government of India. The Director General of the Institute is appointed by the Government of India and holds the rank of Additional Secretary to the Central Government. **Hence option 3 is correct.**
- **NOTE:**
 - **Council of Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)**
 - It works as a nodal agency for catalyzing and coordinating the emerging partnership between voluntary organizations and the Government for the sustainable development of rural areas. CAPART is an autonomous body registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860. It is chaired by the Union Minister for Rural Development. **Hence option 1 is not correct.**

Q 41.D

- The **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SCs)** is a **constitutional body** established by **Article 338** of the Constitution.
- **Evolution:**
 - **Originally, Article 338** provided for the appointment of a **Special Officer for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)** to investigate all matters relating to the **constitutional safeguards for the SCs and STs.**

- In **1978**, the Government (through a Resolution) set up a multimember Commission for SCs and STs
- In **1987**, the Government (through another Resolution) modified the functions of the Commission and renamed it as the **National Commission for SCs and STs**
- The **65th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1990** provided for establishment of a high level multi-member **National Commission for SCs and STs** in the place of a single Special Officer for SCs and STs.
- The **89th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2003 bifurcated** the combined National Commission for SCs and STs into **two separate bodies**:
 - ✓ **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (Article 338)** and
 - ✓ **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (Article 338-A).**
- Since then, the **functions of the NCSC** include:
 - To **investigate and monitor** all matters relating to the constitutional and other legal safeguards for the SCs and to evaluate their working
 - To inquire into **specific complaints** with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the SCs
 - To participate and advise on the planning process of **socio-economic development** of the SCs and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union or a state
 - To present **reports to the President**, upon the working of those safeguards
 - To make **recommendations** as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or a state for the effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the SCs
 - To discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, **welfare and development** and advancement of the SCs as the president may specify.
- Therefore, the NCSC handles matters related only to the SCs and not STs. Hence, **statements 1, 2, and 3 are not correct.**

Q 42.D

- **Post-independence India inherited a complex tapestry of states and territories from British rule, which included provinces and princely states.** The linguistic and cultural diversity of these regions often led to demands for states that better represented the identities of their inhabitants. The most prominent movement was for the creation of a Telugu-speaking state, which culminated in the formation of Andhra State in 1953. This set a intensified demands for the reorganization of states based on linguistic lines.
- **In response to growing demands for state reorganization, the Government of India appointed the State Reorganisation Commission in December 1953, chaired by retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Fazal Ali, with members H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar.**
- The commission was tasked with recommending the reorganization of states to promote the welfare of the people and the nation, strengthen national unity and security, and **balance linguistic and cultural homogeneity with administrative efficiency and economic development.**
- **The State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) primarily recommended the reorganization of state boundaries based on linguistic lines, although considerations of economic viability and administrative convenience were also taken into account. The SRC's main aim was to align state boundaries with linguistic and cultural identities to promote administrative efficiency and regional unity. Hence statement I is not correct.**
- It submitted its report in October 1955, which formed the basis for the subsequent legislation, i.e. the States Reorganisation Act of 1956.
- **This act led to the creation of 14 states and 6 union territories. Hence statement II is correct.**
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 43.C

- **The Finance commission of India is a Constitutional body under Article 280. It is constituted by the president of India every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary.**
- It is required to make **recommendations to the president** of India on the following matters:
 - The distribution of the net proceeds of taxes to be shared between the Centre and the states, and the allocation between the states of the respective shares of such proceeds. **Hence, option (a) is correct.**
 - The principles that should govern the grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre (i.e., out of the consolidated fund of India). **Hence, option (b) is correct.**

- The measures needed to augment the consolidated fund of a state to supplement the resources of the panchayats and the municipalities in the state on the basis of the recommendations made by the state finance commission.
- Any other matter referred to it by the president in the interests of sound finance
- The recommendation to the governor on the principles that should govern the division of tax revenues between a state and its Panchayati Raj institutions is given by the **State Finance Commission**. Hence, **option (c) is not correct.**

Q 44.C

- SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) is a **flagship programme of the Election Commission of India to promote voter education and participation in elections. To capture all the events and activity on a digital platform the Election Commission of India has developed a web-based solution that provides information and resources on voter education and participation in elections in India.** The portal was launched in 2009 and is available in English, and Hindi. **Hence both statements 1 and 2 are correct.**
- In ECI there is a separate division that looks after it i.e., SVEEP division that organizes multi-intervention programmes that reaches out through different modes and media to educate citizens, electors, and voters about the electoral process in order to increase their awareness and promote their informed participation. The ECI SVEEP portal includes all the publications, e-books and awareness material to educate the citizens.

The portal provides a variety of information and resources, including:

- Voter registration information
- Voter education materials
- Voter outreach programs
- Voter information and resources for marginalized groups
- All information available in Hindi and english both.

Q 45.A

- The comprehensive electoral process is guided by the Constitution and election laws, ensuring free and fair elections in India. The ECI plays a crucial role in conducting elections impartially and upholding democratic principles.
- The electoral process in India, including all the key steps:
 - **Delimitation of Constituencies**
 - ✓ The Election Commission of India (ECI) is responsible for delimiting parliamentary and assembly constituencies based on population figures from the latest census.
 - ✓ Delimitation ensures equal representation by redrawing boundaries to balance the population across constituencies.
 - **Announcement of Election Schedule**
 - ✓ The ECI announces the schedule for the upcoming Lok Sabha or state assembly elections, including dates for filing nominations, scrutiny, withdrawal, polling, and counting of votes.
 - **Model Code of Conduct comes into effect:**
 - ✓ The Model Code of Conduct comes into effect immediately after the announcement of the election schedule by the ECI.
 - ✓ It lays down guidelines for political parties and candidates to ensure free and fair elections.
 - **Issue of Notification**
 - ✓ The President of India issues a notification calling upon the electorate to elect members to the Lok Sabha or state legislative assemblies.
 - **Filing of Nominations**
 - ✓ Candidates file their nomination papers before the Returning Officer of the constituency.
 - ✓ Nomination papers contain details like the candidate's name, address, age, and the name of the political party they belong to.
 - **Scrutiny of Nominations**
 - ✓ The Returning Officer scrutinizes the nomination papers to verify their correctness and eligibility of the candidates.
 - ✓ Candidates can withdraw their nominations within a specified time period after scrutiny.
 - **Allocation of Symbols**
 - ✓ After the withdrawal of nominations, the ECI allots unique symbols to the candidates.

- ✓ National and state parties have exclusive symbols, while independent candidates are allotted free symbols.
- **Election Campaigns**
 - ✓ The official election campaign period begins after the list of nominated candidates is finalized and concludes 48 hours before polling.
 - ✓ Candidates and parties engage in rallies, meetings, and media outreach to seek votes.
- **Polling**
 - ✓ Voting takes place on the scheduled polling day(s) using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
 - ✓ Polling is staggered across multiple phases to ensure law and order and availability of security forces.
- **Counting of Votes**
 - ✓ Votes are counted under the supervision of the Returning Officer on the specified date.
 - ✓ The candidate with the highest number of valid votes is declared the winner.
- **Declaration of Results**
 - ✓ The Returning Officer declares the final election results and submits a report to the ECI.
 - ✓ The ECI then notifies the names of the elected candidates in the official gazette.
- **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q 46.C

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (“BNS”) was enacted on December 25, 2023, repealing and replacing the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (“IPC”) as the new penal code of the country.

Key changes in the BNS include:

- Offences against the body: The IPC criminalises acts such as murder, abetment of suicide, assault and causing grievous hurt. The BNS retains these provisions. It adds new offences such as organised crime, terrorism, and murder or grievous hurt by a group on certain grounds. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- Sexual offences against women: The IPC criminalises acts such as rape, voyeurism, stalking and insulting the modesty of a woman. The BNS retains these provisions. It increases the threshold for the victim to be classified as a major, in the case of gang rape, from 16 to 18 years of age. **It also criminalises sexual intercourse with a woman by deceitful means or making false promises. Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- Sedition: The BNS removes the offence of sedition. It instead penalises the following: (i) exciting or attempting to excite secession, armed rebellion, or subversive activities, (ii) encouraging feelings of separatist activities, or (iii) endangering the sovereignty or unity and integrity of India. These offences may involve exchange of words or signs, electronic communication, or use of financial means. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**
- Rulings of the Supreme Court: The BNS conforms to some decisions of the Supreme Court. These include omitting adultery as an offence and adding life imprisonment as one of the penalties (in addition to the death penalty) for murder or attempt to murder by a life convict.

Q 47.B

- The First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system, also known as the plurality voting system, is a widely used electoral system in many democratic countries.
- **In the FPTP system, the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins the seat, even if they do not have an absolute majority.**
- This often leads to a two-party system, where the two largest parties win most of the seats, while smaller parties struggle to gain representation.
- **The FPTP system can lead to the under-representation of smaller parties. Since the system favors the two largest parties, smaller parties often struggle to win seats, even if they have a significant share of the popular vote.**
- **The FPTP system is known for producing clear winners, as it is designed to create a decisive outcome and a stable government. In contrast, proportional representation systems are more likely to result in coalition governments,** as they allow for a more diverse representation of parties in the legislature.
- The First-Past-The-Post system has several advantages, including its simplicity, quick results, strong constituency representation, and the tendency to produce stable governments.
 - However, it is important to note that these advantages come with certain disadvantages, such as potential under-representation of smaller parties and the possibility of tactical voting.

- The FPTP system is commonly used in countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and India.
- Hence option (b) is the correct answer.

Q 48.B

- **The BRICS Games 2024:**
 - The BRICS Games 2024, took place in Kazan, Tatarstan, from June 12 to 23, 2024, which served as a significant event within the BRICS framework.
 - **Evolution and Frequency of the BRICS Games:**
 - ✓ The tradition of holding sports events in the BRICS chair country began in 2016, and these games have been held more frequently. The BRICS Games have evolved since their inception, with the initial football tournament in 2016 being followed by events in 2017-2018 that included three sports. By 2021, the games were expanded to include additional sports and align with India's Khelo India Games. Thus, the BRICS Games are not held on a four-year cycle. Hence statement 1 is not correct.
 - **Participation of Nations:**
 - ✓ The BRICS Games are not restricted to athletes from BRICS member countries alone. The 2024 edition will see participation from athletes beyond the BRICS nations. Over 5,000 athletes from more than 60 countries will compete in Kazan, reflecting the global nature of the event. This inclusion highlights the games' commitment to fostering international participation and cultural exchange. Hence statement 2 is not correct.
 - **Host Nation:**
 - ✓ The BRICS Games 2024 were hosted by Russia. This year's games are took place in Kazan as part of Russia's Chairmanship of the BRICS association. This hosting aligns with Russia's role in the BRICS framework and underscores the importance of the event in promoting international sportsmanship and cooperation. Hence statement 3 is correct.

Q 49.C

- **Context of the News:**
 - **Recent Deployment:** DD Kisan, an Indian television channel dedicated to agricultural content, recently introduced two Artificial Intelligence (AI) anchors named 'AI Krish' and 'AI Bhoomi'. This initiative marks a significant technological advancement aimed at enhancing the channel's engagement with its viewers. Hence option (c) is the correct answer.
- **Function and Features of AI Krish and AI Bhoomi:**
 - **Role:** AI Krish and AI Bhoomi are AI TV anchors designed to provide information relevant to agriculture and rural communities. They are programmed to deliver updates and information on agricultural research, trends in agriculture mandis, weather changes, and government schemes related to agriculture.
 - **Languages:** These AI anchors are capable of speaking in 50 different Indian and foreign languages, making them accessible to a broad audience across various states and regions.

Q 50.B

- **The Right to a Clean Environment is increasingly recognized as a fundamental human right, essential for the well-being and dignity of individuals.** This right encompasses access to a healthy environment, which includes clean air, water, and safe living conditions. Key Aspects of the Right to a Clean Environment:
- **Constitutional Framework:** The Right to a Clean Environment is not explicitly mentioned in the Indian Constitution. However, it is derived from several constitutional provisions:
 - **Article 21:** This article guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. The Supreme Court of India has interpreted this right to include the right to a clean and healthy environment. In various landmark judgments, the Court has held that a clean environment is integral to the right to life.
 - **Article 48A:** This article directs the State to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. It emphasizes the responsibility of the State in environmental conservation.
 - **Article 51A(g):** This article imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures.

- **Judicial Interpretations:** The Indian judiciary has played a crucial role in recognizing and expanding the Right to a Clean Environment through various landmark judgments:
 - **Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar (1991):** The Supreme Court held that the right to life under Article 21 includes the right to a healthy environment. The Court emphasized that it is the duty of the State to take necessary steps to prevent pollution and protect the environment.
 - **M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (1987):** In this case, the Court recognized the right to a clean environment as a fundamental right and directed the government to take measures to prevent pollution of the Ganges River.
 - **Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India (1996):** The Supreme Court ruled that the right to a clean environment is a part of the right to life and that the polluter pays principle should be applied to ensure that those responsible for pollution bear the costs of managing it.
- **International Recognition:** The Right to a Clean Environment is also recognized in various international treaties and declarations, including:
 - **Stockholm Declaration (1972):** This declaration emphasizes the need for a healthy environment and sustainable development.
 - **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992):** This declaration reaffirms the right to a healthy environment and the responsibility of states to protect it.
- **Legislative Framework:** In addition to constitutional provisions, India has enacted several laws aimed at protecting the environment, which further supports the Right to a Clean Environment:
 - **The Environment Protection Act, 1986:** This Act provides for the protection and improvement of the environment and the prevention of hazards to human beings, other living creatures, plants, and property.
 - **The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974:** This Act aims to prevent and control water pollution and to maintain or restore the wholesomeness of water.
 - **The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981:** This Act aims to prevent, control, and abate air pollution.
- While significant progress has been made in recognizing and protecting this right, ongoing efforts are needed to address challenges and ensure a sustainable and healthy environment for all citizens. The interplay between constitutional provisions, judicial activism, and legislative frameworks plays a vital role in promoting the right to a clean environment in India.
- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution directs the State to promote international peace,** maintain just relations, respect international law, and encourage dispute settlement by arbitration.
- **Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q 51.B

- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution**
 - The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) was set up by a resolution of the Government of India in 2000. The 11-member Commission was headed by M.N. Venkatachaliah, the former Chief Justice of India. It submitted its report in 2002.
 - The commission identified the eleven areas of study and proposed to examine them. They included the following:
 - Strengthening of the institutions of parliamentary democracy (working of the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary; their accountability; problems of the administrative, social, and economic cost of political instability; exploring the possibilities of stability within the discipline of parliamentary democracy).
 - Electoral reforms; standards in political life.
 - The pace of socio-economic change and development under the Constitution (assurance of social and economic rights: how fair? how fast? how equal?).
 - Promoting literacy; generating employment; ensuring social security; and alleviation poverty.
 - Union-State relations.
 - Decentralization and devolution; empowerment and strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions.
 - Enlargement of Fundamental Rights.
 - Effectuation of Fundamental Duties.
 - **Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q 52.B

- According to Article 328 of Constitution of India, the Legislature of a State may from time to time by law make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, the elections to the House or either House of the Legislature of the State including the preparation of electoral rolls and all other matters necessary for securing the due constitution of such House or Houses. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- However these laws are Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and in so far as provision in that behalf is not made by Parliament.
- One nation One Election requires amendment to Article 172 which stipulates that every legislative Assembly of every State, unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting.
- However such an amendment cannot be brought about without violating the federal structure—particularly in States ruled by Opposition parties so that State elections can be synchronised with Lok Sabha polls, Parliament cannot do so as it will be infringing on the federal structure of the Constitution.
- Thus One nation One Election requires a constitutional amendment which has to be ratified by the state legislative assembly by at least half of all the states in the Union of India. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Q 53.D

- Civil Society Organisations are expected to play an important role in all conceivable aspects of development as a planner and implementer of development programmes.
- **Specific roles performed by the civil society organisations are as follows:**
- **Facilitating Communication in the Planning Process** - In policy-making, especially at the field level, they have a good feel of the community response and basic needs of the citizens. To win the confidence of the people (community) they use interpersonal methods of communication. They provide information to the public agencies about the lives, attitudes, culture and capabilities of people in their area. **Hence option 1 is correct.**
- **Mobilising Local Resources and Initiatives for proper Planning**- The civil society actors play a crucial role in development especially through mobilising local resources and initiatives. Their efforts can be seen during the post-disaster phase, especially in planning for rehabilitation and reconstruction. To uplift the vulnerable people they plan and develop land, building materials supply centres, and community-based economic enterprises; construct houses; and provide infrastructure. **Hence option 2 is correct.**
- **Advocacy for underprivileged sections** - Civil society actors prepare and empower the disadvantaged sections of people to overcome psychological inhibitions and to raise their voice against atrocities and injustice. This is basically an advocacy role. They act as 'Ombudsman' for the affected people, and attempt to influence government policies and programmes on behalf of the underprivileged sections of society. **Hence option 3 is correct.**
- They conduct innovative research and activities in the field of planning for policy-making and implementation of development programmes, which is documented and shared with the government and public. These efforts in monitoring and sharing of results contribute to the effective functioning of the bureaucracy and political leadership, and encourage people's participation in the policymaking process; thus, they keep a check on policy process. Some NGOs provide technical assistance, and training for monitoring and evaluation. **Hence option 4 is correct.**

Q 54.B

- A co-operative society is a voluntary association of individuals having common needs, who join hands for the achievement of common economic interest. Its aim is to provide support to its members, with focus on the interest of the poorer sections of society, through the principle of self-help and mutual help. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- The Cooperative Societies with objects not confined to one State are governed by Entry 44 of the List I - Union List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution and provisions of the centrally administered Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002. The Cooperative Societies with objects confined to one State are governed by Entry 32 of the List II - State List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution and provisions of the respective State Cooperative Societies Act. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- As cooperatives function under the mutual cooperation of all the members, all members are equal and free for their rights. Therefore "one-person-one-vote" system prevails here. Each cooperative member has equal voting rights, regardless of the number of shares they own or their role in the organization. A cooperative is a separate legal entity from the members, directors, and employees. These parties are not liable for the entity's debts. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**

Q 55.A

- The Forest Rights Act, 2006, officially known as the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act**, aims to rectify historical injustices faced by forest-dwelling communities in India. Here are the key provisions of the Act:
 - **Recognition of Rights:** The Act recognizes and vests the rights of Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDST) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD) who have been residing in forests for generations. This includes rights over land and resources that they have traditionally used.
 - **Types of Rights:** The Act identifies four types of rights for forest-dwelling communities:
 - ✓ **Title Rights:** Grants ownership of land (up to a maximum of 4 hectares) that has been cultivated by the family. Hence statement 2 is not correct.
 - ✓ **Use Rights:** Includes the right to collect minor forest produce, grazing rights, and access to water bodies.
 - ✓ **Relief and Development Rights:** Provides rights to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction and access to basic amenities.
 - ✓ **Forest Management Rights:** Empowers communities to protect, regenerate, and manage community forest resources that they have traditionally conserved.
 - **Role of Gram Sabha:** The Gram Sabha (village assembly) plays a central role in the implementation of the Act. It is responsible for identifying and verifying claims of forest-dwelling communities, monitoring the implementation of rights, and passing resolutions regarding forest management. Hence statement 3 is correct.
 - The Forest Rights Act, 2006, does not specifically mention the creation of Community Forest Resource Management Committees (CFRMCs). Instead, it empowers the Gram Sabha to make decisions regarding the management and protection of community forest resources. The role of the Gram Sabha is central in verifying claims, managing forest resources, and protecting forest rights. Hence statement 1 is not correct.
 - **Eligibility Criteria:** To be eligible for rights under the Act, individuals must have resided in the forest for at least three generations (75 years prior to December 13, 2005) for bona fide livelihood needs.
 - **Process for Claiming Rights:** The Gram Sabha initiates the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community forest rights. Claims are verified and consolidated before being submitted to the appropriate authorities for recognition.
 - **Protection from Eviction:** The Act protects forest-dwelling communities from eviction from their traditional lands, ensuring that their rights are recognized and upheld.
 - **Community Forest Resource Rights:** The Act recognizes the rights of communities over common property resources and allows them to manage these resources sustainably.
 - **Strengthening Conservation:** The Act aims to strengthen the conservation regime of forests while ensuring the livelihood and food security of forest-dwelling communities.

Q 56.B

- 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. The Dalit Panthers were inspired by the **Black Panther Party**, a socialist movement that sought to **combat racial discrimination against African-Americans**, during the **Civil Rights Movement in the United States**, which occurred in the mid-20th century.
- Activities of Dalit Panthers mostly centred around fighting increasing atrocities on Dalits in various parts of the State. The larger ideological agenda of the Panthers was **to destroy the caste system**. Their manifesto, issued in 1973, fit **the Ambedkarite spirit into a broader Marxist framework** and heralded the rise of an autonomous Dalit perspective in post-Independence India. **Hence statement (b) is not correct.**
- It sought to build an organisation of all oppressed sections like the **landless poor peasants and urban industrial workers along with Dalits**.
- Dalit writers protested **against the brutalities of the caste system** in their numerous autobiographies and other literary works published during this period. These works portraying the life experiences of the most downtrodden social sections of Indian society sent shock waves in **Marathi literary world**, made **literature more broad-based and representative of different social sections** and initiated contestations in the cultural realm.

Q 57.C

- **General Consent Principle for CBI**
 - The consent of the state government to CBI can be either case-specific or “general”.
 - General consent is normally given by states to help the CBI in the seamless investigation of cases of corruption against central government employees in their states.
 - The Central Government can authorize CBI to investigate such a crime in a State but only with the consent of the concerned State Government. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - This is essentially consent by default, which means CBI may begin investigations taking consent as having been already given.
 - In the absence of general consent, CBI would have to apply to the state government for its consent in every individual case, and before taking even small actions. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Q 58.A

- **Proportional representation (PR) is an electoral system where the number of seats a political party or group wins in an elected body is proportionate to the number of votes they receive from the electorate. Hence statement II is correct.**
 - This means that if a party receives a certain percentage of the total votes, it will receive a corresponding percentage of the seats in the legislative body.
 - Some common PR systems include party-list PR, single transferable vote, and mixed member proportional.
- **The PR system often leads to a multiparty system where no single party gains an outright majority. As a result, coalition governments are common.**
 - **While coalitions can represent a broader spectrum of the electorate, they can also lead to political instability if the coalition partners have conflicting interests or if the coalition is fragile.**
- **Advantages of PR system:**
 - ✓ **Fairer representation:** PR ensures that the distribution of seats closely matches the proportion of votes received by each party, making the system more representative of voter preference.
 - ✓ **Inclusion of minority voices:** PR provides a better chance for smaller parties and minority groups to gain representation in the legislature. **Hence statement I is correct.**
 - ✓ **Reduced wasted votes:** Under PR, fewer votes are considered "wasted" as more voters' preferences are taken into account.
 - ✓ **Encourages coalition building:** PR often leads to coalition governments, which can promote consensus and moderation in policymaking.
- **Disadvantages :**
 - **Political instability:** PR can result in coalition governments, which may be less stable and decisive compared to single-party majorities.
 - **Complexity:** PR systems are generally more complex for voters to understand, especially in countries with low literacy rates.
 - **Weaker constituency link:** PR list systems can weaken the direct link between elected representatives and their local constituencies.
 - **Potential for extremism:** PR can provide a route for extremist parties to gain representation, which is less likely under majoritarian systems.
 - **Expense:** PR can be more costly to implement compared to simpler plurality voting methods
- **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q 59.C

- **Cooperative Society:** A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled. The Co-operative Society is formed for the mutual benefit of all the members.
 - **Number and Term of members of the board and its office bearers of Co-operative Society:**
 - **Article 243 ZJ**
 - ✓ **Directors:** Such number of directors as may be provided by the state legislature but **not more than 21**. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - **Term of office:**
 - ✓ 5 years from the date of election and election of a board shall be conducted before the expiry of the term of the current board (**Article ZK**) by such body, as may be provided by the state legislature.

- **Reservation of seats**
 - ✓ The state legislature shall provide a **reservation of 1 seat to SC/ST and 2 seats to women** on the board of every cooperative society having members from such a category of persons. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Q 60.A

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at safeguarding consumer rights and addressing grievances. Here are the key provisions of the Act:
 - **Definition of Consumer:** The Act defines a consumer as any person who buys goods or services for personal use and not for resale. It includes users of such goods and services.
 - **Consumer Rights:** The Act recognizes six consumer rights:
 - ✓ The right to be protected against hazardous goods and services.
 - ✓ The right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard, and price of goods or services.
 - ✓ The right to choose goods and services.
 - ✓ The right to be heard and to seek redressal against unfair trade practices.
 - ✓ The right to consumer education.
 - ✓ The right to seek compensation for unfair trade practices or exploitation.
 - **Establishment of Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions:** The Act establishes a three-tier structure for consumer dispute redressal:
 - ✓ District Commission: For claims up to `1 crore.
 - ✓ State Commission: For claims between `1 crore and `10 crore.
 - ✓ National Commission: For claims exceeding `10 crore.
 - ✓ These commissions have the authority to adjudicate consumer disputes and provide relief.
 - **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):** - **The Act establishes the CCPA to promote, protect, and enforce the rights of consumers. It has the authority to:**
 - ✓ **Conduct investigations into violations of consumer rights.**
 - ✓ **Issue orders to prevent unfair trade practices.**
 - ✓ **File class action suits on behalf of consumers. Hence statement 2 is correct.**
 - **E-commerce Regulations:** The Act includes specific provisions for e-commerce, ensuring that online sellers adhere to consumer rights and provide necessary information about goods and services.
 - **Product Liability:** **The Act introduces the concept of product liability, holding manufacturers, service providers, and sellers accountable for any harm caused by defective products or deficient services. Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
 - **Unfair Trade Practices:** The Act defines and prohibits unfair trade practices, including misleading advertisements and false representations.
 - **Consumer Mediation:** The Act encourages mediation as a method for resolving consumer disputes, promoting quicker and less adversarial resolutions.
 - **Penalties for Violations:** The Act prescribes penalties for non-compliance with its provisions, including fines and imprisonment for repeat offenders.
 - **Simplified Complaint Process:** **The Act allows consumers to file complaints electronically, making the process more accessible and user-friendly. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, reflects the evolving landscape of consumer rights, especially in the context of digital commerce, and aims to empower consumers in their transactions.

Q 61.A

- **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**
 - **Mandate**
 - ✓ Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India
 - ✓ Investigate offenses affecting India's sovereignty, security, and integrity
 - **Handles cases related to:**
 - ✓ Friendly relations with foreign states
 - ✓ Atomic and nuclear facilities
 - ✓ Smuggling of arms, drugs, fake currency, and infiltration
 - ✓ Offenses under international treaties, agreements, conventions, and resolutions
 - **Establishment**
 - ✓ Constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008
 - ✓ Empowered to investigate terror-related crimes across states without state permission

- ✓ Operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- **Initiation of Probes**
- **Referral by State Government**
 - ✓ The state government can refer scheduled offense cases to the Central government
 - ✓ Central government assesses the case and directs NIA to take over
 - ✓ The state government provides necessary assistance to the NIA
- **Initiation by Central Government**
 - ✓ Can direct NIA to investigate scheduled offenses committed within India. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
 - ✓ Can direct NIA to investigate scheduled offenses committed outside India. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**
- **Note:** Scheduled offenses are those listed in the NIA Act.

Q 62.A

- **Lokpal and Lokayukta**
 - The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.
 - These institutions are statutory bodies without any constitutional status.
 - They perform the function of an "ombudsman" and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and related matters.
- **What is the Structure of Lokpal?**
 - Lokpal is a multi-member body, that consists of one chairperson and a maximum of 8 members. The Chairperson of the Lokpal should be either the former Chief Justice of India or the former Judge of the Supreme Court or an eminent person with impeccable integrity and outstanding ability, having special knowledge and expertise of a minimum of 25 years in the matters relating to anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance including insurance and banking, law and management.
 - Out of the maximum eight members, half will be judicial members and a minimum of 50% of the Members will be from SC/ ST/ OBC/ Minorities and women.
 - The judicial member of the Lokpal is either a former Judge of the Supreme Court or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.
 - The non-judicial member should be an eminent person with impeccable integrity and outstanding ability, having special knowledge and expertise of a minimum of 25 years in matters relating to anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance including insurance and banking, law, and management.
 - The term of office for Lokpal Chairman and Members is 5 years or till the age of 70 years.
 - The members are appointed by the president on the recommendation of a Selection Committee. The selection committee is composed of the Prime Minister who is the Chairperson, the Speaker of Lok Sabha, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, the Chief Justice of India, or a Judge nominated by him/her, and One eminent jurist.
 - For selecting the chairperson and the members, the selection committee constitutes a search panel of at least eight persons.
- **What comes under the Jurisdiction of Lokpal and its Powers?**
 - Jurisdiction of Lokpal includes the Prime Minister, Ministers, members of Parliament, Groups A, B, C, and D officers, and officials of the Central Government. **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**
 - **The jurisdiction of the Lokpal included the Prime Minister except on allegations of corruption relating to international relations, security, public order, atomic energy, and space. The Lokpal does not have jurisdiction over Ministers and MPs in the matter of anything said in Parliament or a vote given there.**
 - Its jurisdiction also includes any person who is or has been in charge (director/ manager/ secretary) of anybody/ society set up by a central act or any other body financed/ controlled by central government and any other person involved in an act of abetting, bribe giving or bribe-taking.
 - The Lokpal Act mandates that all public officials should furnish their assets and liabilities of themselves as well as their respective dependents. It has the power to superintendence over, and to give direction to CBI.

Q 63.A

- Article 280: provides for a Finance Commission as a quasi-judicial body.
 - It is constituted by the President every fifth year or even earlier. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
 - Finance Commission makes recommendations on the measures needed to augment the Consolidated fund of a state to supplement the resources of the panchayats and the municipalities in the state on the basis of the recommendations made by the State Finance Commission. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
 - The Finance Commission consists of a chairman and four other members to be appointed by the president. They hold office for such period as specified by the president in his order. The chairman of NITI Aayog is not an ex-officio member of the Finance Commission. **Hence statement 3 is not correct**

Q 64.D

- Exit polls are different from Opinion Polls which are conducted just before the elections. In simple words, the Election Commission defines Exit Poll to be a survey that is conducted based on a set of questions that are asked to voters exiting the polling station. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- Exit Polls are to be conducted only after the very last phase of voting is completed, as per the Election Commission of India. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- **Section 126A of the R.P. Act 1951, which prohibits conduct of Exit poll and dissemination of its results during the period mentioned therein, i.e. after the very last phase of voting is completed.**

Q 65.B

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 introduced provisions to handle cases of children in the age group of 16-18 years who commit heinous crimes. Key Provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015:
- **Definition of a Child:** The Act defines a child as any person who has not completed eighteen years of age. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Prohibition of Capital Punishment and Life Imprisonment:** The Act prohibits the death penalty and life imprisonment without the possibility of release for children, even if they are tried as adults. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- **Establishment of Juvenile Justice Boards:** The Act establishes Juvenile Justice Boards to handle cases involving children in conflict with the law. The Boards consist of a Principal Magistrate and two social workers.
- **Role of Child Welfare Committees (CWCs):** The Act makes Child Welfare Committees responsible for the care, protection, treatment, development, and rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**
- **Adoption Regulations:** The Act empowers the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) to frame adoption regulations and ensure their implementation.
- **Preliminary Assessment for Children Aged 16-18:** For children aged 16 to 18 accused of committing heinous offenses, the Juvenile Justice Board conducts a preliminary assessment to determine if they should be tried as adults.
- **Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration:** The Act emphasizes the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection.
- **Offenses and Penalties:** The Act categorizes offenses by children into petty, serious, and heinous crimes and prescribes penalties accordingly.
- **Monitoring and Inspection:** The Act mandates monthly inspections of child care institutions by the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees.
- **Mandatory Registration of Child Care Institutions:** The Act requires all child care institutions to be registered under the Act, ensuring accountability and oversight.

Q 66.D

- Recently, the parliament passed the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.
- **Earlier in Anoop Baranwal vs. Union of India case, 2023, the SC ruled that the CEC and ECs will be chosen by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition in Parliament, and the Chief Justice of India. However, above act superseded this verdict.**

Key provisions of the Act

- The Act replaces the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.
- The act seeks to regulate:

- the appointment, conditions of service and term of office of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs), and the procedure for transaction of business by the Election Commission.
- Selection committee: The CEC and other ECs shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of a Selection Committee consisting of:
 - ✓ **Prime Minister as Chairperson.**
 - ✓ **Leader of Opposition/leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.**
 - ✓ **Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.**
- Search Committee: A Search Committee shall prepare a panel of five persons for consideration of the Selection Committee, for appointment as the CEC and other ECs.
- It is to be headed by the Minister of Law and Justice and comprising two other members not below the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 67.D

Right to Information Act 2005 mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information by various Public Authorities under the government of India as well as the State Governments. The law imposes a penalty for wilful default by government officials. Citizens can ask for anything that the government can disclose to Parliament.

RTI Act also mandates that “every public authority shall pro-actively disclose information pertaining to it, and maintain its documents and records to facilitate the right to information under the Act”.

Under the RTI Act 2005, "Public authority" means any authority or body or institution of self-government established or constituted—

- by or under the Constitution;
- by any other law made by Parliament/State Legislature.
- by notification issued or order made by the appropriate Government, and includes any—
 - body owned, controlled or substantially financed;
 - non-Government organisations substantially financed, **directly or indirectly** by funds provided by the appropriate Government.
- **Hence option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q 68.A

- The provision of home voting is a progressive measure aimed at empowering voters who encounter barriers to participating in the electoral process at the polling stations. **In a pathbreaking initiative, the Election Commission of India (ECI), for the first time in a Lok Sabha Election, has provided the facility of home voting for the elderly and Persons with Disabilities in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- Specifically, this facility is extended to two key demographic groups: persons with disabilities (PwDs) meeting the 40% benchmark disability criteria and senior citizens aged above 85 years. By extending this optional facility to these segments of the voters, the Election Commission recognizes the need to ensure that citizens’ right to vote is not encumbered by physical barriers and disabilities. This upholds the Commission’s motto of ensuring that no voter is left behind. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- The procedure to avail this facility is simple yet thorough. Within five days of the election notification, eligible voters must complete Form 12D and submit it to the returning officer. PwD voters submit a baseline disability certificate with their applications.
- A dedicated team of polling officials along with security officials visits the voter's residence to collect their votes. Crucially, voters are notified ahead of time of the planned visit, allowing them to be prepared to exercise their right to vote in a safe and comfortable manner. To further expedite the procedure and improve accessibility, voters can also receive notifications via SMS about the days when their home voting facility will be active. The complete process is video graphed for transparency.
- **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q 69.C

- **Formation of Socialist Party (1948):**
 - **The Socialist Party was formed in 1948 by Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev, and others who decided to separate from the Indian National Congress due to ideological differences.**

- The party aimed to establish a socialist state in India, emphasizing policies such as nationalization of key industries, land reforms, and the promotion of cooperative farming.
- The Socialist Party played a significant role in Indian politics during the early years of independence, advocating for a more equitable society and often aligning with other leftist and regional parties.
- **First general elections (1951-52):** Independent India's first general elections were held between 25th October 1951 and 21st February 1952.
 - 17.32 crore voters from across the country (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) were enrolled, and 45% were women.
 - This was the first time such a massive exercise of universal adult franchise was undertaken, with 176 million electors above the age of 21 (the voting age was brought to 18 only in 1989, the Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Act, 1989), of whom 82% were unlettered.
 - The Indian National Congress, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, emerged as the dominant political force, securing 318 out of 489 Lok Sabha seats, consolidating its position as the ruling party.
 - The Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged as the runner-up in the first Lok Sabha election, followed by the Socialist Party and other political parties.
- **Coalition government in Kerala by CPI (1957):** In the first Kerala Legislative Assembly election in 1957, the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) won 60 out of 126 seats and formed the government with the support of 5 independent candidates. It was formed in April 1957.
 - This was one of the first democratically elected communist governments in the world.
 - E.M.S. Namboodiripad took oath as the Chief Minister of Kerala.
- Hence option (c) is the correct answer.

Q 70.D

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF 2024-

- The brief was released by the World Bank. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

Key highlights-

- Remittance - Remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) reached to \$656 billion.
 - **Top five recipient countries: India (\$120 billion)**, followed by Mexico, China, Philippines, and Pakistan. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- Migration -
 - Top destinations Countries: US, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and UK.
 - **Largest origin countries: India also remained the largest origin countries of emigrants (18.7 million emigrants)** followed by Ukraine, China, Mexico and Venezuela. Hence, statement 3 is correct.
 - Largest migration corridor: Mexico to US.

Q 71.B

- **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)**
 - It is the main agency for preventing corruption in the Central government. It was established in 1964 by an executive resolution of the Central government. Its establishment was **recommended by the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–64)**.
 - Thus, originally the CVC was neither a constitutional body nor a statutory body. Later, **in 2003, the Parliament enacted a law conferring statutory status on the CVC.**
- **Composition**
 - The CVC is a multi-member body consisting of a Central Vigilance Commissioner (chairperson) and not more than two vigilance commissioners.
 - They are appointed by the president by warrant under his hand and seal on the recommendation of a three-member committee consisting of the **prime minister** as its head, the **Union minister of home affairs**, and the **Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha**. They hold office for a term of four years or until they attain the age of sixty-five years, whichever is earlier. After their tenure, they are not eligible for further employment under the Central or a state government. **Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**
- **What are the Functions of CVC?**
 - The CVC receives complaints on corruption or misuse of office and recommends appropriate action. Following institutions, bodies, or a person can approach CVC:
 - ✓ Central government

- ✓ Lokpal
- ✓ Whistleblowers
- A whistleblower is a person, who could be an employee of a company, a government agency, or an outsider (like media, higher government officials, or police) disclosing information to the public or some higher authority about any wrongdoing, which could be in the form of fraud, corruption, etc.
- It is not an investigating agency. The CVC either gets the investigation done through the CBI or chief vigilance officers (CVO) in government offices.
- It is empowered to inquire into offenses alleged to have been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 by certain categories of public servants.
- Its annual report gives the details of the work done by the commission and points to systemic failures that lead to corruption in government departments.
- Improvements and preventive measures are also suggested in the report.

Q 72.B

SUPACE(Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency):

- In April 2021, the Supreme Court launched its first AI portal Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency (SUPACE), to leverage machine learning in dealing with huge chunks of case data. It is built by ManCorp Innovation Labs.
- It is not designed to take decisions, but only to process facts and to make them available to judges looking for an input for a decision.
- Initially, it will be used on an experimental basis by the judges of Bombay and Delhi High Courts who deal with criminal matters.

SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software)

- In order to promote regional languages in judicial procedure, the Supreme Court has developed Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS) which is a machine-assisted translation tool trained by Artificial Intelligence.
- SUVAS has been developed with technical support from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- This tool is specially designed for the judicial domain and currently has the capacity to translate English Judicial Documents, orders or Judgments into ten vernacular languages which are: Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Bengali, Urdu and vice-versa.
- **Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q 73.C

- **Recent Study Findings:**
 - Recent studies conducted by researchers at the Cleveland Clinic have found that higher levels of **xylitol and erythritol, which are common sugar substitutes, are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes.** These findings have raised concerns about the safety of these sugar substitutes. **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**
- **Role and Usage of Xylitol and Erythritol:**
 - **Xylitol:** Xylitol is a sugar alcohol used as a sugar substitute in various sugar-free products, including candies, gums, baked goods, and oral care products like toothpaste. It is often recommended for people managing obesity and diabetes because it provides a sweet taste without the calories of sugar.
 - **Erythritol:** Similar to xylitol, erythritol is another sugar alcohol used in "healthy" processed foods as a low-calorie sugar alternative. It is favored for its ability to mimic the sweetness of sugar without contributing to high blood sugar levels.

Q 74.A

- **Recent Context:** In partnership with other organisations, scientists and experts from the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have developed a Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric that will give governments,** businesses, civil society, and financial institutions the ability to measure whether their actions can help halt biodiversity loss and reduce global species extinction risk in oceans and seas.
- **STAR Metric:**
 - The Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric is a scientific **tool designed to measure the contribution of investments towards reducing species extinction risk by IUCN.** **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

- It is aimed at helping various stakeholders, including governments, cities, civil society, the finance industry, investors, and companies, to target their investments and activities to achieve conservation outcomes and contribute to global policy goals.
- **Key Features of the STAR Metric:**
 - **Data Utilization:** Incorporates data from 5,362 threatened and Near Threatened species.
 - **Impact Potential:** Studies show that 24% of global extinction risk reduction could be achieved by increasing sustainability in crop production, and 56% by restoring habitats.
 - **Assessment Areas:** The metric assesses two main actions:
 - ✓ Threat abatement
 - ✓ Habitat restoration
- **How STAR Works:**
 - **Assessment of Actions:** It evaluates the potential of specific actions at particular locations to contribute to global sustainability targets.
 - **Scientific Underpinning:** Based on data from the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and published research in Nature Ecology & Evolution.
- **Funding and Support:**
 - Supported by funding from the Luc Hoffmann Institute, Vulcan, Synchronicity Earth, and the Global Environment Facility, as well as the Conservation International GEF Project Agency.
 - The Biodiversity Consultancy has pioneered the tool's private sector applications.

Q 75.C

Why in the news?

- As per an 'Access Now' report, India witnessed 116 shutdowns in 2023, the highest number of shutdown in world for the sixth consecutive year.

Internet shutdown

- It is an intentional disruption of internet communications for specific population or within a location for any duration of time, often to exert control over the flow of information.
 - In 2023, globally the number of internet shutdowns rose by 41% to 283 from 201 in 2022.

Provisions for Internet Shutdown •

- Currently, suspension of telecom services (including internet shutdowns) is governed by Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017, notified under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
 - It provide for a temporary shutdown of telecom services in a region on grounds of public emergency (up to 15 days at once).
 - The 1885 Act empowers the central government to regulate various types of telecom services including internet services and grant licenses for them.
- Orders of temporary suspension of telecom services are to be issued By Union/State home secretary Only.
 - Under 2017 Rules, a three-member Review Committee headed by Cabinet Secretary at central level and Chief Secretary at state level, reviews telecom/internet shutdown orders by central government and state government, respectively.

Supreme Court Judgement in Anuradha Bhasin vs. Union of India and Ors. 2020

- **SC held that freedom of speech and expression through medium of internet is an integral part of Article 19(1)(a) and accordingly, any restriction on the same must be in accordance with Article 19(2) of the Constitution.**
 - **Hence, option(c) is the correct answer.**
- In relation to internet shutdown, Court had passed following directions
 - An order suspending internet services indefinitely is impermissible under 2017 Rules. Suspension can be utilised for temporary duration only.
 - Any order suspending internet issued under Suspension Rules, must adhere to principle of proportionality and must not extend beyond necessary duration.
 - Any order suspending internet under the Suspension Rules is subject to judicial review.

Q 76.B

- **NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India)**
 - The NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India (GoI), playing a pivotal role in shaping the strategic long-term policies and programs for the country.

- NITI Aayog serves as a dynamic platform, providing both directional and policy inputs to the Government of India and offers relevant technical advice to the Centre and States.
- The Core Mission of NITI Aayog includes providing critical directional and strategic input into the development process and being the incubator of ideas for development.
- **NITI Aayog's Indexes and Initiatives**
 - ✓ SDG India Index
 - ✓ Composite Water Management Index
 - ✓ Atal Innovation Mission
 - ✓ SATH programme
 - ✓ Aspirational District Programme
 - ✓ **School Education Quality Index. Hence option 2 is correct.**
 - ✓ District Hospital Index
 - ✓ Health Index 2019 – (Healthy states, progressive India)
 - ✓ Composite Health Index
 - ✓ Digital Transformation Index
 - ✓ Agriculture Marketing and Farmer-Friendly Reform Index
 - ✓ **India Innovation Index. Hence option 4 is correct.**
 - ✓ Women Entrepreneurship Platform
 - ✓ Good Governance Index (NITI with other agencies)
- **Note:**
 - ✓ **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released the final rankings of the Ease of Living Index (EoLI) and the Municipal Performance Index (MPI). Hence option 1 is not correct.**
 - ✓ The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has released the 1st edition of the '**State Ranking Index for NFSA**'. **Hence option 3 is not correct.**

Q 77.C

- **Sevottam is a generic framework for bringing continual improvement in public service delivery** till excellence is achieved. Sevottam word is a fusion of two Hindi words Seva and Uttam which means 'excellence in service'. It was created by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India in 2005, after study of the best international practices such as the Charter Mark of United Kingdom and the Malcolm model of United States of America. It is a framework for bringing continual improvements in service delivery by government organizations till excellence is achieved.
- Sevottam comprises 3 modules namely,
 - **Citizen's Charter**
 - **Grievance Redressal Mechanism**
 - **Capability Building for Service Delivery.**
- **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**

Q 78.B

- **The Representation of the People Act, 1951, serves as a crucial framework for the conduct of elections in India, specifying the qualifications and disqualifications for membership in the Parliament and State Legislatures.** Following are the main grounds for disqualification under this Act:
 - **Conviction for Certain Offenses: A person is disqualified if they have been convicted of any offense and sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more. Hence statement (a) is not correct.** This includes offenses related to:
 - ✓ Corruption
 - ✓ Bribery
 - ✓ Promoting enmity between different groups
 - ✓ Social crimes such as dowry and untouchability, as per the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.
 - **Corrupt Practices:** Individuals found guilty of corrupt practices during elections, as defined in the Act, are disqualified. This includes practices such as bribery and undue influence.
 - **Failure to Lodge Election Expenses: If a candidate fails to submit an account of their election expenses within the stipulated time frame, they may face disqualification. Hence option (b) is the correct answer.**
 - **Government Contracts:** A person is disqualified if they have a subsisting contract for the supply of goods or services to the government, which may create a conflict of interest.

- **Office under Government Company:** Individuals holding an office of profit in a government company, where the government has at least a 25% share, are disqualified.
- ✓ **Holding an advisory position in a non-governmental organization or being a member of a local sports association is not a ground for disqualification under the Act. Hence statement (c) and (d) are not correct.**
- **Dismissal for Corruption or Disloyalty:** A person dismissed from government service for corruption or disloyalty to the state is disqualified from contesting elections.
- **Promoting Enmity or Prejudice:** Conviction for offenses promoting enmity between different groups on grounds such as religion, race, or language can lead to disqualification.
- **Social Crimes:** Individuals punished for preaching or practicing social crimes, such as untouchability or dowry, are also disqualified.
- **Election Petition:** An election can be contested through an election petition filed in the High Court, with appeals lying in the Supreme Court. This serves as a mechanism for redressal for affected parties.
- **Authority of the President/Governor:** The final authority to decide on disqualifications rests with the President (for Parliament members) and the Governor (for State Legislature members). They act based on the advice of the Election Commission of India.
- **Powers of the Election Commission:** The Election Commission has the authority to summon and enforce attendance for inquiries related to disqualifications, functioning with the powers of a civil court.
- **Removal or Reduction of Disqualification:** The Election Commission may remove or reduce the period of disqualification under certain circumstances.

Q 79.A

- Recognised political parties have been allowed to freely use state-owned television and radio during polls since the 1998 Lok Sabha elections. The ECI decides how much time each recognised national and state party will be allotted prior to the start of the election campaign.
- National parties, all put together, get a **minimum of 10 hours of telecasting time on Doordarshan's national channel, and at least 15 hours on its regional channels.** They also get **10 hours of broadcasting time on the national hook-up of AIR and 15 hours of broadcasting on regional AIR stations.** State parties, all put together, get a minimum of 30 hours of telecasting time on the appropriate regional Doordarshan channel and AIR radio station. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- The Prasar Bharati Corporation may organize a maximum of two national panel discussion/debates on the national channel of Doordarshan and All India Radio. Each nationally recognized party can nominate one representative to such programmes. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- The Election Commission of India will approve the names of moderators for such panel discussion and debates in consultation with the Prasar Bharati Corporation. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
- In the State, where Assembly elections are also being held simultaneously, similar debates and panel discussions may be arranged from the Regional Kendras of Doordarshan and All India Radio for elections to the concerned State Assemblies. In these programmes, the concerned State recognized parties will be permitted to participate.

Q 80.B

- India attended the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Ministerial meeting held in Singapore.
- IPEF members signed agreements which are first-of-their-kind approaches to addressing 21st century challenges and strengthening economic engagement across a critical region. India actively participated in the signing proceedings and the ministerial deliberations. However, India did not formally sign these agreements as domestic approval processes are still underway and will be completed after formation of the new government. These agreements will enter into force after at least five IPEF partners complete their internal legal procedures for ratification, acceptance or approval.
- IPEF is a US led framework for participating countries to solidify their relationships and engage in crucial economic and trade matters that concern the region.
- **IPEF Member countries:** The United States, **India**, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **The framework is structured around four pillars relating to**
 - **Pillar I- Trade;**
 - **Pillar II- Supply Chains;**

- **Pillar III- Clean Economy; and**
- **Pillar IV- Fair Economy**
- **India has joined Pillars II to IV of IPEF while it has an observer status in Pillar-I. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q 81.A

- **Quality Council of India (QCI)**
 - **About:**
 - ✓ QCI is a non-profit organization registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
 - ✓ Nodal Ministry is the **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - **Composition:**
 - ✓ A **Council of 38 members** governs it with equal representation of government, industry, and consumers.
 - ✓ **The Prime Minister appoints the Chairman of QCI** on the recommendation of the industry to the government. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
 - **Objective:**
 - ✓ To create a mechanism for independent third-party assessment of products, services, and processes.
 - ✓ It plays a pivotal role at the national level in propagating, adopting, and adhering to quality standards in all important spheres of activities including education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector, and other areas of organized activities that have a significant bearing in improving the quality of life and wellbeing of the citizens of India.

Q 82.C

- **State of Ocean Report**
 - **Organization: UNESCO**
 - **Details:** The "State of Ocean Report" highlights key knowledge gaps in research and data on ocean warming. It emphasizes the need for regular data to support healthy and resilient oceans. **Hence pair 1 is correctly matched.**
 - **Additional Information:**
 - ✓ **Data Gaps:** The report stresses that current observations and research are insufficient for understanding and addressing ocean crises and validating carbon removal technologies.
 - ✓ **Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR):** Increased interest in mCDR technologies, but there are significant technical, environmental, and regulatory challenges.
- **World Wildlife Crime Report**
 - **Organization: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**
 - **Details:** This report details the impact of wildlife crime on species like rhinoceroses and cedars and highlights trends in wildlife seizures from 2015 to 2021. **Hence pair 2 is not correctly matched.**
 - **Additional Information:**
 - ✓ **Wildlife Crime:** Defined as illegal activities related to wild animals and plants. Major drivers include demand for exotic pets, medicinal use, and high profits from illegal trade.
 - ✓ **Impacts:** Includes environmental degradation, economic consequences such as money laundering, and social risks including disease transmission and loss of ecosystem services.
- **Water for Shared Prosperity**
 - **Organization: World Bank**
 - **Details:** Released at the 10th World Water Forum, this report focuses on water access disparities due to population growth, urbanization, and climate change, and provides recommendations for inclusive water security. **Hence pair 3 is correctly matched.**
 - **Additional Information:**
 - ✓ **Recommendations:** Include improving resilience to hydro-climatic risks, integrating nature-based solutions, and reforming water information systems to better target pro-poor solutions.
 - ✓ **World Water Forum:** Held every three years, co-hosted by the World Water Council and a host country, focusing on raising the political importance of water and resolving international water issues.

Q 83.C

- **Corrupt electoral practices under section 153(1) of Representation of People act are cognizable offenses.** Some of the **corrupt electoral practices as per** sub-section (1) section 153(1) of Representation of People act 1951:
 - The systematic appeal by a candidate or his agent or by any other person, **to vote or refrain from voting on grounds of cast, race, community or religion or the use of or appeal to, religious symbols** or, the use of or appeal to, national symbols such as the national flag or the national emblem, for the furtherance of the prospects of that candidate's election. **Hence Statement-I is correct.**
 - The publication by a candidate or his agent or by other person of any statement of fact which is false, and which he either believes to be false or does not believe to be true, in relation to the personal character or conduct of any candidate being a statement reasonably calculated to prejudice the prospects of that candidate's election.
 - **The hiring or procuring whether on payment or otherwise of any vehicle or vessel by a candidate or his agent or by any other person for the conveyance of any elector (other than the candidate himself, and the member of this family or his agent) to or from any polling station.**
 - Any person who contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both.
 - **The election commission of India has the power to postpone elections but does not have the power to cancel elections. Hence Statement-II is not correct.**

Q 84.A

- Muthappan Vellattam, the **ritualistic Theyyam performance a tribal cultural dance** dedicated to Muthappan, a deity in north Malabar, was set to be staged in the United Kingdom for the first time. **Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.**
- It is a vibrant ritualistic art form indigenous to the northern part of Kerala, specifically the Kolathunadu area, which in present-day consists of Kasaragod, Kannur, Wayanad, and Kozhikode districts.
 - **Practised predominantly by the tribal communities from the lower strata of the society,** Theyyam transcends mere entertainment to serving as a conduit for spiritual expression and community cohesion. Some of them include the Malayar community, deriving their name from 'mala' meaning the mountain, they habit Kasaragod in north to Vadamakara in south.
 - The performers, known as Theyyam artists, undergo elaborate rituals and transformations, often assuming the guise of deities, spirits, or ancestral heroes. Through intricate costumes, vivid makeup, and frenzied dance movements, Theyyam artists embody the divine, bridging the gap between the earthly and the celestial realms.
 - Moreover, Theyyam offers a profound insight into the ethos and values of rural society. It reflects the deeply ingrained beliefs, customs, and communal solidarity prevalent in these agrarian communities and by studying Theyyam, one can unravel the complexities of caste dynamics, gender roles, and the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature prevalent in rural Kerala.
- **Kaavu: It is the sacred grove or forest area where Theyyam performances traditionally take place.** Embedded in tradition, these natural sanctuaries serve as vital repositories of biodiversity, preserving endemic flora and fauna, and culturally, they are sanctuaries which foster communal cohesion and spiritual connections to the land. Thus, kaavu not only safeguard cultural heritage but also sustain ecological balance, embodying the harmonious relationship between rural communities and their natural surroundings.

Q 85.A

The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) is a law in India that deals with evidence in court cases. It came into effect from July 1, 2024 and replaced the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

Key changes proposed in the BSA include:

- **Documentary evidence:** Under the IEA, a document includes writing, maps, and caricature. The BSA adds that electronic records will also be considered as documents. Documentary evidence includes primary and secondary evidence.
- **Oral evidence:** Under the IEA, oral evidence includes statements made before Courts by witnesses in relation to a fact under inquiry. **The BSA allows oral evidence to be given electronically. This would permit witnesses, accused persons, and victims to testify through electronic means. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- **Admissibility of electronic or digital records as evidence:** The BSA provides that electronic or digital records will have the same legal effect as paper records. It expands electronic records to include

information stored in semiconductor memory or any communication devices (smartphones, laptops). This will also include records on emails, server logs, smartphones, locational evidence and voice mails.

- **Joint trials: It is not a new concept introduced by the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. This concept has existed in Indian law and is governed by the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).** A joint trial refers to the trial of more than one person for the same offence. The IEA states that in a joint trial, if a confession made by one of the accused which also affects the other accused is proven, it will be treated as a confession against both. The BSB adds an explanation to this provision. **It states that a trial of multiple persons, where an accused has absconded or has not responded to an arrest warrant, will be treated as a joint trial. Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
- Under section 25 of the Indian Evidence Act and corresponding provision section 23(1) of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, confessions made by an accused to a police officer are not admissible as evidence. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**

Q 86.C

- The Central Vigilance Commission is the apex integrity institution of the Govt. of India, mandated to combat corruption and ensure integrity in administration and public services. The Commission's focus on creating an efficient vigilance administration across organizations, with an aim towards transparent, ethical, objective, accountable and responsive system of governance, would ensure effective anti-corruption and preventive measures, thereby eliminating the possibility of indulging in corrupt and unfair practices by government servants. The mandate of the Commission is laid down in the CVC Act, 2003.
- The Commission further exercises superintendence over the functioning of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (CBI) insofar as it relates to the **investigation of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**; or offences under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 for certain categories of public servants. It also gives directions to the Delhi Special Police Establishment (CBI) for superintendence insofar as it relates to the investigation of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. **Hence options 1 and 3 are correct.**
- The Commission also reviews the progress of investigations conducted by the CBI into offences alleged to have been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 or **an offence under the Code of Criminal Procedure** and reviews the progress of the applications pending with the competent authorities for sanction of prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018:**
 - Scheduled Offences are counterfeiting government stamps or currency, cheque dishonour, transactions defrauding creditors, money laundering, etc.
 - Declaring an offender: an application will be filed in a Special Court designated under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002.
 - **The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is the apex agency to implement the law.**
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002**
 - **It provides for confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, money laundering and for matters connected therewith.**
 - **The Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) have been given the responsibility to enforce the provisions of the Act.**

CVC's Power of Jurisdiction in Other Acts:

- **THE LOKPAL AND LOKAYUKTAS ACT-2013**
 - The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 has amended some provisions of the CVC Act, 2003, which empowers the Commission to conduct preliminary inquiry into complaints referred by the Lokpal in respect of officers and officials of Groups A, B, C & D, for which a Directorate of Inquiry (for making preliminary inquiry) is to be set up in the Commission.
- **The Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014**
 - The Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014 empowers the Commission as the competent authority:
 - ✓ to receive complaints relating to disclosure on any allegation of corruption or wilful misuse of power or wilful misuse of discretion against any public servant and to inquire or cause an inquiry into such disclosure,
 - ✓ and to provide adequate safeguards against victimisation of the person making such complaint and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

Q 87.A

- **Jawaharlal Nehru** - Jawaharlal Nehru served as the first Prime Minister of India from 1947 until his death in 1964.
 - **Constitution of India** came into effect on January 26, 1950.

- **Non-Aligned Movement:** In India, Nehru was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which aimed to maintain independence from the Cold War blocs led by the USA and the USSR. The Bandung Conference of 1955 was a precursor to this movement.
- The **reorganization of states on linguistic lines took place in 1956**, leading to the creation of new states and the redrawing of boundaries to better reflect linguistic demographics.
- The **Second Five-Year Plan, also known as the Mahalanobis Plan, emphasized heavy industries and aimed at building a strong industrial base in India.** It marked a shift from agrarian to industrial economy.
- **Panchsheel Principles:** Nehru, along with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, formulated the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) agreement in 1954, promoting mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, and non-interference.
- **Border Conflict:** The Sino-Indian War in 1962 was a significant military conflict between India and China over border disputes. India faced a defeat, which led to a reassessment of its defense and foreign policies. **The first No Confidence Motion against Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in August 1963 was primarily due to criticism over India's defeat in the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and dissatisfaction with his leadership and defense policies. Hence pair 1 is correctly matched.**
- **Indira Gandhi -**
 - **Agricultural Transformation:** Introduced high-yielding variety seeds, increased use of fertilizers, and improved irrigation, leading to a significant increase in food grain production.
 - **Nationalization of Banks (1969):** Nationalized 14 major commercial banks to ensure better distribution of credit, especially to the agriculture and small-scale industrial sectors.
 - **1971 War and Creation of Bangladesh:** India supported East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in its war of independence against West Pakistan, leading to the creation of Bangladesh. **The Simla Agreement was signed on July 2, 1972, between India and Pakistan, under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, not Lal Bahadur Shastri. Hence pair 2 is not correctly matched.**
 - **Emergency Period (1975-1977):** Declared a state of emergency citing internal disturbances, leading to suspension of constitutional rights, censorship of the press, and political imprisonment.
 - **The first nuclear explosion by India, known as "Smiling Buddha," took place on May 18, 1974, under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.** Atal Bihari Vajpayee was Prime Minister during the second round of nuclear tests, known as "Operation Shakti," in May 1998. **Hence pair 3 is not correctly matched.**
 - **Operation Blue Star (1984):** Ordered military action to remove Sikh militants from the Golden Temple in Amritsar, which led to significant controversy and her subsequent assassination.
 - **Garibi Hatao:** Launched a campaign focused on eradicating poverty through various economic and social measures.
- **Lal Bahadur Shastri -**
 - **Tashkent Agreement (1966):** Signed a peace agreement with Pakistan, mediated by the Soviet Union, following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.
 - **Indo-Pakistani War of 1965:** Faced a major conflict with Pakistan over the Kashmir region, which ended with a ceasefire and subsequent peace talks.
 - **Jai Jawan Jai Kisan Slogan:** Promoted this slogan to emphasize the importance of soldiers and farmers, boosting morale and focusing on food production and defense.
 - **Promotion of the Green Revolution**
- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee -**
 - **Pokhran-II Nuclear Tests (1998):** Conducted a series of five underground nuclear tests, making India a declared nuclear weapons state. The first nuclear explosion by India, known as "Smiling Buddha," took place on May 18, 1974, under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. **Atal Bihari Vajpayee was Prime Minister during the second round of nuclear tests, known as "Operation Shakti," in May 1998.**
 - **Kargil War (1999):** Managed a conflict with Pakistan over the Kargil region in Jammu and Kashmir, leading to a successful military campaign to reclaim occupied territories.
 - **Lahore Summit (1999):** Held a summit with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, aiming to improve bilateral relations and resolve long-standing issues.
 - **Golden Quadrilateral Project -** major road infrastructure project to connect the four major cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata was launched.
 - **Economic Reforms and Growth:** Implemented economic reforms that led to significant growth, including privatization of state-owned enterprises and liberalization of the economy.
 - **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched**
- **Hence option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q 88.A

- **National Human Rights Commission**
 - The National Human Rights Commission is a statutory (not constitutional) body. It was established in 1993 under legislation enacted by the Parliament, namely, the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
- **Composition**
 - The commission is a multi-member body consisting of a chairperson and five members.
 - The chairperson should be a retired chief justice of India or a judge of the Supreme Court. Members should be a serving or retired Supreme Court judge, a high court chief justice chief, and three persons (out of which at least one should be a woman) with knowledge or practical experience concerning human rights. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
 - The commission also has seven ex-officio members—the chairpersons of the National Commission for Minorities, the National Commission for SCs, the National Commission for STs, the National Commission for Women, the National Commission for BCs, and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities.
- **Appointment**
 - The chairperson and members are appointed by the president on the recommendations of a six-member committee consisting of the prime minister as its head, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, leaders of the Opposition in both the Houses of Parliament and the Central home minister.
 - Further, a sitting judge of the Supreme Court or a sitting chief justice of a high court can be appointed only after consultation with the chief justice of India.
 - The chairperson and members hold office for a term of three years or until they attain the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
 - They are eligible for re-appointment. After their tenure, the chairperson and members are not eligible for further employment under the Central or state government.
- **Role and Function:**
 - Possesses powers of a civil court with judicial proceedings.
 - Empowered to utilize the services of central or state government officers or investigation agencies for investigating human rights violations.
 - Can investigate matters within one year of their occurrence. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
 - Functions are primarily recommendatory in nature.

Q 89.D

On September 22, 2006, the Supreme Court passed a judgment in a Writ Petition filed by former DGP Prakash Singh and others on several issues concerning police reforms.

The main directions issued by the Supreme Court are:

- Establishment of three institutions for police organisation
 - a State Security Commission to prevent unwarranted influence or pressure on the police by the state government. **Hence, option 4 is correct.**
 - a Police Establishment Board to decide transfers, postings, promotions and other service-related matters of police officers.
 - a Police Complaints Authority to be established at the state and district levels to inquire into public complaints against police officers regarding serious misconduct. **Hence, option 3 is correct.**
- The Director General of Police (DGP) should be selected from three senior-most officers of the state empanelled by the Union Public Service Commission and must have a minimum two-year tenure. **Hence, option 1 is correct.**
- Officers in key positions in the field (Inspector General in charge of Range, Station House Officer) must be given a two-year tenure.
- In order to improve the quality of investigation, the investigating police must be separated from law-and-order police. **Hence, option 2 is correct.**
- Set up a Police Establishment Board at the state level for inter alia deciding all transfers, postings, promotions and other service-related matters of officers of and below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police.
- Constitute Police Complaints Authorities at the state and district level for looking into complaints against police officers.

Q 90.A

- **TRISHNA:**
 - **Associated Nations:** France and India. **Hence pair 1 is correctly matched.**
 - **Mission Objectives:** TRISHNA (Thermal InfraRed Satellite for High-resolution Observation) aims to monitor various aspects related to Earth's thermal infrared emissions. Its primary objectives include:
 - ✓ Monitoring the water status and stress of continental ecosystems.
 - ✓ Observing coastal and inland waters.
 - ✓ Assessing urban environments.
 - ✓ Applications to solid Earth, cryosphere, and atmosphere.
- **PREFIRE Mission:**
 - **Associated Nations:** United States. **Hence pair 2 is not correctly matched.**
 - **Mission Objectives:** PREFIRE (Polar Radiant Energy in the Far-Infrared Experiment) involves launching two CubeSats to study how heat is lost from Earth's polar regions. Its goals include:
 - ✓ Capturing new data on heat loss from the Arctic and Antarctic.
 - ✓ Improving climate models and predictions related to climate change and sea level rise.
 - ✓ Understanding why the Arctic has warmed significantly faster than the rest of the planet.
- **EarthCARE Mission:**
 - **Associated Nations:** Europe and Japan. **Hence pair 3 is not correctly matched.**
 - **Mission Objectives:** EarthCARE (Earth Clouds, Aerosols, and Radiation Explorer) aims to enhance understanding of the Earth's climate system. Its objectives include:
 - ✓ Measuring the influence of clouds and aerosols on climate by reflecting solar radiation back into space and trapping infrared radiation emitted from Earth's surface.
 - ✓ Employing advanced lidar and radar technologies to study cloud and aerosol properties.

Q 91.B

Why in the news?

- ICC prosecutor sought arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister and Hamas leaders for committing crimes against humanity and war crimes. Earlier, in March 2023, ICC issued arrest warrant against Russian President in the context of situation in Ukraine.

Consequences of the ICC issuing arrest warrants:

- The accused would be arrested and if not, would restrict their freedom of movement, as member states are obliged to arrest the accused.

About International Criminal Court (ICC) -

- It is the first international permanent court to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of serious international crimes,
- **ICC's founding treaty, called the Rome Statute (adopted in 1998 entered into force in 2002).**
 - **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Membership: 124 countries are States Parties to Rome Statute of ICC.
 - **India, Israel, the US, Russia and China are not parties to the Rome Statute.**
 - ✓ **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - Palestine became the 123rd member (2015) and Malaysia became 124th State party (2019).
- Official languages: English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.
- **Enforcement: ICC's decisions are binding.**
 - **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
 - However, it does not have its own police force and relies on State cooperation, which is essential to the arrest and surrender of suspects.

Additional Components-

- Trust Fund for Victims (2004): Provides assistance, support, and reparations to victims.
- Detention Centre: Holds detainees in safe, secure, and humane custody.

Complementarity Principle: The ICC complements national criminal systems and prosecutes only when states are unwilling or unable to do so genuinely.

Why did India not join the Rome Statute? •

- Subordination of the ICC to the UN Security Council, may potentially lead to political interference.
- UN Security Council's power to bind non-States Parties to the ICC, violates principles of sovereignty.
- Wide competence and powers of the ICC prosecutor on a proprio motu basis (without a referral from the Security Council or a state party) could be misused for political purposes.
- Exclusion of nuclear weapons and terrorism from ICC jurisdiction whose use would constitute a war crime.

Q 92.D

- **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**
 - NPPA was set up as an independent regulator, for drug pricing and ensuring affordable access to medicines.
 - It is **an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers**.
 - NPPA is **not a Statutory or Constitutional Body**. Hence statement 1 is not correct.
 - It is responsible for implementing and enforcing the provisions of the DPCO.
 - **Functions of NPPA:**
 - ✓ Fixation and revision of prices of 'Scheduled' drugs under Drug (Price Control) Orders.
 - ✓ **Scheduled drugs (15% of the pharma market)** are allowed an increase based on WPI.
 - ✓ **Non-scheduled drugs (85% of the pharma market)** are allowed an automatic 10% increase annually.
 - ✓ Monitoring and enforcement of drug prices.
 - ✓ Ensuring availability and accessibility of all medicines and medical devices, including non-scheduled drugs.
 - ✓ Undertaking or sponsoring studies on drug pricing.
 - ✓ Collecting and maintaining data on production, exports, imports, market share, and profitability of pharmaceutical companies.
 - ✓ Advising the Central Government on changes or revisions in drug policy.
 - ✓ **Note:** NPPA does not directly fix prices of Non-scheduled drugs. However, it does monitor their prices and can intervene in certain cases, such as under Para 10(b) of the DPCO, if it finds excessive pricing. Hence statement 2 is not correct.

Q 93.C

- **Recent Context:** The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam or the Women's Reservation Bill was recently passed by the Parliament. The Women Reservation Act aims to reserve one-third of all seats to women in Parliament and State Legislatures.
- Election of 74 women to 18th Lok Sabha (LS) is a slight dip in women representation as 78 women were elected to 17th LS (14.4% representation).
- Status of women representation in Legislature 9.7% of 797 women contestants won in 18th LS elections while in 17th LS elections, 10.74% of 726 women contestants won.
- Women's representation in LS increased from 5% in first LS to its highest in 17th LS (14.4%).
- Presently, women members constitute 14.05% of Rajya Sabha members.
- Globally, share of women in national parliaments is 26.9%.

Significance of women representation:

- Women legislators perform better in their constituencies on economic indicators than their male counterparts. Accounting for around 50% population, legislative representation is fundamental to political empowerment.
- Women are less likely to be criminal and corrupt, more efficacious, and less vulnerable to political opportunism.

Challenges to women's legislative representation: Societal Prejudices, male dominated political structures, and family obligations.

Structural disadvantages:

- Election campaigns are costly, time-consuming and are marred by inappropriate commenting, hate speeches, abusive threats and muscle power.
- Internalised patriarchy: Women themselves are often influenced by patriarchal societal norms.

Steps taken for increasing women political representation:

- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 (106th Amendment Act) to reserve one-third of seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies including Legislative Assembly of Delhi. Hence, option C is the correct answer.**
- The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments made reservation of 1/3rd seats in Panchayats and Municipalities for women.
- India pledged to achieve SDG target 5.5, which calls for women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making in politics and public.

Q 94.B

- **National Testing Agency (NTA):**
 - It was established as a Society registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act, of 1860. It is an **autonomous and self-sustained testing organization** to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in higher educational institutions. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
 - **Aim:** NTA aims to conduct efficient, transparent, and international standardized tests to assess the competency of candidates for admission and recruitment purposes.
 - **Composition:** NTA is chaired by an eminent educationist appointed by the Ministry of HRD. The CEO of NTA is the Director General to be appointed by the Government. The Director General is assisted by 9 verticals headed by academicians/ experts. NTA consists of a Board of Governors comprising members from user institutions. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
 - NTA administers several prominent entrance exams, including JEE-Main for engineering, NEET-UG for medical courses, and CUET-UG for various undergraduate programs. Additionally, it conducts exams like CUET-PG for postgraduate admissions, UGC-NET, and CSIR UGC-NET for research fellowships and PhD admissions, among others. Lakhs of students annually take these major entrance examinations.

Q 95.A

- Pressure groups resort to three different techniques in securing their purposes. First, they can try to place in public office persons who are favourably disposed towards the interests they seek to promote. This technique may be labelled electioneering. Second, they can try to persuade public officers, whether they are initially favourably disposed toward them or not, to adopt and enforce the policies that they think will prove most beneficial to their interests. This technique may be labelled lobbying. Third, they can try to influence public opinion and thereby gain an indirect influence over government, since the government in a democracy is substantially affected by public opinion. This technique may be labelled propagandizing. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- **Lobbying is not yet recognized in a statutory or non-statutory form in India.** In India, the only law that has some relevance to lobbying is Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which makes it illegal for a “public servant taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official Act”. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**



























Q 96.A

- An e-FIR is a digital version of the traditional First Information Report (FIR) that is filed online on the account of offence committed on known or unknown. The concept of an e-FIR was introduced to simplify the overall process and provide easy access to the general public to record a crime. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- **Cognizable offences, non-cognizable matters and offences can be reported with a Digital FIR.** It contains every detail regarding the offense, the complainant, the accused, and the witnesses. The police department will forward the complaint to the appropriate police station, where it will be turned into a formal complaint and an investigation will be started as per the severity of the offence. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- As per law whether an FIR is launched physically or digitally the police is bound to take action. E-FIR or online police complaints are legally valid and can be submitted as evidence in court.

Q 97.B

- The **Constitution determines the terms of services** of members of various **constitutional bodies**. This is done in order **to ensure independence of the office**. In this regard:
 - The **Election Commissioners** hold office for a term of **six years** or until they attain the age of **65 years**, whichever is earlier. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - The chairman and members of the **Union Public Service Commissions UPSC** hold office for a term of **six years** or until they attain the age of **65 years**, whichever is earlier. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - The chairman and members of the various **State Public Service Commissions SPSCs** hold office for a term of **six years** or until they attain the age of **62 years**, whichever is earlier. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
 - The chairman and members of a **Joint Public Service Commission JSPSC** are appointed by the president. They hold office for a term of **six years** or until they attain the age of **62 years**, whichever is earlier. **Hence, statement 4 is not correct.**

Constitutional/ Non-Constitutional Bodies

Constitutional/ Non-Constitutional Bodies					
 President	Entry age/ Minimum age required 35 years	 Supreme Court Judges	Entry age/ Minimum age required No age limit Retirement age/ Tenure 65 Years	 High Court Judges	Entry age/ Minimum age required No age limit Retirement age/ Tenure 62 Years
 Prime Minister	Entry age/ Minimum age required 25 Years	 CAT Chairman	Retirement age/Tenure 5 Years or 65 Years	 NHRC chairperson/ member	Retirement age/Tenure 3 Years or 70 Years
 Vice- President	Entry age/ Minimum age required 35 Years	 CAT Members	Retirement age/Tenure 5 Years or 65 Years	 SHRC chairperson/ member	Retirement age/Tenure 3 Years or 70 Years
 Rajya Sabha	Entry age/ Minimum age required 30 Years	 UPSC	Retirement age/Tenure 6 Years or 65 Years	 State Chief Information Commissioner	Retirement age/Tenure 65 Years
 Lok Sabha	Entry age/ Minimum age required 25 Years	 SPSC	Retirement age/Tenure 6 Years or 62 Years	 Central Vigilance Commissioner and vigilance commissioners Retirement age/Tenure 4 Years or 65 Years	
 Governor	Entry age/ Minimum age required 35 Years	 ECI	Entry age/ Minimum age required 6 Years or 65 Years		
 Chief Minister	Entry age/ Minimum age required 25 Years	 CAG	Entry age/ Minimum age required 6 Years or 65 Years	 Director of CBI	Retirement age/Tenure 2 Years
 State Legislative Assembly	Entry age/ Minimum age required 25 Years	 CIC & IC	Retirement age/Tenure 65 Years	 Chairman and Members of the Lokpal	Retirement age/Tenure 5 Years or age of 70 Years
 State Legislative Council	Entry age/ Minimum age required 30 Years	 Finance Commission	Entry age/ Minimum age required 6 Years or 62 Years		
 Panchayats/ Municipalities	Entry age/ Minimum age required 21 Years				

Q 98.B

COLOMBO PROCESS- India chaired its first meeting as Chair of the Colombo Process.

- **About Colombo Process -**
 - **Regional Consultative Process that provides platform for consultations on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour.**
 - Comprises of 12 Member States of Asia such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc.
 - India is one of the founding members.
 - Thematic priority areas are: Skills and Qualification Recognition Processes; Fostering Ethical Recruitment Practices, etc.
 - UN's International Organization for Migration provides technical and administrative support to the Colombo Process.
 - **Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q 99.A

- **In response to the increasing discontent and violence in Punjab, the Rajiv-Longowal Accord, also known as the Punjab Accord, was signed on July 24, 1985.**
- It happened following Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards and the Indian army's Operation Blue Star invasion of the Golden Temple in 1984 to drive out extremists.
- **The main provisions of the Punjab Accord were:**
 - **Transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab. Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
 - **Setting up of a separate commission to resolve the border dispute between Punjab and Haryana. Hence statement 2 is correct.**
 - **Establishing a tribunal to settle the sharing of Ravi-Beas river waters among Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
 - Withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act from Punjab.
 - Providing compensation and relief to those affected by militancy in Punjab.
 - Safeguarding the interests of minorities in Punjab.
- **Aftermath and Impact**
 - The Accord failed to bring lasting peace to Punjab. Harchand Singh Longowal was assassinated by Sikh militants less than a month after signing.
 - **It led to increased violence, human rights violations by police, and fragmentation of the Akali Dal.**
 - The Barnala government in Punjab, formed after elections, was unable to contain the resurgence of militant activities.
 - **President's rule was imposed in 1987.**
 - States bordering the Akalis, such as Haryana, opposed the Accord, believing the Centre had given in too much to the Akalis.
 - After the Accord, disputes over matters like as the sharing of river flows between Punjab and Haryana persisted.

Q 100.D

- **Central Information Commission (CIC)**
 - The Central Information Commission (CIC) is a statutory body in India, established under the provisions of the Right to Information Act (2005). Thus, it is not a constitutional body.
 - It functions as the overseer for implementing the RTI Act in the organizations of the Central Government as well as Union Territories (UTs).
 - It looks into the complaints made to it and decides the appeals regarding matters related to the RTI Act and about the public offices under the Central Government and the UTs.
- **Composition of Central Information Commission (CIC)**
 - The Central Information Commission consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.
 - They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a Committee consisting of:

- The Prime Minister as the Chairperson,
- The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and
- A Union Cabinet Minister is nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Tenure of Members of CIC**
 - The Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
 - The Chief Information Commissioner as well as Information Commissioners are not eligible for reappointment.
 - An Information Commissioner is eligible for appointment as Chief Information Commissioner for a tenure such that the total tenure including his/her term as Information Commissioner does not exceed five years.
- **Salary and Service Conditions of CIC**
 - The salary, allowances, and other service conditions of the Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner shall be such as prescribed by the Central Government. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - Their salary and service conditions cannot be varied to their disadvantage during the service.
- **Annual report:**
 - CIC submits its annual report to the Central government. The central government places this report before each house of Parliament. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**