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FEBRUARY

2017

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SUBSCRIBE

1. The “Save Ennore Creek” campaign was related to

- (a) The clean-up operation following the oil spill off the Ennore coast
- (b) Restoring the depth of River Kosasthalaiyar by clearing the debris and fly ash dumped in it
- (c) Clean-up operation of the mercury-contaminated Poromboke wetland
- (d) Gathering the support of civil society to urge a private company – responsible for, and – to clean-up the DDT-laced creek

Solution: b.

- “Residents of various fishing hamlets in Ennore demanded that fly ash dumped in the Buckingham Canal and the Kosasthalaiyar be removed, and debris underneath the bridges across these waterways and wetlands be cleared to reduce flood risks.”
- “Merely desilting smaller drains leading to the waterways will not help. Removing the fly ash and debris will help restore the depth of the river, which is important to ensure water flow during heavy rain,”
- “Even after a thorough job of removing the beached oil, talking about a return to normal is problematic. Chennai’s seas and the Ennore Creek were in a state of crisis prior to the spill. The spill is the latest in a series of insults on the estuarine and marine habitats. As you read this, KPL — a key agent in the unfolding drama — is dumping dredged sand onto salt pans that are part of the Ennore wetlands. The petrochemical industries in Manali are discharging tonnes of oily chemical effluents into the creek and the sea. The power plants in the area are discharging their coal ash and hot waste water into the wetlands. Our regulators know all this and do nothing to enforce the law.”

[Th: Return to a dangerous normal;](#)

[TH: September 2016 – Residents kick off campaign to save Ennore creek;](#)

2. The Government has prepared an action plan to eliminate a few diseases. In this context, consider the following pairs:

Disease	Target year for elimination
1. Tuberculosis	: 2018
2. Leprosy	: 2018
3. Kala-Azar	: 2017

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

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

Solution: b.

- The Government has prepared an action plan to eliminate Kala-Azar and Filariasis by 2017, Leprosy by 2018, Measles by 2020 and Tuberculosis by 2025 is also targeted.
- “It would appear incongruous that an emerging economy with no timetable for universal health coverage and a lack of political will to loosen its purse strings for higher government expenditure has set ambitious deadlines to rid itself of deadly scourges. Last year it was revealed that India has a higher burden of new patients with TB than estimated earlier — 2.8 million in 2015 compared to 2.2 million in the previous year, a quarter of the world’s cases.”
- “Kala-azar, though underreported and mainly confined to Bihar and Jharkhand, is a promising candidate for elimination in the current year..”
- With reference to Leprosy: “Detecting new cases early and preventing them from progressing to disability-inducing grade two

level is crucial, although complete removal by 2018 as envisaged in the Budget may prove difficult.”

[Budget Highlights;](#)

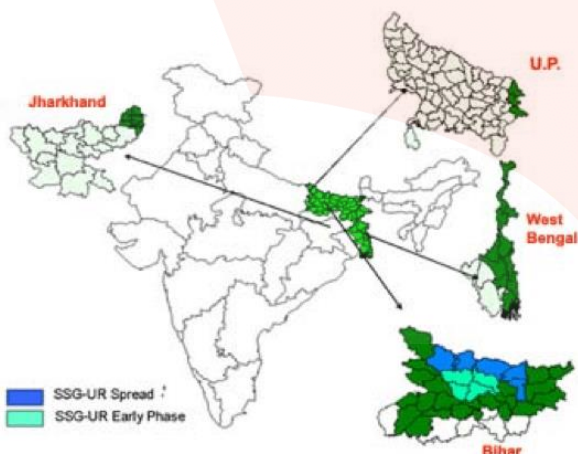
[Targeting old scourger;](#)

3. Kala-azar is a disease that is caused by a protozoan parasite with no animal reservoir, and whose associated vector is the sand fly. The disease is largely confined to the states of

- (a) Northeast India
- (b) North India
- (c) Eastern India
- (d) Central India

Solution: c.

“Kala-azar, though underreported and mainly confined to Bihar and Jharkhand, is a promising candidate for elimination in the current year, since the few thousand cases are caused by a protozoal parasite with no animal reservoir; control of the vector, the sand fly, holds the key.”



[TH: Targeting old scourger;](#)

Image source: [NVBDCP;](#)

4. The ‘Doctrine of Lapse’, in Modern Indian history, is associated with

- (a) Lord Wellesley
- (b) Lord William Bentick
- (c) Lord Canning
- (d) Lord Dalhousie

Solution: d.

- “The New Delhi Municipal Council on Monday passed a proposal to change the name of Dalhousie Road to Dara Shikoh Road, after the eldest son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.”
- Doctrine of lapse, in Indian history, was a formula devised by Lord Dalhousie, governor-general of India (1848–56), to deal with questions of succession to Hindu Indian states. It was a corollary to the doctrine of paramountcy, by which Great Britain, as the ruling power of the Indian subcontinent, claimed the superintendence of the subordinate Indian states and so also the regulation of their succession.

[Britannica;](#)

[TH: Dalhousie road becomes dara shikoh road;](#)

5. With reference to negotiations within the ambit of the World Trade Organisation, the “peace clause” is related to

- (a) Giving developing countries, among other things, longer time periods for implementing WTO agreements and commitments as well as provisions for safeguarding their trade interests
- (b) Temporarily permitting developing countries to hike import duties on farm products to counter sudden import surges and price falls, thereby protecting the interests of poor farmers

- (c) Suspension of efforts by developed countries to bring within the WTO's ambit non-trade issues such as labour and environment
- (d) India breaching the WTO agricultural subsidies' disciplines to meet its food security needs while not inviting any action from other member countries of the WTO

Solution: d.

"The skewed rules in the areas of agriculture and intellectual property rights have been flagged by the developing countries as their particular areas of concern. In agriculture, WTO rules have been loaded in favour of the developed countries, while the interests of small farmers have almost been completely ignored. India flagged the important issue of food security and argued that the sovereign states must have the right to decide the manner in which the poor should be provided subsidised food. This issue arose after questions were raised as to whether public stockholding of food, which is at the heart of India's Public Distribution System (PDS), meets the WTO disciplines on agricultural subsidies. After India countered the viewpoints of the countries questioning its PDS, an understanding was reached where even if India breached agricultural subsidies' disciplines to meet its food security needs, no penal action would be taken against it through what is commonly called a "peace clause". But India's insistence that there should be a permanent solution to the problem of public stockholding for food security purposes has been met with deafening silence."

TH: [Rewiring the WTO](#);

6. If the 'COMCASA' is signed between India and the United States of America,

- (a) It would permit the United States to transfer high-end military technologies to India in return for Indian military support in Afghanistan
- (b) The two militaries would be able to share geospatial data with each other
- (c) It would allow for secure exchange of communication between the two militaries
- (d) The two nations can utilise each other's air and naval bases for the purpose of re-fuelling and re-stocking essentials

Solution: c.

"During his recent visit to Delhi, Admiral Harry Harris, the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) chief, reiterated a long pending demand that India sign the COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) that would enhance joint surveillance of Chinese vessels."

- Highlighting the signing of military logistics agreement between the two countries last year after a decade, Admiral Harris expected that the two pending foundational agreements, the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) — formerly known as the Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) — and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) will also be signed but "at a pace India is comfortable with".
- COMCASA allows for secure exchange of communication between the militaries, while BECA is meant to facilitate the sharing of geospatial data. Emphasising their importance, he said that signing the COMCASA will allow the two navies to monitor Chinese submarines even better.

TH: What America first means for India;

7. With reference to the World Trade Organisation, consider the following statements:

1. The Agreement on Trade Facilitation was accepted at the Bali Ministerial Conference
2. 'Public Stockholding' and 'Investment' are the two issues that have been identified for inclusion in the run-up to the next Ministerial Conference

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

- "Trade facilitation.. covers all the measures that countries need to take in order to reduce transactions costs. Trade facilitation was not exactly an area that excited the developing countries for their shares in global trade are at very low levels. Moreover, by accepting the commitments under the agreement, they were required to undertake changes in their customs procedures and facilities, which seemed a daunting task for many of the poorer countries. The critical element was the availability of financing facilities for undertaking the modifications. However, despite their initial opposition, the developing countries eventually accepted the Agreement on Trade Facilitation at the end of the Bali Ministerial Conference in 2013."
- "In the run-up to the 11th Ministerial Conference to be held in Buenos Aires in December 2017, ground is being prepared by the major economies for another exercise at

"cherry picking". The issues that have been identified for inclusion in the WTO are electronic commerce and investment.."

TH: Rewiring the WTO;

8. Winter rain or snowfall in North and North-west India is attributed to Western Disturbance – an 'extratropical', non-monsoon precipitation pattern driven by westerly winds. On their way, the moisture content of these winds gets augmented from

1. Caspian Sea
2. Persian Gulf
3. Gulf of Guinea
4. Celebes Sea

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

The **Gulf of Guinea** opens out to the **Atlantic Ocean**. The **Celebes Sea** is to the South-east of the South China Sea. "During the winters, the weather in India is pleasant. The pleasant weather conditions, however, at intervals, get disturbed by shallow cyclonic depressions originating over the east Mediterranean Sea and travelling eastwards across West Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan before they reach the northwestern parts of India. On their way, the moisture content gets augmented from the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf in the south."

IE: What's behind the valley's snow peak;

Chapter – Climate; Indian Physical Environment, NCERT Class 11;

1. Restrictions on exit polls in India derive their sanction from
- Article 324 of the Constitution
 - Section 126(A) of Representation of the People Act
 - A Supreme Court judgement
 - None of the above

Solution: b.

"In 2004, the EC approached the Law Ministry along with the endorsement of six national parties and 18 state parties, seeking an amendment to the Representation of the People Act to provide for a ban on both exit and opinion polls during a period specified by the Commission. The recommendation was accepted in part, and in February 2010, restrictions were imposed only on exit polls through the introduction of Section 126(A) in the Act."

[IE: Exit polls and why they are restricted by the panel;](#)

2. The primary objective/s of the ISRO Nano Satellites (INS) is/are to
- Design and develop a low-cost modular Nano satellite capable of carrying payloads up to 5 kilograms
 - Provide an opportunity for ISRO technology demonstration payloads
 - Provide an opportunity to carry innovative payloads for Universities

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

PSLV-C37 carried two ISRO Nano Satellites – INS-1A and INS-1B. ISRO Nano Satellite (INS) is a versatile and modular Nano satellite bus system envisioned for future science and experimental payloads. The INS system is developed as a co-passenger satellite to accompany bigger satellites on PSLV.

The primary objectives of INS system are to:

- Design and develop a low cost modular Nano satellite in the weight range of 10 kg capable of carrying payloads up to a weight of 5 kg
- Provide an opportunity for ISRO technology demonstration payloads
- Provide a standard bus for launch on demand services
- Provide an opportunity to carry innovative payloads for Universities / R&D laboratories

[ISRO – INS;](#)

Improvisation: [ISRO sets the bar high;](#)

3. Recently, which of the following State Governments has become the first in our country to have a 'Happiness Department'?
- Assam
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Goa
 - Rajasthan

Solution: b.

Bhutan, Venezuela, the United Arab Emirates and Madhya Pradesh have Ministries/Departments of Happiness.

July 2016 – [TH: MP becomes first state to have 'happiness department';](#)

Improvisation: IE: [Happiness, beyond measure;](#)

4. The 'Micromasters Programme', recently seen in the news, is related to

(a) An online credentials-offering programme under the overall supervision of Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(b) The Indian Skill Development Service

(c) A set of programmes being offered by the National Skill Development Corporation in association with the Indian Institutes of Technology

(d) The short-term management courses that are set to be offered by the Indian Institutes of Management to individuals working in the social field, upon passage of the IIM Bill

Solution: a.

"The most recent step in this unfolding (Massive Online Open Courses) might be the most exciting. These universities are now preparing to offer actual credentials based on these online courses. On February 6, MIT launched what it calls a Micromasters in data and economics for development policy, which is a package of five online courses that, on successful completion, will lead to a degree from MITx, a newly set up degree granting institution under the MIT umbrella.."

[IE: A more democratic learning;](#)

[EdX;](#)

5. Who among the following is/are nominated/designated by the Election Commission of India?

1. Chief Electoral Officer
2. District Election Officer
3. Returning Officer
4. Presiding Officer

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

"In February 2007, during Assembly elections in Punjab, the Commission had asked District Election Officers of 20 districts to file separate complaints against NDTV director Prannoy Roy on charges that the channel had broadcast exit poll-like projections during voting hours. The difference in the Jagran case is that the DEOs were directed to file criminal cases under Section 188 of the IPC (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), which is a cognisable offence, and led to the arrest on Tuesday of Jagran online editor Shashank Shekhar Tripathi."

- The Presiding Officer along with other Polling Officers conducts the poll at a polling station.
- The Presiding Officer and the Polling Officers are appointed by the DEO. In case of UTs, such appointments are made by the Returning Officers.

CH-65, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: [IE: Exit polls and why they are restricted;](#)

6. Which among the following suggestions if feasible/implemented, would eliminate the need for farmers in North India to burn their paddy crop stubble?

1. Use of manual labour for harvesting the paddy crop
2. Use of seeder machines for wheat-seed drilling function
3. Increasing the silica content of rice straw by conventional methods of plant breeding

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

- Combine harvesters have been extensively used for harvesting of paddy and wheat due to non-availability of labour at the time of harvesting and increase in labour cost. Use of machines for harvesting has serious implications for crop residue management at the farm level. The combine harvester cuts the crop well above the ground, leaving behind substantial amount of stubble on the field. The machine leaves the residues in such a state that it is difficult to collect them manually.
- “The government has no one to blame but itself, since it has not been able to supply affordable seeder machinery in sufficient

numbers to eliminate the need to remove the straw.” Lack of suitable machinery is a major constraint to direct-drilling wheat seeds into combine-harvested rice residues due to the heavy straw load, and the presence of loose tough straw deposited by the harvester. Seeder machines combines two processes – stubble mulching and seed-drilling functions.

- Burning of wheat residue is **not necessary for the farmers** because of the availability of technology and its higher economic value as dry fodder. Rice straw, however, is not used as fodder as it is found to be non-palatable to animals due to its high silica content.

Improvisation: [TH: The foul air we breathe;](#)

November 10th: [TH: Straws in the wind;](#)

[Researchgate: The Happy Seeder;](#)

1. A 'moonshot', in a technology context, appears sometimes in the news. This is

- (a) An ambitious and exploratory project undertaken without any expectation of near-term profitability or benefit
- (b) A Reusable Launch Vehicle project being undertaken by an international consortium consisting of newspace companies from across the globe
- (c) Google Lunar XPrize participant Team Indus' project name
- (d) A proposed mode of passenger transportation that would propel a vehicle through a near-vacuum tube at more than airplane speeds

Solution: a.

- A moonshot, in a technology context, is an ambitious, exploratory and ground-breaking project undertaken without any expectation of near-term profitability or benefit and also, perhaps, without a full investigation of potential risks and benefits.
- Google defines moonshot as a project or proposal that a) Addresses a huge problem, b) Proposes a radical solution, and c) Uses breakthrough technology.
- The term "moonshot" derives from the Apollo 11 spaceflight project, which landed the first human on the moon in 1969. "Moonshot" may also reference the earlier phrase "shoot for the moon" meaning aim for a lofty target.

[What is moonshot;](#)

Improvisation – [BBC: Google hails net balloon 'breakthrough';](#)

2. With reference to the recently released 'State of Global Air 2017' report, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is released by the World Health Organisation
 - 2. It is a biennial report
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 Only
 - (b) 2 Only
 - (c) Neither 1 nor 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: d.

- Boston-based Health Effects Institute has launched State of Global Air 2017 — a concise, accessible report and interactive website providing "one-stop shopping" for the latest trends in air quality and its impact on human health around the world.
- The report and website will be updated each year, highlighting the extent to which air pollution affects public health as well as tracking progress toward cleaner air.

Improvisation: [IE – Costs of Denial;](#)

[HEI launches State of Global Air report;](#)

3. Though the casualties from the well-known PM 2.5 is higher, the State of Global Air 2017 report highlights the alarming rate of increase in deaths – a 148 per cent increase since 1990 – related to which one of the following air pollutants?

- (a) Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)
- (b) Lead
- (c) Ozone
- (d) Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

Solution: c.

The Centre's plan for a graded response to pollution "will need to take cognisance of a new pollutant mentioned in the report — ozone. Though the casualties from the gas are far less than the well-known PM 2.5, the rate of increase in ozone-related deaths is alarming. The report notes a 148 per cent increase in ozone-related deaths since 1990. The science on ozone pollution is still in its early stage and it could well be that the figures in the report are nebulous. But ozone pollution is surely something which the graded action plan would do well to address."

IE – [Costs of Denial](#);

Additionally, two conventions have also developed in this regard over the years. First, he should be an outsider, that is, he should not belong to the state where he is appointed, so that he is free from the local politics. Second, while appointing the governor, the president is required to consult the chief minister of the state concerned, so that the smooth functioning of the constitutional machinery in the state is ensured. However, both the conventions have been violated in some of the cases.

Improvisation: [Above the fray?](#);

Ch-26, Governor, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

4. Consider the following statements:

1. He must be an eminent person in some walk of life
2. He should be a person from outside the state
3. He should not have taken part in politics generally and particularly in the recent past

Which one of the statements given above is/are qualifications for the appointment of a Governor as mandated by the Constitution?

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

Solution: d.

The Constitution lays down only two qualifications for the appointment of a person as a governor. These are:

- 1) He should be a citizen of India.
- 2) He should have completed the age of 35 years.

5. Successful implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana will lead to

- (a) Permanently reduced instances of acute respiratory illnesses
- (b) Reduced consumption of electricity
- (c) A near-full transition to LPG as the main cooking fuel
- (d) Increased number of Below Poverty Line homes possessing LPG connections

Solution: d.

- Although reducing outdoor air pollution remains difficult for Indian policymakers given the multiplicity of sources involved, the country is making major strides in addressing household air pollution. First with the Give it Up scheme and now with the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) programme, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has targeted 5 crore BPL households to be connected to LPG by 2019.

- An LPG connection is a necessary first step, but there is need to ensure usage as well. An LPG connection alone does not help health much if the cylinder and stove sit unused in a corner, and are used occasionally for making tea. A near-full transition to LPG as the main cookfuel is needed to stop the household and ambient pollution from traditional biomass use.

[IE – The pollution in the house;](#)

6. Consider the following list of orders that can be passed by the Supreme Court:

1. Transfer of an accused from one state prison to another
2. Permitting two chief ministers to simultaneously occupy constitutional office
3. Issuing contempt notice against a sitting High Court judge

Which one of the following articles of the Constitution gives special powers to the Supreme Court to pass such orders?

- (a) Article 32
- (b) Article 124
- (c) Article 136
- (d) Article 142

Solution: d.

“...it invoked its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to order Shahabuddin’s transfer to Tihar Jail.”

“...instead of ruling on the legal issues involved, or deciding which of the two Chief Ministers was the legitimate occupant of the chair, the bench headed

by Chief Justice M.M. Punchhi, ordered a composite floor test to be held on February 26. On that day, both Mr. Pal and Mr. Singh sat as Chief Ministers in the U.P. Assembly, while the MLAs had the liberty to vote for either of them.” ... “The order in the Jagdambika Pal case can only trace its power to Article 142 of the Constitution.”

“Mr. Rohatgi said the Supreme Court as the apex judiciary is empowered under Articles 129 read with its extraordinary powers under Article 142 (2) to punish a member of the High Court and subordinate judiciary for contempt.”

[IE – Shift Shahabuddin for the sake of social order;](#)

[TH: Jugaad jurisprudence;](#)

[TH: SC issues contempt notice against HC Judge Karnan;](#)

7. In the context of Indian Polity, a “composite floor test”, to appoint a State Chief Minister

- (a) Has been mandated by the Constitution in certain exceptional circumstances
- (b) Is by way of convention, a means to resolve intra-political party disputes
- (c) Is a judicial innovation
- (d) Entails casting of votes by secret ballot

Solution: c.

“Two Chief Ministers simultaneously occupying constitutional office is an abomination which the Supreme Court once sanctified, in unusual circumstances, in **Jagdambika Pal**. In 1998, Jagdambika Pal was sworn in as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and lasted for three days in February. The previous State government led by Kalyan Singh was dismissed on February 21, 1998 by Governor Romesh Bhandari. Mr. Singh moved

the Allahabad High Court, which termed the dismissal of his government unconstitutional on February 23, thereby reinstating the Kalyan Singh government. Mr. Pal appealed to the Supreme Court. On February 24, instead of ruling on the legal issues involved, or deciding which of the two Chief Ministers was the legitimate occupant of the chair, the bench headed by Chief Justice M.M. Punchhi, ordered a composite floor test to be held on February 26. On that day, both Mr. Pal and Mr. Singh sat as Chief Ministers in the U.P. Assembly, while the MLAs had the liberty to vote for either of them. Mr. Singh won the floor test, only to fall on a later day.”

“The order in the ***Jagdambika Pal case*** can only trace its power to Article 142 of the Constitution which authorises the Supreme Court to “pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it”. Orders passed under this article have no precedential value.”

The Governor “did well to ignore the curious advice of Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi, who advocated a composite floor test...There are precedents for a composite floor test, but these were conducted in truly extraordinary circumstances and when specifically mandated by the judiciary.”

[TH: Jugaad jurisprudence;](#)

[TH: Change of Guard;](#)

1. Which one of the following is **not** a fundamental duty of citizens as mandated by the Constitution?

- (a) To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag, the National Anthem and the National Song
- (b) To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India
- (c) To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so
- (d) To safeguard public property

Solution: a.

- Orally noting that “there is no concept of National Song”, the Supreme Court has refused to intervene in a petition seeking a direction to the government to frame a national policy to promote and propagate the ‘National Song’, along with the National Anthem and the National Flag.
- A Bench of Justices Dipak Misra, R. Banumathi and Mohan M. Shantanagoudar, in a short order, said it should be clearly noted that Article 51A (a), citing the citizens’ fundamental duties, does not refer to ‘National Song.’

TH: [There’s no concept of National Song: SC;](#)

2. The nodal agency for framing policy guidelines and protocols involved in organ donation and transplantations is

- (a) The Organ Donation Foundation
- (b) The Human Tissue Authority of India
- (c) The Blood and Transplant Authority of India
- (d) The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation

Solution: d.

“The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation has begun the process of framing uniform guidelines on brain death certification to be followed by doctors across the country. NOTTO, the nodal agency that frames policy guidelines and protocols involved in organ donation and transplantation, will hold consultations with 60 medical experts on February 20 in New Delhi to arrive at a framework.”

[TH: Uniform norms for brain death certification;](#)

3. With reference to the element Chromium, which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Chromium-3 (Trivalent) is an essential human dietary element
- 2. Chromium-6 (Hexavalent) is carcinogenic
- 3. Ingestion of the carcinogenic form of Chromium can cause gastrointestinal disorders whereas its inhalation causes respiratory problems

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The same question was posted here in August 2016.

Chromium is an odorless and tasteless metallic element. Chromium is found naturally in rocks, plants, soil and volcanic dust, and animals. The most common forms of chromium that occur in natural waters in the environment are:

Trivalent chromium (chromium-3)

- *Chromium-3 is an essential human dietary element. It is found in many vegetables, fruits, meats, grains, and yeast.*

Hexavalent chromium (chromium-6)

- *Chromium-6 occurs naturally in the environment from the erosion of natural chromium deposits. It can also be produced by industrial processes.*

There are demonstrated instances of chromium being released to the environment by leakage, poor storage, or inadequate industrial waste disposal practices. *These forms of chromium can convert back and forth in water and in the human body, depending on environmental conditions.* Measuring just one form may not capture all of the chromium that is present.

The World Health Organization has classified Cr-6 as carcinogenic and can cause stomach ulcers and cancers and severe damage to kidneys and liver.

[TH: Groundwater beneath their feet;](#)

[August, PIB;](#)

[EPA: Chromium;](#)

Solution: d.

- Small pox was universally eradicated in 1979 and declared so in 1980; India's UIP was launched in 1985. Under the UIP, India has been declared polio-free (wild poliovirus, not vaccine-derived poliovirus).
- The recently-launched MR (Measles, Rubella) vaccination campaign targets around 41 crore children across the country. All children aged between 9 months and less than 15 years will be given a single shot of Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccination *irrespective of their previous measles/rubella vaccination status or measles/rubella disease status.*
- MR vaccine will be provided free-of-cost across the states from session sites at schools as well as health facilities and outreach session sites.
- *Measles vaccine is currently provided under Universal Immunization Programme (UIP). However, rubella vaccine will be a new addition.*

[PIB: India accelerating efforts to eliminate measles and control rubella by 2020;](#)

[PIB: Health Ministry launches single vaccine for dual protection against measles and Rubella;](#)

4. Which of the following diseases have been eradicated under the Universal Immunisation Programme?

1. Small Pox
2. Measles
3. Rubella

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

5. The 'National Institute of Disaster Management' is related to

- (a) Laying down the policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management (DM)
- (b) The largest community capacity building exercise
- (c) Undertaking training along with research, documentation and development of a National-level information base related to DM
- (d) Ensuring effective coordination between state governments in the event of a disaster that affects two or more states

Solution: c.

Statement 'a' refers to the NDMA, 'b' refers to the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project, 'd' is a task undertaken by the Ministry of Home Affairs ("The overall coordination of disaster management vests with the Ministry of Home Affairs").

About NIDM:

- It undertakes training along with research, documentation and development of a national level information base.
- It organises training for trainers, DM officials and other stakeholders.
- It plays an important role in developing and facilitating the implementation of a national training schedule for DM.

Improvisation: [PIB](#);

[Insights into Yojana, January 2017](#);

[About NIDM](#);

NOTES

1. With reference to 'Red Sanders', sometimes seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a tree species found in a part of South India.
2. It is one of the most important trees in the tropical rain forest areas of South India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

- Statement 1: Red Sanders (a tree) has a highly restrictive distribution in the South Eastern portion of Indian peninsula (Eastern Ghats of South India) to which it is endemic.
- Statement 2: It occurs in the forest formation which is classified as "Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests".

It is generally found at altitudes of 150 – 900 m. It grows on dry, hilly, often rocky ground, and occasionally found on precipitous hill sides also. It prefers lateritic and gravelly soil and cannot tolerate water logging.

[MoEF](#);

[TH](#);

[Q28, CS\(P\) 2016](#);

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The state council of ministers shall be collectively responsible to the legislative assembly as also the legislative council in states where it is present
2. When the legislative assembly passes a no-confidence motion against the council of ministers, all the ministers have to resign including those who are from the legislative council

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Article 164 clearly states that the council of ministers is collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly. This means that all the ministers own joint responsibility to the legislative assembly for all their acts of omission and commission. They work as a team and swim or sink together. When the legislative assembly passes a no-confidence motion against the council of ministers, all the ministers have to resign including those ministers who are from the legislative council.

Ch-28, 'State Council of Ministers', Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: [TH: Marred by violence](#);

- 3.** Our Constitution confers the doctrine of judicial review on
- The Supreme Court
 - The High Courts
 - Both a and b
 - Neither a nor b
- 4.** The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority recently capped the prices of coronary 'stents'. A stent is
- A tiny tube-shaped device to open up narrowed or blocked arteries
 - An artificial heart valve
 - An external device used to provide the functions of both the heart and the lungs
 - A prosthetic device that is implanted into the body to replace the original biological heart

Solution: c.

"Only an elected legislature, after careful deliberation, could decide to restrict some speech in the interests of an overwhelmingly important public goal. This could then be challenged before independent courts. Thus, the Constitution protected citizens' rights through two layers of safeguards: the legislature had to make a law, and then the courts could be called upon to test its constitutionality."

Article 13 declares that all laws that are inconsistent with or in derogation of any of the fundamental rights shall be void. In other words, it expressly provides for the doctrine of judicial review. This power has been conferred on the Supreme Court (Article 32) and the high courts (Article 226) that can declare a law unconstitutional and invalid on the ground of contravention of any of the Fundamental Rights.

Ch-7, 'Fundamental Rights', Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

Improvisation: [TH: Upsetting a very fine balance;](#)

Solution: a.

- A stent is a small mesh tube that's used to treat narrow or weak arteries. Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart to other parts of your body.
- Doctors also may place stents in weak arteries to improve blood flow and help prevent the arteries from bursting.
- Stents usually are made of metal mesh, but sometimes they're made of fabric. Fabric stents, also called stent grafts, are used in larger arteries.
- Some stents are coated with medicine that is slowly and continuously released into the artery. These stents are called drug-eluting stents. The medicine helps prevent the artery from becoming blocked again.

Improvisation: [TH: Government meets stent makers to ensure a steady supply ;](#)

[TH: Stent prices heavily slashed;](#)

[NHLBI;](#)

5. The Dam Safety Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, with World Bank assistance will rehabilitate and improve large dam projects in seven states, coupled with institutional reforms and strengthening of regulatory measures pertaining to safe and financially-sustainable dam operations. These seven states include:

- (a) Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka
- (b) Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- (c) Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand
- (d) Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha

Solution: b.

Maharashtra is not among the seven states.

- Globally India ranks third after China and the USA in terms of number of large dams with a total storage capacity of about 283 billion cubic meters. Close to 80% of large dams have surpassed the age of twenty-five years, and many of them face the challenges of deferred maintenance. Many of these dams are considerably old (about 170 dams exceed the age of 100 years) and built in an era whose design practices and safety considerations do not match with the current design standards and the prevailing safety norms.
- Several of these dams may be experiencing distress and are in urgent need of attention for ensuring their structural safety as well as operational efficiency. Large dams' failure may seriously affect the lives, property and the environment in addition to disrupting the services provided by the dam.

- The DRIP project is being implemented in the seven States (Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand).

PIB: [Third National Dam Safety Conference held;](#)

6. Aero India is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition held in

- (a) New Delhi
- (b) Jaipur
- (c) Indore
- (d) Bangalore

Solution: d.

Started in 1996, Aero India is among the world's biggest aerospace shows. The exhibition began on a low key, but as India opened up its purse strings after the Kargil conflict to become a major buyer in the global arms bazaar, companies began to flock to Bangalore for Aero India.

[Wikipedia;](#)

TH: [What is the Aero India show?;](#)

1. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, for the period between 2011 and 2015,

1. Nearly a third of Indian cities have breached annual pollution limits mandated by it
2. The level of PM2.5 particles in most cities is within prescribed limits

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

A mains-oriented question.

- Nearly a third of Indian cities have breached annual pollution limits mandated by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) between 2011 and 2015, according to figures from the Union Environment Ministry-affiliated organisation.
- The numbers — the latest available and updated in blocks of 4 years — sourced from 680 pollution-monitoring stations spread over 300 cities across the country, measure levels of particulate matter (PM 10), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂).
- Monitoring and enforcing pollution limits was done by the State pollution control boards and the Centre could only send advisories, according to officials.
- **Regarding statement 2:** While cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Pune measure PM2.5 levels, most lack the sensors required to gauge the presence of these minute particles that are considered more toxic than the more-commonly measured PM 10.

TH: [There's poison in the air;](#)

2. In India's case, the 'National Regulatory Authority' (NRA), as defined by the World Health Organisation, comprises

1. The Pharmacovigilance Programme of India
2. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation
3. State Drug Regulatory Authorities

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has given the Indian vaccine regulatory structure the highest possible rating of 4 on a majority of parameters.

- 'NRA's are defined by the WHO as "national regulatory agencies responsible for ensuring that products released for public distribution (normally pharmaceuticals and biological products, such as vaccines) are evaluated properly and meet international standards of quality and safety".
- In India's case, the NRA, as defined by the WHO, comprises the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), which has regulatory control over the import of drugs, approval of new drugs and clinical trials; the State Drug Regulatory Authorities; the Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI), the country's national drug safety programme; and the Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) structures at the central and state levels.

IE: [An even safer jab, says WHO;](#)

3. Consider the following statements:

1. India has never participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
2. PISA is a global evaluation of 15-year-olds conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Economic Survey 2014-15 Volume 2: "...the overall standard of education is well below global standards: that PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2009+ results ranked Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh 72 and 73 out of 74 participants, higher only than Kyrgyzstan, exposes the gaps in our education system. PISA, which measures the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds with questions designed to assess their problem-solving capabilities, rates these two states at the bottom, with the scores in mathematics and science falling way behind the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) average..." India did not participate in PISA 2012 as well as PISA 2015.

January 2017 – [IE: Group of Secretaries on Education recommendations](#); – In an effort to improve learning outcomes in the country, the group has suggested that surveys by "third party" be allowed annually to measure outcomes. Besides, they have called for the country's participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

IE: [Learn the lesson](#);

4. ISRO's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle is a three-stage launcher. Which of the following GSLV stages is derived from ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle?

1. First
2. Second
3. Third

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

GSLV is a three stage launcher that uses one solid rocket motor stage and one Earth storable liquid stage – both of which are derived from the PSLV – and one cryogenic stage (India's first cryogenic engines developed by the Liquid Propulsion System's Centre)..

ISRO: [Launchers – GSLV](#);

Improvisation: [IE: Reaching for the Stars](#);

5. Consider the following statements:

1. Hydrogen liquefies at a lower temperature than Oxygen
2. The combination of liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen is widely utilised as fuel for a cryogenic rocket engine

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

Regarding Propellants: In a rocket engine, fuel and a source of oxygen, called an oxidizer, are mixed and exploded in a combustion chamber.

Information regarding Statement 1: ...but their ultra-low temperature, particularly of liquid hydrogen (Oxygen liquifies at -183 deg C and Hydrogen at -253 deg C), creates enormous problems when using them in rockets.

Information regarding Statement 2: A cryogenic engine burns a highly-efficient propellant combination (a propellant consists of a fuel and an oxidiser). The most widely-used combination is liquid hydrogen – the fuel – and liquid oxygen – the oxidiser.

Improvisation: [IE: Reaching for the Stars](#);

Wikipedia: [Cryogenic Rocket Engine](#);

NASA: [Propulsion System](#);



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