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DAILY

QUIZ

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1. The James Webb Space Telescope is a successor to the
- Fifty-Metre Aperture Space Telescope
 - Aryabhata Observational Telescope
 - Thirty Metre Telescope
 - Hubble Space Telescope

Solution: d.

The **James Webb Space Telescope** (sometimes called JWST or Webb) will be a **large infrared telescope** with a 6.5-meter primary mirror (about 6 times larger in area than the Hubble Space Telescope).

JWST will be the premier observatory of the next decade, serving thousands of astronomers worldwide. It will study every phase in the **history of our Universe**, ranging from the **first luminous glows after the Big Bang, to the formation of solar systems** capable of supporting life on planets like Earth, to the **evolution** of our own Solar System.

[BBC: JWST – Hubble successor set for yet more tests;](#)

[NASA: JWST;](#)

2. In the context of the global food trade and its relationship with global water sources,
- India is presently a “net importer” of water
 - India has always been a “net importer” of water
 - India is the largest importer of food grown with unsustainable water
 - None of the above

Solution: d.

Page 74, Economic Survey Volume 1 2015-16: This section discusses the pattern of India’s food trade with reference to the export of water “embedded” in these foodstuffs (this does not take into account water used in production).

- India was a “**net importer**” of water until around **1980s**. With increases in food grain exports, India has now become a **net exporter** of water – about 1 per cent of total available water every year.

- The ratio of export to import of such virtual water is about 4 for India and 0.1 for China.

BBC: This article specifically refers to the global food trade with reference to the export of foodstuffs grown using unsustainable water (at the time of production).

- The global market for foodstuffs is depleting water sources in many parts of the world quicker than they can naturally be refilled. The complex trade is increasing pressure on non-renewable groundwater, mainly used for irrigating crops such as rice, wheat and cotton.
- Pakistan, the US and India are the countries exporting the most food grown with unsustainable water.

3. Which one of the following statements with reference to the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) programme is **incorrect**?
- It is a sector-driven cooperative organization, which includes trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries
 - The Asian Development Bank serves as the SASEC Secretariat
 - Pakistan is not a member
 - Myanmar is a member

Solution: a.

Statement ‘a’ refers to BIMSTEC.

The [South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation \(SASEC\) Program](#), set up in **2001**, brings together **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Myanmar (Joined February 2017), Nepal and Sri Lanka** in a project-based partnership to promote regional prosperity by improving cross-border connectivity, boosting trade among member countries, and strengthening regional economic cooperation.

- Since 2001, SASEC countries have implemented 46 regional projects worth more than \$9 billion in the energy, economic corridor development, transport, trade facilitation, and information and communications technology sectors.

- The **Manila**, Philippines-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) serves as the **Secretariat** for the SASEC member countries, and is the lead financier of the SASEC programme.

[PIB](#);

4. Consider the following statements:

- The World Customs Organisation (WCO) was established under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation
- The 'Revised Kyoto Convention' is related to the simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures globally

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Statement 1 is wrong, although the WTO and WCO cooperate on certain issues such as trade facilitation.

- The **WCO**, established in **1952** as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an **independent intergovernmental body** whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.
- The CCC was initially a Customs Committee set up by a group of a few European Governments based on the principles of the GATT. The name 'WCO' was adopted in **1994** to reflect its status as a truly global intergovernmental institution.
- Today, the WCO represents 181 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately **98% of world trade**. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the **WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters** and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.
- The '**Revised Kyoto Convention**' (RKC) is the **legal instrument of the WCO** that aims to **simplify and harmonize international customs** procedures

globally, in order to achieve faster, more predictable and efficient customs clearances.

In the news: SASEC is facilitating trade guided by the SASEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework (2014–2018) in the sub-region through various projects, which include, among others, implementing provisions of the RKC.

[PIB](#);

[What is the WCO](#);

5. The Union Government's 'GARV' portal is associated with which one of the following schemes/campaigns?

- Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik
- Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojna
- GiveItUp Campaign

Solution: c.

[PIB](#);

[GARV](#);

6. With reference to the devices of Parliamentary proceedings, a 'Substantive Motion' is a

- Self-contained independent proposal dealing with a very important matter like impeachment of the President
- Motion that is moved in substitution of an original motion and proposes an alternative to it
- Motion that, by itself, has no meaning and cannot state the decision of the House without reference to the original motion or proceedings of the House
- Motion moved by a member of the House to cut short the debate on a matter before the house and instead initiate a debate dealing with a very important matter

Solution: a.

Ch-22, Parliament: Devices of Parliamentary Proceedings, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: [TH: My motion on Governors wasn't taken up, says Digvijaya](#);

Clarification

Q4, Quiz, 31st March 2017
(Click [HERE](#)): Typo; Answer should be option 'a', as can be gleaned from the explanation and sources provided.

NOTES

1. The e-Visa facility was recently extended to the nationals of 161 countries for entry through
- airports
 - seaports
 - Both a and b
 - Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

"With effect from April 1, 2017, **e-Visa** has further been sub-divided into **3 categories** i.e. **e-tourist visa**, **e-Business visa** and **e-Medical visa**. E-visa facility has been extended to the nationals of 161 countries for entry through 24 airports (E-visa service was earlier granted through 16 airports) and **3 Indian Ports i.e. Cochin, Goa and Mangalore** to tap the potential of cruise tourism from different countries. This service will also be provided from Mumbai and Chennai seaports shortly."

[PIB](#);

2. The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation programme was formed in 2001 in response to a request made by the South Asia Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ) countries to the Asian Development Bank to assist in facilitating economic cooperation between them. Which countries comprise the SAGQ?
- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal
 - Myanmar, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka
 - Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
 - Maldives, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh

Solution: a.

- The '**BBIN**' nations comprise the **SAGQ**, formed in **1996**, as a vehicle for accelerating sustainable economic development through regional cooperation.
- Myanmar** joined **SASEC** in February this year. Two options can thus be easily eliminated.

- The **Ninth SAARC summit (1997)** endorsed **SAGQ** as a sub-regional initiative under SAARC.

[PIB](#);

[SAGQ](#);

3. Of the eight core industries, the combination of which of the following accounts for the largest weight in the Index of Industrial Production?
- Electricity, Fertilisers and Natural Gas
 - Fertilisers, Natural Gas and Cement
 - Refinery Products, Steel and Electricity
 - Cement, Coal and Crude Oil

Solution: c.

In **ascending order** of their weights in the IIP:

Fertilisers < Natural Gas < Cement < Coal < Crude Oil < Refinery Products < Steel < Electricity.

[PIB](#);

4. The city of Dinpanah, built by Humayun, was razed to the ground and on the same site, which was also perhaps the site of Indraprastha, believed to be the capital of the Pandavas, he raised the citadel of Purana Quila with an extensive city-area sprawling around it. "He" is
- Akbar
 - Babur
 - Sher Shah Sur
 - Anangpal Tomara

Solution: c.

"**Sher Shah Sur** seems to have razed to the ground the city of Dinpanah built by Humayun, and on the same site, which was also perhaps the site of Indraprastha, believed to be the capital of the Pandavas, he raised the citadel of Purana-Qal'a with an extensive city-area sprawling around it. Among the seven cities of Delhi, the Purana-Qal'a is the sixth."

[ASI: Purana Quila](#);

[PIB](#);

1. 'Sanskritisation', in the realm of sociology, refers to
- A process of upward social mobility
 - A phenomenon in which western cultural trends are co-opted by Indians while giving them an "Indian flavour"
 - A process whereby members of upper castes attempt to raise their own social status by occupying the "corridors of power"
 - None of the above

Solution: a.

'Sanskritisation' refers to a process whereby members of a (usually middle or lower) caste attempt to raise their own social status by adopting the ritual, domestic and social practices of a caste (or castes) of higher status. Although this phenomenon is an old one and predates Independence and perhaps even the colonial period, it has intensified in recent times.

Conceptual -> Sanskritisation -> Oped Page, The Hindu, 3rd April, 2017;

Pg-48, Indian Society, Class 12 NCERT;

2. Consider the following statements with reference to the International Labour Organisation:
- It is the only tripartite United Nations agency
 - India is a founder member
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

The **only tripartite U.N. agency**, since **1919** the **ILO** brings together 1) **governments**, 2) **employers** and 3) **workers'** representatives of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

The Union Cabinet recently has given its approval for ratification of the **two fundamental conventions** of the **International Labour Organization** namely, **Minimum Age Convention (No 138)** concerning minimum age for admission to employment, and the **Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No 182)** concerning the prohibition and immediate action for elimination of the worst forms of Child Labour.

- India is a **founder member** of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, which came into existence in 1919.
- At present, the ILO has 187 members.

[PIB](#); [ILO](#);

3. Which one of the following city's Heat Action Plan – to cope with heatwaves – was the first of its kind to be formulated in South Asia?
- Adilabad
 - Ahmedabad
 - Hyderabad
 - Allahabad

Solution: b.

A fact that can be used in the Main Examination.

"Ahmedabad, for instance, drew up a city-level action plan in the wake of its 46.8°C heatwave of 2010 with support from public health institutions. Preparing the health system to identify symptoms of heat stress and providing treatment through **urban health centres** is one intervention it decided upon. **Reviewing school timetables, rescheduling work timings** to cooler hours, making **water widely available** and reserving religious sites and libraries as cooling centres were others."

[TH: How Ahmedabad beat the heat;](#)

[TH: Coping with Summer;](#)

4. The satellite-based information service for detection and monitoring of Harmful Algal Bloom is being implemented by
- Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services
 - National Centre for Earth Science Studies
 - National Institute of Ocean Technology
 - Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management Project Directorate

Solution: a.

Improvisation: [TH: Algal bloom may spare Indian waters;](#)

[INCOIS: HAB;](#)

algae gives **deep green colour to the ocean** in the areas of spread.

- The decomposition reduces dissolved oxygen from the water column and causes adverse effect on fish. Secondly, degrading Noctiluca cells release **ammonia** in the water increasing toxic level and it causes **fish mortality**.
- Cool dry continental air** from the **northeast** causes an increase in surface density of the sea water due to evaporative cooling and **increased salinity**." The "vertical mixing of the water masses causes recharge of water column with nutrients from the deep. The resulting **nutrient enrichment** increases the biological production" of the water, they noted.

[TH: Algal bloom may spare Indian waters;](#)

[Science Alert;](#)

5. *Noctiluca scintillans*, commonly known as the sea sparkle, is an algal species which recently bloomed in the Arabian Sea. Which of the following statements about this algal species is **incorrect**?
- Its decomposition reduces dissolved oxygen from the water
 - Degrading *Noctiluca scintillans* release ammonia in the water increasing toxic levels and causing fish mortality
 - Cool dry continental air from the northeast creates the conditions necessary for this algal bloom
 - It gives the ocean a dark red colour in the areas of its spread

Solution: d.

'Sea sparkle' and 'dark red' don't probably go well together.

- Those at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, (INCOIS), Hyderabad, confirmed that the **algal species *Noctiluca scintillans*** had bloomed. The presence of the **green**

NOTES

1. 'Gibraltar' is

- (a) A British overseas territory
- (b) A strait connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea
- (c) An island in the Atlantic Ocean lying west of the coast of Portugal
- (d) An isthmus connecting Portugal with Spain

Solution: a.

Gibraltar is a **British overseas territory** occupying a narrow peninsula of **Spain's** southern Mediterranean coast, just northeast of the **Strait of Gibraltar**, on the east side of the **Bay of Gibraltar (Bay of Algeciras)**.



In the news: Following the triggering of formal Brexit negotiations, it was revealed the EU's draft document on its Brexit strategy said no agreement on its future relationship with the UK would apply to Gibraltar without the consent of Spain – giving it a potential veto. Spain – a member of the EU – reportedly lobbied for the condition. Gibraltar, which voted by 96% to stay in the EU in June's referendum, accused Spain of using Brexit to pursue its territorial aims.

[BBC: Gibraltar Brexit row – what is the dispute about?;](#)

[Britannica: Gibraltar;](#)

2. The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation comes under the

- (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- (b) Ministry of Home Affairs
- (c) Ministry of Science and Technology
- (d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Solution: d.

[PESO;](#)

Improvisation: [PIB;](#)

3. With reference to the Union Public Service Commission, consider the following statements:

- 1. To be considered for appointment as a member of the Commission, he/she must have held office for at least ten years either under the Union or a State Government
- 2. 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
- 3. The President must appoint a Chairman before the sitting Chairman is due for retirement

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

"Prof. Syiemlieh joined the Commission as Member on June 25, 2012 and was later appointed to perform the duties of the post of Chairman, UPSC under **Article 316 (1A)** of the Constitution of India w.e.f. January 4, 2017. He took the **Oath of Office and Secrecy** as Chairman, Union Public Service Commission, under clause (1) of Article 316 of the Constitution of India, today (3rd April, 2017)."

- Usually, the Commission consists of **nine to eleven members** including the chairman.
- Further, no qualifications are prescribed for the Commission's membership except that one-half of the members of the Commission should be such persons who have held office for at least ten years either under the Government of India or under the government of a state.
- 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**.
- The **President** can appoint one of the members of the UPSC as an acting chairman in the following two circumstances: (a) When the office of the chairman falls vacant; or (b) When the chairman is unable to perform his functions due to absence or some other reason.

Ch-39, UPSC, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: [PIB](#);

4. What makes the Serum Institute of India's BRV-PV rotavirus vaccine unique?
- (a) It is the first effective rotavirus vaccine to ever be developed
 - (b) It requires no refrigeration
 - (c) This vaccine is the first to be introduced into India's Universal Immunisation Programme before successful completion of clinical trials
 - (d) Both a and b

Solution: b.

- **MSF**: Currently, **two vaccines** exist against rotavirus, but they must be kept **refrigerated at all times**. In addition to being **heat-stable**, **BRV-PV** is also **cheaper** than the other two rotavirus vaccines on the market, with a price of less than \$2.50. This price should help ensure that countries quickly incorporate the new vaccine into routine immunization programs.
- **IE Explained**: **Rotavac**, a rotavirus vaccine produced by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, became part of **India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)** when it was introduced in 4 states in April

2016, and was subsequently extended to 5 more states last month. The key step forward in the manufacture of Serum Institute of India's new **BRV-PV vaccine** — to be ultimately called **Rotasiiil** — is that **it does not**, unlike Rotavac, **require refrigeration**, and is, therefore, **easier to store in low-income countries** where rotavirus poses the greatest threat to children.

5. India is a founder-member of
1. International Labour Organisation
 2. African Development Bank Group
 3. South Asian Subregional Economic Cooperation
 4. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

These are organisations/groups which have appeared in the news recently, and on which we have framed questions repeatedly (except on the African Development Bank [AfDB] Group).

- India is a Non-Regional **Member** of the **AfDB Group** and is **not a founding-member**.
- The AfDB Group has 80 member countries, comprising 54 regional member countries (RMC) and 26 non-regional member countries (NRM). The non-regional member countries are primarily from Europe, America and Asia. Initially, only independent African countries could become members of the Bank. However, due to growing demand for investments from African countries and because of the Bank's limited financial resources, membership was opened to non-regional countries.

[FAQs: AfDB Group](#);

Improvisation: [PIB](#);

6. Which of the following were seats of learning from India's past?

1. Takshashila
2. Vikramashila
3. Somapura
4. Odantapuri

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

Ans: c.

"There was a time when India played a dominant role in the higher education system and we had renowned seats of learning like **Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramashila, Valabhi, Somapura** and **Odantapuri**. However after them we have not been able to find a place in world rankings which is commensurate with our size, culture and civilization. India now has to work towards regaining that glory of the past."

Another seat of learning is **Jagaddala**.

2015: [PIB](#);

Improvisation: [TH: Pranab hopeful of reviving Vikramshila University](#);

Solution: d.

- **Graphene oxide** membranes have already proven their worth in sieving out small nanoparticles, organic molecules and even large salts. But until now, they couldn't be used to filter out common salts, which require even smaller sieves.
- Previous work had shown that graphene oxide membranes became slightly swollen when immersed in water, allowing smaller salts to flow through the pores along with water molecules. Now, Dr Nair and colleagues demonstrated that placing **walls made of epoxy resin** (a substance used in coatings and glues) on either side of the graphene oxide membrane was sufficient to stop the expansion.
- **Restricting the swelling** in this way also allowed the scientists to tune the properties of the membrane, letting through less or more common salt for example.

[BBC](#);

[TH: The magic sieve](#);

NOTES

7. A UK-based team of researchers recently created a "graphene-based sieve" capable of removing salt from seawater. This "graphene-based sieve" is

- (a) A single-layer sheet of graphene
- (b) A thin sheet of graphene with hole sizes less than one nanometer drilled into it
- (c) A solution of liquid graphene oxide mixed with seawater which attracts all salt molecules like a magnet
- (d) Epoxy Resin-coated graphene oxide membrane

1. Consider the following statements with reference to a tribe that resides in South India:

1. They have a rich traditional knowledge of the medicinal resources in the forests of Agasthyamalai Hills
2. The tribal physicians among them – known as “*Plathi*” – are the exclusive holders of the traditional medicinal knowledge
3. A formulation named “*Jeevani*”, which means “giver of life”, was made by a research institute, sourcing ingredients from a plant known called “*Arogyapacha*” by this tribe
4. A recently discovered arboreal crab – the first of its kind – has been named after this tribe

Which tribe do the statements given above refer to?

- (a) kadar
- (b) kani
- (c) badaga
- (d) kurumba

Solution: b.

TH: Scientists have discovered a new species of long legged, tree-dwelling crabs in Western Ghats of Kerala. The new species named **Kani maranjandu** after the **Kani tribe** in **Kerala**, are substantially different from other congeners. This is the first report of its kind to offer a record of an arboreal crab — a species that lives in trees.

[WIPO: Using traditional knowledge to revive the body and a community;](#)

[DTE: The Kani learning;](#)

2. The Defense Acquisition Council recently approved the procurement of a fresh batch of Barak Surface-to-Air Missiles for Naval warships. These missiles are built by

- (a) Russia
- (b) Israel
- (c) France
- (d) United States of America

Solution: b.

“The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** of the Defence Ministry on Monday approved the purchase of Barak surface-to-air missiles (SAM) for the Navy among other proposals. **Israeli-built Barak short-range** SAMs are installed on most of the front-line warships, including the aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya**.”

[Insightsonindia: Daily Current Affairs;](#)

[TH: Defence ministry nod to buy Barak missiles;](#)

3. An Expendable Bathythermograph System helps with making accurate measurements – directly or indirectly – of

- (a) Temperature throughout the water column
- (b) Sound speed profile for the water column
- (c) Depth of water and consequently in mapping the seabed
- (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

Temperature measurements are directly made by this system. Options ‘b’ and ‘c’ are indirectly determined, using data generated by the system.

- An **Expendable Bathythermograph (XBT)** is a small probe that is dropped over the side of a ship. As it falls through the water, it **measures temperature**. Small wires transmit the temperature data back to the ship where it is recorded for further analysis.
- Because the probe falls through the water at a known rate, the depth of the probe can be inferred from the time of launch. Scientists then plot temperature as a function of depth to create a temperature profile of the water.
- It may surprise you to learn that temperature profiles play an important role in multibeam mapping operations. In order to make accurate depth measurements using **multibeam sonar**, we need to know how fast the sound wave emitted from the sonar unit travels through seawater. The speed at which sound travels changes as the density of water varies through the water column.

Temperature and salinity are the two main variables that affect the density of seawater.

In the news: "The other deals include procurement of expendable **Bathy thermograph systems** for the Navy to **detect temperature changes under water** through the foreign military sales route from the U.S."

Improvisation: [TH: Defence ministry nod to buy Barak missiles;](#)

[NOAA: Ocean Explorer – the XBT;](#)

4. The Right to Vote in India is

- (a) A constitutional right
- (b) A statutory right
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

In India, the right to vote is provided by the Constitution and the Representation of People's Act, 1951, subject to certain disqualifications.

- **Article 326 of the Constitution guarantees the right to vote to every citizen above the age of 18.**
- Further, **Section 62 of the Representation of Peoples Act (RoPA), 1951** states that every person who is in the electoral roll of that constituency will be entitled to vote.
- Thus, the Constitution and the RoPA make it clear that every individual above the age of 18, whose name is in the electoral rolls, and does not attract any of the disqualifications under the Act, may cast his vote.

[PRS: Right to Vote in India;](#)

Improvisation: [TH: Right to recall legislators;](#)

5. Consider the following list of lakes surrounding an African nation:

1. To its East is Lake Victoria
2. To its North is Lake Edward and Lake Albert
3. To its South is Lake Tanganyika
4. Its western border runs through Lake Kivu

This nation's capital is

- (a) Kigali
- (b) Mogadishu
- (c) Bujumbura
- (d) Pretoria

Solution: a.

A GK question. **Kigali** (capital of **Rwanda**) was in the news a few months ago (Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol). **Mogadishu** (**Somalia**) and **Pretoria** (one of three **South African capitals**) are capitals of **Indian Ocean littoral countries**; two options could thus be eliminated.



6. Which of the following devices of direct democracy is/are available to Indian citizens?

1. Referendum
2. Initiative
3. Plebiscite

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Democracy is of two types – *direct* and *indirect*.

- In **direct democracy**, the people exercise their supreme power directly as is the case in **Switzerland**. There are four devices of direct democracy, namely, **Referendum, Initiative, Recall and Plebiscite**.
- In **indirect democracy**, on the other hand, the representatives elected by the people exercise the supreme power and thus carry on the government and make the laws. This type of democracy, also known as **representative democracy**, is of two kinds—**parliamentary and presidential**.
- The **Indian Constitution** provides for **representative parliamentary democracy** under which the executive is responsible to the legislature for all its policies and actions.

Ch-4, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

Improvisation: [TH: Right to recall legislators](#);

NOTES

1. The '*M.P. Sharma v. Satish Chandra*' and '*Kharak Singh v. the State of U.P.*' are cases associated with which one of the following issues that are often seen in the news?

- (a) Net neutrality
- (b) Right to privacy
- (c) Criminal defamation law
- (d) Right to Information Act

Solution: b.

These two cases have in recent times repeatedly appeared in the news whenever there has been any issue related to Right to Privacy.

In the news: "When the hearing began, senior advocate K.K. Venugopal, for Facebook, raised the contention that if the WhatsApp-Facebook contract is going to be challenged as a violation of the right to privacy, then a larger Bench than five judges should hear the case. He referred to the 1954 **eight-judges Bench** verdict in **M.P. Sharma's case** and the **six-judges Bench** judgment of 1962 in **Kharak Singh case** on the right to privacy. Both judgments had categorically rejected the existence of privacy as a guaranteed right under **Article 21** of the Constitution."

[TH: WhatsApp case for Constitution Bench;](#)

2. The Rail Development Authority will be responsible for

- 1. Setting efficiency and performance standards for rail operations
- 2. Setting passenger and freight fares
- 3. Ensuring fair play and level playing field for stakeholder investment

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The regulator will perform four primary functions—

- 1) tariff determination (it will not set the tariffs; it will only recommend tariffs "commensurate with costs");
- 2) ensuring fair play and level playing field for stakeholder investment;
- 3) setting efficiency and performance standards; and
- 4) dissemination of information.

[Livemint;](#)

[TH: Rail regulator gets green light;](#)

3. The McMahon Line, the result of the 1914 Simla Convention, between British India and Tibet, demarcated the boundary line between Tibet and present-day state(s) of

- (a) Jammu and Kashmir
- (b) Arunachal Pradesh
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: b.

McMahon Line: Frontier between **Tibet and Assam** in British India, negotiated between Tibet and Great Britain at the end of the **Shimla Conference** (October 1913–July 1914) and named for the chief British negotiator, Sir Henry McMahon.

- It runs from the **eastern border of Bhutan** along the crest of the Himalayas until it reaches the **great bend in the Brahmaputra River** where that river emerges from its Tibetan course into the Assam Valley.

Improvisation: [TH: Ties severely damaged, says China;](#)

4. 'Air Services Agreement', sometimes seen in the news, is

- (a) A legally binding agreement private national carriers have to sign under which they are required to adhere to the 5/20 rule in order to fly overseas
- (b) An multilateral agreement liberalising the rules and regulations of the commercial aviation

- (c) An agreement outlining the Viability Gap Funding criteria for airlines operating under the Regional Connectivity Scheme
- (d) The basic legal framework for any air operation between two countries

Solution: d.

ASA is the basic legal framework for any air operation between the two countries. According to [Wikipedia](#), "An air transport agreement (also sometimes called an air service agreement or ATA or ASA) is an agreement which two nations sign to allow international commercial air transport services between their territories. The bilateral system has its basis under the Chicago convention and associated multilateral treaties."

Additional Information: The **Convention on International Civil Aviation**, *drafted* in 1944 by 54 nations, was established to promote cooperation and "create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world." Known more commonly today as the '**Chicago Convention**', this landmark agreement established the core principles permitting international transport by air, and led to the creation of the specialized agency which has overseen it ever since – the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

[PIB](#);

5. According to the International Astronomical Union, a 'Planet' in the Solar System is a celestial body that
1. Is in orbit around the Sun
 2. Has sufficient mass of its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium
 3. Has not cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

You can (hopefully) expect UPSC not to give statements that may cause panic (this is with reference to Statement 2).

In simple words, according to [THIS TH article](#), a 'planet' is a celestial body that "must orbit the sun, must be round, and along with its satellites, must "orbit in a clear path around the sun".

The exact definition, according to the **IAU** ([Click HERE](#)), of "**a planet** in the Solar System would be as follows: A **celestial body** that (a) **is in orbit** around the Sun, (b) has **sufficient mass for its self-gravity** to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape, and (c) **has cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit.**"

6. A recent proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture and Family Welfare seeks to prepare an inventory of the assets created in the last one decade under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana through Geotagging technique. Which one of the following is responsible for geotagging?
- (a) Earth System Science Organisation, Ministry of Earth Sciences
 - (b) National Land & Development Office, Ministry of Urban Development
 - (c) National Remote Sensing Agency, ISRO
 - (d) National Atlas Organisation, Department of Science & Technology

Solution: c.

'Geotagging' is the process of adding geographical identification like latitude and longitude to various media such as a photo or video. Geotagging can help users find a wide variety of location-specific information from a device. It provides users the location of the content of a given picture.

- '**Geomapping**' is a visual representation of the geographical location of **geotagged assets** layered on top of map or satellite imagery.
- Who does Geotagging? The **National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA)**, **ISRO** (Hyderabad) has a software platform, [Bhuvan](#) that allows users to

explore a 2D/3D representation of the surface of the Earth. It also acts as a platform for hosting government data.

- Geotagging for monitoring of assets is already started in Ministry of Rural Development for MGNREGA and Department of Land Resources for monitoring of watershed activities in the states. Postal department has also geotagged the post offices using NRSC Bhuvan Platform.
- Several assets are created in the states under various schemes of various Ministries. Monitoring of such wide spread activities is of paramount importance to states and Government of India to understand **flow of funds**, inventorising the assets, bringing in **transparency**, planning of assets for future, and finally informing the farmers about the facilities available. Geotagging helps with such monitoring.

[PIB: Geotagging:](#)

NOTES

1. The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) will enable
1. Citizens to register complaints online
 2. Expediting various kinds of police verification requests
 3. Investigating officers to carry out pan-India search on complete National Crime and Criminal database

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Originally approved in 2009, the **CCTNS Project aims** to:

- deliver various web based police related services to citizens.
- facilitate a pan-India search of crime and criminal records of individuals through a national database.
- generate crime and criminal reports at the state and central level to inform policy interventions and
- computerise police processes.
- In 2015, an additional objective of establishing a basic platform for an Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) was added to the Project.

[PIB: Extension of implementation of CCTNS project;](#)

2. In what way(s) will the fairway development of Ashuganj-Zakiganj stretch of Kushiya river and Sirajganj-Daikhawa stretch of Jamuna river benefit India?
1. It will reduce the logistics cost of cargo movement across and within the states of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
 2. It will give an impetus to tourism in the virgin unexplored terrain of northeast India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

The Union Cabinet has approved MoU between India and **Bangladesh** for fairway development of Ashuganj-Zakiganj stretch of **Kushiya river** and Sirajganj-Daikhawa stretch of **Jamuna river** in the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route by undertaking necessary dredging jointly by the two countries.

- The MoU will a) considerably reduce the logistics cost of cargo movement to North Eastern India and b) also reduce the congestion through the Siliguri Chicken's Neck corridor.
- The **Barak River** rises from the Manipur hills and flows along Nagaland-Manipur border through hilly terrains and enters Assam. It then enters Bangladesh where it is known by the name of the **Surma** and the **Kushiya**.
- The Jamuna River, in this question, refers to one of the three main rivers of Bangladesh. It is the main distributary channel of the Brahmaputra River as it flows from India to Bangladesh.

[PIB: Cabinet approves MoU between India and Bangladesh for fairway development;](#)

3. The 'Belmont Forum' is

- (a) An initiative of the governments of India and France to establish it as a centre for analysis and discussion of the theory and practice of democracy around the world
- (b) A group of the world's major and emerging founders of global environmental change research
- (c) An alliance of developing and developed countries formed to stimulate new thinking, joint activity, and public education in response to economic globalisation
- (d) An annual conference for policy-makers in the healthcare sector

Solution: b.

The [Belmont Forum](#), created in 2009, is a group of the world's major and emerging funders of global environmental change research.

- It provides an opportunity to identify study and deliver international environmental research priorities, for the society, in an accelerated way through trans-national research collaboration.
- **India is a member of Belmont Forum**, besides Australia, Brazil, Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Netherland, South Africa, UK and USA etc.
- **Ministry of Earth Science (MoES)**, represents India in the Belmont Forum since 2012.

In the news (Click HERE): "The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of the Collaborative Agreement with French National Research Agency (ANR), France for supporting the Belmont Forum Secretariat from January, 2015 to December, 2017 at a total estimated expenditure of Euro 40,000. The Cabinet also approved continued financial support to Belmont Forum Secretariat beyond 2017."

4. Which of the following is/are emissions from coal power plants?

1. Particulate Matter
2. Ozone
3. Mercury
4. Sulphur Dioxide

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

Ozone is a secondary pollutant; it is formed due to the reaction of emissions from **coal power plants** such as nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds with atmospheric Oxygen, in the presence of sunlight.

Harmful pollutants emitted from a typical, uncontrolled coal plants include: **Sulphur Dioxide, Nitrogen Oxides,**

PM (soot or fly ash), **Mercury, VOCs, Lead, Cadmium, toxic heavy metals, Arsenic, Carbon Monoxide** and trace amounts of **uranium**.

[UCSUSA: Coal Power – Air pollution;](#)

[Improvisation: PIB: Plan for reduction of pollution level of coal based thermal power plants;](#)

5. Which one of the following events eventually pushed the United States of America to join the First World War?

- (a) Sinking of the passenger ship RMS Lusitania which killed all Americans on board
- (b) Resumption by Germany of its policy of unrestricted U-boat warfare
- (c) Pressure from critics at home to right the moral wrongs being perpetrated by the Central Powers
- (d) The proposal of Germany to Mexico to "make war together, make peace together"

Solution: d.

Question, mains-based.

Statements 'a', 'b' and 'c' are reasons which kept provoking the USA. Eventually, it was the German Ambassador to Mexico's telegram, proposing "military assistance to Mexico if the United States entered the war on the Allies' side" which was made the USA consider German actions as "nothing less than an act of war against the government and people of the USA".

[BBC: The inflammatory telegram that pushed the US into World War 1;](#)

6. As per Article 142 of the Indian Constitution,

- (a) The law declared by the Supreme Court shall be binding on all courts within the territory of India
- (b) The Supreme Court may bestow upon itself such supplemental powers as may appear to be necessary or desirable for the purpose of enabling the Court more effectively to exercise the jurisdiction

- (c) Supreme Court may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it
- (d) The Supreme Court has power to issue directions, orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari for any purposes other than those mentioned in Article 32

Solution: c.

An unfettered power

In calling for a joint trial of separate cases in the Babri Masjid issue, the Supreme Court used its extraordinary powers under Art. 142

Article 142: The Supreme Court may pass such decree or order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it

- The recent highway liquor ban was imposed by the Supreme Court under Article 142

- In 2011, a bench of Justice A.K. Ganguly and Justice Deepak Verma had said on Article 142: "...no fetter is imposed on the court's jurisdiction except of course any express provision of the

law to the contrary"

Two sets: There were two sets of cases relating to the demolition of the disputed structure on December 6, 1992

- The first involved unnamed 'karsevaks', whose trial is taking place in a Lucknow court

- The second set of cases in a Rae Bareilly court relates to the VVIPs accused of "inflammatory speeches", in which the CBI is pressing for restoration of "conspiracy" charge against the accused



[TH: SC proposes joint trial of Babri cases;](#)

[Article 142;](#)

- A **Cyber Physical System (CPS)** is a mechanism controlled or monitored by computer-based algorithms, tightly integrated with internet and its users.
- In general Cyber means computation, communication and control that are discrete and logical. Physical means natural and human-made systems governed by the laws of physics and operating in continuous time. Computing and communication systems bridges with the physical world are referred to as Cyber Physical Systems.

[TH: Centre kicks off programme on CPSs;](#)

NOTES

7. Which of the following utilise the concept of 'Cyber Physical Systems' in their working?

- (a) Aircraft Navigation Systems
- (b) Autonomous Unmanned Vehicles
- (c) Smart Electricity Grids
- (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

- The Department of Science & Technology has recently launched a new programme "[Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems \(ICPS\)](#)" to **foster and promote R&D** in this emerging field of research.

1. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), consider the following statements:

1. The Panchayat Development Officer, using information from the Socio Economic Caste Census, is solely responsible for identifying beneficiaries
2. A single nodal account at the state level is utilised to disburse funds electronically and directly to the beneficiary's account

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.

- Identification of beneficiaries eligible for assistance and their prioritisation to be done using information from Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) ensuring total transparency and objectivity. The list will be presented to **Gram Sabha** to identify beneficiaries who have been assisted before or who have become ineligible due to other reasons. The finalised list will be published. Annual list of beneficiaries will be identified from the total list through participatory process by the Gram Sabha.
- As part of the Governance Reform, from anywhere between 2 to 20 Bank accounts in every District for the Rural Housing programme earlier, there is now a Single Nodal Account at the State level from where funds are directly transferred electronically on the AwaasSoft-PFMS platform to the beneficiary's account.

[Vikaspedia: PMAY-G;](#)

[PIB: From houses to homes;](#)

2. Which of the following statements with reference to the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) is/are correct?

1. It is comprised of four programs which provide resources to manage the challenges of climate change
2. It helps developing countries integrate climate resilience into development planning
3. It provides middle-income countries such as India with highly concessional resources to scale up the deployment of low carbon technologies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- The \$8.3 billion **Climate Investment Funds (CIF)** is providing 72 developing and middle income countries with urgently needed resources to manage the challenges of climate change and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

CIF is comprised of four programs:

- a) **Clean Technology Fund** (statement 3),
- b) **Pilot Program for Climate Resilience** (statement 2),
- c) **Scaling Up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries Program** and
- d) **Forest Investment Program.**

- The **Clean Technology Fund (CTF)** provides middle-income countries with highly concessional resources to scale up the demonstration, deployment, and transfer of low carbon technologies in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport.

In the news: "The **GoI** and the **ADB** recently signed a **\$175 million loan agreement** to support construction of high voltage transmission systems to evacuate power generated from new mega solar parks to the interstate

grid, and improve reliability of the national grid system. In addition, the project **includes \$50 million co-finance from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF)** – a component of the Climate Investment Funds.”

[PIB](#);

3. A private company that succeeds in getting a Government to pass laws that restrict competition is a form of

- (a) Subsidy
- (b) Rent seeking
- (c) Paradox of Competition
- (d) Beggar-thy-neighbour policy

Solution: b.

According to Adam Smith, individuals and businesses can earn income from three sources: profit, wages and rent.

- Generating profit usually requires risking capital in hopes of a return, while earning wages tends to be labor-intensive and requires hard work. Rent is the easiest and least risky type of income one can earn, as it requires only the ownership of resources and the ability to use those resources to generate income through lending their use to others.
- Because rent income necessitates less risk or work than other types of income, it follows logically that individuals and companies seek to earn this income whenever possible. Rent-seeking becomes a problem when entities engage in it to increase their share of the economic pie without increasing the size of the pie.
- An example of rent-seeking is when a company lobbies the government for loan subsidies, grants or tariff protection. These activities don't create any benefit for society; they just redistribute resources from the taxpayers to the company.

[Investopedia: Rent-Seeking](#);

Improvisation: [TH: His Mugabe moment?](#);

4. Which of the following pairs of militant secessionist groups and the countries they are associated with is/are correctly matched?

- (a) FARC – Colombia
- (b) ETA – France and Italy
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: a.

Both these groups have been in the news recently.

- **Farc (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)** – Colombia; A peace agreement was signed recently between Farc and the Colombian Government; The current President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, was the 2016 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for “his resolute efforts to bring the country’s more than 50-year-long civil war to an end”.
- **Eta (the Basque militants) – France and Spain**; For four decades, the armed organisation Eta has waged a bloody campaign for independence for the seven regions in northern Spain and south-west France that Basque separatists claim as their own. In April 2017 the militant group announced it would unilaterally hand over all its weapons even though the Spanish government said the group would “get nothing” in exchange.

[BBC: Eta – Basque separatists plan to unilaterally disarm](#);

[BBC: What is Eta?](#);

5. ‘GJ 1132b’ was recently in the news for which one of the following reasons?

- (a) It is the world’s first and a made-in-India Zika virus vaccine
- (b) An atmosphere has been detected around this Earth-like planet which lies beyond our solar system
- (c) The asteroid that NASA’s OSIRIS-REx mission will scoop up a sample from and return it to earth
- (d) None of the above



Solution: b.

Scientists say they have detected an atmosphere around an **Earth-like planet** for the **first time**. They have studied a world known as GJ 1132b, which is 1.4-times the size of our planet and lies 39 light years away.

- Their observations suggest that the “**super-Earth**” is cloaked in a thick layer of gases that are either water or methane or a mixture of both.
- Discovering an atmosphere, and characterising it, is an important step forward in the hunt for life beyond our Solar System. But it is highly unlikely that this world is habitable: it has a surface temperature of 370C.
- The magma ocean-atmosphere model, associated with the GJ 1132b, could help scientists solve the puzzle of how Venus evolved over time.

[BBC: Atmosphere found around Earth-like planet GJ 1132b;](#)

From 2016: [NASA: Venus-like exoplanet might have oxygen atmosphere, but not life;](#)

NOTES

1. Off the coast of mainly which of the following countries is the Pacific Ocean marked by anomalous heating during El Niño events?

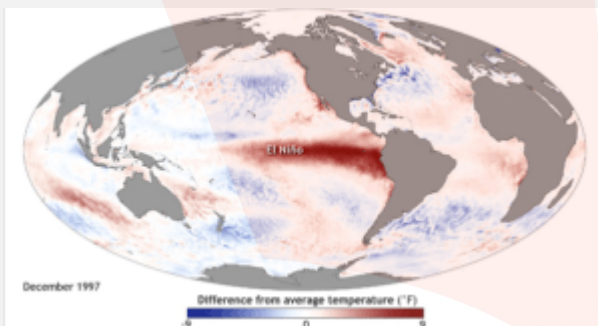
1. Peru
2. Bolivia
3. Indonesia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

Bolivia is a land-locked country. Indonesia does not enter the picture, because, "the ENSO cycle is a scientific term that describes the fluctuations in temperature between the ocean and atmosphere in the east-central Equatorial Pacific (approximately **between** the International Date Line and 120 degrees West)." [Click HERE](#) to open Google Maps.



Improvisation: [TH: Why is India getting hotter?;](#)

2. Consider the following statements with reference to the Champaran Satyagraha:

1. The Champaran tenants were permitted by law to plant only three out of every twenty parts of their land with their choice of crops and indigo was to be cultivated in the remaining area
2. In accordance with the report submitted to the government by the

formal inquiry committee, chaired by Gandhiji, an agrarian act was passed

3. Gandhiji also, during his stay in Champaran, promoted primary education

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

- It was the other way round – 'The Champaran tenant', informs Gandhi, 'was bound by law to plant three out of every twenty parts of his land with indigo for his landlord'. This system was called **Tinkathia**.
- Gandhiji was a member of the formal inquiry committee set up by the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar, Sir Edward Gait. The Committee was chaired by **Sir Frank Sly**. It was upon the recommendations made by this committee that the **Champaran Agrarian Act** was passed.
- Gandhi's association with Champaran lasted for a year. Towards the end he had got busy with another agrarian Satyagraha at **Kaira** (or Kheda) in Gujarat. He did not limit his stay in Champaran to indigo issue. He promoted primary education in a poorly literate district by inviting volunteers, who came from as far as Maharashtra and Gujarat.

[PIB Features;](#)

3. Arrange the following capitals of African countries as they would appear on a map from North to South:

1. Khartoum
2. Addis Ababa
3. Cairo
4. Juba

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.



Improvisation: [TH: Sudan's perilous oil fields;](#)

4. Which one of the following statements about the National Service Scheme (NSS) is **incorrect**?

- (a) It was established with primary objective of developing the personality and character of the student youth through voluntary community service
- (b) Its members do not have to wear any uniform unlike the National Cadet Corps
- (c) Its motto is, "Not me, but you"
- (d) It is under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Human Resource and Development

Solution: d.

It is under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

[PIB Features;](#)

5. Which of the following characteristics is/are true in general about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)?

- 1. PVTGs are less developed and more vulnerable among the tribal groups
- 2. They are relatively physically isolated
- 3. Their population is small
- 4. Unlike most other Indian scripts, their scripts have no connection to the ancient Brahmi script family

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

In **1973**, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). PVTGs have some basic characteristics –

- they are mostly homogenous, with a small population,
- relatively physically isolated,
- social institutes cast in a simple mould,
- absence of written language,
- relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change etc.

[Vikaspedia: PVTGs;](#)

[TH: PVTGs – Lost in a classification trap;](#)

6. With reference to the SARFAESI Act, consider the following statements:

1. The moment a high-value borrower fails to pay the loan EMIs, a bank resort to actions under this act
2. The act applies only to those assets that have been mortgaged by the borrower
3. If a bank fails a minimum of two times to auction the assets, it can go for private treaties

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

It is when the loan is classified as an NPA, that banks can resort to the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) to recover the loan money.

If you read [THIS article](#), you would have been able to answer the question – “The consortium of lenders has finally succeeded in selling absconding tycoon Vijay Mallya’s Kingfisher Villa in Goa through bilateral negotiations after three failed auctions. “As per the SARFAESI act, if auctions fail a minimum of two times then we can go for bilateral deal which are called private treaties,” said a senior SBI official.”

[Mrunal: What is the SARFAESI Act?;](#)

7. Out of the following list of bodies, which one is best-placed to discuss the Punchhi Commission Report?

- (a) Inter-State Council
- (b) National Commission for Scheduled Castes
- (c) Reserve Bank of India
- (d) Wildlife Institute of India

Solution: a.

Punchhi Commission was the **second** commission on **inter-state relations** set up by the Gol.

[TH: Rajnath to chair inter-state council meet today;](#)

8. Consider the following statements:

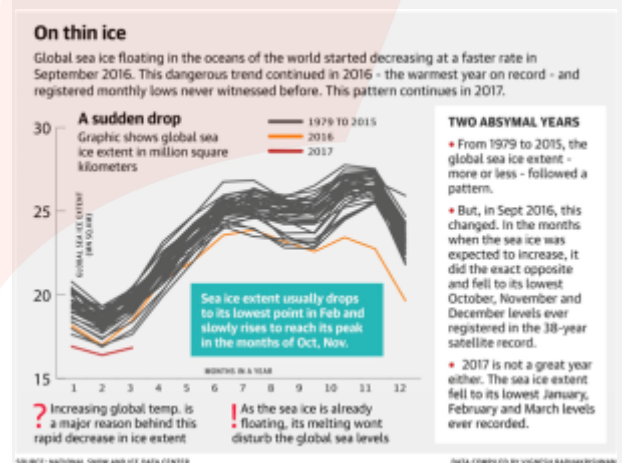
Assertion (A): Sea levels are rising around the world

Reason (R): Global sea ice floating in the oceans of the world are decreasing

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation for A
- (b) A is correct, but R is NOT an appropriate explanation for A
- (c) A is correct, but R is incorrect
- (d) A is incorrect, but R is correct

Solution: b.



As the sea ice is already floating, its melting wont disturb the global sea levels.

Improvisation: The Hindu, S&T Page, 9th April 2017;

[NOAA: Is sea level rising?;](#)

9. 'Subduction' would most likely occur along which of the following plate tectonic boundaries?

- (a) Divergent
- (b) Convergent
- (c) Transform
- (d) None of the above

Solution: b.

Convergent Boundaries: Where the crust is destroyed as one plate dives under another. The location where sinking of a plate occurs is called a subduction zone. There are three ways in which convergence can occur. These are: (i) between an oceanic and continental plate; (ii) between two oceanic plates; and (iii) between two continental plates.

Page 36, Fundamentals of Physical Geography, Class 11, NCERT;

Improvisation: "What is subduction?", Demystifying Science, The Hindu, BEING page, 9th April 2017;

10. The web portal "Bharat ke Veer" aims to

- (a) Create awareness of hitherto lesser-known freedom fighters among the masses
- (b) Honour the victims of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre
- (c) Enable donors to contribute towards the family of a Central Armed Police Force soldier who sacrificed his/her life in line of duty
- (d) Highlight instances of children performing selfless and brave acts in protection of the environment

Solution: c.

The portal is an IT based platform, with an objective to enable willing donors to contribute towards the family of a braveheart who sacrificed his/her life in line of duty. The amount so donated will be credited to the account of 'Next of Kin' of those Central Armed Police Force/Central Para Military Force soldiers.

[PIB;](#)

11. The 'Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor', where naval ships escort merchant ships, is located in the

- (a) Gulf of Aden
- (b) Sulu Sea
- (c) Mozambique Channel
- (d) Alboran Sea

Solution: a.

Since 2008, India has deployed at least one naval ship in the piracy-infested Gulf of Aden through which a major chunk of the global commerce passes. The naval ship escorts the merchant ships through the 490-nautical mile long Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC).

[IE: Indian and Chinese navies jointly respond to a piracy attack in Gulf of Aden;](#)

[PIB;](#)

12. Cellular Jail, also known as 'Kala Pani', was a colonial prison located in

- (a) Myanmar
- (b) North East Frontier Agency
- (c) Rameswaram
- (d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Solution: d.

"Soon after his arrival, the Union Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh visited the National Memorial, Cellular Jail and paid tributes to the freedom fighters by placing a wreath at the Martyrs' Column. The Home Minister also visited the Veer Savarkar Cell in the Cellular Jail."

[PIB;](#)

13. The 'Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana' and 'Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana' are being administered by

- (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- (b) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- (c) Ministry of Finance
- (d) Both a and b

Solution: c.

Remember that both these insurance schemes are available only to bank account holders. That makes it easy to remember that these two schemes are administered by the Department of Financial Services under the MoFinance.



Government Advertisement, 'Life' Page, 10th April 2017;

- 14.** "The Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act 1976 imposed a freeze on the population figure for readjustment at the 1971 census and has been extended by the Constitution (84th Amendment) Act 2001 till 2026. As a result, the House of the People today represents the population figure of the 1971 census". For what purpose has the freeze on undertaking delimitation been extended up to the year 2026?

- To enable State Governments to pursue the agenda for population stabilisation
- To ensure continuity in developmental programmes for periods longer than the interval between successive censuses
- To avoid the expenditure that the exchequer would incur due to the associated costs of increased number of people's representatives in both the centre and state governments
- None of the above

Solution: a.

- The [Statement of Objects and Reasons](#) to the Constitution (84th Amendment) Act, 2001 states, "There have been consistent demands, both for and against undertaking the exercise of fresh delimitation. Keeping in view the progress of family planning programmes in different parts of the country, the Government, as part of the National Population Policy strategy, recently decided to extend the current freeze on undertaking fresh delimitation up to the year 2026 as a motivational measure to enable the State Government to pursue the agenda for population stabilisation."
- Ch-22, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth: "This ban on readjustment was extended for another 25 years (ie, upto year 2026) by the 84th Amendment Act of 2001, with the same objective of encouraging population limiting measures."

[PIB: President inaugurates seminar on "economic reforms with reference to electoral issues";](#)

- 15.** Lucky Grahak Yojana and Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana, two promotional schemes to popularise digital payments, are being implemented by

- National Payments Corporation of India
- NITI Aayog
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Solution: a.

"NITI Aayog announces the launch of the schemes Lucky Grahak Yojana and the Digi-धन Vyapar Yojana to give cash awards to consumers and merchants who utilize digital payment instruments for personal consumption expenditures. The scheme specially focuses on bringing the poor, lower middle class and small businesses into the digital payment fold. It has been decided that National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) shall be the implementing agency for this scheme."

Improvisation: [TH: 1 crore bounty for a Rs.1,590 payment;](#)

[PIB;](#)



16. The 'Golden Triangle', infamous for opium and heroine production and trafficking, refers to the region covered broadly by which of the following countries?

- (a) India, Myanmar and China
- (b) Myanmar, Laos and Thailand
- (c) India, Pakistan and Afghanistan
- (d) Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Solution: b.

Option 'd' refers to the Golden Crescent. According to [THIS IDSA article](#), "Traditionally, the Golden Triangle is a region between the borders of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand; a famous region for its opium production."

Also, from 2014: [UN News Centre: Opium cultivation in 'Golden Triangle' hits new high](#);

Improvisation: TH: [Manipur drug-makers prove elusive for police](#);

NOTES

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Chief Justice of India administers the oath of office to a person appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court
2. In the United States of America, the President is responsible for the nomination and administration of oath of Justices of the Supreme Court

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

- **USA SC:** "For almost 150 years, there was little presidential involvement with the oath ceremonies of Supreme Court Justices and no President has ever administered an oath to a Justice. On January 18, 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt became the first president to participate in an oath ceremony."
- The US President nominates, and his nomination must be vetted by the Senate before the individual can be sworn in as a Justice of the SC.
- In India, a person appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court, before entering upon his Office, has to make and subscribe an oath or affirmation before the President, or some person appointed by him for this purpose.

Improvisation: [TH: Gorsuch sworn in as US SC Justice;](#)

2. The term 'Yellowcake', which sometimes appears in the news, is associated with

- (a) Seabed Mining
- (b) Fuel for nuclear reactors
- (c) Kolar Gold Fields
- (d) Graphene technology-related developments

Solution: b.

- **Yellowcake:** The solid form of mixed **uranium oxide**, which is produced from uranium ore in the uranium recovery (milling) process. The material is a mixture of uranium oxides, which can vary in proportion and color from yellow to orange to dark green (blackish) depending on the temperature at which the material is dried (which affects the level of hydration and impurities).
- **Yellowcake** was commonly referred to as **U3O8**, because that chemical compound historically comprised the majority of the yellowcake produced by uranium recovery facilities utilizing conventional milling methods.

[TH: Australia Uranium to arrive soon;](#)

3. Which one of the following statements about the powers and functions of the Election Commission is *incorrect*?

- (a) It notifies the dates and schedules of elections and scrutinises nomination papers
- (b) It can cancel polls in the event of rigging, booth capturing, violence and other irregularities
- (c) It advises the President whether elections can be held in a state under President's rule in order to extend the period of emergency after one year
- (d) In carrying out the functions as mentioned in a, b and c, the EC is constitutionally bound to consult the Union Government regarding the prevailing security situation

Solution: d.

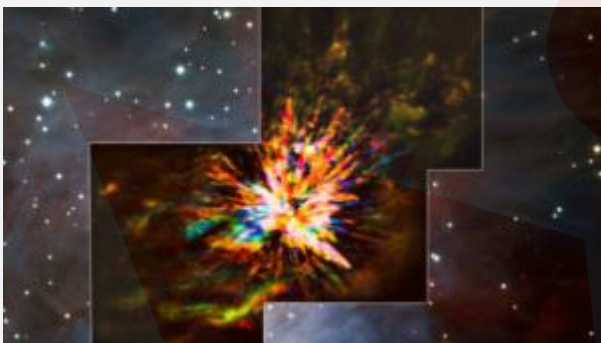
"The Election Commission said on Monday that it was **not bound** to consult the Union Home Ministry before holding any election, following reports that it had ignored the Ministry's advice against holding by-elections in the Kashmir Valley considering the prevailing security situation."

[TH: EC ignored advice on Kashmir: Centre;](#)

4. A 'supernova' is

- (a) A huge explosion in space which can take place in the dying moments of giant, ancient stars
- (b) The birth of stars when a massive cloud of gas starts to collapse under its own gravity
- (c) The resulting explosion due to the collision of proto-stars
- (d) A collision event of two black holes, resulting in the generation of Gravitational Waves

Solution: a.



- **Huge explosions in space are mostly associated with supernovas**, which can take place in the dying moments of **giant, ancient stars**. This new image though shows an explosion taking place at the other end of the stellar lifecycle. "People most often associate stellar explosions with ancient stars, like a **nova eruption** on the surface of a decaying star or the even more spectacular supernova death of an extremely massive star. The **Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimetre Array (ALMA) telescope** in the **Chilean Andes** has given us new insights into explosions on the other end of the stellar life-cycle, star birth," Prof. Bally said.
- **Space: Facts about the ALMA telescope**: It is an international partnership among Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Chile. It's designed to spot some of the most distant, ancient galaxies ever seen, and to probe the areas around young stars for planets in the process of forming.

[Space: Supernova](#);

Improvisation: [Violent end as young stars dramatically collide](#);

5. The web portal "*nakshe*", set up by The Survey of India, was recently launched. The Survey of India is

- (a) The principal mapping agency of the country
- (b) Under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: a.

- The **Survey of India**, the country's **oldest scientific organisation** and official maker of maps, has set up a web portal called **Nakshe** that allows 3,000 of its 7,000 maps to be downloaded for free. The only caveat is that one would **require an Aadhaar number for such access**. The **Sol maps** —prepared for **defence and civilian purposes** — are considered a standard reference for the shape, extent and geographic features of the country.
- **DST: Sol**: The National Survey and Mapping Organization of the country under the **Department of Science & Technology**, it is the oldest scientific department of the GOVT. of INDIA. It was set up in **1767** and has evolved rich traditions over the years.

[PIB](#);

[TH: Aadhaar must for web-access to Survey of India maps](#);

1. For the past two years, states have been ranked on the basis of steps taken to make it easier to do business. States are being ranked based on improvements in indicators as listed in

- The World Bank's Doing Business project
- The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Economic Outlook for India Report 2015
- The Department of Industrial Policy's Business Reform Action Plan

Solution: d.

While the BRAP (a 340-point reform action plan) may have (and in all likelihood, would have) borrowed from the World Bank's Doing Business project, the correct answer here is option 'd'.

- Data for assessment of Implementation of Business Reforms was collected from States/UTs on the BRAP portal.
- The portal, among the first of its kind globally, allowed **States and UTs** to submit evidence of implemented reforms.
- These submissions were **reviewed by the World Bank team** and validated by DIPP's team to study whether they met the objectives of the BRAP.
- The portal allowed collaborative dialogue between DIPP and the States/UTs to analyse the evidence submitted.

[PIB](#);

2. India Rankings 2017 as compiled under the National Institutional Ranking Framework is based upon certain parameters. The least weightage is assigned to which one of the following parameters?

- Teaching, Learning and Resources
- Outreach and Inclusivity
- Graduation Outcomes
- Research and Professional Practice

Solution: b.

Summary of Ranking Parameters and Weightages- 2017

Sr. No.	Parameter	Marks	Weightage
1	Teaching, Learning & Resources	100	0.30
2	Research and Professional Practice	100	0.30
3	Graduation Outcomes	100	0.20
4	Outreach and Inclusivity	100	0.10
5	Perception	100	0.10

[NIRF: Methodology](#);

Improvisation: [PIB](#);

3. "On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions," said Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Which of the following parts of the Constitution, if observed in letter and spirit, can help alleviate the concerns and apprehensions as expressed by him?

- Part III
- Part IV
- Part IVA

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

"On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognising the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which is Assembly has to laboriously built up."

Improvisation – [PIB: Vice President's Address;](#)

4. 'Belle-II' is

- (a) A facility to track space junk sized under 10cm in diameter
- (b) A collaboration between scientists from many countries including India
- (c) A challenger to CERN's Large Hadron Collider
- (d) China's experimental space station

Solution: b.

- Complementary to the direct search experiments being carried out at the Large Hadron Collider in CERN, Belle-II will indirectly probe new physics using intense electron-positron beams and a sensitive detector. In contrast, the LHC is a proton-proton collider.
- This experiment is designed to study violations of the Standard Model and dark matter (as is the LHC).
- A grand collaboration of 700 scientists from 23 countries, Belle-II has a significant Indian participation both on experimental and theoretical sides.
- 'Belle-II' is the detector; 'SuperKEKB' is the accelerator. The High Energy Accelerator Research Organisation (KEK) is Japanese and the experiment (SuperKEKB and Belle-II) is based in Japan.

[TH: Belle-II 'rolls in' to collision point;](#)

Kanha has become the **first tiger reserve** in India to officially introduce a **mascot** — ***Bhoorsingh the Barasingha*** — to present the hard ground swamp deer as the spirit of the reserve and spread awareness to save it from possible extinction. Barasingha, or swamp deer, is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh (all other options of tiger reserves belong to states other than MP). The Kanha tiger reserve, spread over Mandla and Balaghat districts, is the only place in the world where the species exists.

[HT: Meet 'Bhoorsingh the Barasingha';](#)

[Vikaspedia: March Current Affairs;](#)

5. Which one of the following tiger reserves became the first in India to officially introduce a mascot – '*Bhoorsingh the Barasingha*'?

- (a) Keoladeo
- (b) Buxa
- (c) Kanha
- (d) Dampa

Solution: c.

1. Consider the following statements:

Assertion (A): Every bill introduced in the Indian Parliament goes through the committee stage in each house

Reason (R): Every bill introduced in the British Parliament goes through the committee stage in each house

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- In the last three years, just 29% of Bills have been referred to parliamentary committees. This is in contrast to the 60% and 71% of bills examined by committees in the 14th and 15th Lok Sabhas, respectively.
- The important contribution of committees is evident in the progress of the Bills referred to them. The Mental Healthcare Bill passed this session and the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill passed by Lok Sabha this week incorporated most of the changes recommended by the committees.
- Perhaps, it may be advisable to move to a system like that of the British Parliament where every Bill goes through the committee stage in each House. That may take more time to pass a Bill but will ensure that there is adequate deliberation by parliamentarians before they pass a Bill.

TH: Passage without scrutiny;

2. All Parliamentary Committees

- 1. Are nominated by the Speaker/Chairman
- 2. Present their report to the President who lays it before the Parliament
- 3. Are set up to make detailed scrutiny only regarding legislative matters

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

A **parliamentary committee** means a committee that:

- Is appointed or elected by the House (committee on estimates, for instance) or nominated by the Speaker/Chairman
- Works under the direction of the Speaker/Chairman
- Presents its report to the House or to the Speaker/Chairman
- Has a secretariat provided by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha

Consultative committees, which also consist of members of Parliament, are not parliamentary committees as they do not fulfil above four conditions.

In the news: The Parliamentary panel on home affairs headed by Congress leader **P. Chidambaram** has said that after the 1971-Pakistan war, the country's borders had never been as vulnerable as it is now, and that the government should revive the National Counter Terrorism Centre.

Improvisation: TH: 'Borders have never been so vulnerable since 1971 war';

3. Which Indian state became the first to establish a cashless system for distribution of food grains through its Public Distribution System?

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Maharashtra
- (c) Kerala
- (d) Madhya Pradesh

Solution: a.

Gujarat became the **first State** in the country for establishing Cashless System for distribution of foodgrains.

[Vikaspedia: February Current Affairs;](#)

[PIB;](#)

4. India's first ever training centre dedicated for Para Athletes is set to come up in which one of the following states?

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Manipur
- (c) Kerala
- (d) Odisha

Solution: a.

The Prime Minister after meeting with Para Athlete Shri Devender Jhajharia Gold Medalist of RIO Olympic Games 2016 desired that a World Class Para athletic Centre be opened in India. The Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports took the initiative and approved a Centre of Excellence for Differently Abled Sportspersons at SAI Gandhinagar, the first ever training centre dedicated for Para athletes in the country. Recently, he laid the foundation for this Centre of Excellence Para Centre.

[Vikaspedia: February Current Affairs;](#)

[PIB;](#)

5. The N.K. Singh panel to review India's fiscal discipline rules has recommended
1. Debt-to-GDP ratio targets for both the Central Government and State Governments
 2. Repealing the existing Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act
 3. Setting up of a fiscal council which the government must consult before invoking what has been termed by the panel as an 'escape clause'

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.

- It has recommended a **debt-to-GDP ratio** of **38.7%** for the central government, **20%** for the state governments together and a **Fiscal Deficit** of **2.5% of GDP**, both by financial year **2022-23**. The committee has prescribed a so-called glide path to these targets—steady progress towards them.
- To put that in context, the government has set a **FD target of 3.2% of GDP in 2017-18**, marginally better than the 3.5% clocked last year.
- The panel has introduced an '**escape clause**' that **can allow the government to skip the FD target for a particular year**, in situations that include **national security concerns, acts of war, national calamities, a collapse of the agriculture sector and far-reaching structural reforms** with unanticipated fiscal implications. It can also be triggered if real output growth in the economy slips by 3 percentage points from the average of the previous four quarters. The panel also suggested the creation of a Fiscal Council that the government must consult before invoking escape clauses.
- A similar '**buoyancy clause**' has been proposed, so that **FD must fall at least 0.5% below** the target if real output grows 3% faster than the average of the last four quarters.
- The panel has recommended that the existing FRBM Act and rules be scrapped and a **new Debt and Fiscal Responsibility Act** be adopted.

[TH: Hold FD at 3% of GDP till 19-20: NK Singh panel;](#)

[Livemint;](#)

6. With reference to 'Bitcoins', sometimes seen in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Bitcoins in India are tracked by the Reserve Bank of India
2. Anyone with a Bitcoin address can send and receive Bitcoins from anyone else with a Bitcoin address
3. Online payments can be sent without either side knowing the identity of the other

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

Bitcoins can be sent directly to anyone, anywhere in the world. The only requirement is that you should have a **Bitcoin address** of the recipient. The process doesn't require you to reveal your identity. The system is peer-to-peer and transactions take place between users directly, without an intermediary.

[Q41, CS\(P\) 2016;](#)

[TH: All about bitcoins;](#)

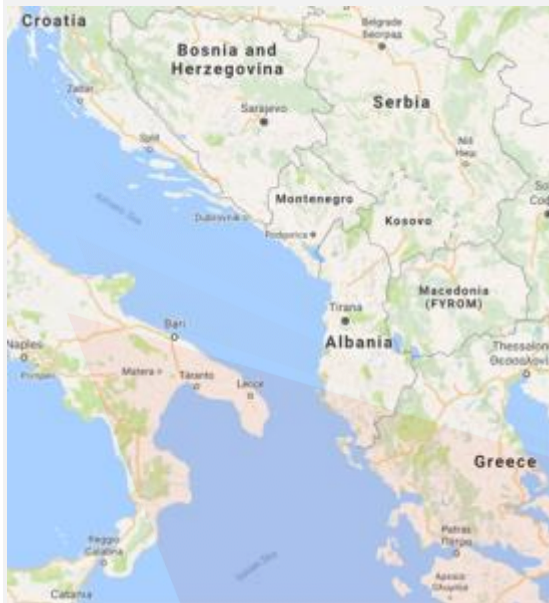
[TH: Panel to suggest norms for bitcoins, virtual currencies;](#)

Clarifications

Q3, 12th April 2017 (Click [HERE](#)): Regarding Part IVA – the answer is correct. For further clarity, here is one of the Fundamental Duties – “to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;” – if this is observed in letter and spirit by every citizen, will this or not help alleviate the concerns expressed by Dr. Ambedkar? Whether this was introduced into the Constitution during Ambedkar's time or not, is irrelevant in answering this question.

1. Which one of the following nations is an Adriatic Sea-littoral nation?
- Greece
 - Libya
 - Montenegro
 - Bulgaria

Solution: c.



Improvisation: [IE: Russia slams US approval of Montenegro's NATO accession;](#)

2. The recent increase in the Minimum Support Price of Jute will benefit the Jute industry which supports the livelihood of around 40 lakh farm families. These farm families are mainly concentrated in the states of
- Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
 - Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
 - West Bengal, Odisha and Chattisgarh
 - Assam, West Bengal and Bihar

Solution: d.

These farm families are mainly concentrated in the States of West Bengal, Bihar and Assam which account

for over 95% of the area as well as jute production in the country.

[PIB;](#)

[Jute Commissioner – state wise production, raw jute;](#)

3. The Government e-Marketplace Special Purpose Vehicle will **not**
- Replace the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposal
 - Be a Section 25 company under the Companies Act, 2013
 - Provide for procurement of goods and services required by central government organisations
 - Provide for procurement of goods and services required by state government organisations

Solution: b.

The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval for the setting up of a Special Purpose Vehicle to be called Government e-Marketplace (GeM SPV) as the **National Public Procurement Portal** as Section 8 Company registered under the Companies Act, 2013, for providing procurement of goods & services required by Central & State Government organizations.

- A "Section 25" company is registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. A similar company under the Companies Act 2013 is a "Section 8" company. (News associated with these section-companies often appear in the news).
- This section provides an alternative to those who want to promote charity without creating a Trust or a Society for the purpose. It allows the formation of a company, which will exist as a legal entity in its own right, separate from the person promoting it.
- The crucial bit, however, is that any company under this section must necessarily re-invest any and all income towards promoting the said object or charity. In essence, unlike a regular company, where owners and shareholders can make profits or receive dividends, no money gets out of a Section 25 company.

[PIB;](#)

[ET;](#)

[IE: Section 25 Company Explained;](#)

4. The recent approval given by the Cabinet in order to increase oil palm area and production will

1. Encourage oil palm plantation on large scale by corporate bodies
2. Lead to reduction in the area of wetlands
3. Require allocation of additional funds to the National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

At present, oil palm development programme is being promoted in individual farmer's field. There is no scope to provide assistance directly to private entrepreneurs/Cooperative bodies/Joint ventures for large scale plantation. Therefore, the Cabinet approved relaxation in restrictions for providing assistance to more than 25 hectare area also under NMOOP to attract corporate bodies towards oil palm and derive maximum benefit of 100% FDI. *It further gave its approval to revise the norms of assistance mainly for planting materials, maintenance cost, inter-cropping cost and bore-well to make oil palm plantations attractive.* The measures will yield following results:

- To encourage oil palm plantation on large scale by corporate bodies and to utilize wastelands. By relaxing restrictions under NMOOP, private entrepreneurs/cooperative bodies/joint ventures will show their interest in investment in oil palm plantation and availing the NMOOP support.
- To encourage farmers for oil palm cultivation in a bigger way. The revision of cost norms will motivate farmers for oil palm plantation.

There will be some financial implication in relaxing restrictions of area and up-scaling the norms of subsidies but the same would be accommodated within NMOOP fund. Therefore, no additional funds would be required.

[PIB: Cabinet approves measures to increase oil palm area and production in India;](#)

5. Which one of the following statements with reference to Oil Palm is **not** correct?

- (a) India is one of the world's largest exporters of palm oil
- (b) It is one of the cheapest edible oils
- (c) It is one of the world's most efficient crop in terms of yield of vegetable oil per hectare
- (d) North Eastern States of India have good potential for the development of oil palm plantations

Solution: a.

- The total production of edible oil in the country is about 9 million MT, while the domestic requirement is around 25 million MT. The gap between demand and supply is being met through imports, which amounted to Rs. 68,000 crores in 2015-16.
- Palm oil contributes 70% of vegetable oil import and is one of the cheapest oil due to high productivity per hectare. Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Thailand and Columbia are the major oil palm producing countries. An average oil yield of 4-5 tonnes/ hectare has been recorded with oil palm against the highest oil yield of 1.3 tonnes/ hectare from rapeseed.
- The revised norms of assistance (refer to italicised text in solution to previous question) will help with the development of oil palm plantations in the North Eastern States where the terrain is hilly and investment costs have hitherto deterred farmers from taking up oil palm cultivation.

[PIB: Cabinet approves measures to increase oil palm area and production in India;](#)



6. Several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were entered into by India and Bangladesh recently. Which one of the following is **not** one of them?

- (a) Defence Cooperation Framework
- (b) Peaceful uses of Outer Space
- (c) Sharing of Teesta Waters
- (d) Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy

Solution: c.

[MEA: List of MoUs exchanged;](#)

[Th: Banking on Teesta;](#)

NOTES

1. 'PowerTex India' is a comprehensive scheme for
- Enhancing the reach of microfinance Institutions in rural areas
 - The development of the powerloom sector
 - Promoting the use of energy efficient pumps in agriculture
 - Accelerating the adoption of new transportation technologies

Solution: b.

It is a comprehensive scheme for powerloom sector development, simultaneously at over 45 locations in the country. the scheme will especially benefit small powerloom weavers. The scheme has several components, some of which are:

- In-situ Upgradation of Plain Powerlooms
- Yarn Bank Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Credit Scheme for Powerloom Weavers
- Solar Energy Scheme for Powerlooms
- Tex Venture Capital Fund

[PIB: PowerTex India;](#)

[PIB;](#)

2. Loans extended under the Pradhan Mantri Mandra Yojana during 2016-17 have crossed the set target. Majority borrowers during this year were
- Scheduled Tribes
 - Scheduled Castes
 - Other Backward Classes
 - Women

Solution: d.

Data compiled so far indicates that the number of borrowers this year were over 4 crore, of which over 70% were women borrowers. About 20% of the

borrowers were from the Scheduled Caste Category, 5% from the Scheduled Tribe Category, while Other Backward Classes accounted for almost 35% of the borrowers.

[PIB;](#)

3. The 'India Innovation Index' is

- A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, and Confederation of Indian Industry to make India an innovation-driven economy
- A list ranking Indian states on innovations, developed by the Global Innovation Index publishers
- A pilot project of the World Intellectual Property Organisation which if it deems successful, will be replicated in other emerging economies
- None of the above

Solution: a.

- To make India an innovation-driven economy, NITI Aayog, DIPP & CII together launched a mega initiative "India Innovation Index" that will rank states on Innovations through country's first online innovation index portal that will capture data on innovation from all Indian states on innovation and regularly update it in real time.
- The India Innovation Index Framework will be structured based on the best practices followed in Global Innovation Index (GII) indicators and additionally by adding India-centric parameters those truly reflect the Indian innovation ecosystem.
- This initiative will be the point of reference for all international agencies to collect India's up to date data points for global indices and analytics.

February, 2017: [PIB: India Innovation Index;](#)

[Vikaspedia: February Current Affairs;](#)

4. 'Serpentinisation' is a term, that appeared recently in the news in the context of

- (a) Discovery of Hydrogen by NASA's Cassini spacecraft in plumes of gas erupting out of Saturn's moon Enceladus
- (b) Discovery of the missing evolutionary link between crocodiles and snakes in fossil records
- (c) Scientific understanding of why shoelaces come undone
- (d) Dropping by the USA of its largest conventional bomb for the first time in combat

Solution: a.

- Cassini flew through and sampled the waters from a subsurface ocean on Enceladus that is being jetted into space. Cassini has already established that this voluminous liquid is in contact with the rock bed from the types of salts and silica that have also been detected in the jets.
- Scientists wanted to know if a particular interactive process seen at Earth was taking place in the subsurface ocean of Enceladus – something called serpentinisation.
- **Serpentinisation:** At the mid-ocean ridges on our planet, seawater is drawn through, and reacts with, hot upwelling rocks that are rich in iron and magnesium. As the minerals in these rocks incorporate H₂O molecules into their crystal structure, they release hydrogen – a byproduct that can be used by some microbes as an energy source to drive their metabolism.
- It is the definitive signal for molecular hydrogen in the plumes of Enceladus that Cassini has now confirmed.

[BBC: Saturn moon 'able to support life';](#)

[TH: A Saturn moon may host life;](#)

5. Which one of the following statements with reference to the Gender Parity Index specific to India, released recently by the Union Finance Minister, is correct?

- (a) It is specific to India in the formal sector
- (b) It has been commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Employment
- (c) The Ministry of Human Resources Development will collaborate with the Ministry commissioning this index to develop requisite skilling programmes
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

13th April, [PIB](#): The Union Minister of Finance will release the Gender Parity Index specific to India in the formal sector during the 33rd Annual Session of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) to be held in New Delhi tomorrow. The main aim of developing Gender Parity Index commissioned jointly by FLO and FICCI is to evaluate gender diversity and empowerment of women in the formal sector and the progress made over the years. The Index will serve as framework for measuring gender parity and produce an overall score of an organisation and reflect it on the index.

6. North Korea is surrounded by which of the following seas?

- 1. East China Sea
- 2. Sea of Japan
- 3. Yellow Sea

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b



[North Korea](#) occupies the northern portion of the Korean peninsula, which juts out from the Asian mainland between the East Sea (Sea of Japan) and the Yellow Sea.



TH: [Tensions in Korean peninsula;](#)

NOTES

1. In the International Banking landscape, what is 'SWIFT'?

- (a) A Bank for International Settlements (BIS) programme to help member country-banks improve the quality and speed of Credit Appraisal Procedures
- (b) A messaging network that financial institutions use to securely transmit information and instructions
- (c) A model policy of the International Monetary Fund which provides guidelines on ways and means to recover loans
- (d) None of the above

Solution: b.

SWIFT stands for the [Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications](#). It is a messaging network that financial institutions use to securely transmit information and instructions through a standardized system of codes.

Improvisation: [TH: How \\$171 mn stolen from UB was recovered](#);

2. With reference to the Belle-II Experiment spearheaded by the High Energy Accelerator Research Organisation, consider the following statements:

- 1. It has the same aim as the Large Hadron Collider
- 2. Indians were involved in the preceding experiment, Belle

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Another question on Belle-II was asked here a few days ago.

- Complementary to the direct search experiments being carried out at the Large Hadron Collider in CERN, Belle-II will indirectly probe new physics using intense electron-positron beams and a sensitive detector. In contrast, the LHC is a proton-proton collider.
- **Statement 2:** This experiment as well as the LHC are designed to study violations of the Standard Model and dark matter.
- A grand collaboration of 700 scientists from 23 countries, Belle-II has a significant Indian participation both on experimental and theoretical sides. Indians have been involved in the preceding experiment, Belle, for decades now, however, with Belle-II, their engagement is deeper.
- 'Belle-II' is the detector; 'SuperKEKB' is the accelerator. The High Energy Accelerator Research Organisation (KEK) is Japanese and the experiment (SuperKEKB and Belle-II) is based in Japan.

[Indians use origami to get a closer look at 'beauty';](#)

3. According to the International Astronomical Union, a "dwarf planet" in the solar system is a celestial body that

- (a) Is not in orbit around the sun
- (b) Has a nearly round shape
- (c) Has cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit
- (d) Is a satellite

Solution: b.

A few days ago a question regarding the definition of a "planet" in the solar system was posted here. In this question, only statement 'd' is correct. The other statements are incorrect. According to the IAU, a "dwarf planet" in our solar system is a celestial body that

- is in orbit around the Sun,
- has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape,
- has not cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit, and
- is not a satellite.

[IAU: Definition of Planet and Dwarf Planet;](#)

Improvisation: [Space.com;](#)

S&T Page, "Possible new dwarf planet found", The Hindu, 16th April 2017;

4. Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations

- (a) Gives a foreign armed forces personnel immunity in matters of criminal proceedings during peacetime
- (b) Permits the host nation to declare at any time and for any reason a particular member of the consular staff to be persona non grata
- (c) Gives a foreigner, detained on criminal charges, the right to regular consultation with his country's consular officials during detention and trial
- (d) Bars the host nation from entering consular premises

Solution: c.

"On Friday, India again sought consular access to Jadhav in Pakistan, which has rejected 13 earlier requests. India has also rejected Pakistan's demand that it accept Jadhav was a spy and cooperate in the investigation in return for consular access to him, and has warned that Pakistan's refusal to accord access is in contravention of international law."

- [Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations](#) allows consular officers the right to access, converse and correspond with nationals in prison, custody or detention and arrange private legal representation — a lawyer of the nationals' own choice — to defend them during trial.

[TH: Like the LaGrand brothers;](#) [TH;](#)

5. Consider the following statements:

- 1. The face and cheeks of Buddha's images are round
- 2. The subject matter treated is predominantly Buddhist

- 3. This art form was present in certain areas of Afghanistan

Which of the statements given above are correct about the Gandhara School of Art?

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

Solution: b.

- **Greek and Roman techniques**, modified according to Indian requirements, were employed in fashioning the **Gandhara sculpture** which truly represents Indian culture in a Western garb.
- The subject-matter treated is predominantly Buddhist. Its area extended from Takshila in India to the Swat Valley in Pakistan and north-wards to areas in Afghanistan.
- Page 51, Fine Art, Class 11, NCERT – About the Gandhara Buddha head: The forehead plane is large having protruding eyeballs, the eyes are half-closed and the face and cheeks are not round like the images found in other parts of India.

[CCRT: Buddhist Art;](#)

Improvisation: [TH: Tryst with the Buddha;](#)

6. Point 'NJ9842', sometimes seen in the news, refers to

- (a) The highest altitude region along the Actual Line of Control
- (b) The point where the Line of Control terminates
- (c) The northernmost point on the Actual Ground Position Line
- (d) The starting point of the Line of Control

Solution: b



The yellow-dash line in the image represents the AGPL. While the LoC was delineated and accepted by India and Pakistan up to point NJ9842, the glacier was left unmarked.

[TH: A glacial fight;](#)

7. India occupied the Siachen Glacier in 1984 in a preemptive move. The mission that led to its occupation was called

- (a) Operation Takeover
- (b) Operation Steeplechase
- (c) Operation Meghdoot
- (d) Operation Rose

Solution: c.

"On April 13, 1984, India launched **Operation Meghdoot** to capture the 76.4 km-long glacier on the Saltoro ridge, narrowly thwarting Pakistan's own attempts in the process. A platoon of 4 Kumaon led by then Captain Sanjay Kulkarni planted the Indian flag at *Bilafond La*."

[TH: A glacial fight;](#)

8. According to Duverger's Law,

- (a) No democracy is infallible
- (b) A plurality electoral system does not result in true representation of its people

- (c) The proportional representation electoral system is the only system which most closely results in the formation of a true democratic government
- (d) The winner-takes-all forms of electoral systems tend to become two-party systems

Solution: d.

Duverger's Law holds that simple majority electoral systems, where the **highest vote getter** is the winner (such as the first-past-the-post method as is practised in India), tend to become two-party systems. A relative exception to this rule is India. Here, the party system is quite diverse. But the increasing tendency of parties to be part of two opposing and large coalitions has functionally brought India's case closer to Duverger's Law. States like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar used to buck the trend with a high number of effective political parties, but even these, especially Bihar, have moved closer to becoming a two-coalition system.

[TH: What is Duverger's law in political science?;](#)

9. The procedure relating to the removal of a judge of a high court, by the process of impeachment, is regulated by

- (a) The Judges Enquiry Act, 1968
- (b) The First Judges case, 1982
- (c) The Executive (Removal of Judges) Order, 1951
- (d) The Third Judges case, 1998

Solution: a.

The **Judges Enquiry Act (1968)** regulates the procedure relating to the removal of a judge of the SC as well as of the HC by the process of impeachment.

Chapter on Supreme Court, High Court, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth.

Improvisation: [TH: Justice Karnan's outrageous defiance;](#)

10. 'Paika Rebellion' refers to an armed uprising against the British East India company in which one of the following present-day states?

- (a) Odisha
- (b) Tamil Nadu
- (c) Madhya Pradesh
- (d) Himachal Pradesh

Solution: a.

The same question has been posted here earlier.

- The **Paikas** were the **traditional land-owning militia** of **Odisha** and served as warriors.
- They revolted against the British after the later took over their rent-free land, 14 years after Odisha came under British rule in 1803.

February, 2017: [TOI: National recognition to Paika revolt;](#)

[TH: Bring out hidden histories: PM](#)

NOTES

1. Consider the following statements about temples built under the patronage of an empire in medieval India:

1. Temples built under this style are treasure houses of ornamental and decorative elements
2. The emphasis of decoration is less on the grace of the human body
3. The Vimana of some temples have a star-shaped plan
4. These temples were built in Somnathpura and Belur

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

- (a) Hoysalas
- (b) Chalukyas of Badami
- (c) Western Ganga Dynasty
- (d) Rashtrakutas

Solution: a.

- The temples built in the 12-13th centuries under the patronage of the **Hoysalas** of Mysore, are at **Somnathpur, Belur** and **Halebid**.
- The well-known **Kesava temple** at **Somnathpur**, and the **Hoysala temple** at **Halebid** and **Belur** are veritable treasure houses of ornamental and decorative elements, carved in niches, and intricate vegetal and floral carvings.
- Not an inch of space is left uncarved. The decoration is elaborate, the emphasis being more on ornamentation than movement or the grace of the human body.

[CCRT: Temple Architecture;](#)

[CCRT: Medieval School of Sculpture;](#)

2. With reference to the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2016 which was recently passed by the Parliament, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It guarantee access to anti-retroviral drugs and treatment for opportunistic infections
2. The bill lists the various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited
3. The ombudsman appointed by each state government shall submit a report to the state government periodically stating the number and nature of complaints received

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- The **HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Bill** passed by Parliament **does not guarantee access to anti-retroviral drugs and treatment for opportunistic infections** (those caused by pathogens that take advantage of an opportunity not normally available, such as a host with a weakened immune system). The requirement for the ombudsman to make public the periodic reports on compliance will exert pressure on States to meet their obligations.
- The Bill lists the various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited. These include the denial, termination, discontinuation or unfair treatment with regard to: (i) employment, (ii) educational establishments, (iii) health care services, (iv) residing or renting property, and (v) standing for public or private office.
- An ombudsman shall be appointed by each state government to inquire into complaints related to the violation of the Act and the provision of health

care services. The ombudsman shall submit a report to the state government every six months stating the number and nature of complaints received, the actions taken and orders passed.

[TH: HIV/AIDS Bill: Legally Enabling;](#)

[PRS MPR: March 2017;](#)

3. The Central Council of Indian Medicine has been constituted to regulate the Indian systems of medicine comprising

1. Ayurveda
2. Unani
3. Sidda
4. Sowa-Rigpa
5. Homeopathy

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- (c) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (d) 2, 3, 4 and 5

Solution: b.

- The **Central Council of Indian Medicine** is the **statutory body** constituted under the **Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970**. It has been framing and implementing various regulations relating to the **Indian Systems of Medicine of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Sowa-Rigpa**.
- Under the **Homeopathy Central Council Act, 1973**, the **Central Council of Homeopathy** was constituted to regulate the Indian system of medicine of Homeopathy.
- [In the news \(March, 2017\)](#): The committee set up by NITI Aayog to examine the Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970 and the the Homeopathy Central Council Act, 1973, recently submitted its report. The Committee proposes a **National**

Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine to replace the Central Council of Indian Medicine and the **National Commission for Homoeopathy** to replace the Central Council of Homeopathy.

[About Central Council of Indian Medicine;](#)

4. The inclusion or exclusion from the list specifying Scheduled Castes in a State can be effected through

- (a) An act of the Parliament
- (b) Order of the President after having consultation with the State Government concerned
- (c) An act of the State Assembly
- (d) Order passed by Governor of State concerned after having consultation with the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Solution: a.

- The Constitution of India provides certain privileges/concessions to the members of Scheduled Castes which are notified under the provisions of Article 341 of the Constitution of India.
- First list of Scheduled Castes in relation to a State or Union Territory is to be issued by a notified Order of the President after having consultation with the State Government concerned.
- Any subsequent inclusion in or exclusion from the list of Scheduled Castes can be effected through an Act of Parliament as envisaged under clause (2) of Article 341.
- [In the news \(March 2017\)](#): The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was passed by Lok Sabha. The Bill amends the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. The Bill includes a couple of castes, Sualgiri, Swalgiri as synonyms to the Sabakhia caste in the list of SCs for the state of Odisha.

February: Cabinet approves amendments: [PIB](#);

5. The 'Fund and Reform Tracker' App

- (a) Is an app developed to monitor in real time the implementation by states of the Centre's Business Reform Action Plan
- (b) Will monitor the implementation of Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana
- (c) Will monitor Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan projects from the moment they are sanctioned till their final completion
- (d) Will incentivise State Governments to promote behavioural change in the spheres of cleanliness and hygiene

- In urban areas, about 33% of the male workforce, and 56% of the female workforce is composed of migrant workers.

Solution: c.

The Fund and Reform Tracker will monitor RUSA projects from the minute they are sanctioned and track their progress till their final completion. It will also be a sort of a report card of states with details of their higher education policies, plans and best practices.

[PIB: Minister of HRD launches the Fund and Reform Tracker of RUSA;](#)

6. As per Census 2011, migration in India is majorly between

- (a) Rural to rural areas
- (b) Urban to urban areas
- (c) Rural to urban areas
- (d) Urban to rural areas

Solution: a.

- [PRS MPR March 2017](#): Working group on migration submits report: As per Census 2011, migration in India is majorly between rural to rural areas (4%), followed by urban to urban areas (22.6%), rural to urban areas (22.1%), and urban to rural areas (7.9%). Between Census 2001 and 2011, rural to urban migration increased marginally from 21.8% to 22.1%, and urban to urban migration increased from 15.2% to 22.6%.

NOTES

1. SAUNI Yojana envisages filling more than a hundred major dams in the arid region(s) of
- Vidarbha
 - Hyderabad-Karnataka
 - Saurashtra
 - a, b and c

Solution: c.

“SAUNI stands for **Saurashtra Narmada Avtaran Irrigation**, a project launched by Narendra Modi in 2012, three months before the Assembly election that would make him Chief Minister for a third consecutive term. SAUNI envisages filling 115 major dams of the arid Saurashtra region by diverting floodwaters overflowing from the Sardar Sarovar Dam across the Narmada in south Gujarat.”

[IE Explained: SAUNI Yojana;](#)

[PIB;](#)

2. Consider the following statements:
- The International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) along with the Development Committee (DC) advises the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board of Governors
 - The DC is a ministerial-level forum of the World Bank Group and the IMF
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

- The IMF Board of Governors is advised by two ministerial committees, the IMFC and the DC.
- The DC is a ministerial-level forum of the WB Group and the IMF for intergovernmental consensus-building on development issues. It is known formally as the *Joint Ministerial Committee of the*

Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund on the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries.

- The DC's mandate is to advise the Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund on critical development issues and on the financial resources required to promote economic development in developing countries. Over the years, the Committee has interpreted this mandate to include trade and global environmental issues in addition to traditional development matters.
- [In the news:](#) On 22nd April, 2017, the Finance Minister will participate in IMFC restricted Breakfast Session and thereafter, will participate in the IMFC Plenary Session along with Governor RBI and Secretary (Economic Affairs) among others. In the afternoon, the Finance Minister will participate in the Development Committee Plenary Meeting of the World Bank.

[Q90, CS\(P\); IMF: Governance Structure;](#)

3. The 'Council on Foreign Relations' is
- An office of the United States Department of State
 - A bi-monthly foreign affairs magazine published by the Observer Research Foundation
 - An independent organisation and think tank focusing on significant foreign policy issues of the world
 - The plenary meeting of the World Bank to shape its developmental programme agenda for the next financial year

Solution: c.

- The [Council on Foreign Relations \(CFR\)](#) is an independent, nonpartisan membership organisation, think tank, and publisher dedicated to being a resource for its members, government officials, business executives, journalists, educators and students, civic and religious leaders, and other interested citizens in order to help them better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other countries.

- [In the news](#): On Monday, 24th April, 2017, the Finance Minister will hold an interaction with Council for Foreign Relations in the morning.

4. 'VIKALP' scheme is

- An alternate train accommodation scheme
- A consumer helpline app designed by the Indian Railways
- A framework aimed at catalysing green practices in the Indian Railway Industry
- The Indian Railways' scheme for water management

Solution: a.

To avoid accommodation going vacant in different classes of a train an upgradation scheme was introduced in 2006 wherein **passengers of lower class are upgraded against vacant accommodation available in upper class without realisation of difference of fare.** However, there was no scheme to take care of upgradation/transfer across different trains running between the same Origin – Destination pairs. To meet this requirement, **Alternate Train Accommodation Scheme (ATAS)** was conceptualised and introduced under the name "VIKALP" where an **optional facility was given to shift passengers remaining waitlisted irrespective of booking quota and concession** at the time of charting in the booked train to be given confirmed berth in an alternate train which was leaving within a specified time gap.

March 2017: [PIB: Expansion of ATAS aka VIKALP](#);

Improvisation: [PIB](#);

5. 'Mandamus', a writ mentioned in Article 32 and 226 of the Constitution, literally means

- To forbid
- To be informed
- By what authority
- We command

Solution: d.

'a' refers to Prohibition; 'b' refers to Certiorari; 'c' refers to Quo-Warranto;

- **'Mandamus'** is a command issued by the court to a **public official** asking him to perform his official duties that he has failed or refused to perform. It can also be issued against any **public body**, a **corporation**, an **inferior court**, a **tribunal** or **government** for the same purpose.

[TH: Respect for national flag, anthem, non-negotiable, Centre tells SC](#);

6. Budgetary deficits must be financed by either taxation, borrowing or printing money. If a government relies mostly on borrowing, which of the following is a possible outcome?

- It transfers the burden of reduced consumption on future generations
- It reduces the quantum of financial resources available for the private sector

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- By borrowing, the government transfers the burden of reduced consumption on future generations. This is because it borrows by issuing bonds to the people living at present but may decide to pay off the bonds some twenty years later by raising taxes. These may be levied on the young population that have just entered the work force, whose disposable income will go down and hence consumption. Thus, national savings, it was argued, would fall.
- Also, government borrowing from the people reduces the savings available to the private sector. To the extent that this reduces capital formation and growth, debt acts as a 'burden' on future generations.

Page 71, Introductory Macroeconomics, Class 12, NCERT; [TH: Equity in debt](#);

1. Under Article 142 of the Constitution, extraordinary powers to pass such decree or order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before the court is available to

- (a) High Courts
- (b) Supreme Court
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: b.

- **Article 142 – Enforcement of decrees and orders of Supreme Court** and unless as to discovery, etc (1) **The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree** or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or orders so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament and, until provision in that behalf is so made, in such manner as the President may by order prescribe; (2) **Subject to the provisions of any law made in this behalf by Parliament**, the Supreme Court shall, as respects the whole of the territory of India, have all and every power to make any order for the purpose of securing the attendance of any person, the discovery or production of any documents, or the investigation or punishment of any contempt of itself.
- Article 142 has been invoked by the SC in recent times for the following – the highway liquor ban, in reviving the conspiracy charge in the Babri case against MP L.K. Advani and others, transferring cases from one court to another so that joint trial may be carried out in cases arising out of the Babri Masjid demolition, transferring Shahabuddin from Siwan jail to Tihar jail, etc. The Vishaka guidelines too were issued by the SC by invoking the same article.

TH: [Conspiracy charge against Advani in Babri case revived](#);

2. The first Indian satellite that was built in the country, was named after a 5th Century A.D. astronomer. Which of the following is/are texts authored by this astronomer?

- 1. Aryabhatibhashya
- 2. Brihatsamhita
- 3. Aryasiddhanta

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Aryabhata is the first Indian spacecraft that was also built in the country.

- **'Bhashya'**, usually refers to commentary on a text. For instance, Patanjali's Mahabhashya is a commentary on Panini's Ashtadhyayi as well as Katyayana's Varttika.
- Aryabhatibhashya, according to [Wikipedia](#), is a commentary by Bhaskara I, a mathematician belonging to the 7th Century A.D., on Aryabhata's work.
- Aryabhata's work includes the Aryabhatiyam and the Aryasiddhanta.
- Brihatsamhita is Varahamihira's work.

Improvisation: TH: [Looking back at first Indian 'space baby'](#);

3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Discussions on the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor predates the formal launch of China's Belt and Road Initiative
- 2. The BCIM economic corridor will pass through the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal before entering Bangladesh

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

Statement 1 is correct. "The **BCIM economic corridor** is an ambitious undertaking that hopes to connect **Kolkata with Kunming**, capital of the Yunnan province. It envisages formation of a thriving economic belt, focusing on cross-border transport, energy and telecommunication networks. Starting from Kunming, the route passes through nodal points, such as Mandalay and Lashio in Myanmar. It heads towards Kolkata after passing through Manipur and Silchar, before crossing Bangladesh via Sylhet and Dhaka, with branches extending to the ports of Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.... Both the BCIM and the CPEC predate the formal launch of the BRI"



[TH: Dialogue on stalled CIM corridor set to resume in Kolkata;](#)

4. The Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) unit generates a paper slip against the pressing of a button by the voter. For confirmation that the vote cast by him has been recorded in favour of the candidate of his choice, the paper slip, also called the ballot slip, will contain only
1. Name of the candidate
 2. Serial number of the candidate
 3. Name of the voter

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

VVPAT device functions like a printer to be attached to the ballot unit and kept inside the voting compartment. When the voter presses the button against the name of the candidate of his choice on the Ballot Unit, the VVPAT unit generates a paper slip, called Ballot Slip. **This paper slip contains the name, serial number and symbol of the chosen candidate.** The voter can see this slip through a screened window where it stays for seven seconds, and then it automatically gets cut and falls down into a sealed drop box. In this process, the slip will not go into the hands of the voter nor will others be able to see it.

[PIB: Cabinet approves procurement of VVPAT units for use in GE2019;](#)

5. The Union Cabinet recently approved policy guidelines to allow financially sound State Government entities to borrow directly from bilateral ODA (Official Development Assistance) partners for implementation of vital infrastructure projects. ODA is provided by official agencies, and each transaction of which is
- (a) Administered with the main objective of promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries
 - (b) Concessional in character
 - (c) Both a and b
 - (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

The OECD DCD-DAC has measured resource flows to developing countries since 1961. Special attention has been given to the official and concessional part of this flow, defined as ODA. ODA is the key measure used in practically all aid targets and assessments of aid performance. The DAC [defines ODA](#) as “those flows to countries and territories which are:

- provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and
- each transaction of which:
 - is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and
 - is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent).”

Regarding [the Cabinet decision](#): Existing guidelines do not allow direct borrowings by the State Government entities from external agencies. The approved guidelines will facilitate the State Government entities to directly borrow from the external bilateral funding agencies subject to fulfilment of certain conditions and all repayments of loans and interests to the funding agencies will be directly remitted by the concerned borrower. The concerned State Government will furnish guarantee for the Loan. The Government of India will provide counter guarantee for the loan. This will enable several state agencies to implement major infrastructure projects of national importance sans any financial constraints.

NOTES

1. Consider the following statements with reference to a mammal:

1. All its species are nocturnal
2. This is the world's most trafficked mammal
3. It is listed in Schedule I under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
4. The recent CITES meeting agreed to ban all trade in all its species

These statements refer to which one of the following mammals?

- (a) Cheetah
- (b) Dugong
- (c) Snow Leopard
- (d) Pangolin

Solution: d.

"There are eight species of pangolin across Asia and Africa, and they are all nocturnal, and notoriously shy, hiding in burrows and hollow trees for most of the day. Even conservationists working extensively in their natural habitats often struggle to catch sight of one...the International Union for the Conservation of Nature estimates that a million pangolins may have crossed international borders in the last decade – making them the **world's most trafficked mammal**."

- The CITES meeting as mentioned in the statement was took place in [September, 2016](#).
- "Manis Crassicaudata" aka Thick-tailed or Indian Pangolin is mentioned in the [Schedule I list](#).
- [IUCN](#) lists it as "**Endangered**".

[BBC: How to save the world's most trafficked mammal;](#)

2. The 'C-DOT Common Service Platform', recently in the news, is related to which one of the following?

- (a) Providing facilities for multiple transactions at a single geographic location in every village
- (b) Smart Cities project
- (c) Cellular network coverage in rural areas
- (d) Social Security Programme

Solution: b.

C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) has developed CCSP(C-DOT Common Service Platform), the one M2M standards compliant common service platform which can be deployed on any off-the-shelf generic server platforms or cloud infrastructure. Using the CCSP platform from C-DOT, the smart cities can reap all the benefits of using a standards compliant horizontal service layer and thus be more efficient, economical and future proof.

[PIB: C-DOT develops CCSP to make smart cities more efficient;](#)

3. Which one of the following is **not** counted among the five great epics of Tamil Literature?

- (a) Silappadikaram
- (b) Manimekalai
- (c) Kundalakesi
- (d) Neelakesi

Solution: d.

Apart from 'a', 'b' and 'c', '**Sivaka Cintamani**' and '**Valayapathi**' are the other two great epics of Tamil Literature.

[Wikipedia: Five Great Epics of Tamil Literature;](#)

[TH: Woman, who debated with the Buddha;](#)

4. Consider the following list:

1. Varaha mandapa, a cave temple
2. Dharmarajaratham, a monolithic rock-cut temple
3. Kailasnath temple, a structural temple

The above group of temples were constructed by the rulers of which one of the following dynasties?

- (a) Rashtrakutas
- (b) Pallavas
- (c) Chalukyas of Badami
- (d) Imperial Cholas

Solution: b.

"While there is some evidence of architectural activity going back to the period of Mahendravarman-I (AD 600-630), the father of Mamalla, most of the monuments like **rock-cut rathas**, sculptured scenes on open rocks like Arjuna's penance, the **caves** of Govardhanadhari and Mahishasuramardini are attributed to the period of Narasimhavarman-I Mamalla (AD 630-668)... The structural architecture was introduced on a grand scale by Pallava Rajasimha (AD 700-728), culminating in erection of the world famous Shore temple."

[ASI: World Heritage Site, Mahabalipuram;](#)

Improvisation: [TH: On the trail of Raja Raja;](#)

5. Which of the following missions is/are associated with studying planet Venus?

1. Venera
2. Akatsuki
3. Mariner

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.

Ever since the then **USSR** sent the **Venera mission** to Venus in February 1961, there have been close to 30 missions to the planet, the last one being **Japan's Akatsuki** in 2010. These comprised orbiters, landers, atmospheric probes and fly-bys.

The erstwhile Soviet Union tops the list with 16 Veneras and two Vegas. The **US** had **Mariner**, **Pioneer** and **Magellan** missions. New missions are in the pipeline.

Additional Information: "The Announcement of Opportunity [AO] is just the beginning. The studies must be finalised, a project report would have to be presented and approved. A formal mission may not happen before 2020," said a senior ISRO official. A mission must be approved by ISRO's Advisory Committee on Space Sciences, then the Space Commission and later by the government.

[TH: After Mars, ISRO turns eyes on Venus;](#)

6. 'Gramoday Sankalp', a quarterly newsmagazine, will be released on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day. It will be published and distributed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on behalf of which of the following ministries?

1. Ministry of Rural Development
2. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
3. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

• A quarterly Newsmagazine "**Gramoday Sankalp**", published and distributed by **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** on behalf of three Ministries viz., Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development and Drinking Water and Sanitation will also be released on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day (It marks the passing of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 that came into force with

effect from 24 April 1993). This news magazine will be launched in Hindi, English and other regional languages.

- It is expected that this newsletter will act as a vehicle for direct communication between the Policy makers and Gram Panchayats.

[PIB](#);

NOTES

Clarification

Q4, 20th April Quiz

(Click [HERE](#)): Regarding the VVPAT ballot slip – The word ‘only’ should have been omitted from the question. Should a similar mistake appear in a question in the real exam (yes, it is a possibility), mark the most appropriate option as the correct answer. In this case, the answer will remain the same.

1. How will the European Union's new Sentinel-1 radar satellites help monitor every land volcano on Earth?

- (a) They will watch for changes in the shape of the ground
- (b) They will measure the variability in the magnetic fields associated with volcanic regions
- (c) By monitoring levels of ice formation in and around volcanoes, phreatic explosions of volcanoes can be predicted
- (d) They will measure the variability in temperatures up to a certain depth from the surface

- Computers will automatically recognise such behaviour at all volcanoes

[BBC: Sentinel satellites to monitor every land volcano;](#)

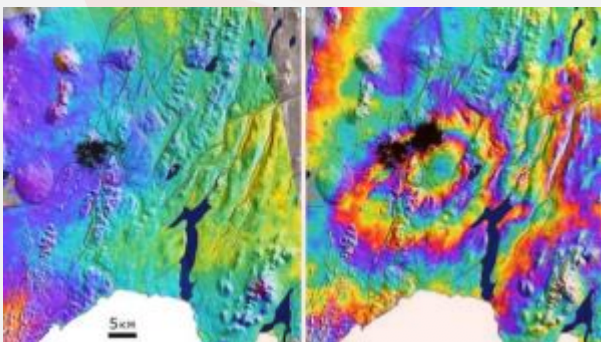
2. Which of the following states are contiguous with three or more neighbouring countries?

- 1. Sikkim
- 2. Assam
- 3. West Bengal

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a



- The featured pictures are of a volcanic region in the north of Iceland
- Satellites sense ground movement as magma rises up from deep in the Earth
- Surface bulging becomes apparent by comparing images taken in a sequence
- The left picture shows a time just as activity is about to get under way
- On the right, the ground is lifting and quakes are increasing (black dots)
- The amount of deformation is represented by coloured "fringes", or contours
- Each fringe cycle (e.g. purple to purple) denotes 3cm of movement upwards (changes in millimetres can be measured)

Solution: d.

A GK question. Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and West Bengal are three states which are contiguous with three or more neighbouring countries. Assam is contiguous with Bhutan and Bangladesh only.



3. 'Biodiversity Heritage Sites' are declared, by State Governments in consultation with local bodies, under the
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
 - Biological Diversity Act, 2002
 - Nationally Important Biodiversity Heritage Systems Programme
 - Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Solution: b.

"Under Section 37 of Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (BDA) the State Government in consultation with local bodies may notify in the official gazette, areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)."

In the news: According to [THIS article](#) from 2016, **Ameenpur lake** on the outskirts of Hyderabad became the **first BHS in the country for a water body**. According to the image provided (from today's newspaper), it is the first BHS in the country in an urban environment.

Ameenpur lake gets biodiversity heritage tag

HYDERABAD

The Ameenpur lake in Hyderabad has become the first 'biodiversity heritage site' in an urban environment in India under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. After the rejuvenation of water bodies, Ameenpur has become home to 251 rare species of birds prompting the government to declare it as biodiversity heritage site.

[NBA, India: Guidelines for selection and management of BHSs](#);

4. Following its entry into which one of the following Multilateral Export Control Regimes has India begun the process of extending the range of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile?
- Wassenaar Arrangement
 - Missile Technology Control Regime
 - Nuclear Suppliers Group
 - Australia Group

Solution: b.

"The technology upgrade to the extended range BrahMos, teste-fired on March 11, came after India gained entry into the 34-nation Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in June 2016, which "removed the caps" on the missile's range. The MTCR basically

prevents the proliferation of missiles and UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) over the range of 300-km."

"Navy test-fires maiden land attack BrahMos missile", 'Nation' page, The Hindu, 22nd April 2017; [Tol](#);

5. The National Dairy Development Board's "Quality Mark" will be specific for
- State Milk Federations
 - The location of a dairy unit
 - The process employed for a particular dairy product
 - A dairy cooperative, regardless of the location of its units or processes employed therein, as long as the final product conforms to set quality parameters

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

As part of the innovative initiatives under the "**White Revolution**" umbrella Schemes, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries has supported the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) developed initiative of "Quality Mark" Award Scheme for dairy Cooperatives to promote and encourage enhancement of safety, quality and hygiene of milk and milk products manufactured by dairy cooperatives.

- It is aimed at bringing about process improvement in the entire value chain from producer to the consumer to ensure availability of safe and quality of milk and products both for the **domestic and foreign market**.
- The Dairy units (not only State Milk Federations, but also cooperative dairies, etc.) which meet the criteria for award of quality mark will be allowed to use the logo on the package containing milk and milk products and the **award of the quality mark shall be specific for location of the dairy unit as well as for the process for a particular product**.

- The award of Quality Mark shall be valid for three years subject to maintenance of quality, food safety standards and compliance with terms and conditions of the agreement.

[PIB: "Quality Mark" award scheme for dairy cooperatives initiated by NDDB;](#)

6. The 'BRS Conventions' are all related to the issue of
- (a) Marine environment
 - (b) Biological Diversity
 - (c) Atmosphere
 - (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

The [BRS Conventions](#) refer to the **Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm** Conventions. All three deal with **hazardous materials/chemicals/wastes**. These are related also with protecting humans and the environment and consequently biodiversity, but the conventions as such are specifically related to the control/banning of the use/movement of hazardous wastes and chemicals.

[In the news:](#) An inter-ministerial Indian delegation will participate in the 2017 COPs to the BRS Conventions. The three COPs to BRS Conventions will be held jointly and back-to-back from April 24-May 5, 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The theme of the meetings and the high-level segment will be – "**A future detoxified: sound management of chemicals and waste**". While the **Basel Convention** will discuss the **control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal**, the **Rotterdam Convention** will deliberate on the prior informed consent procedure for certain **hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade** and the **Stockholm Convention** is on **persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**.

NOTES

1. Consider the following statements with reference to the Stockholm Convention:

Assertion (A): India has ratified only twelve Persistent Organic Pollutants POPs

Reason (R): Subsequent to the Convention entering into force, chemicals cannot be added to the list of POPs

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- Till date, **26 chemicals** are listed as POPs under the Stockholm Convention (12 initially, subsequent additions were made later on).
- As of now, India has ratified only the 12 initially listed POPs.

Source: [PIB: Inter-Ministerial Delegation to participate in BRS Conventions in Geneva;](#)

2. Amidst the growing environmental awareness and tightening of environmental regulations in the industrialised world in the 1970s-80s, increasing public resistance to the disposal of hazardous wastes took the form of what came to be known as the Not In My Back Yard syndrome. This eventually led to international negotiations which resulted in the adoption of the

- (a) Rotterdam Convention
- (b) Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol
- (c) Stockholm Convention
- (d) Basel Convention

Solution: d.

The Basel Convention was adopted on March 22, 1989 by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Basel, Switzerland, in response to a public outcry, following the discovery, in the 1980s, in Africa and other parts of the developing world of deposits of toxic wastes imported from abroad. Environmental awareness and tightening of environmental regulations in the industrialised world during 1970s and 1980s had led to an increasing public resistance to the disposal of hazardous wastes – in accordance with what became known as the **NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome** – and to an escalation of disposal costs. This in turn led some operators to seek cheap disposal options for hazardous wastes in the developing world, which was lagging in environmental awareness regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

[PIB: Inter-Ministerial Delegation to participate in BRS Conventions in Geneva;](#)

3. Inclusion of a chemical under the Rotterdam Convention

- (a) Reduces the time and costs associated with its import
- (b) Bans international trade of that chemical
- (c) Bans the production of such chemicals
- (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- The inclusion of chemicals under **Rotterdam Convention** does not ban the chemical. However, importing countries need to follow the Prior Informed Consent procedure. Listing of hazardous chemicals may lead to an increase in the trade cost, as well as delay the import/export process.
- The Convention deals with pesticides and industrial chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted by the parties because of environmental or human health concerns.
- Listing of chemicals under **Stockholm convention** bans/restricts the chemicals for trade, import, export and use along with minimizing unintentional release of POPs.

Additional Information: Meetings of the COPs of BRS Conventions are generally held every alternate year. India has participated in the earlier meetings of the COPs of the BRS Conventions. The most important matters to be deliberated during the 2017 COPs to the BRS Conventions include – listing of those chemicals under Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention that may have an impact on industrial growth.

[PIB: Inter-Ministerial Delegation to participate in BRS Conventions in Geneva;](#)

[How does the RC work to protect human health and environment?;](#)

4. Which of the following sections of the Indian Penal Code are associated with insult to religion and/or promoting disharmony between different religious groups?

1. 153A
2. 295A
3. 124A

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

Solution: a.

Section 124A of the IPC is the Sedition law.

- [Sections 153A, 295 and 295A](#) of the IPC: The purpose of the Section 153A is to punish persons who indulge in wanton vilification or attacks upon the religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc of any particular group or class or upon the founders and prophets of a religion.
- The object of Section 295A is to punish deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage the religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or the religious beliefs.

[TH: Tale of two sections;](#)

5. The Governing Council of NITI Aayog comprises of

1. Prime Minister as Chairperson
2. Chief Ministers of all States
3. Special Invitees of NITI Aayog

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- PM as **chairperson**
- Ex-officio members of NITI Aayog
- Vice-chairperson of NITI Aayog
- Full-time members of NITI Aayog
- **CMs** of all states, Puducherry and the NCT of Delhi
- **Governor** of **A&N** islands
- Special Invitees of NITI Aayog

[NITI Aayog: Governing Council composition;](#)

[TH: Modi asks states to speed up infrastructure spending;](#)

6. The ALMA telescope is

1. An international partnership of which India is not a partner country
2. Designed to spot some of the most distant and ancient galaxies ever seen

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- It is the most powerful radio telescope in the world. ALMA stands for “Atacama Large Millimetre/Submillimetre Array”.
- [Space: Facts about the ALMA telescope](#) : It is an international partnership among **Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Chile.**
- It’s designed to spot some of the most distant, ancient galaxies ever seen, and to probe the areas around young stars for planets in the process of forming.
- India is **not** an ALMA partner country, which makes it very difficult for Indian astronomers to obtain observing time on ALMA.
- It was recently in the news for having captured for the first time huge explosions associated with star-births.

Improvisation: [IE Explained: Peek into how galaxies like Milky Way looked 12 billion yrs ago;](#)

7. Consider the following pairs:

Telescope astronomical observatory	Location
---	-----------------

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope | : Hawaii |
| 2. ALMA Telescope | : Peru |
| 3. Keck Telescope | : France |

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- **GMRT – Pune;**
- **ALMA telescope – Chile;**
- **Keck telescope – Hawaii;**

[IE Explained: Peek into how galaxies like Milky Way looked 12 billion yrs ago;](#)

8. The atoms in a Bose-Einstein Condensate
- (a) Are super hot
 - (b) Are super unexcited
 - (c) Have highly varied levels of energy
 - (d) Each behave as a super atom

Solution: b.

- The atoms in a BEC are super cold (near absolute zero), super unexcited, all take on the same qualities and become one “blob”, creating a “super atom”. Atoms in a BEC have almost no energy.
- In this state, particles move extremely slowly, and follow behaviour predicted by quantum mechanics, acting like waves. They also synchronise and move together in what’s known as a superfluid, which flows without losing energy.

[Bose-Einstein basics;](#)

Improvisation: [BBC: Physicists observe ‘negative mass’;](#)

9. The Goldman Environmental Prize honours
- (a) Grassroots environmental activists
 - (b) Corporations engaging in and promoting sustainable utilisation of natural resources
 - (c) Nongovernmental environmental organisations involved in protecting and documenting tribal biodiversity knowledge systems
 - (d) Governmental Institutions that proactively take effective steps to protect biodiversity

Solution: a.

- Prafulla Samantara, one of the GEP 2017 winners, helped to stop a \$2bn mining project on ancestral lands in Odisha. He led the Dongria Kondh tribe to a landmark victory in the Supreme Court over Vedanta Resources Ltd.
- [About the Goldman Environmental Prize:](#) The Goldman Environmental Prize honors grassroots environmental heroes from the world’s six inhabited continental regions.

- It recognizes individuals for sustained and significant efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment, often at great personal risk.
- The Goldman Prize views “grassroots” leaders as those involved in local efforts, where positive change is created through community or citizen participation in the issues that affect them.

[BBC: GEP 2017;](#)

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

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

Solution: c.

- Gorumara National Park and the Jaldapara NP are in West Bengal.

Additional Information: **West Bengal has the second highest rhinoceros population in India, after Assam.** The **Jaldapara National Park** has about 200 rhinos and the **Gorumara National Park** has about 50 rhinos.

[TH: How to drown a tiger;](#)

[TH: Probe begins into killing of two rhinos in WB;](#)

10. What is/are unique about ‘Kharai Camel’, a breed found in India?

1. It is capable of swimming in seawater
2. It survives by grazing on mangroves
3. It lives in the wild and cannot be domesticated

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

According to [THIS TH article](#) dated 23rd March, 2017, the camels swim long distances in the sea to reach the grazing areas —usually **more than 3 km** at a time even in **deep waters**. They are left in the mangrove islands, where they eat large volumes of saline plant species.

[Q19, CS\(P\) 2016; DTE: The sinking ship;](#)

11. Consider the following pairs:

National Park	State in which it is located
1. Gorumara National Park	: Assam
2. Jaldapara National Park	: West Bengal
3. Panna National Park	: Madhya Pradesh

1. The world's first malaria vaccine will be piloted in 2018 in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi. Which one of these nations does **not** open out to either the Indian Ocean or the Atlantic Ocean?

- (a) Ghana
- (b) Kenya
- (c) Malawi
- (d) None of the Above

Solution: c.

Ghana opens out to the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean and Kenya, to the India Ocean



- The **RTS, S vaccine** trains the immune system to attack the malaria parasite, which is spread by mosquito bites.
- The vaccine needs to be given four times – once a month for three months and then a fourth dose 18 months later. This has been achieved in tightly controlled and well-funded clinical trials, but it is not yet clear if it can be done in the “real-world” where access to health care is limited.
- It is why the WHO is running pilots in three countries to see if a full malaria vaccine programme could be started. It will also continue to assess the safety and effectiveness of the vaccination.
- In children aged between 5 and 17 months, the four doses have been shown to prevent nearly four in ten cases of malaria. This is much lower than approved vaccines for other conditions.

[BBC: Malaria – Kenya, Ghana and Malawi get first vaccine; TH;](#)

2. Of the following list of nations that occupy the Caucasus region, which one is landlocked?

- (a) Russia
- (b) Georgia
- (c) Azerbaijan
- (d) Armenia

Solution: d.



[Britannica: Caucasus – region and mountains, Eurasia;](#)

Improvisation: [PIB;](#)

3. The Cabinet Secretariat

1. Is responsible for the administration of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961
2. Irons out differences amongst ministries and/or departments
3. Was in its primitive form established before Independence

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 and the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961, facilitating smooth transaction of business in Ministries/ Departments of the Government by ensuring adherence to these rules.
- The Secretariat assists in decision-making in Government by ensuring Inter-Ministerial coordination, ironing out differences amongst Ministries/ Departments and evolving consensus through the instrumentality of the standing/ adhoc Committees of Secretaries. Through this mechanism new policy initiatives are also promoted.

[Cabsec: Origin;](#)

Improvisation: [PIB;](#)

4. The 'IDEAS' initiative of the Union Government will

- (a) Test the problem-solving skills of students
- (b) Encourage students to participate in events that promote Mathematics and Science subjects
- (c) Enable NRIs and overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

"The Centre is set to launch a scheme for students from higher educational institutions to volunteer to offer innovative, original and practical solutions to problems facing the country and get rewarded for their efforts. The Human Resource Development Ministry has identified a handful of areas pertaining to which the problem-solving skills of students will be tested."

[TH: Solve a problem, win 1 crore;](#)

5. Why does India find it tough to secure extraditions?

- (a) India has not ratified the United Nations Convention against torture
- (b) India does not have a comprehensive law to define and punish individuals convicted of carrying out custodial torture
- (c) Unlike in the case of custodial deaths, the police are not required to report cases of torture which do not result in deaths, to the National Human Rights Commission
- (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

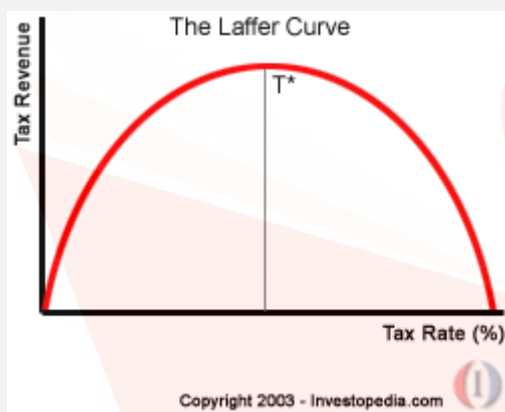
A mains-oriented question. All three statements are correct.

- India may be finding it tough to secure extraditions because there is a fear within the international community that the accused persons would be subject to torture here, the Supreme Court said.
- A Bench of Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said it was a matter of both Article 21 (fundamental right to life and dignity) and of international reputation that the government must consider promulgating a standalone, comprehensive law to define and punish torture as an instrument of "human degradation" by state authorities.

[TH: SC for broad anti-torture legislation;](#)

6. According to the Laffer curve,
- (a) Periodical increases in tax can eventually impede growth
 - (b) Economic performance of a country shares an inverted-U shaped relationship with overall government spending
 - (c) Both a and b
 - (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: a.



The Laffer curve, popularised in 1974 by economist Arthur Laffer in a discussion with former U.S. President Gerald Ford, is often used to bolster the argument that **high or increasing tax rates will not yield additional tax revenue** because members of the workforce will opt to work less in such circumstances, substituting earned income with leisure. The curve supports the notion in supply-side economics that tax and regulatory burdens can impede growth

[Th: What is the Laffer curve?](#)

1. Each member country of the IMF is assigned a quota, based broadly on its relative position in the world economy. A member country's quota has a bearing on which of the following?

1. In determination of the country's maximum financial commitment to the IMF
2. The access the country has to IMF financing
3. Value of the country's Special Drawing Rights

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- When a country joins the IMF, it is assigned an initial quota in the same range as the quotas of existing members of broadly comparable economic size and characteristics.
- Quota subscriptions are central to the IMF's financial resources. Each member country of the IMF is assigned a quota, based broadly on its relative position in the world economy.
- A member country's quota determines its maximum financial commitment to the IMF, its voting power, and has a bearing on its access to IMF financing.
- Quotas are denominated in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), the IMF's unit of account.

[IMF: Quotas;](#)

[TH: A call for reform: On IMF's quota system;](#)

2. The IMF uses a quota formula to help assess a member's relative position. This quota formula is a weighted average of a country's

1. GDP based on market exchange rates
2. GDP based on Purchasing Power Parity exchange rates
3. Openness of its economy

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- The current quota formula is a weighted average of **GDP** (weight of 50 percent), **openness** (30 percent), **economic variability** (15 percent), and **international reserves** (5 percent).
- For this purpose, GDP is measured through a blend of GDP—based on market exchange rates (weight of 60 percent) and on PPP exchange rates (40 percent).
- The formula also includes a “compression factor” that reduces the dispersion in calculated quota shares across members.

[IMF: Quotas;](#)

Improvisation: [TH: A call for reform: On IMF's quota system;](#)

3. 'Data Exclusivity', seen in the news in recent times, refers to

- (a) Intellectual Property like-rights which deny generic drug manufacturers access to data on a 'new drug' unless the owner is paid a share of research expenditure associated with the 'new drug'
- (b) The inability of a drug regulatory authority to approve a bioequivalent version of a drug, despite already possessing information on clinical trials and other relevant data related to the drug under consideration
- (c) Exemptions given to drug-manufacturers from printing the compositions of new and 'breakthrough drugs' on the drug-packaging
- (d) Both b and c

Solution: b.

A question on Data Exclusivity was posted here a few months ago.

- **Data exclusivity** is a kind of **intellectual property protection** wherein clinical trial and other data submitted by an originator drug company **cannot be used or relied upon** by a drug regulatory authority to approve a generic version of that drug for a certain period of time.
- The notion is that without such protection, the originator company lacks the necessary commercial incentive to conduct expensive trials and take a potential drug to the market.
- Blocking generic entry for some years will, the theory goes, help drug companies invest in clinical trials – arguments similar to those used to justify the grant of patents.

November, 2016 – [TH: Generics vs Big Pharma, reloaded;](#)

[TH: The expanding universe of IP;](#)

4. Which of the following statements with reference to 'Data Exclusivity' is **not** correct?

- (a) If 'Data Exclusivity' is granted for a drug of a pharmaceutical company, generic versions of the same drug will cost more than it would have otherwise
- (b) A drug that is not patented can be granted 'Data Exclusivity'
- (c) Section 3(d) of The Patents Act, 1970 disallows the grant of 'Data Exclusivity' to pharmaceutical companies
- (d) The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) does not mandate 'Data Exclusivity'

Solution: c.

From the given list of statements, 'c' is incorrect.

- Pharmaceutical companies have been pushing for data exclusivity to prolong already existing monopoly and delay competition from generics even after the expiry of the 20-year patent term or to gain exclusivity on non-patented drugs. In India, such a system may negate the impact of Section 3(d) of the Patents Act, which disallows evergreening patents (and not 'Data Exclusivity').
- With data exclusivity, **a company could nevertheless gain exclusive rights over such drugs even though they are not patented.** This is because during the period of exclusivity, regulators are barred from using the originators' data to grant marketing approval to generics; generic companies would then be required to repeat the entire cycle of clinical trials already conducted instead of merely establishing bioequivalence to prove efficacy. As seen in countries where data exclusivity is granted, generic companies do not undertake such clinical trials and their versions of the drug accordingly stay off the market as long as the period of data exclusivity lasts.
- If, however, a generic company does go ahead with clinical trials, in all likelihood the costs associated with the clinical trials will be included in

determining the market price of the generic drug.
Thus, statement A is correct.

Improvisation: [TH: The expanding universe of IP;](#)

5. In which of the following regions of India are you most likely to find people affected by the Blackfoot Disease?

- (a) Ganga river basin
- (b) Southern portions of the Western Ghats
- (c) Telangana plateau
- (d) Rann of Kachchh

Solution: a.

A GK question. Blackfoot Disease is caused by drinking arsenic-contaminated groundwater. Questions on Arsenic contamination of groundwater (most prevalent in the Ganga and Brahmaputra river basin regions) have been posted here earlier.

6. In what ways can water in the flood plains of a river become saline?

- (a) Over-exploitation of water from the aquifer
- (b) Sand mining on the flood plains
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

Both statements are correct.

[TH: Amaravati could become the prototype for building cities;](#)

7. Which one of the following statements regarding the flood plains – a geographical feature – is correct?

- (a) The main channel of the river itself is a part of the flood plain
- (b) A floodplain cannot be eroded by a river
- (c) Flood plains can stretch wide only up to a few hundred kilometres
- (d) The frequently-changing landscape of a flood plain renders ineffective any attempt to study past geologic activity

Solution: a.

- A flood plain consists of two parts. The first is the main channel of the river itself, called the **floodway**. Beyond the floodway is the **flood fringe**.
- Some flood plains are extraordinarily wide. The **Barotse flood plain** of the Zambezi River, for example, is a vast wetland stretching thousands of kilometers through Angola, Zambia, and Botswana.
- Some rivers have very narrow flood plains. These rivers usually have a steep stream gradient—a very deep, fast-moving channel.
- There are two major processes involved in the natural development of flood plains: erosion and aggradation.
- The layered sediments of many flood plains can create important aquifers. Clay, sand, and gravel filter water as it seeps downward. Water purification systems often take advantage of this natural phenomenon in a process called bank filtration.
- The sedimentary patterns of flood plains often provide scientists with evidence of past geologic activity. Thick layers of sand may indicate flash flooding, for instance.

[National Geographic: Flood Plains;](#)

Improvisation: [TH: Amaravati could become the prototype for building cities;](#)

1. The 'e-Bird' platform has been designed for
- Documentation of the presence or absence of bird species, as well as their abundance
 - Crowdsourcing information on endangered species of birds
 - Creating awareness among people of the variety of birds endemic to the Western Ghats
 - Sharing information on the discovery of new species of birds

Ans: a.

- A real-time, online checklist program, eBird has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds.
- Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.
- eBird documents the presence or absence of species, as well as bird abundance through checklist data. A simple and intuitive web-interface engages tens of thousands of participants to submit their observations or view results via interactive queries into the eBird database.

[About eBird](#); [About eBird India](#);

Improvisation: [TH: A shrinking home for endemic birds](#);

2. The 'Prakash Singh' case, or the 'Prakash Singh vs Union of India' case, is well-known for its judgment regarding
- Guidelines to deal with sexual harassment at the workplace
 - Police reforms
 - Right to hawk
 - Investigation of armed forces for excesses committed in the course of discharge of their duties in "disturbed areas"

Solution: b.

[Th: On reinstating Kerala DGP Senkumar](#);

3. The Central Government recently clarified that it has no plan to impose any tax on agriculture income. Additionally, it cited what reason for its inability to impose such a tax?
- Agricultural activity does not guarantee a minimum income due to it being monsoon-dependent, unlike in the formal sector wherein there is a guaranteed minimum income
 - A study by NITI Aayog's reveals collection of verifiable data on agricultural income will cost more than the potential revenue that can be tapped from it
 - As per the Constitutional allocation of powers, the central government has no jurisdiction to impose such a tax
 - The Central Government's priority must be to ensure that every farmer can engage in agricultural activity as a viable means of livelihood, following which such a proposal can be considered

Solution: c.

[PIB](#);

4. The State Security Commission – one of the seven directives passed by the Supreme Court in its judgement on police reforms – must be constituted by states to
- Ensure that the Director General of Police is appointed through a merit-based transparent process
 - Delineate the investigation and law and order functions of the police
 - Decide transfers, postings, promotions and other service related matters of police officers
 - Ensure that the State Government does not exercise unwarranted pressure on the police

Solution: d.

According to today's editorial (Click [HERE](#)), "In particular, every State should set up a State Security Commission — Kerala has one — to both guide the police and decide on top police appointments and transfers." More specifically though, according to [THIS](#) document (by the Human Rights Initiative) regarding the salient features of the Seven Directives of the Supreme Court judgment in the Prakash Singh Case, SSCs will help resolve two issues:

- The lack of any established meaning in law or conventions in practice that indicate the limits of political 'supervision' and 'control' over the police.
- The lack of any rationale system for evaluating police performance against a set of pre-determined criteria.

In fact, statements 'a', 'b' and 'c' are three other directives out of the seven. The SSC, according to the TH Editorial, will also play a role in top police appointments and transfers; but from the given options, 'd' is the most appropriate.

[Human Rights Initiative: Seven steps to police reform;](#)

Improvisation: [Th: On reinstating Kerala DGP Senkumar;](#)

- The partners in this project – remeasurement of Mount Everest – are India's ministry of science and technology, the Survey of India (SOI) and the government of Nepal. It will use new measurement tools developed by SOI and with the help of the Global Positioning System (GPS).
- **INDGEOID Version 1.0** is the new measurement tool, a **mathematical model**, developed by the Sol. It assists in measurements of the height of objects above mean sea level and is considered superior to the earlier methodology based solely on GPS satellites. INDGEOID will correct the errors in measurements made by GPS satellites.

[Livemint: India, Nepal to remeasure Mt. Everest;](#)

[TH: Field methods in geology;](#)

5. 'INDGEOID', recently seen in the news in association with India and Nepal, is

1. A satellite developed by the Survey of India that will measure the height of objects from the mean sea level more accurately than is currently possible with GPS satellites
2. An Earth Observation Satellite to monitor levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over the Indian subcontinent

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

1. The term 'Godzilla' was used recently to describe which one of the following occurrences?

- (a) Eruption of the Barren Island volcano
- (b) The two-year Great Barrier Reef bleaching event
- (c) The most recent El Niño event
- (d) Cassini spacecraft's first plunge in-between Saturn's rings and the planet

Solution: c.

The droughts of 2014 and 2015 were blamed on one of the longest and strongest El Niño events ever recorded, nicknamed "Godzilla".

[IE Explained;](#)

2. Cyprus is an island in the

- (a) Black Sea
- (b) Mediterranean Sea
- (c) Sea of Azov
- (d) Tyrrhenian Sea

Solution: b.



[IE Explained: Cyprus – divided island;](#)

3. When a population reaches a fertility rate of replacement levels, which one of these definitely follows?

- (a) The total population will stabilize, neither increasing nor decreasing in the immediate future
- (b) The average number of children per family will be 2.1
- (c) In the absence of migration, there will be no change in the population of a state in the immediate future
- (d) The population pyramid will transform into one which is broad at the base and rapidly narrows towards the top

Solution: b.

Evidence from India's last Census in 2011, confirmed by data from the recent National Family Health Survey 2017 (NFHS-4), shows that fertility in India is fast approaching replacement levels. This means that couples will have children who will essentially replace their number, to stabilise population growth. The NFHS-4 shows that in the past decade, the average number of children per family has come down from 2.7 to 2.2. With replacement fertility being 2.1 children per woman, this is good news for the land and the people. Even after fertility rates drop to replacement levels, the total population will still grow, and is likely to reach 1.7 billion by 2050.

[India's population story;](#)

4. The North American Free Trade Agreement is an agreement signed by

- 1. USA
- 2. Canada
- 3. Mexico
- 4. Cuba

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

[TH: Now, Trump flips on NAFTA;](#)

NOTES

5. Consider the following statements:

1. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 act gives State Governments a twelve-week deadline to comply with its provisions
2. 'Relief of the disabled' is a subject in the State List

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Statement 1 refers to the directions given by the Supreme Court to State Governments and Union Territories, and is not a part of the Act.

[LawMin: Seventh Schedule;](#)

[TH: A new chapter for the disabled;](#)

1. The Eurasian Economic Union comprises

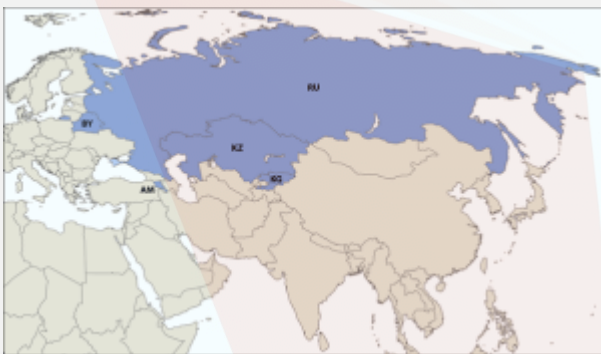
1. Russia
2. Kazakhstan
3. Armenia
4. India
5. Belarus

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (c) 1, 2, 3 and 5
- (d) 1, 2 and 3 only

Solution: c.

The Eurasian Economic Union comprises **Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.**



In the news: India is set to formalise a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, clearing the decks for negotiations on deepening trade relations with the five former Soviet republics.

2. For mainly which one of the following reasons has Bhutan backed out of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement?

- (a) The agreement will affect its balance of trade with partner nations to its detriment
- (b) It wants a framework agreement under the SAARC arrangement on a consensus-basis and not in its present sub-grouping form

(c) China has threatened to withdraw its economic exchanges with Bhutan should the latter ratify the BBIN agreement

(d) Concerns over increased air pollution with more number of commercial vehicles that will ply in the country

Solution: d.

“The main concern expressed by Bhutanese citizen groups and politicians is over increased vehicular and air pollution in a country that prides itself on ecological consciousness. The upper house of parliament has refused to ratify the MVA that was originally signed by all four BBIN countries in 2015, and the official announcement indicates that Thimphu will not push the agreement ahead of elections in 2018.”

TH: No full stops;

3. Which of the following pairs of countries and visas – which Indian IT professionals relied on to work in those countries – is are correctly matched?

1. USA: H-1B Visa
2. United Kingdom: Q Visa
3. Australia: 457 Visa

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

“The visa rule changes for Indian tech personnel weren’t wholly unexpected, especially after Brexit and Donald Trump’s victory in the U.S. on the back of, among other things, promises to put the brakes on outsourcing. Only, now governments are acting upon such rhetoric in some countries, including the U.S., the U.K. (Tier 2 Short term visa), Singapore and Australia.”

THBL: UK visa restrictions will hit 30,000 Indian techies;

TH: Facing up to IT;

4. Consider the following statements:

1. Each State in India has its own drug regulator
2. As mandated recently by the amended Drugs and Cosmetic Rules, bio-equivalence studies are mandatory for all classes of generic drugs manufactured in 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.

- On April 3, the government amended the Drugs & Cosmetic Rules, 2017 through a notification to make bioequivalence studies mandatory for certain classes of generic drugs ("highly soluble drugs") manufactured in India.
- The challenge for the government is to balance its policy objectives of taking the power of the doctor away to prescribe brand name drugs with the reality that generic drugs in India are of questionable quality. The solution does not lie in more laws, but in providing more information to the consumer. Drug regulators in India have a vast trove of information on substandard drugs which they need to release into a searchable database. This is easier said than done because India has 36 drug regulators — one for each State/Union Territory and the Central regulator.

17th April: [IE](#);

[TH: Generic medicines in a digital age](#);

5. 'CD Count' and 'ART' often appear in the news in the context of tests and treatments related to which one of the following infections?

- (a) Tuberculosis
- (b) HIV/AIDS
- (c) Swine Flu
- (d) Hepatitis C

Solution: b.

[PIB](#);



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