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SUBSCRIBE
1. The world’s first baby was recently born using a new “three person” fertility technique. The new technology associated with this fertility technique is called
(a) Leigh Technology
(b) Zhang Method
(c) Mitochondrial Donation
(d) Nucleus Replacement Method

Solution: c.

“It’s not the first time scientists have created babies that have DNA from three people – that breakthrough began in the late 1990s – but it is an entirely new and significant method.”

To be read along with the image: 1) Eggs from a mother with damaged mitochondria and a donor with healthy mitochondria are collected 2) The majority of the genetic material is removed from both eggs 3) The mother’s genetic material is inserted into the donor egg, which can be fertilised by sperm.


2. In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index?

1. Carbon dioxide
2. Carbon monoxide
3. Nitrogen dioxide

Select the correct answer using the code given below.
(a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
(c) 1, 4 and 5 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Solution: b.
The Air Quality Index doesn’t include carbon dioxide and methane.

Primary Source: Q61, CS(P) 2016

3. Which nations from the following list – comprising of members of SAARC – are also members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)?

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. Nepal
4. Sri Lanka
5. Maldives
6. Afghanistan
7. Pakistan

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 1, 4 and 5 only
(b) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
(c) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
(d) 6 and 7 only

Solution: c.
4. Which of the following nations are party to the Chabahar Agreement?

1. India
2. Iran
3. Afghanistan
4. Turkmenistan

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

“A Trilateral meeting was held between Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping, Sh. Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Afghanistan, Dr. Mohammadullah Batash and Minister of Road and Urban Development, Iran, Dr. Abbas Ahmed Akhoundi in the capital. The three Ministers held discussions on Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor i.e. Chabahar Agreement which was signed by them on 23rd May, 2016 in Tehran in the presence of Prime Minister of India and Presidents of Iran and Afghanistan.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151240

5. Consider the following statements with reference to the ‘writ petition’ as provided for in the Constitution:

1. It is only by a Constitutional Amendment that the power to issue writs can be extended to any court other than the Supreme Court and High Courts.
2. A High Court may refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction, whereas the Supreme Court may not.

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.

No constitutional amendment is required. The Parliament, under Article 32, can empower any other court to issue writs. But no such provision has been made by the Parliament so far.

“A remedy under article 32 is in itself a fundamental right and hence, the supreme court may not refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction. On the other hand, a remedy under article 226 is discretionary and hence, a high court may refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction. Article 32 does not merely confer power on the supreme court as article 226 does on a high court to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights or other rights as part of its general jurisdiction. The supreme court is thus constituted as a defender and guarantor of the fundamental rights.”

“The State government had also imposed a community fine in some villages for violating the new prohibition law. A writ petition on the community fine has been pending in the court.”

Primary Source: Chapter 7, Fundamental Rights, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth
6. The idea of Satyagraha meant which of the following?

1. Emphasis on the power of truth.
2. The need to search for truth.
3. If the cause was true, and the fight was against injustice, then physical force was not necessary to fight the oppressor.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

“The idea of satyagraha emphasised the power of truth and the need to search for truth. It suggested that if the cause was true, if the struggle was against injustice, then physical force was not necessary to fight the oppressor. Without seeking vengeance or being aggressive, a satyagrahi could win the battle through non-violence. This could be done by appealing to the conscience of the oppressor. People – including the oppressors – had to be persuaded to see the truth, instead of being forced to accept truth through the use of violence. By this struggle, truth was bound to ultimately triumph. Mahatma Gandhi believed that this dharma of non-violence could unite all Indians.”

Primary Source: Page 55, India and the Contemporary World – II, Class 10, NCERT

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151246

NOTES
1. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Tiger Reserve / Wildlife Sanctuary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>Simlipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Palpur Kuno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Nauradehi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Solution: b.

India has around 500 wildlife sanctuaries. There’s no way anyone can or should spend time to remember them. We’ll frame questions as and when some of them appear in the news and if the associated issue is relevant for our purpose.

“By 2010, the Rs 300-crore Project Cheetah was racing ahead full steam, backed by the ministry, under Jairam Ramesh. Madhya Pradesh’s Palpur-Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary, which had been waiting (and still continues to) for lions from Gir for almost two decades, was chosen as the reintroduction site... The apex court put the project on hold in 2012, and in 2013, it scrapped the proposal altogether. The government tried reviving it in 2014 by filing a fresh plea — along with a new proposed site in Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh — but the court hasn’t been impressed.”

“The then field director of Similipal Tiger Reserve reported sighting a cheetah on a routine patrol, and, around two weeks later, the deputy-director of the tiger reserve claimed to have seen the same animal on another patrol. The story caused some flurry in the conservation quarters before the matter was cleared up...”

http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/where-the-wild-things-were-hunting-cheetah-santhal-pargana-jharkhand-3060119/

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The ‘Kurinji’ flowers which blooms once in 12 years is found here.
2. The ‘Toda’ tribe resides here.
3. It is a notified Biosphere Reserve.

The above statements refer to which of the following sites?

(a) Nanda Devi National Park
(b) Nilgiris
(c) Namdapha
(d) Agasthyamalai

Ans: b.

The Toda tribe (Tamil Nadu) was depicted in the Republic day Tableau this year.

“The Karvi/Kurinji plant and the flowering phenomena is intertwined with the lives of indigenous communities. The Muthuvas of Munnar and the Todas of Nilgiris consider the flowering of Kurinji auspicious. In the Nilgiris, since the time of the British, Nilakurinji has been replaced by tea, pine, wattle and eucalyptus plantations, dams, construction and other markers of “development”. The restricted distribution of the Karvi/Kurinji makes them more vulnerable.”

Primary Source: http://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/lifestyle/look-the-karvi-is-flowering/

3. As part of what some academics refer to as a “global movement towards self-respect”, a statue of Mahatma Gandhi was recently sought to be removed from a University in which of the following nations?

(a) Nigeria
(b) Ghana
(c) South Africa
(d) Namibia

Solution: b.
Not a question that would be asked. But this issue — “global movement for self-respect” — is relevant for us, plus, is useful for essay-writing. And hence the question.

“His biographer and grandson, Rajmohan Gandhi, said that his grandfather had first travelled to Africa at the age of 24 to practice law. He was undoubtedly “at times ignorant and prejudiced about South Africa’s blacks,” says Rajmohan Gandhi.

He adds that, while “Gandhi too was an imperfect human being... the imperfect Gandhi was more radical and progressive than most contemporary compatriots.” ....”

“In the long term, however, we would like to be part of the global movement towards self-respect and pride that we see in the removal of the Rhodes statue in Umzantsi (South Africa), Colin Kaepernick’s protest against the National Anthem in the US, and the Black Lives Matter protests.”

Primary Source: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mahatma-was-read-out-of-context-says-granddaughter/article9174489.ece


4. Which of the following statements associated with National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is/are incorrect?

1. Providing free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society.
2. It organizes Lok Adalats.
3. To give effect to its policies and directions, State Legal Services Authority have been constituted in every state.

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

Solution: d.

“The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society and to organize Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes. In every State, State Legal Services Authority has been constituted to give effect to the policies and directions of the NALSA and to give free legal services to the people and conduct Lok Adalats in the State. The State Legal Services Authority is headed by Hon’ble the Chief Justice of the respective High Court who is the Patron-in-Chief of the State Legal Services Authority.”

Primary Source: http://nalsa.gov.in/index.html

5. Consider the following list:

1. Chemayungdung glacier
2. River Xiabuqu
3. Angsi glacier

Which of the above list of rivers/glaciers is/are associated with River Brahmaputra, known in China as the ‘Yarlung Tsangpo’?

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

Solution: d.

“China has blocked a tributary of the Brahmaputra as part of a major hydro-electric project, whose construction began in 2014.”

“The Brahmaputra’s source is the Chemayungdung Glacier, which covers the slopes of the Himalayas about 60 miles (100 km) southeast of Lake Mapam in southwestern Tibet. The three headstreams that arise there are the Kubi, the Angsi, and the Chemayungdung.”

The NCERT (11th Class) too refers to Chemayungdung Glacier as the source for the River Brahmaputra, and not Angsi glacier (although it too is an important primary source of the river, as can be gleaned from the Britannica description quoted above).
6. With a view to showcasing and projecting the Buddhist heritage and pilgrim sites of India, International Buddhist Conclaves have sometimes been organised by the Government. The 5th International Buddhist Conclave, the most recent, was organised in which among the following regions?

(a) Varanasi and Sarnath
(b) New Delhi and Bodhgaya
(c) Nalanda and Bodhgaya
(d) Patna and Bodhgaya

Solution: a.

Such a conclave was last organised in 2014. “With a view to showcasing and projecting the Buddhist heritage and pilgrim sites of India, the Ministry of Tourism is organizing the “5th International Buddhist Conclave (from 2nd to 6th October 2016)” in Varanasi-Sarnath in collaboration with the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Conclave will be inaugurated by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister for Tourism & Culture on 2nd October, 2016 in New Delhi.”

“The International Buddhist Conclave is also one of the initiatives being taken by India as its commitment as the land of origin of Buddhism and to improve the experience of pilgrims as well as tourists wishing to savor the essence of Buddhist heritage, at the Buddhist sites of the country. The Conclave will include presentations, panel discussion, business to business meetings between the international and domestic tour operators, an exhibition highlighting the Buddhist attractions in India, as well as visits to important Buddhist sites in and around Varanasi and Sarnath.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=1513

7. The 22nd Conference of Parties (COP) will be held at Marrakech, Morocco. Which of the following statements with reference to the COP is not correct?

(a) It is the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
(b) India has never hosted a COP.
(c) It meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise.
(d) The 21st COP was held in Paris.

Solution: b.

India hosted COP 8.

http://unfccc.int/bodies/body/6383.php

8. ‘Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan’, led by Muslim women, is

(a) A movement striving to secure pan-India gender equality in practice and in laws, regardless of religious affiliations.
(b) An Amnesty International-affiliate working towards understanding and ameliorating marginalisation of Muslim women in India.
(c) An organisation which fights for the citizenship rights of the Muslims, especially Muslim women, in India.
(d) An autonomous organisation creating awareness and clearing misconceptions about the Uniform Civil Code as enshrined in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Solution: c.

From the given statements, the most appropriate is ‘c’.

- **Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA)** is an autonomous, secular, rights-based mass organization led by Muslim women which fights for the citizenship rights of the Muslims in India. BMMA was formed in January, 2007.
- **Vision**: To create conditions within the Indian society where the Muslim community and especially the Muslim women are able to eradicate their own poverty and marginalization and live a life...
of equality, justice and with respect for human rights.

- **Their view on the UCC:** The Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, opposes move to introduce the Uniform Civil Code without taking into account the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. Under Article 25 the Constitution of India gives the right to all including minorities to have personal laws based on respective tenets of different religious communities. Under this provision we demand a gender just reform in the Muslim personal law based on the Quranic values of equality and justice.

Primary Source: [https://bmmaindia.com/about/](https://bmmaindia.com/about/)


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9. Arrange the following list of countries in their order of occurrence from West to East – seen on a world map – taking into account their eastern-most geographical extremities:

1. Iran
2. Saudi Arabia
3. Gabon

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Take into account either the eastern-most or western-most geographical points of these nations on a map and they will be arranged in a 3-2-1 form.

“... it was unclear if there could be a meaningful consensus on production cuts among disparate member-countries — which included the small-yet-prosperous West African country of Gabon, crisis-hit Venezuela, and fractious West Asian nations such as Iran and Saudi Arabia.”

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10. The Haj Committee of India is

(a) A statutory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs
(b) A body under the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, working in tandem with the Ministry of Minority Affairs
(c) A statutory body under the Ministry of External Affairs
(d) An independent body which organises the All India Annual Conference for Haj Chairmen & Secretaries of the Independent State Haj Committees.

Solution: a.

- Following President Pranab Mukherjee’s assent to amendments to the **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961**, the Centre on Saturday made public the gazette notification on the transfer of management of Haj Pilgrimage, including administration of the Haj Committee Act, 1959, to the **Minorities Affairs Ministry**.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs** has dealt with the Haj pilgrimage and other aspects of the Act so far.
- Under the amended business rules in the Second Schedule, the Ministry would however, continue to oversee other pilgrimages to places outside India under the Indian Pilgrimships Rules, 1933, and pilgrim parties from India to shrines in Pakistan and vice versa.
- MEA continues to be in charge of coordinating pilgrimages to shrines in Pakistan, Nepal and China and vice versa, travel for traders and pilgrims from India to the Tibet region of China.

1. The Direct Benefit Transfer in Kerosene (DBTK) initiative of the government is aimed at rationalising subsidy, based on the approach to cut subsidy leakages but not subsidy per se. Which among the following states became the first in the country to implement DBTK?

   (a) Chattisgarh  
   (b) Jharkhand  
   (c) Meghalaya  
   (d) Mizoram

Solution: b.

"Jharkhand has become the first state in the country to implement Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Kerosene in four identified districts namely, Chatra, Hazaribagh, Khunti and Jantara from 1st October, 2016. Under the DBTK Scheme, PDS kerosene is being sold at non-subsidised price, and, subsidy, as admissible, is being transferred to consumers directly into their bank accounts."

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151396

2. Consider the following statements:

   **Assertion (A):** Liquified Petroleum Gas subsidy was the first subsidy, preferred over Kerosene subsidy, under which Direct Benefits Transfer was introduced.

   **Reasons (R):** Coordination between ministries and state government departments in introducing subsidies under DBT is easier in the case of LPG than Kerosene.

Which of the above statements is/are true?

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

Solution: a.

R is one of the reasons why DBT in LPG was preferred over Kerosene. The following is an extract from the section, ‘Where next to spread JAM?’ on Page 61, Volume 1, Economic Survey, 2015-16.

“Within-government coordination: ministries and state government departments share authority in administering subsidies and transfers. Some subsidies have more streamlined administrative arrangements than others. The LPG subsidy, for instance, merely requires coordination between the Union Petroleum Ministry, the 3 Oil Marketing Companies and the network of distributors it manages. Coordination in this setting is significantly easier than in kerosene, where the Union Petroleum Ministry must coordinate with the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and all the states’ Public Distribution Departments. It is thus no accident that LPG was the first subsidy where DBT was introduced!"

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151396

3. The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for 2016 was awarded to Yoshinori Ohsumi, a Japanese Cell Biologist, for his discoveries with regard to a concept and process known as ‘Autophagy’, a Greek term for “self-eating”. How does autophagy as a cellular process help an organism?

1. During starvation, breaking down proteins and nonessential components and reusing them for energy.
2. Getting rid of damaged structures.
3. Destroying invading viruses and bacteria.

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 process is thought to go awry in cancer, infectious diseases, immunological diseases and neurodegenerative disorders. Disruptions in autophagy..."
are also thought to play a role in aging. But little was known about how autophagy happens, what genes were involved, or its role in disease and normal development until Dr. Ohsumi began studying the process in baker’s yeast.”

4th October, Explained Page, Indian Express

4. Who of the following founded the institution ‘Asiatic Society’ in the year 1784?
   (a) Sir William Jones
   (b) Henry Thomas Colebrooke
   (c) Nathaniel Halhed
   (d) Warren Hastings

Solution: a.

Our Pasts III Part 2, NCERT Class 8 mentions, “Jones discovered that his interests were shared by many British officials living in Calcutta at the time. Englishmen like Henry Thomas Colebrooke and Nathaniel Halhed were also busy discovering the ancient Indian heritage, mastering Indian languages and translating Sanskrit and Persian works into English. Together with them, Jones set up the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and started a journal called Asiatick Researches.”

The Asiatic Society website though, has this to say: “While others were thinking in terms of individual study and research, Sir William Jones was the first man to think in terms of a permanent organisation for Oriental studies and researches on a grand scale in this country. He took the initiative and in January 1784 sent out a circular letter to selected persons of the elite with a view to establishing a Society for this purpose. In response to his letter, thirty European gentlemen of Calcutta including Mr. Justice John Hyde, John Carnac, Henry Vansittart, John Shore, Charles Wilkins, Francis Gladwin, Jonathan Duncan and others gathered on 15 January 1784 in the Grand Jury Room of the old Supreme Court of Calcutta. The Chief Justice Sir Robert Chambers presided at the first meeting and Jones delivered his first discourse in which he put forward his plans for the Society.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151370

5. The ‘Rajamannar Committee’ was set up to study which one of the following matters?
   (a) Role of the Governor
   (b) Centre-State relations
   (c) National Language
   (d) Inter State river disputes

Solution: b.

“This over succeeding decades, and contingent on issues and the balance of political forces, the debate over the operational modalities of the centre-state relations has developed. An early advocate of decentralization was C. Rajagopalachari who thought that ‘the solution to centrifugal forces was to concede greater autonomy to the states.’ The same line of argument was adopted by Tamil Nadu’s Rajamnarr Commission in its 1971 Report of the Centre-State Relations Inquiry Committee. Some years later, the Sarkaria Committee noted that ‘while the Union-State relations were intended to be worked on the basis of co-operative federalism and consensus in all areas of common interest, they have not been so worked and the forums envisaged by the Constitution for that purpose have not been established.’”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151370
1. Consider the following statements:


2. Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to such a tribunal under the ISWD Act.

Which of the statements mentioned above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

- “Article 262 allows a parliamentary law — Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956 — to forbid the Supreme Court from intervening in inter-State water disputes.”

- Section 6 (2) of the 1956 Act gives the orders of tribunals set up by the government under it the same force as an order of the Supreme Court. In short, the statutory law excluded the Supreme Court from intervening against the 2007 final order of the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal (CWDT).

- Again, once the tribunal has pronounced a final order, it would fall on the Centre to prepare a water-sharing scheme based on the award of the tribunal. This scheme would be forwarded to the Parliament for promulgation. It was the Parliament’s sole right “to annul, vary, modify the Centre’s scheme.”

- “The Supreme Court, by ordering the setting up of the CMB, has denuded the Centre of its powers under the 1956 Act to frame a scheme based on the tribunal award. The final say is vested in the Parliament,” the Centre said.”

Chapter 15, Inter-State Relations, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth


2. Consider the following statements with reference to a temple in India:

1. It is directly and materially linked to Brahmanism and Tantric belief systems.

2. The ‘wheels’ depict symbolic motifs referring to the cycle of the seasons and the months.

3. It today consists of an unroofed ‘Natyamandir’, which rises on a high platform.

4. A king by name Narasimha Deva I built it.

The above statements refer to which among the following temples?

(a) Sun Temple, Konark
(b) Vittala Temple Complex, Hampi
(c) Airavateshwara Temple, Darasuram
(d) Pancha Rathas, Mahabalipuram

Solution: a.

- It is an outstanding testimony to the 13th-century kingdom of Orissa and a monumental example of the personification of divinity, thus forming an invaluable link in the history of the diffusion of the cult of Surya, the Sun God. In this sense, it is directly and materially linked to Brahmanism and Tantric belief systems.

- The Sun Temple is the culmination of Kalingan temple architecture, with all its defining elements in complete and perfect form. A masterpiece of creative genius in both conception and realisation, the temple represents a chariot of the Sun God, with twelve pairs of wheels drawn by seven horses evoking its movement across the heavens.

- The Sun Temple is an exceptional testimony, in physical form, to the 13th-century Hindu Kingdom of Orissa, under the reign of Narasimha Deva I (AD 1238-1264). Its scale, refinement and conception represent the strength and stability of the Ganga Empire as well as the value systems of the historic milieu.

- Its aesthetical and visually overwhelming sculptural narratives are today an invaluable window into the religious, political, social and secular life of the people of that period.

- Separately, “The Stone Chariot at Hampi is one of the three famous stone chariots in India. The other
two chariots are situated in Konark (Odissa) and Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu).”

Primary Source: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/246

Improvisation: http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/in-the-kingdom-of-the-sun/article9167935.ece

3. Which of the following taxes is/are not components of capital receipts of the central government?

1. Telecom spectrum auctions
2. Grants-in-aid
3. Interest receipts on loans granted
4. Dividends and profits on investments

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

Solution: d.

“Non-tax revenue (receipts) of the central government mainly consists of interest receipts on account of loans by the central government, dividends and profits on investments made by the government, fees (this will include spectrum charges) and other receipts for services rendered by the government. Cash grants-in-aid from foreign countries and international organisations are also included.”

GKToday: “In recent times, spectrum auctions have been one of the major sources of non-tax revenues for the government. We note here, that despite it looks that spectrum amount should be a capital receipt, it is shown as a non-tax revenue receipt in budget documents as one time spectrum charges levied on telecom players.”

Primary Source: Page 61-61, 12th Macroeconomics, NCERT


4. After the latest policy announcement, officials of the central bank said that the real neutral interest rate in India is now 1.25%. Which of the following statements about the real neutral interest rate is/are incorrect?

1. It is the estimated level of real interest rates at which the economy is growing at potential while inflation is under control.
2. This rate can go below zero, viz. it can be negative.
3. If projected inflation is higher than the inflation target, then the actual real rates must be higher than the neutral real rate.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

“Executive Director M.D. Patra hinted there was scope for policy interest rates to ease further when he said the neutral rate is 1.25 per cent, which is lower than the 1.5-2 per cent regime that prevailed under the previous governor Raghuram Rajan.”

- It is the estimated level of real interest rates at which the economy is growing at potential while inflation is under control. So the economy is chugging along without recession or overheating.
- This measure is the rate at which desired savings equal desired investments.
- If projected inflation is higher than the inflation target, then the actual real rates must be higher than the neutral real rate to ensure than monetary policy is anti-inflationary.
- It gives us some idea about whether monetary policy at any point of time is too tight or too loose.
- The empirical problem is that the real neutral rate of interest cannot be directly observed. It has to be estimated statistically. And it changes over time, depending on the inflation target of the central bank, the state of the business cycle and estimates of potential output.
- The Indian central bank has broadly been working over the past three years under the assumption that the neutral interest rate here is somewhere
between 1.5-2%. That number has now been brought down to 1.25% — or around 50 basis points. Now the RBI has not changed its inflation target. That leaves us with estimates of potential growth. So here is an uncomfortable question: Does the Indian central bank now believe that India’s potential growth rate is lower than earlier estimated?

Primary Source: Click Here; Secondary Source: Click Here;

Improvisation:

5. Consider the following statements:

1. Kazakhstan, Canada and Russia – not necessarily in that order – are the top 3 producers of uranium in terms of quantity.

2. India has signed civil nuclear agreements with the top 3 producers of Uranium.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

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

Solution: a.

In descending order, Kazakhstan, Canada and Australia are the top three producers of Uranium. Click Here to see the relevant table.

Some countries with which India has signed a civil nuclear deal include: USA, Russia, France, Kazakhstan, Australia, Canada, South Korea.

Improvisation:
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/clinching-the-deal-with-japan/article9184878.ece

6. Consider the following statements with reference to a town named ‘Tharangambadi’:

1. It is located in Tamil Nadu.

2. It was a trade agreement first which gave these foreigners possession of the town, and allowed them to trade pepper.

3. The Dansborg Fort in the town was built by them.

The above statements refer to which of the following Europeans?

(a) Portuguese
(b) Danish
(c) French
(d) Dutch

Solution: b.

Statement 3 was a giveaway.

“Although most people have heard of India’s French colony of Pondicherry, it’s little known that the Danes colonised part of India – especially a corner far removed from the major trading cities of Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai…in the early 17th Century, this tongue twister of a name proved too difficult for the incoming Danes, who altered it to Tranquebar, by which it is still known to this day.”

“The Danish East India company, created in 1616 under King Christian IV for trade with India and Ceylon, had its eye on the Coromandel Coast in India’s southeast for its pepper and cardamom…. A report published by the Danish Indian Cultural Centre of Tranquebar claims that “The long period under Danish rule transformed Tharangambadi from an Indian village into a hybrid Danish town encircled by a wall, grid pattern street layout and a strong fortress on the coast.”…. And the education system in Tranquebar is entirely a legacy of the Danes: most of the schools are managed by the Catholic St Theresa’s Convent and the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church.”


7. ‘Mission Raftaar’ is

(a) The Indian Railways’ Mission Mode activity to increase speeds of freight train and super-fast mail/express trains

(b) A component of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways’ ‘Avataran’ or
seven mission mode activities, under which all national highways will be made pothole-free by 2019

(c) A complementary programme to the Sagarmala initiative in order to provide efficient road and rail connectivity from ports to the hinterland

(d) A blueprint for making optimum use of the massive renewable energy generation capacity that will be created by 2022

Solution: a.

Mission Raftaar: It targets doubling of average speeds of freights trains and increasing the average speed of superfast mail/express trains by 25 kmph in the next 5 years.

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151418

8. ‘Kunduz’, often seen in the news, is a city in which of the following nations?

(a) Afghanistan
(b) Iran
(c) Iraq
(d) Syria

Solution: a.

“Fierce gun battles raged for a second day on Tuesday in Afghanistan’s embattled northern city of Kunduz while in the country’s south, insurgents killed 12 policemen at checkpoints around the Helmand provincial capital (Lashkar Gah) and seized another district they had attacked a day earlier. The timing of the coordinated assaults was particularly poignant, coming a year after the Taliban captured and held parts of Kunduz before the city was fully liberated weeks later with the help of U.S. air strikes.”

http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/kunduz-sees-fierce-fighting-for-the-second-day/article9185691.ece

*Clarifications*

Q5, October 1st Quiz (Click Here): Copy-pasting the statement as given in the question – “A High Court may refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction, whereas the Supreme Court may not”. Copy-pasting the extract from Laxmikanth’s Indian Polity, which has also been provided in the explanation to the question – “A remedy under article 32 is in itself a fundamental right and hence, the supreme court may not refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction. On the other hand, a remedy under article 226 is discretionary and hence, a high court may refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction. Article 32 does not merely confer power on the supreme court as article 226 does on a high court to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights or other rights as part of its general jurisdiction. The supreme court is thus constituted as a defender and guarantor of the fundamental rights.”

Explanation for Q7, October 2nd and 3rd Quiz (Click Here): If you got the answer right, you may have skipped reading the correct statements (which is essentially an explanation for the question). If you got the answer wrong, you may have only bothered to see the answer (correct option). Hence, we are providing the explanation here for that question – “The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements. A key task for the COP is to review the national communications and emission inventories submitted by Parties. The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise. The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995. The COP meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session.”
1. The 2016 Nobel Prize for Chemistry has been awarded for
   
   (a) Development of the world’s smallest machines.
   
   (b) Discoveries in DNA repair.
   
   (c) Devising computer simulations of chemical processes.
   
   (d) Developing new ways of linking carbon atoms together.

   Solution: a.
   
   “The machines conceived by today’s laureates are a thousand times thinner than a strand of hair. They could slip inside the human body to deliver drugs from within – for instance, applying pharmaceuticals directly to cancer cells. This field of nanotechnology could also yield applications in the design of smart materials.”

   

2. Lakhs of people belonging to a particular community have recently been mobilising themselves and carrying out ‘silent protests’ in the form of silent marches across the state of

   (a) Karnataka
   
   (b) Manipur
   
   (c) Tripura
   
   (d) Maharashtra

   Solution: d.
   
   General (Knowledge) question.
   
   A silence that’s deafening;


3. Which among the following list of nations are members of ‘ASEAN’ or the Association of South East Asian Nations?

   1. Myanmar
   2. Singapore
   3. South Korea
   4. Philippines
   5. Laos

   Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

   Solution: b.

   [10 States — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.]


4. India is a member of which of the following?

   1. Asia-Pacific economic corporation.
   2. Association of South-East Asian Nations.
   3. East Asia Summit
Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 1, 2, and 3
(d) India is a member of none of them

Solution: b.

India is a member of East Asia Summit. India is a member of ASEAN+6, not ASEAN.

Q7, CS(P) 2015;

Improvisation:
http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-needs-to-remove-bottlenecks-singapore-pm/article9189369.ece

5. The United Nations’ highest court – The International Court of Justice – recently rejected the nuclear disarmament case filed against India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom by which of the following nations?

(a) Italy
(b) Marshall Islands
(c) Japan
(d) South Korea

Solution: b.

“The Ruling 9-7 in India’s favour, the International Court of Justice on Wednesday accepted the Indian argument that it had no jurisdiction to deliberate on the suit brought by the Pacific nation of Marshall Islands against India, Pakistan and the UK for not taking steps to end the nuclear arms race.”

“The International Court of Justice ruled that the Marshall Islands had failed to prove that a legal dispute over disarmament existed between it and the three nuclear powers before the case was filed in 2014, and that “consequently the court lacks jurisdiction.”....”


6. Which of the following statements with reference to The Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2014 is/are not correct?

1. It lists the various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited.
2. The ‘informed consent’ clause is applicable in case of screening by any licensed blood bank wherein the HIV test is anonymous.
3. An ombudsman shall be appointed by the central government to inquire into complaints related to the violation of the act.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Statements 2 and 3 are incorrect.

- Informed consent and Disclosure of HIV status: Informed consent for an HIV test will not be required in case of screening by any licensed blood bank, a court order, medical research, and epidemiological purposes where the HIV test is anonymous and not meant to determine the HIV status of a person. Establishments keeping records of information of HIV positive persons shall adopt data protection measures.

- Role of the Ombudsman: 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.

Primary Source: PRS Link
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151427
1. The World Sustainable Development Summit 2016, themed, ‘Beyond 2015: People, Planet & Progress’, is among the first international platforms to discuss the new agenda post the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the signing of the Paris Agreement. It is being organised by

(a) Alliance of Small Island States
(b) International Solar Alliance
(c) The Energy and Resources Institute
(d) United Nations Population Fund

Solution: c.

“World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS), formerly ‘Delhi Sustainable Development Summit’, is TERI’s annual event to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on all aspects of sustainable development. The Delhi Sustainable Development Summit was initiated in 2001, with the sole aim of making ‘sustainable development’ a globally shared goal. The Summit brought together the finest minds and leading thinkers of the world to focus attention on the challenge of sustainable development as it relates to prevalent trends at the global, regional, and local levels.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151496

2. ‘MERCOSUR’ is an economic and political bloc with which India has signed a Preferential Trade Agreement, and is looking to expand the scope of this agreement now. This bloc’s ‘full members’ does not include

(a) Argentina
(b) Bolivia
(c) Paraguay
(d) Venezuela

Solution: b.

Venezuela, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil are its full members.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151495

3. Consider the following statements:

1. The total number of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in India is estimated at 2.1 million.
2. The number of people getting free treatment nationally for HIV is close to 50% of the total number of PLHIV.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

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

Solution: d.
Both statements are correct. This is a question framed with a mains perspective. Data for the first statement is available in NACO’s latest annual report, whereas for the second statement, we relied on today’s Hindu editorial: “In August, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare put the number of people getting free treatment nationally at 9,65,000, of which 53,400 are children. This must be viewed against the most recent estimate last year, that 2.1 million people live with HIV in India, of whom 7,90,000 are women. Regional variations in access to diagnosis and treatment must be addressed.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/stamping-down-on-prejudice/article9193542.ece

4. Consider the following pairs:

1. Free Trade Agreement : Tariff liberalisation on a limited number of lines
2. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement : An agreement which consists of an integrated package of agreement on, among others, Investments and Intellectual Property

Which of the above terminologies is/are correctly described?

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

Solution: b.

• Preferential Trade Agreement – Tariff liberalisation on a limited number of lines;
• Free Trade Agreement – Elimination of Tariffs on items covering substantial bilateral trade between the (FTA) partner countries;
• Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement – CECA or CEPA or BTIA terms are used to describe Agreements which consist of an integrated package of Agreement on Goods, Services, Investment, Mutual Recognition, Intellectual Property, etc.

“Commerce” – Chapter 7, India Year Book 2015

5. The ‘Sendai framework’ – the first intergovernmental agreement of the United Nations post-2015 sustainable development era – is a framework for

(a) Disaster risk reduction.
(b) Building resilience for adaptation to climate change in the agriculture sector.
(c) Mutual administrative assistance in refugee-related issues.
(d) Enhancing national, regional and international efforts to promote awareness among Earth citizens with regard to sustainable habits and practices.

Solution: a.

The “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030” was adopted during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan on 14-18 March, 2015 where India was represented by the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh. The implementation of the Sendai Framework involves adopting integrated and inclusive institutional measures so as to work towards preventing vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery and strengthen resilience.

Primary Source:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=128812

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151476
6. The Government of India is all set to host the Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR). Which of the following statements about this conference is/are correct?

1. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) is a co-organiser.

2. This is not the first time that India is hosting it.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- The **AMCDRR** is a biennial conference jointly organised by different Asian countries and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). The event represents a unique opportunity for governments to reaffirm their political commitments in implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and now the **Sendai Framework** for DRR 2015-2030.
- The AMCDRR also serves as a forum for other stakeholders to take a shared responsibility and make actionable commitments towards implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).
- At the same time the conference also provides opportunity for all governments and stakeholders to exchange experiences on successful practices and innovative approaches in reducing and managing disaster risk.
- So far, countries in Asia in collaboration with UNISDR have organized six AMCDRR conferences since 2005. **India** had also hosted the second AMCDRR in New Delhi in 2007.
- The commemoration of the first World Tsunami Awareness Day, to spread awareness about the dangers of tsunami and the importance of Early Warning Systems in mitigating its impact, will also be held on the closing day of the Conference.

http://pib.nic.in/news-site/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=128812

http://pib.nic.in/news-site/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151476

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**Clarifications**

Q1, 5th October Quiz (Click Here): Regarding statement 2 – Please read the statement in its entirety and not just the first half. Copy-pasting the full statement here – “Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to such a tribunal under the ISWD Act.”. The answer does not change.

Q2, 4th October Quiz (Click Here): Regarding the statement given under ‘reasons’ – “Coordination between ministries and state government departments in introducing subsidies under DBT is easier in the case of LPG than Kerosene.”. Technically, the statement is incorrect because state government departments are not involved in LPG DBT. Apologies for the technical error; Please consider the following statement instead: “Coordination between ministries and government departments in introducing subsidies under DBT is easier in the case of LPG than Kerosene.”

Q3, October 7th Quiz (Click Here): Regarding the number of PLHIV receiving free ART treatment – An extract from the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare’s speech dated 9th July, 2016: “India, which faced the spectre of disastrous consequences on account of AIDS epidemic 15 years back, has been able to manage the challenge effectively. Deaths due to AIDS have been reduced by nearly 55% since 2007. New HIV infections have been reduced by 66% since 2000 and around 1 million people affected by AIDS are currently on antiretroviral therapy.” There are additional PIB releases dated 2015 which confirm the estimate.
1. ‘Fixed Term Employment’ was recently introduced in the Apparel Manufacturing Sector. Which of the following statements with reference to this is not correct?

(a) It refers to a workman who is employed on a contract basis for a fixed period.

(b) The working conditions in terms of all statutory benefits of a fixed term employee would be at par with permanent workmen.

(c) The termination of fixed term employment of the workman requires a notice to be served a week preceding the date of termination.

(d) Fixed term workers employed for short periods will get better working and service conditions as compared to a contract workers.

Solution: c.

Natural termination of the fixed term employment contract requires “no notice or pay in lieu thereof.”

“This step would ultimately benefit the workers as their working conditions would be at par with the regular employees including social security and other benefits. It would, on the one hand provide flexibility to the employers and on the other hand improve the working conditions of the workers already working for some fixed tenure only by way of contracts. The measures assume significance due also to its potential for social transformation through women empowerment; since 70% of the workforce in the garment industry are women, majority of the new jobs created are likely to go to women.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151519

2. The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties is constituted under

(a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

(b) Ministry of Finance

(c) Ministry of Company Affairs

(d) Ministry of External Affairs

Solution: a.

“The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties was constituted in April 1998 under Ministry of Commerce and Industry and is headed by the Designated Authority”.

“The role of DGAD is to ensure a level playing field to the Domestic Industry against the adverse impact of the unfair trade practices like dumping and actionable subsidies from any exporting country, by using Trade Remedial methods under relevant framework of WTO arrangements, Customs Tariff Act & Rules and other relevant laws and International agreements, in a transparent and time bound manner”.

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151519

3. “MIP Vaccine” – the first of its kind in the world to be developed in India – will be piloted in Bihar and Gujarat as a part of the country’s efforts at eradicating which of the following diseases?

(a) Rotavirus

(b) Leprosy

(c) Rubella

(d) Japanese Encephalitis

Solution: b.

Same question was posted here last month.

- “With nearly 60% of all new cases of leprosy every year being recorded in India, the Indian government has launched an intensive programme to eliminate the dreaded disease.”
- “Prof Gursaran Prasad Talwar first developed the Mycobacterium indicus pranii (MIP) vaccine in the 1980s at the National Institute of Immunology, an autonomous state-funded institution under the government’s Department of Biotechnology.”
- An ambitious house-to-house survey was also launched in July and the Leprosy Case Detection Campaign promises to screen more than 32 million people in problem areas. Dr Swaminathan, who says the vaccine is totally safe, highlights its effective use for other treatments, including bladder cancer.”
- “But vaccination is only part of the solution. Sanitation must be improved too. Transmission is
human-to-human contact, but we think environment is also playing a role. Dr Sengupta, who has studied the disease for more than 40 years, points to findings that show how the bacteria that causes leprosy – *Mycobacterium leprae* – can live outside a host for prolonged periods in wet soils and pools of water.”


**Improvisation:**

4. Consider the following statements:

1. He attended the Congress of Opposed Nationalities in 1927.
2. He was once the President of the All India States People’s Conference.
3. He was one of the organisers of the Independence for India League to fight for complete Independence of India.

The above statements refer to

(a) Sardar Vallabhai Patel  
(b) Subhas Chandra Bose  
(c) Chakravarti Rajagopalachari  
(d) Jawaharlal Nehru

**Solution:** d.

- “Gandhi failed to grasp the importance of an alliance between oppressed groups. That task was taken on by his heir Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru learnt the virtue of solidarity by participating in the ‘Congress of Oppressed Nationalities’ in Brussels in February 1927. The 1927 congress was the precursor of the Bandung Conference in 1955.”
- **Wikipedia:** The [All India states people’s conference was formed in 1927](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-India_States_People%27s_Conference). Nehru who had been supporting the cause of the people of the princely states for many years was made the President of the conference in 1935. He opened up its ranks to membership from across the political spectrum. The body would play an important role during the political integration of India, helping Indian leaders Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon (to whom Nehru had delegated the task of integrating the princely states into India) negotiate with hundreds of princes.

- In 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru joined hands with Subhas to organise the Independence for India League to fight for complete independence and ‘a socialist revision of the economic structure of society’.

Page 298, India’s Struggle for Independence, Bipan Chandra

**Improvisation:**
[http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/before-he-became-mahatma/article9198678.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/before-he-became-mahatma/article9198678.ece)

5. “The arid Madanapalle division of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh is witnessing a disturbing trend in recent times”. Which among the following “trend” is being referred to here?

(a) Moving the courts to seek administered death for their ailing children.

(b) Children – especially girls – of farmers whose crops have failed, going missing.

(c) Killing cattle in order to cut costs incurred by their owners in having to maintain the cattle due to the absence of adequate rainfall.

(d) A large number of married women belonging to the region have been arrested in cases of ‘flesh trade’ since the last few months in different parts of India.

**Solution:** a.

Once again, not quite a question that would appear in the preliminaries. This issue is relevant and helpful for answer/essay writing.

“Ramanappa is fortunate that his euthanasia petition jolted the state machinery into enabling a new lease of life for his daughter, but the same cannot be said of others in the arid Madanapalle division of Chittoor district which is witnessing a disturbing trend. At least two other parents in the last three months — and three more in the past — were pushed, under similar tragic circumstances, into moving the courts to seek administered death for their ailing children.”

The Hindu: [Chittoor’s Euthanasia seekers](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/chittoors-euthanasia-seekers/article7390081.ece)
1. ‘Hurricane Matthew’ which recently struck Haiti, as seen from space, was

(a) Moving roughly from the Brazilian to the Argentinian coast.
(b) Moving roughly from the coast of Taiwan to Central-East coast of China.
(c) rotating in a clockwise (CW) direction.
(d) rotating in an anti-clockwise (ACW) direction.

Solution: d.

You must know two facts in order to answer this question (to eliminate one of the options between ‘c’ and ‘d’ only.. A hurricane either rotates in a CW or an ACW direction, therefore options ‘a’ and ‘b’ automatically get eliminated). First, figure out where Haiti is – north or south of the equator? It’s North. Next, you must know how the Coriolis force works. The Coriolis force causes deflection of winds to the right in the Northern Hemisphere whereas it causes deflection of winds to the left in the Southern Hemisphere. Consequently, you know that the hurricane was (is) rotating in an anticlockwise direction.

Watch the following video to easily understand how the Coriolis force works: https://youtu.be/i2mec3vgcAI


2. With reference to CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – consider the following statements:

1. It accords protection to animal and plant species when traded only as live specimens.
2. It is an international agreement between governments.
3. The Convention is legally binding on the Parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

• CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

• Today, it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species of animals and plants, whether they are traded as live specimens, fur coats or dried herbs.

• It is an international agreement to which States (countries) adhere voluntarily. Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties – in other words they have to implement the Convention – it does not take the place of national laws. Rather it provides a framework to be respected by each Party, which has to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level.

Primary Source: https://cites.org/eng/disc/what.php


3. At the CITES meeting in South Africa in September 2016, Pangolins – said to be the world’s most trafficked mammal – received extra safeguards against trafficking. Where in India can one naturally find the endangered Indian Pangolin?

(a) Brahmaputra river basin area
(b) Zanskar Valley
(c) Northeast including the Brahmaputra river basin area
(d) None of the above

Solution: c.

At the CITES meeting in South Africa in September 2016, Pangolins – said to be the world’s most trafficked mammal – received extra safeguards against trafficking. Where in India can one naturally find the endangered Indian Pangolin?

(a) Brahmaputra river basin area
(b) Zanskar Valley
(c) Northeast including the Brahmaputra river basin area
(d) None of the above

Solution: c.
4. Consider the following list:

1. Clouded Leopard
2. Amur Falcon
3. Hoolock Gibbon

The above list of species can all be naturally found in which of the following region/state?

(a) Northeast India
(b) Jammu and Kashmir
(c) Western Ghats
(d) Balaghat range

Solution: a.

The Clouded Leopard and the Hoolock Gibbon in India are found only around the Northeast region.

“In India, clouded leopards are restricted to the country’s north-east: the eastern Himalayas, the Assam valley, and the hills south of the Brahmaputra……. In upper Assam, the last vestiges of rainforests lie scattered, fragmented by pockets of agriculture and vast monoculture plantations of tea. Wildlife scientists have recorded rare and threatened wildlife such as hoolock gibbons (two species – “western hoolock gibbon” and “eastern hoolock gibbon” – both of which are restricted in India to the Northeast), India’s only ape species, stump-tailed macaques and small cats in some of the remnant patches… In Nagaland and Meghalaya, community reserves and initiatives protect migratory Amur falcons remnant forests, and other wildlife”.


5. ‘Kigali’ is the capital of

(a) Burundi
(b) Rwanda
(c) Uganda
(d) Tanzania

Solution: b.

Kigali is the capital of Rwanda, where the amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase out the use of HFCs is likely to be finalised.


6. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Reason for appearing recently in the news</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kigali</td>
<td>Discussions on International Shipping emissions reductions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Solution: d.

- “The Indian Pangolin is distributed in South Asia from parts of eastern Pakistan through much of India south of the Himalayas (excluding northeastern portions of the country), Southern Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
- In India, this species is widely distributed from the plains and lower hills south of the Himalayas to extreme southern India.

Primary source: [http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/12761/0](http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/12761/0)


3. Montreal : The International Civil Aviation Organisation reached an agreement to curb the rise of emissions from international aviation.

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

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

Solution: c.

- Last week has been of great significance in the fight against climate change. The Paris Agreement received the required number of ratifications, and will become international law from November 4, three days before the annual climate change conference begins in Marrakech (we posted a question on this a few days ago).
- In Montreal on Thursday, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) carved out an agreement to curb the rise of emissions from international aviation after 2020, despite reservations from some countries, including India.
- And from today, countries have gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, to finalise an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to enable the 1989 ozone-protecting agreement to phase out the use of Hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs.
- Once the HFC amendment is approved, the world will be left with just one more climate change hole to plug, that of emissions from international shipping.
- Like international aviation, international shipping emissions are not covered under the Paris Agreement because these emissions cannot be attributed to any specific country.


7. With reference to the ‘International Civil Aviation Organisation’, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a United Nations Specialised agency.
2. It manages the administration and governance of the Stockholm Convention.
3. It also coordinates assistance and capacity building for States (countries) in support of numerous aviation development objectives.

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 Stockholm Convention is associated with Persistent Organic Pollutants. And the ICAO’s headquarters is located in Montreal, Canada.
- The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a UN specialized agency, established by States in 1944 to manage the administration and governance of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).
- ICAO works with the Convention’s 191 Member States and industry groups to reach consensus on international civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and policies in support of a safe, efficient, secure, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible civil aviation sector. These SARPs and policies are used by ICAO Member States to ensure that their local civil aviation operations and regulations conform to global norms.
- In addition to its core work resolving consensus-driven international SARPs and policies among its Member States and industry, and among many other priorities and programmes, ICAO also coordinates assistance and capacity building for
States in support of numerous aviation development objectives and audits States’ civil aviation oversight capabilities in the areas of safety and security.

**Primary Source:** [http://www.icao.int/about-icao/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.icao.int/about-icao/Pages/default.aspx)

**Improvisation:** [Indian Express; The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/a-roller-coaster-remedy/article9189685.ece)

8. Recently, a study determined that moderate intensity, rattling roller coaster rides might be effective for which of the following?

(a) Dislodging (passing) kidney stones.

(b) Improving lung capacities.

(c) Serving the purpose of a replacement fitness regime.

(d) Toning body muscles.

**Solution:** a.

- The authors found that moderate-intensity, rattling coasters might be effective at dislodging little kidney stones in the outer ducts of the kidney and propelling them toward the ureter, the tube connecting the kidneys and bladder.
- Their report, published last week in The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association, suggests that riding these roller coasters might help patients who have kidney stones that are five millimeters or less in diameter.

10th October, ‘Explained’ Page, Indian Express


9. An immunotherapy drug has recently been described as a potential “game-changer” in cancer therapy. This drug, ‘Nivolumab’, works by

(a) Interrupting chemical signals that cancers use to convince the immune system they are healthy tissue.

(b) Enhancing the efficacy of chemical substances used in chemotherapy treatments.

(c) Utilising nano-molecular machines to target and destroy cancer cells.

(d) None of the above.

**Solution:** a.

- In a study of head and neck cancer, more patients taking nivolumab survived for longer compared with those who were treated with chemotherapy.
- In another study, combining nivolumab with another drug shrank tumours in advanced kidney cancer patients.
- **Immunotherapy works by harnessing the immune system to destroy cancer cells.**
- Nivolumab and ipilimumab both work by interrupting the chemical signals that cancers use to convince the immune system they are healthy tissue.


10. India is represented at the IMF by an “Executive Director”, currently Dr. Rakesh Mohan, who also represents

1. Bangladesh
2. Sri Lanka
3. Nepal
4. Bhutan
5. Maldives

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

- **Finance Minister is the ex-officio Governor on the Board of Governors of the IMF**. RBI Governor is the Alternate Governor at the IMF. India is represented at the IMF by an Executive Director, currently Dr. Rakesh Mohan, who also represents three other countries as well, viz. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

- India’s current quota in the IMF is SDR (Special Drawing Rights) 5,821.5 million, making it the 13th largest quota holding country at IMF and giving it shareholdings of 2.44%. However, based on voting share, India (together with its constituency countries Viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka) is ranked 17th in the list of 24 constituencies at the Executive Board.

Primary Source: 
http://finmin.nic.in/the_ministry/dept_eco_affairs/MI/India_IMF.pdf

Improvisation: PIB
1. ‘Bad Bank’, sometimes mentioned in the news, refers to
   (a) A variant of an Asset Reconstruction Company.
   (b) A bank which has more than 5 percent of its loans categorised as Non-Performing Assets.
   (c) A Public Sector Bank which has more than 5 percent of its loans categorised as Non-Performing Assets.
   (d) The bank – whether private or public – which contributes the most to the pile of stressed assets within the Indian economic system.

   Solution: a.
   • “A fourth option for banks is to sell the NPA at a discount to an Asset Restructuring Company. This again involves a significant loss on loans when the transaction is made. But it has the effect of getting an NPA off the books of the bank or ‘cleaning up the balance sheet’. The bank’s capital is eroded to the extent of the loss.”
   • “The bad bank proposal is a variant of the fourth option. The idea is to transfer NPAs of banks, perhaps only PSBs, to the bad bank. The bad bank will manage these NPAs in suitable ways — some may be liquidated, others may be restructured, etc. Getting NPAs off the books will help the PSB management focus on new business instead of having to expend their energies on trying to effect recoveries. A bad bank will be better focussed on the task of recovery. If it’s a private entity, it can also bring in superior expertise.”

   Solution: d.

   • **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)** is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NHM). It is being implemented with the objective of reducing maternal and infant mortality by promoting institutional delivery among pregnant women.
   • The scheme is under implementation in all states and Union Territories (UTs), with a special focus on Low Performing States (LPS).

   “While previous studies had shown the impact of Janani Suraksha Yojana in reducing maternal mortality, it was not known if it had reduced socioeconomic inequalities — differences in access to maternal care between individual people of higher or lower socioeconomic status. A new study brings in first conclusive evidence of the role played by Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) in reducing ‘socioeconomic disparities’ existing in maternal care.”

   3. The Port of Antwerp, a river port set up over 500 years ago and located 80 kilometre inland, today has emerged as one of Europe’s major transshipment hubs feeding cargo to large parts of Europe through water, rail and roadways. This port is located in
   (a) Netherlands
   (b) Belgium
   (c) France
   (d) Denmark

   Solution: b.
“Belgium’s Port of Antwerp could well be India’s lighthouse. In its bid to drastically cut logistics costs, the Asian nation is planning to pump in billions of dollars to make its dry river beds navigable and develop over 2,000 river ports across 111 national waterways spanning 20,000 km. And, it could take away a few lessons on generating cargo close to its proposed riverine ports from its European counterpart.”


4. Which of the following Indian Railways Sites have been accorded ‘World Heritage Site’ status by UNESCO?

1. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
2. Kangra Valley Railway
3. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus
4. Matheran Light Railway

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

“Indian Railways with more than 160 years of rich history; presents a wide spectrum of both tangible and intangible heritage. Indian Railways is proud owner of four UNESCO accorded World Heritage Sites namely Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (1999), Nilgiri Mountain Railway (2005), Kalka Shimla Railway (2008) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai (2004). There are two more in waiting or in the tentative list namely Matheran Light Railway and Kangra Valley Railway.”


5. This is not the first time that an organisation in India got bestowed with the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy. For what initiative/innovation did an Indian organisation win the 2016 Prize?

(a) A programme, which uses literacy to promote changes in traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls, and contributes to increased participation of women in local governing bodies.

(b) A programme which focuses on the development of the educational and eco-gardening skills, contributing to the inclusion in society of migrant populations, prisoners and street children.

(c) A ‘talking pen’ which reproduces the sound of written text.

(d) The ‘Literacy for People Deprived of Liberty’ programme, which has reached over several thousand male and female prisoners since it was established.

Solution: c.

“Maniyamma, an octogenarian tribal woman of Palakkayam colony in Chaliyargrama panchayat used to struggle with books and slates in her endeavour to become a neo-literate. But a ‘talking pen’ which reproduces the sound of a written text made matters easy for her and so many other indigenous people of the area. They moved the electronic pen across the alphabets and words of songs to hear and learn them simultaneously with ease... It is this talking pen and other such innovative efforts in literacy and skill development programmes which helped Jan Shikshan Sansthan(JSS), Malappuram to bag the covetous...”
UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy, 2016... This is the fourth time an organisation in India got bestowed with Confucius prize.”

- Established in 2005 through the generosity of the Government of the People’s Republic of China, the UNESCO Confucius Prize recognises the activities of outstanding individuals, governments or governmental agencies and NGOs whose work in literacy serves rural adults and out-of-school youth, particularly women and girls.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=151475

6. Which nations from the following list are members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation as also the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation?

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. Nepal
4. Maldives
5. Afghanistan
6. Myanmar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 4 only
(b) All but 4, 5 and 6
(c) All but 5 and 6
(d) All but 5

Solution: b.

We posted a similar question here a few days ago. Myanmar is not a member of SAARC. Afghanistan and Maldives are not members of BIMSTEC. Only 1, 2 and 3 from the above list are common to both the groups.

“The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It constitutes seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.”

Improvisation:
1. The first ‘World Tsunami Awareness Day’ will be celebrated on November 5th, 2016. This day will commemorate the

(a) First documented instance of a tsunami early warning.
(b) First documented tsunami which occurred on November 5th about 2,500 years ago.
(c) Birthday of Tilly Smith, who in 2004 saved the lives of a few hundred beach-goers by alerting them minutes before the arrival of the tsunami caused by the Indian Ocean earthquake, as soon as she noticed water receding from the shoreline.
(d) None of the above.

Solution: a.

“The significance of this day, the 5th November, to tsunami awareness can be traced back to the year 1854. A villager in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, was concerned about an impending tsunami after a high-intensity earthquake on November 5, 1854. He set up a fire to rice sheaves on the top of a hill. Fellow villagers, who went atop to put off the fire, were saved even as a tsunami destroyed their village down below. This was the first documented instance of a tsunami early warning.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151595

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The Supreme Court has asked the government to grant citizenship to these people.
2. They fled from erstwhile East Pakistan in the 1960s.
3. They were resettled in Arunachal Pradesh.
4. They are Buddhist.

The statements given above refer to which people?

(a) Hajongs
(b) Chakmas
(c) Hindu refugees
(d) Both a and b

Solution: b.

“They were inhabitants of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) who had to flee as their land was submerged by the Kaptai dam in the 1960s. Chakmas are Buddhist, Hajongs Hindu — and they also faced religious persecution in East Pakistan. Most of those who came were Chakmas; only about 2,000 were Hajong. They entered India through what was then the Lushai Hills district of Assam (today’s Mizoram). While some stayed back with Chakmas already living in the Lushai Hills, the Indian government moved a majority of the refugees to present-day Arunachal Pradesh.”

Primary Source: http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/why-chakmas-and-hajongs-are-indias-nowhere-people/

Improvisation: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151588

3. Graphene is a

(a) Network of hollow football-shaped cages of carbon atoms.
(b) Thin hollow tube of curled carbon atoms.
(c) Network of pyramidal-structured carbon atoms.
(d) Honeycomb sheet of carbon, one atom thick.

Solution: d.

“Scientists at Tsinghua University in Beijing have found that if you feed silkworms graphene (a form of carbon consisting of sheets one atom thick arranged in a honeycomb pattern), they will produce super-strong silk.”

12th October, ‘Explained Page’, Indian Express

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04bsn7r

4. The high-level Pam Rajput Committee was set up in order to study the

(a) Status of women since 1989 in India.
(b) Proposal of setting up a ‘bad bank’.
(c) State of bridges built in the pre-independence period.

(d) Digital momentum of India since 2000 and to suggest steps to enhance it in a time-bound manner.

Solution: a.

“In March this year, the Supreme Court had asked the Centre to make public a report by the high-level Pam Rajput committee on the status of women in India — the committee has sought a ban on gender discriminatory practices propagated by personal laws. It was only this month, however, that the Ministry of Law finally filed its affidavit where it took a stand that personal laws, regardless of the fact that they are meant to preserve the plurality and diversity of the country, “must be examined in the light of the overarching goal of gender justice and dignity of women”.

http://www.gktoday.in/pam-rajput-committee-on-status-of-women-in-india/

5. Consider the following statements:

1. The doctrine of judicial review, expressively provided for in Article 13 of the Indian Constitution, is a power that has been conferred on the Supreme Court (SC) as well as the High Courts.

2. The SC in the Kesavananda Bharati case held that the Parliament is empowered to abridge or take away any of the Fundamental Rights, as long as the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution is not violated.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

Both statements are correct.

- The doctrine of judicial review, expressively provided for in Article 13 of the Indian Constitution, is a power that has been conferred on the Supreme Court (Article 32) as well as the High Courts (Article 226).

- The SC in the Kesavananda Bharati case held that the Parliament is empowered to abridge or take away any of the Fundamental Rights, as long as the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution is not violated. That is, a Constitutional amendment can be challenged on the ground that it violates a fundamental right that forms a part of the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution and hence, can be declared as void.

Primary Source: Chapter 7 – Fundamental Rights and Chapter 11 – Basic Structure of the Constitution, Indian Polity 4th edition by M. Laxmikanth

Improvisation:

6. Yemen shares its land border with which of the following countries?

(a) Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates
(b) Oman and United Arab Emirates
(c) Saudi Arabia and Oman
(d) Bahrain and Qatar

Solution: c.

Yemen shares its land border with Saudi Arabia and Oman.
7. With reference to ‘Seagrass’ – distinct from seaweed – which of the following is/are correct?

1. These are flowering plants that form dense underwater beds.
2. They are found in shallow waters of coastal regions on every continent.
3. They are also known as “lungs of the sea”.

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: c.

- **Seagrasses** are flowering plants that form dense underwater beds in shallow water. Distinct from seaweed, the plants provide shelter and food for a large range of animals, including fish, marine mammals and birds. Many seagrass meadows have been lost because of human activities, say researchers.

- **Seagrass**, which is found in shallow waters of coastal regions on every continent except Antarctica, is declining globally at a rate of about 2% a year.

- The loss of seagrass puts the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people at risk and exposes many people to increasing levels of poverty. “Seagrass loss also places the viability of our remaining populations of green turtle, dugong (next question is based on this species, also known as ‘sea cow’) and species of seahorse at risk.”

8. With reference to ‘dugong’, a mammal found in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a herbivorous marine animal.
2. It is found along the entire coast of India
3. It is given legal protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

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) 3 only

Solution: c.

**Dugongs survive on Seagrass.** “The dugong is the only living representative of the once-diverse family Dugongidae; its closest modern relative, Steller’s sea cow (Hydrodamalis gigas), was hunted to extinction in the 18th century. The **dugong is the only strictly marine herbivorous mammal**, as all species of manatee use fresh water to some degree. In India, it is found off the Gujarat Coast (Gulf of Kutch), Tamil Nadu coast (Gulf of Mannar), Palk Bay and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.”

Q69, CS(P), 2015;


9. With reference to the appointment procedure of the United Nations Secretary General, consider the following statements:

1. The Security Council recommends a candidate for appointment to the General Assembly.
2. A General Assembly resolution, appointing the recommended Secretary General, must be passed by consensus.
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.

1) The Security Council **recommends** a candidate for appointment to the General Assembly, an issue to be “discussed and decided at a private meeting.”
2) The Secretary-General “shall be **appointed by** the General Assembly upon the **recommendation of** the Security Council,” traditionally through a GA **resolution**.
   - The appointment constitutes an “important question” requiring a **two-thirds voting majority**.
   - The Secretary General will be appointed for **five years**, with the option of **reappointment for a further five-year-term**.
   - The GA resolved that “it would be desirable for the Council to proffer one candidate only...and for debate on the nomination in the General Assembly to be avoided.”

**Primary Source:**
http://www.unelections.org/?q=node/71

**Improvisation:**
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/antnio-guterres-as-next-un-secretarygeneral-resetting-the-moral-compass/article9212039.ece

10. The Direct Benefit Transfer in Kerosene (DBTK) initiative of the government is aimed at rationalising subsidy, based on the approach to cut subsidy leakages but not subsidy per se. Which among the following states became the first in the country to implement DBTK?

(a) Chattisgarh
(b) Jharkhand
(c) Meghalaya
(d) Mizoram

**Solution:** b.

- The same question was posted here a few days ago.
- After the success of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)/cooking gas, the government has now decided to launch DBT for kerosene (DBTK), starting with pilots in the State of **Jharkhand**.
- The biggest hurdle is the **lack of a streamlined and unified digital consumer database**, which formed the backbone of the robust and rapid implementation of DBT for LPG. Here, the entire database across India was managed by just three public sector oil marketing companies, which are directly under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. This enabled easier coordination for a nationwide rollout of the scheme.
- In comparison, the database of subsidised kerosene beneficiaries falls under the Public Distribution System (PDS), which is managed and maintained **by each State government**. Coordination among the large number of State-level actors, especially in the case of a non-digitised PDS beneficiary database, can create barriers. While e-PDS is being implemented across India, a digital PDS beneficiary database is not yet available for all the States to enable implementation of DBTK.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/towards-a-kerosenefree-india/article9212049.ece

**Notes**
1. India and Russia are collaborating to set up integrated Agro-irradiation centres in India. In what ways is food irradiation beneficial?

1. Preservation by destruction or rendering inactive the organisms that cause spoilage and decomposition.
3. Delay of sprouting and ripening of fruits and vegetables.

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.

Reading the following extract from this Hindu article would have helped you answer the question – “In India, according to estimates, post-harvest losses in food and food grains are around 40-50 per cent, primarily due to insect infestation, microbiological contamination, physiological changes due to sprouting and ripening, and poor shelf life.”

US FDA: **Why irradiate food?**

- **Prevention of Foodborne Illness** – to effectively eliminate organisms that cause foodborne illness.
- **Preservation** – to destroy or inactivate organisms that cause spoilage and decomposition and extend the shelf life of foods.
- **Control of Insects** – to destroy insects. Irradiation also decreases the need for other pest-control practices that may harm the fruit.
- **Delay of Sprouting and Ripening** – to inhibit sprouting (e.g., potatoes) and delay ripening of fruit to increase longevity.
- **Sterilization** – irradiation can be used to sterilize foods, which can then be stored for years without refrigeration. Foods that are sterilized by irradiation are exposed to substantially higher levels of treatment than those approved for general use. (Ex: Astronauts eat meat that has been sterilised by irradiation to avoid getting food borne illnesses when they fly in space.)

2. With reference to food irradiation, consider the following statements:

1. It compromises nutritional quality of food, though, while extending its shelf-life.
2. Milk pasteurisation is a form of food irradiation.

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.

- “Irradiation does not make foods radioactive, compromise nutritional quality, or noticeably change the taste, texture, or appearance of food. In fact, any changes made by irradiation are so minimal that it is not easy to tell if a food has been irradiated.”
- “Food irradiation (the application of ionizing radiation to food) is a technology that improves the safety and extends the shelf life of foods by reducing or eliminating microorganisms and insects. Like pasteurising milk (pasteurisation is the process of heating milk up and then quickly cooling it down to eliminate certain bacteria) and canning fruits and vegetables, irradiation can make food safer for the consumer.”
- The World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have also endorsed the safety of irradiated food.

Sources – same as provided in the hyperlinks above.

3. A consolidated bloc of 22 Members of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha recently received formal recognition from the chairman. Which of the following statements in this context is/are correct?

1. The Rajya Sabha has seen such groups regularly being set up since independence for the purpose of functioning in the house, namely, increased allocation of time for participation in debates.
2. The strength of such groups can change from time to time.

3. Nominated as well as independent members can become a part of such groups.

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: b.

“The general practice is that a group which has a strength of five and more is recognised as a parliamentary group for functioning in the House. Members belonging to different political parties and unattached members who form an association with distinctive designation may also be termed as a parliamentary group for the purpose of functioning in the House, namely, allocation of time for participation in debates and allotment of contiguous seats in the Chamber. For the purpose of getting recognition, members concerned have to make a formal request to the Chairman with the signatures of all members concerned.”

- Vice-President Hamid Ansari has formally recognised a group of 22 MPs belonging to parties with less than four MPs and certain independents as a consolidated block — the United Group.
- Mary Kom and Sachin Tendulkar are nominated members of RS, and are part of the United Group.
- This is only the third time in the history of Indian Parliament that this is happening, the first was in 1983, and the second in 1990. The rarity of such a grouping is not surprising considering the party-wise divisions that usually rule parliamentary practice.
- In 1983, twenty-two members belonging to different political parties formed a “United Association of Members (UAM)” which was given recognition.
- In 1990, six members belonging to different political parties formed a “United Parliamentary Group (UPG)”. Subsequently, the strength of the Group went on changing from time to time.

4. India is focusing on offshore rupee bonds to finance its long-term infrastructure projects rather than green bonds. What are green bonds?

(a) Bonds that are issued to raise capital for infrastructure projects.
(b) A financing option available to private firms and public entities to support climate and environmental investments, in the light of climate change.
(c) Bonds that are issued to finance any green-field projects.
(d) All of the above.

Solution: b.

Statement ‘b’ is the most appropriate among all.

- The Hindu, 2015: “The issuer of a green bond publicly states that capital is being raised to fund ‘green’ projects, which typically include those relating to renewable energy, emission reductions and so on. There is no standard definition of green bonds as of now.”
- Investopedia: Green bonds are created to encourage sustainability and the development of brownfield sites. More specifically, green bonds finance projects aimed at energy efficiency, pollution prevention, sustainable agriculture, fishery and forestry, the protection of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, clean transportation, sustainable water management, and the cultivation of environmentally friendly technologies.

Improvisation:
http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/india-focussed-on-offshore-rupee-bonds/article9216093.ece
5. Which among the following statements with reference to the Commonwealth of Nations is correct?

(a) It consists only of member states that were territories of the former British Empire.

(b) It does not collaborate with cultural and professional organisations.

(c) The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings occurs every two years.

(d) Gender equality and women’s empowerment are issues that are not dealt with by it.

Solution: c.

- The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states (some were never part of the British empire – Mozambique, for example). The Commonwealth includes some of the world’s largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries, spanning five regions. Thirty-one of its members are small states, many of them island nations.

- Commonwealth countries are supported by an active network of more than 80 intergovernmental, civil society, cultural and professional organisations.

- Commonwealth Gender: “We work to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in all social, economic and political spheres.”

- The Commonwealth Secretariat provides guidance on policy making, technical assistance and advisory services to Commonwealth member countries.

- “We support governments to help achieve sustainable, inclusive and equitable development. Our work promotes democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance and social and economic development. We are a voice for small states and a champion for youth empowerment.”

- Priority areas of work are agreed at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings, which occur every two years.


6. To ensure energy security, the Government of India is setting up strategic crude oil storages at three locations in the first phase. Which of the following are among these locations?

1. Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
2. Padur, Kerala
3. Mangalore, Karnataka
4. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only

(b) 2 and 4 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 2, 3 and 4 only

Solution: c.

The same question was posted here a few months ago.

- India is building underground storages in Vishakhapatnam and Mangalore and Padur (both) in Karnataka to store about 5.33 million tonnes of crude oil to guard against global price shocks and supply disruptions.

- These strategic storages would be in addition to the existing storages of crude oil and petroleum products with the oil companies and would serve as a cushion in response to external supply disruptions. The construction of the strategic crude oil storage facilities is being managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL), a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB).


Improvisation: http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/india-gets-first-iranian-oil-parcel/article9216104.ece
7. Under Phase I of the Strategic Petroleum Reserves storage program, three facilities have been created. Which among the following are the proposed sites for Phase II of the storage program?

1. Chandikhol, Odisha
2. Bikaner, Rajasthan
3. Hazira, Gujarat
4. Paradip, Odisha

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

The same question was posted here last month.

“Under Phase II storage program, plans currently are afoot to create Strategic Petroleum Reserves at two locations, namely Chandikhol in Odisha and Bikaner in Rajasthan which entails storage of crude oil in underground rock caverns and underground salt caverns respectively.”


1. The political origin of BRICS lay in the concept of a “strategic triangle”, that was to comprise originally of which of the current members of BRICS?

(a) Russia, India and China  
(b) Brazil, South Africa and India  
(c) South Africa and India  
(d) Russia and China

Solution: a.

Question framed with a mains perspective.

“BRICS, too, may have passed the moment of peak solidarity. The challenge now is to manage the growing differences among them. The political origin of BRICS lay in the concept of a “strategic triangle” that was articulated by the Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov in the early 1990s. Primakov wanted Russia, China and India to blunt the edge of American power in the post-Cold War world. Brazil and South Africa joined the forum a little later and lent it greater credibility as the voice of the emerging powers. Although Brazil and South Africa are important partners, it is the shifting dynamic among the three Eurasian powers — Russia, China and India — and their relationship with the US that will shape the future of BRICS.”


2. With reference to the Gond tribe of India, consider the following statements:

2. ‘Gondwana’ is derived from this tribe’s name, and it means ‘Land of the Gonds’.
3. They revere ‘God Ravan’ – from the Hindu mythology Ramayan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

If you read just the title of this article, you would have answered this question. “On October 11, when most of central and northern India was busy celebrating Vijayadasami-Dasara in remembrance of Lord Rama’s victory over the Lankan king Ravan by setting the latter’s effigies on fire, Gond tribals were gathering in large numbers in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra to revere their “God Ravan”, and to demand that the practice of demonising him be stopped.”


3. With reference to Tasawwuf – in which, emphasis was laid on seeking salvation through intense devotion and love for God – consider the following statements:

1. It first found its way to Hindustan with the coming of the Delhi Sultanate.
2. In medieval times, it was absent in peninsular 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: d.

‘Tasawwuf’ or ‘Sufism’ found its way to Hindustan from the eleventh century onwards, a process which was strengthened with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Sufism was present in the Deccan region by, at least, the 17th Century (references in Class XII NCERT to Sufism being influenced to some extent by the Vachanas of Lingayats in Karnataka region in the 17th century).

In fact, Class 7 NCERT states, “A large number of Sufis from Central Asia settled in Hindustan from the eleventh century onwards. This process was strengthened with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, when several major Sufi centres developed all over the subcontinent.
4. ‘Al-Haram al-Sharif’, or ‘The Temple Mount’, was recently in the news for which of the following reasons?

(a) The first edition of the South Asian Sufi Festival was hosted here.

(b) Israel suspended cooperation with UNESCO as a draft resolution issued by the latter used only the Islamic name for it.

(c) The Law Commission in its report on the Uniform Civil Code has profusely cited inscriptions from this site to buttress its stand to implement Article 44 of the Indian Constitution.

(d) A place of worship straddling the Gujarat-Sindh border, frequented by both Indians and Pakistanis, without having to apply for visas.

Solution: b.

- Unesco’s draft resolution, sponsored by several Arab countries, uses only the Islamic name for a hilltop compound sacred to both Jews and Muslims, which includes the Western Wall, a remnant of the biblical temple and the holiest site where Jews can pray. The validated resolution is expected early next week, but the wording is unlikely to change.

- Israelis and many Jews around the world viewed it as the latest example of an ingrained anti-Israel bias at the UN, where Israel and its allies are far outnumbered by Arab countries and their supporters.

- Jews refer to the hilltop compound in Jerusalem’s Old City as the Temple Mount, site of the two Jewish biblical temples. Muslims refer to it as the Noble Sanctuary, and it is home to the Al-Aqsa mosque and the golden Dome of the Rock. It is the holiest site in Judaism and the third holiest in Islam, after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

5. Crimea is surrounded by the waters of

1. Black Sea
2. Sea of Azov
3. Mediterranean Sea
4. Sea of Marmara

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 1 and 4 only

(d) 3 and 4 only

Solution: b.

The same question was posted here in August.

“Talk about a post-Cold War partnership between the world’s two greatest military powers is now a thing of the past. It looks like a throwback to the Cold War days with Russia and the U.S. fighting a proxy war in Ukraine, leading two competing military operations in Syria and raising allegations and counter-allegations on a host of issues, ranging from human rights violations and breaking international norms to interfering in each other’s domestic politics.”

Improvisation:

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/usrussia-relations-a-return-to-cold-war-tensions/article9220631.ece
6. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea?

(a) Syria
(b) Jordan
(c) Lebanon
(d) Israel

Solution: b.

Q27, CS(P) 2015;

Improvisation:
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/usrussia-relations-a-return-to-cold-war-tensions/article9220631.ece

7. With reference to the problem of overcrowded prisons in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Around two-thirds of India’s prisoners are under trials.
2. Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for undertrials, who have completed half the maximum jail term specified for their offences, to be released on personal bonds.

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.

“Last year, it was found that a little over two-thirds of India’s prisoners were undertrials. Poverty remains the main reason for this, as most prisoners are unable to execute bail bonds or provide sureties. Since 2014, there is some effort to invoke Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, under which undertrials who have completed half of the maximum jail term specified for their offences may be released on personal bonds.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/time-to-decongest-our-prisons/article9220635.ece

NOTES
1. Consider the following statements:

1. Fishing communities thrived once on the catch from this sea, but drastic increase in salinity killed the fish.
2. Its waters were diverted for cotton production, causing the waters to recede.
3. This sea has shrunk to just 10 per cent its former size.
4. It was originally surrounded only by some of the Central Asian Republics.

The statements given above refer to which sea?
(a) Caspian
(b) Baikal
(c) Aral
(d) Balkhash

Solution: c.

See Image – Aral Sea in 1989 (left) and in 2014 (right).

“The Aral Sea was once the fourth-largest saline lake in the world with an area of approximately 68,000sqkm, stretching from Kazakhstan in the north to Uzbekistan in the south. But in the 1960s, when Soviet rulers diverted the course of the two rivers that fed it to develop cotton production in the region, the waters started to recede. The salinity levels also rose drastically, killing most of the fish that remained. Over the next 50 years, this terrible environmental disaster caused the once-magnificent Aral Sea to shrink to just 10% of its former size.”

2. Fishermen of Gujarat and Diu are of late forced to move deeper into the sea and risk entering Pakistani waters. What are some of the reasons for the same?

1. Increased reliance on motorised or mechanised boats.
2. Increased sea surface temperatures.
3. An ever-expanding fishing-vessel-fleet in the region, resulting in overcapacity.
4. Pollution along the coastal region.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 2, 3 and 4
(b) 1 and 4 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Solution: d.

This Hindu article is quite comprehensive, and providing extracts from it is insufficient here. If time permits, read it.

- Fisherfolk have had to go further into the sea to break even (mechanised boats mean greater financial inputs and so require greater fishing returns)...
- Scientists also attest to warming forcing fish further from the shore.
- “Concentration of industrial corridors like chemical and pharmaceutical units in Vapi and Ankleshwar, petrochemicals in Vadodara, refineries and power plants in Jamnagar, and power plants and ports in Kutch have rendered the sea coast highly polluted and that is directly affecting fishing.”...
- A major factor cited by the fishermen for the declining catch is an ever-expanding vessel fleet — 35,150 fishing vessels in all in Gujarat as of 2011 according to the figures provided by the State fisheries department, which has resulted in overcapacity with larger fishing fleets competing for the limited fisheries resource.
3. Consider the following statements:

**Assertion (A):** India’s marine catch is greater in waters off the West coast in comparison with that of the East coast.

**Reasons (R):** The continental shelf along the West coast in the Arabian Sea is larger than along the East coast in the Bay of Bengal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

“While the country has an 8,118-km-long coastline and an EEZ covering two million square kilometres, marine capture fisheries production is greater in waters off the west coast due to the large continental shelf in the Arabian Sea — 70 per cent of India’s marine catch comes from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa with cyclical swings.”


4. The centuries-old art of ‘Patam’ storytelling in Telangana is slowly fading away. Which of the following statements about this art is/are correct?

1. Some of the stories have emerged from the 12th century ‘Veera Shaiva’ movement propounded by Basava.
2. Painted scrolls are intrinsic to this art.
3. The narrations would mostly be tales of the mythological origin of the varna system.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

“....But now the sun is setting on Patam, the 900-year-old art of storytelling from this region. Once practised by thousands of artists from 12 sub-castes, the narrations would mostly be tales of the mythological origins of each of the parent caste groups, narrated with the aid of a Patam or painted scroll.”..... Dalit scholar Ashok Gurram from the University of Hyderabad says the art forms should be allowed to die their natural death, as they reinforce and justify existing caste and gender-based structural hierarchies. “Each of these caste stories or puranas tries to accommodate the parent caste in some mythology, and thereby justifies hierarchical caste relations. They are not mere art forms but a significant political message inseparable from the Varna system”.... “All researchers, however, agree that at least some of the stories have emerged from the 12th Century ‘Veera Shaiva’ movement propounded by Basava.”

http://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/swathi-vadlamudi-on-the-fading-art-of-patam-storytelling/article9220072.ece

5. With reference to Sanskrit plays from ancient India, ‘Pratijna Yougandaharayan’ and ‘Swapnavasavadatta’ are works attributed to

(a) Bhasa
(b) Kalidasa
(c) Ashvaghosha
(d) King Harshavardhana

Solution: a.

*Why is this relevant?*

One, many of Bhasa’s plays were discovered through Koodiyattam (Kutiyattam) plays – a form of Sanskrit theatre traditionally performed in the state of Kerala,
India. Next, ‘Mantrankam’ is the third act of Bhasa’s celebrated Sanskrit play Pratijna Yougandharayan, written sometime between 2nd and 3rd century AD, and the play has been performed as an annual offering at five Shiva temples in Kerala. But with temple funds drying up, and Koodiyattam itself in a state of decline, Mantrankam – a 41-day enactment – wound up in 1995. Finally, this year, backed by the Kuttiyattam Centre and the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the 41-day enactment was revived in the Peruvanam temple.

- **Bhasa** is one of the **earliest** and most celebrated Indian playwrights in Sanskrit.
- His works, notably *Svapnavasavadatta* and *Pratijnayaugandharayana*, were foundational to the **Sanskrit drama**.
- The plays of Bhāsa had been lost for centuries. He was known only from mention in other works like the famous text on poetics *Kavyamimamsa* written during 880–920 AD by Rajashekhara a famous poet, dramatist and critic. In the Kavyamimamsa, he attributes the play Svapnavasavadatta to Bhāsa.
- **Bhāsa does not follow all the dictates of the Natya Shastra**. This has been taken as a proof of their antiquity; no post-Kālidāsa play has been found to break the rules of the Natya Shastra’s. Bhāsa portrayed battle scenes and killings on the stage, something which is frowned upon in the Natyashastra.
- The majority of his dramas are ingenious adaptations on themes of heroism and romantic love borrowed from India’s two great epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. His influence is seen in the works of the great 5th-century dramatist Kālidāsa, who consciously imitated and improved upon some of Bhāsa’s literary motifs.

Sources: Wikipedia; Britannica; Improvisation: The Hindu;

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6. ‘**Kutiyattam**’, considered one of the oldest living theatrical traditions, represents a synthesis of Sanskrit classicism. A single performance may last up to 40 days. This form of Sanskrit theatre has traditionally been performed in

(a) Kerala  
(b) Tamil Nadu  
(c) Karnataka  
(d) Andhra Pradesh

**Solution:** a.

- It is one of the oldest living **theatrical** traditions.  
- Originating more than 2,000 years ago, it represents a synthesis of **Sanskrit classicism** and reflects the local traditions of **Kerala**.  
- **Neta abhinaya** (eye expression) and **hasta abhinaya** (the language of gestures) are prominent.  
- A single act may take days to perform and a complete performance may last up to 40 days.  
- It is officially recognised by UNESCO as a **Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity**.

http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?s=films_details&pg=33&id=1746

**Source:** The Hindu;

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7. Consider the following statements:

1. The Montreal Protocol deals only with phasing down of substances that deplete the ozone layer.
2. Unlike the Montreal Protocol, in which each of the signatories is equally responsible for eliminating the banned chemicals, the Kyoto Protocol puts “differentiated responsibilities” on developed and developing countries.

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.

One hundred and seven countries came to an agreement (adoption of an amendment to the 1989 Montreal Protocol) in Kigali, Rwanda, on Saturday, to substantially phase out a potent greenhouse gas (HFCs – which have a zero ozone depleting potential) by 2045 and move to prevent a potential 0.5 C rise in global temperature by 2050.

- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are a family of gases that are largely used in refrigerants in home and car airconditioners. They, however, substantially
worsen global warming. On late Friday, India, China, the United States and Europe agreed on a timeline to reduce the use of HFC by 85% by 2045.

- The details of the agreement are yet to be made public and India’s Environment Ministry is yet to detail India’s road map for achieving this goal.
- With respect to statement 2, according to Britannica, “The CBDR...was retroactively incorporated into the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol on substances that destroy the ozone layer. Practically, it entails the deferral of developing countries’ compliance with the objectives of these environmental conventions.” Additionally, according to the Ozone Secretariat (Click Here) under the UNEP, “The Montreal Protocol embodies key guiding principles which are now recognized to be the cornerstones of sustainable development including: (i) the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities”.


8. With reference to the amendment to the Montreal Protocol at Kigali, Rwanda, consider the following statements:

1. Developed countries will start to phase down Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 2019.
2. Developing countries will all freeze HFCs consumption levels in 2024 but some countries such as India will begin reduction of its usage only in 2028.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

The second statement means, all developing countries have accepted 2024 as the year in which HFCs consumption levels will peak, which is not true. India and some other nations will freeze HFCs consumption levels only in 2028. That is, they will be permitted to not impose any limits on rise in consumption of HFCs till 2028. The second part of the statement though is correct (India beginning reduction of HFCs usage in 2028).

- Under the compromise stitched up, developed countries will start to phase down the climate impacting family of refrigerant gases called HFCs by 2019.
- Most developing countries, including China, will subsequently follow with a freeze of HFCs consumption levels in 2024 and subsequently reduce the usage.
- Some countries, including India, bargained to get the peak consumption year pegged to 2028, gaining an four extra years.
- India was not able to bargain for the 2030 as the freeze year and had to settle for 2028. The consequence, in terms of costs to the Indian industry and economy, would be much higher than what the two year difference suggests.
- “By 2028, many of the patents on costly alternatives are to expire. So, we wanted 2030 to be the freeze year. The two years in between would have given us the chance to figure out cheaper new technological options rather than their patented technologies that would have taken root by 2028”.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/kigali-amendment-to-montreal-protocol-cool-the-world/article9226943.ece

9. The world’s largest ship-breaking yard is found in

(a) Gadani, Pakistan
(b) Alang, India
(c) Aliaga, Turkey
(d) Bassein, Myanmar

Solution: b.

- Alang, 185 miles (298 kilometers) northwest of Bombay, serves as the final stop for about half of the world’s maritime vessels (this figure varies – the Hindu in today’s article mentions 35%).
10. The Basel Convention is

(a) An international treaty that was designed to reduce the movements of hazardous waste between nations.

(b) An international convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships.

(c) The International Labour Organisation’s extensive norms to improve the working and environmental conditions at many of the world’s hazardous occupational sites.

(d) A set of broad supervisory standards formulated by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, which mainly focuses on risks to banks and the financial system.

Solution: a.

“Maersk is helping local ship breakers to achieve high standards as per the International Maritime Organisation and Hong Kong Convention (HKC) which set occupational health and safety standards for workers.”

- The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 (the Hong Kong Convention) is aimed at ensuring that ships, when being recycled after reaching the end of their operational lives, do not

11. The Kepler and K2 missions of NASA have identified thousands of exoplanet candidates. Apart from theoretical work, which of the following form(s) a part of India’s efforts in looking out for exoplanets?

1. Astrosat
2. PARAS-1 Spectrograph, Mount Abu Infrared Observatory
3. Indian Astronomical Observatory, Hanle

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 Only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 Only
(d) 2 and 3 only
Solution: b.

“Indian efforts in studying both theory and observations are sizeable, from looking out for exoplanets in the Mount Abu Infrared Observatory and through Astrosat, to theoretical work on evolution of the solar system and methods of detecting exomoons, as was evidenced by the presentations in the IIA-ISAC National Symposium on Exoplanets, held in Kodaikanal, earlier this month.”

“Much discussed were the Indian facilities, especially, the PARAS-1 spectrograph, which is part of the Mount Abu Infrared Observatory, focussed on detecting exoplanets. Located at an altitude of about 1,700 m, this spectrograph enjoys around 220 cloudless nights each year. This facility is soon to be upgraded, and PARAS-2, as it is known, is expected to see first light in 2020.”

“The first dedicated program to search for exoplanets in India is called PARAS which stands for PRL (Physical Research Labouratory) Advanced Radial-velocity All-sky Search.”

1. The ‘Ufa Declaration’, ‘Fortaleza Declaration’ and ‘Goa Declaration’ are all associated with
   (a) BIMSTEC
   (b) BBIN
   (c) SAARC
   (d) BRICS

   Solution: d.
   Self-explanatory. [Link]

2. Which of the following nations are members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral
   Technical and Economic Cooperation as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations?
   1. Sri Lanka
   2. Myanmar
   3. Bangladesh
   4. Maldives
   5. Thailand

   Select the correct answer using the code given below:
   (a) 1 and 3 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) 2 and 5 only
   (d) 1, 3 and 4

   Solution: b.

3. The S-400 air defence systems, Talwar-class stealth frigates, and Kamov-226T utility
   helicopters are all being procured by India from
   (a) United States of America
   (b) France
   (c) Russia
   (d) Israel

   Solution: c.
   Source: 18th October, The Hindu;

4. The ‘INS Arihant’, formally commissioned recently by the Indian Navy, is
   (a) An indigenously built nuclear-powered ballistic submarine.
   (b) An indigenously built aircraft carrier.
(c) The only amphibious transport vehicle currently in service.

(d) A superior stealth-tech diesel electric submarine.

Solution: a.

“India has quietly completed its nuclear triad by inducting the indigenously built strategic nuclear submarine INS Arihant into service. Arihant is capable of carrying nuclear tipped ballistic missiles, the class referred to as Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear (SSBN). SSBNs are designed to prowl the deep ocean waters carrying nuclear weapons and provide a nation with an assured second strike capability — the capability to strike back after being hit by nuclear weapons first. Second strike capability is particularly important for India as it had committed to a ‘No-First-Use’ policy as part of its nuclear doctrine.”

http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/now-india-has-a-nuclear-triad/article9231307.ece

6. India’s first ‘National Tribal Carnival’ is expected to promote a sense of inclusiveness among the tribals. The carnival will be hosted at

(a) Kohima
(b) Ranchi
(c) Nagpur
(d) Delhi

Solution: d.

“Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate First National Tribal Carnival in Delhi on October 25, 2016. Shri Oram said the carnival will showcase and promote various facets of tribal culture on a large scale. The Minister said, “The underlying idea is to preserve and promote various facets of the tribal life relating to culture, tradition, customs and their skills and to expose it to the general public with a view to utilizing the potential for overall holistic development of the Scheduled Tribes.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151744

NOTES
HIGHLIGHTS

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- Students who subscribed our test series last year have done exceptionally well in Prelims - 2015 and 2016. If you solve all our tests, be sure of clearing Prelims hurdle.
1. An inaugural BRICS Under-17 tournament, hosted by India, recently ended. This tournament was associated with the sport of
(a) Football 
(b) Cricket
(c) Hockey
(d) Baseball

Solution: a.
“Brazil has lifted the 1st BRICS U-17 Football Tournament 2016 held at Goa. In the Finals they defeated South Africa 5-1.”
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151691

2. The prime objective of the ‘Sagarmala project’ is to
(a) Aid the construction of world-class port facilities in Indian Ocean littoral nations.
(b) Develop naval bases in Indian Ocean littoral nations.
(c) Promote port-led direct and indirect development in India.
(d) Counter China’s rising geo-political prominence in India’s neighbourhood.

Solution: c.
“The prime objective of the Sagarmala project is to promote port-led direct and indirect development and to provide infrastructure to transport goods to and from ports quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively. Therefore, the Sagarmala Project shall, inter alia, aim to develop access to new development regions with intermodal solutions and promotion of the optimum modal split, enhanced connectivity with main economic centres and beyond through expansion of rail, inland water, coastal and road services.”


3. ‘Mission 11 Million’ refers to
(a) A programme to engage more than 11 million children in activities relating to football, initiated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in coordination with FIFA.
(b) A project to establish world-class sports infrastructure across Tier-II and Tier-III cities with a primary objective to facilitate full-fledged training of 11 million sportsmen and women by 2025.
(c) A target-based initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to produce 11 million qualified teachers by 2019.
(d) The Election Commission of India’s outreach programme to rid the electoral rolls of an estimated 11 million bogus voters before the 2019 general election.

Solution: a.
“The enthusiasm evoked by the scintillating display of skills” at the ten-day BRICS tournament “will be an inspiration for the youth of the country and spur India’s impetus towards ‘Khelo India’ and ‘Mission 11 Million’.”

‘Mission 11 Million’ programme has been formulated and will be launched in coordination with FIFA in about 30 cities across the country. The letter said, the primary objective of the programme is to engage more than 11 million children in activities relating to football. The programme is likely to be launched in October, 2016.

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151691

Primary Source: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=145740
4. The ‘State of Food and Agriculture’ report is an annual publication issued by
   (a) The United Nations World Food Programme
   (b) International Fund for Agriculture Fund for Development
   (c) Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
   (d) Biodiversity International

   Solution: c.

   “A report by the Food and Agriculture Organization said agriculture accounted for about a fifth of emissions, which it said needed to be reduced. The State of Food & Agriculture 2016 report said “business as usual” would leave millions at risk from hunger.”


5. The third round of deliberations in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council ended recently. The process, formation and functioning of the GST Council has been approved by which authority?
   (a) The Parliament
   (b) The Union Cabinet
   (c) Ministry of Finance
   (d) The President

   Solution: b.

   As per the amended Constitution, the President, within 60 days of the commencement of Article 279A (1), shall constitute the GST Council. But regarding the approval for its process, formation and functioning, it is the Union Cabinet which is responsible.

   Improvisation:
   http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/centre-moots-4-gst-slabs/article9235889.ece

   Primary Source: Vikaspedia: Page 2, Current Affairs September 2016;

6. India’s first ‘island district’ is located in which state?
   (a) Assam
   (b) Manipur
   (c) Arunachal Pradesh
   (d) Bihar

   Solution: a.

   Mājuli or Majoli is the biggest river island in the world, and is in the Brahmaputra River, Assam, India.
   • It was recently was made a separate district.
   • On September 1st, 2016, it replaced Brazil’s ‘Marajo’ to become the world’s largest river island in the Guinness Book of World Records.

   Though Andaman and Nicobar islands are divided into three districts and Lakshadweep islands is one district, the reference to Majuli being India’s first ‘island district’ most likely has to do with the fact that Majuli is a single island, unlike the other two chains of islands.

   Source: http://vikaspedia.in/education/current-affairs/sep_2016-national-ca

7. The ‘Durand Cup’ is associated with which sport?
   (a) Hockey
   (b) Cricket
   (c) Football
   (d) Kabaddi

   Solution: c.

   A slightly modified question on the Durand Cup was posted here in August.

   Durand Cup is a prestigious football tournament conducted in the country. It was instituted in 1888 at Shimla by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand. It is the oldest tournament in Asia and third oldest in the world after Football Association Cup of England and Scotland Football Association Cup. The Defence Services have been associated in organizing Durand Football Tournament right from its inception.
8. The government’s plan to boost regional air connectivity could hit a legal “air pocket” as leading domestic airlines have opposed which proposal under the plan?

(a) The ‘expectation’ to commit 50 percent of the seats on Regional Air Connectivity Scheme flights to be sold at the specified airfare cap.

(b) Charging a levy on flights on major routes in order to fund subsidies for regional flights.

(c) The basis for setting the upper limit of the fare – which is at present based on duration of the flight.

(d) Charging a levy, in the nature of a tax, by modifying the Aircraft Rules of 1937 and not by amending the Aircraft Act of 1934.

Solution: d.

“As a part of its proposed regional connectivity scheme, the Union Civil Aviation Ministry had mooted amendments to the Aircraft Rules of 1937 in August to set up a regional connectivity fund to subsidise the losses of airlines that wanted to fly on regional routes. The fund was proposed to be financed by a levy on domestic flights along with contribution from states and credit proceeds from other sources.”

“A levy in the nature of tax can only be levied having regard to the provisions contained in the Article 265 of the Constitution of India i.e. by authority of law,” the FIA said in a letter to the ministry. “The draft rules as published are therefore ultra vires the Constitution of India and would be illegal.” The airlines said imposition of a regional connectivity levy would require amendment to the Aircraft Act, 1934 and not the rule and until then the draft rules would be “beyond the authority of law and in contravention to the Constitution of India.”
1. The town of ‘Tamu’ in Myanmar is located closest to which Indian state on the India-Myanmar border?

(a) Arunachal Pradesh  
(b) Nagaland  
(c) Mizoram  
(d) Manipur

Solution: d.

The same question was posted here in August. “We have offered to scale up power supply from Moreh in Manipur to Tamu in Myanmar.”

“India, Myanmar to ‘stay connected’”, The Hindu, 20th October, 2016

2. Which of the following is **not** a part of the Indian Nuclear Triad?

(a) Agni series of missiles  
(b) Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter planes  
(c) Kalvari series of missiles  
(d) INS Arihant

Solution: c.

“Kalvari” is a class of submarines being built in India and was in the news recently.


3. The first ever Global Conference on Voter Education titled “Voter Education for Inclusive, Informed and Ethical Participation” is being organised by the Election Commission of India in association with the

(a) Association for Democratic Reforms  
(b) United Nations Development Programme  
(c) Centre for the Study of Developing Societies  
(d) World Constitution and Parliament Association

Solution: b.

“The first ever Global Conference on Voter Education titled “Voter Education for Inclusive, Informed and Ethical Participation” is being organized by the Election Commission of India in association with UNDP from 19th to 21st October, 2016 at New Delhi. The main purpose of the conference is to learn from the experiences of Election Management Bodies”.

Primary Source: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151732


4. The recommendation, “A permanent Inter-State Council called the Inter-Governmental Council should be set up under Article 263”, was made by

(a) Punchhi Commission  
(b) The Second Administrative Reforms Commission  
(c) Sarkaria Commission  
(d) P V Rajamannar Committee

Solution: a.

5. ‘Schiaparelli’ – an entry, descent and landing demonstrator module – is a vehicle destined for Mars. It is a project by

(a) The European Space Agency (ESA) and Russia

(b) NASA and the ESA

(c) China

(d) Russia and Japan

Solution: a.

“There are growing fears a European probe that attempted to land on Mars on Wednesday has been lost. Tracking of the Schiaparelli robot’s radio signals was dropped less than a minute before it was expected to touch down on the Red Planet’s surface.”

- The Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) satellite is really the key part of the mission formally called ExoMars 2016 – a joint endeavour with the Russian space agency (Roscosmos).
- The TGO is going to spend the coming years studying the behaviour of gases such as methane, water vapour and nitrogen dioxide in the Red Planet’s atmosphere.
- “…officials here have underlined the fact that Schiaparelli was always viewed within the agency as a technology demonstrator – a project to give Europe the learning experience and the confidence to go ahead and land a more ambitious six-wheeled rover on Mars in 2021.”

1. The term ‘Skimming’, sometimes seen in the news with regard to card transactions, refers to

(a) An electronic method of capturing a victim’s card information with the help of an electronic ‘skimmer’ device.

(b) Usage of a ‘sticker’ device in ATM machines which causes non-dispensation of full amount sought to be withdrawn.

(c) A technique which distorts the readout of the magnetic strip by altering the speed or motion of the card as it is swiped, making any information copied from the card unreadable.

(d) The process of ATMs seeking identity proofs of persons withdrawing cash to enhance security of the individual’s account and money therein.

Solution: a. The same question was posted here in August.

“Skimming: An electronic method of capturing a victim’s personal information used by identity thieves. The skimmer is a small device that scans a credit card and stores the information contained in the magnetic strip. Skimming can take place during a legitimate transaction at a business.”

“Skimming can occur easily in a restaurant because your card is taken away when the bill is being settled. If your server is a skimming identity thief, he or she will, before giving the card back to you, scan the credit card with a hand-held electronic device, which takes only seconds. The electronically captured information is then used to by the thief or sold to other criminals.”

http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/multiple-banks-hit-3-2-million-debit-cards-compromised-how-it-happened-what-happens-now-3094108/

2. The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare had declared India to be free from a disease, which, however resurfaced recently at the Delhi Zoo. The disease being referred to here is

(a) Salmonellosis

(b) Black Quarter

(c) Rinder Pest

(d) Bird Flu

Solution: d.

“Just over a month after India declared itself free of Avian Influenza (H5N1), the Delhi Zoo and Deer Park in South Delhi have been shut following the deaths of several “local migratory” water birds.”

- Commonly known as bird flu, the disease usually spreads from bird to bird but may sometimes spread from birds to humans.
- Though human to human transmission — which takes place mostly after intimate and constant physical contact — is rare, the infection is virulent and, in an estimated 60% of cases, fatal.
- India is one of 6 nations in which the disease keeps surfacing among birds — during the last outbreak among poultry in Karnataka this May, 33,000 birds had to be culled.
- There is no vaccine against H5N1.
- According to WHO, some avian influenza viruses such as A(H5N1) and A(H7N9) “have caused serious infections in people”, with “the majority of human cases... (being) “associated with direct or indirect contact with infected live or dead poultry”. There is no evidence that the disease spreads to people through properly cooked food, even though “controlling the disease in animals is the first step in decreasing risks to humans”, says WHO.

3. With reference to the ‘surprise’ outcome of certain referendums recently held, consider the following statements:

1. Majority of the electorate – more than 50 percent – in the Brexit referendum voted.
2. Majority of the electorate – more than 50 percent – did not participate in the referendum called by the Colombian government to ratify the accord with the FARC rebels.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

Not a question that would appear in preliminaries. It is a question framed with a mains perspective.

- The Brexit referendum, on whether Britain should stay in the European Union, concluded on June 23 with 52 per cent (of 72.2 per cent of the electorate that turned out) voting to “Leave”. The October 2 referendum called by the Colombian government to ratify the accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) resulted in a “No” vote favoured by 50.3 per cent of the less than 38 per cent of the electorate that turned out.
- With reference to the Colombian referendum, “...there should have been a minimum bar on participation to decide upon the ratification. With only 38 per cent of the electorate taking part, the referendum’s outcome should not have been binding in the first place.”
- “Second, the need is for identifying when and how referendums are used in a representative democracy and not to question their efficacy..... Referendums can lead to majoritarian and not just majority outcomes and therefore constitutional safeguards on the kinds of Bills and Acts that can be brought up for voting are a must. A lot of thought has to go into creating the mechanisms that allow for referendums.”

4. Consider the following statements:

1. Whereas the Inter-State Council is a constitutional body, the Zonal Councils are statutory.
2. The home minister of the Central Government is the common chairman of all the zonal councils.
3. Our country is divided into five zonal councils.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

All statements are correct. Zonal councils have been established by the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, whereas Article 263 of the Indian Constitution contemplates the establishment of an Inter-State Council to effect coordination between the states and between Centre and States.

Chapter 15, Inter-State Relations, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151825

5. The Union Cabinet recently approved some changes related to the presentation of the Union Budget 2017-18. These changes include:

1. Merger of Railway Budget with the General Budget.
2. Advancement of Budget presentation.
3. Merger of the Plan and Non-Plan classification.
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: d.

- **Merger of Railway Budget with the General Budget:** The Railway Budget will be merged with the Union Budget, and henceforth only one Budget will be presented.
- **Advancement of Budget presentation:** Currently, the Union Budget is presented on the last day of February. This date would be advanced to allow for the budget related legislative business (such as approval for the ministry-wise demands for grants and passage of the Finance Bill) to be completed before the commencement of the financial year on April 1.
- **Merger of the Plan and Non-Plan classification:** Expenditure of the government is currently classified under Plan and Non-Plan expenditure. This classification will be removed, and the expenditure will be classified only under the revenue and capital heads.

The Ministry of Finance recently released a report on ‘Incentivising Pulses Production through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and related policies’. What are some of the key observations and recommendations of the report?

1. The domestic production of pulses has to grow at 13 percent per year to meet the shortfall in availability, as opposed to the current growth of 8 percent.

2. Stock limits and export bans set for pulses should be lifted in order to prevent a decline in prices of pulses.

3. The government should aim to create a new institutional arrangement for pulses which would be allowed to engage in buying, stocking, warehousing, and trading operations for other crops too.
1. Which of the following statements with reference to Zonal Councils in India is not correct?

(a) The state of Sikkim is not a part of the Eastern Zonal Council.
(b) West Bengal participates in meetings of the Eastern Zonal Council as well as the North-Eastern Council.
(c) The home minister of Central Government is the common chairman of all zonal councils.
(d) Zonal Councils have been established by an Act of the Parliament.

Solution: b.

West Bengal does not participate in meetings of the North Eastern Council.

“The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972. The State of Sikkim has also been included in the North Eastern Council vide North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002 notified on 23rd December, 2002."

http://mha.nic.in/zonal_council

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151862

2. Who was India’s Prime Minister when the Economic Reforms of 1991 were introduced?

(a) Atal Bihari Vajpayee
(b) V.P. Singh
(c) Chandra Shekhar Singh
(d) P.V. Narasimha Rao

Solution: d.

“On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the economic liberalisation programme, many of the accounts looking back have tended to work at placing the Prime Minister at the time, P.V. Narasimha Rao, at the centre of the rewriting of economic policy. Is this historically valid?”


3. India is opposed to a global pact for curbing aviation emissions proposed by the United Nations’ International Civil Aviation Organisation in Montreal recently. What is the reason for India’s dissent?

(a) Non-alignment of the provisions to the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) principle.
(b) Signing the agreement would force all airlines flying international routes to begin absolute reduction in emissions by 2020.
(c) The proposed measures are not aligned with the relevant provisions of the Paris Agreement.
(d) Both a and c.

Solution: d.

- India has been vocal in its opposition to measures that would increase costs. The proposed global market-based measures (GMBM) by ICAO must be aligned with the relevant provisions of the Paris Agreement, it has demanded with some other emerging countries, including Brazil and South Africa.
- These provisions relate to the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) principle, which ask the rich nations to cut emission on priority because they have been historically bigger polluters.
- The 15-year agreement will not force airlines to cut pollution. Instead, companies will compensate for emissions growth from 2020 by buying credits that back renewable energy development, forest preservation and other similar measures. (Such) an offset programme....could impose an economic burden on developing countries trying to expand their aviation sectors.
4. Of the following list of cities belonging to the Indus Valley Civilisation, which one(s) fall within the boundaries of the present state of Gujarat?

1. Lothal
2. Surkotada
3. Dholavira

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: d.

5. The national nodal agency for cyber security in India is

(a) Indian Computer Emergency Response Team under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
(b) The National Intelligence Grid under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
(c) National Cyber Security Division under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.
(d) The National Cyber Security Operations Centre under the Ministry of Defence.

Solution: a.

“The Centre’s cyber security arm has issued a fresh warning to all banks cautioning them that cyber criminals from Pakistan may target their information infrastructure, The Hindu has learnt. The alert issued on October 7, came from the Computer Emergency Response Team-India (CERT-In), the nodal agency under the Ministry of Electronics and IT.”

http://www.cert-in.org.in

Improvisation:
6. ‘UDAN’, recently seen in the news, is a scheme launched by the Government of India. This scheme is

(a) A scholarship instituted to award meritorious students belonging to Economically Weaker Sections among the upper castes in the state of Gujarat.

(b) The Railway Ministry’s efforts to increase the average train speed along the existing tracks.

(c) The Civil Aviation Ministry’s Regional Connectivity Scheme.

(d) A collaboration of the Railways Ministry and the Environment Ministry aimed at reducing road transport’s share in freight traffic and its concomitant increase in railway’s share.

Solution: c.

“The Ministry of Civil Aviation took a major step today towards making flying a reality for the small town common man. The Civil Aviation Minister Shri P Ashok Gajapathi Raju launched the Ministry’s much awaited Regional Connectivity Scheme “UDAN” (“Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik”) in New Delhi today. UDAN is an innovative scheme to develop the regional aviation market. It is a market-based mechanism in which airlines bid for seat subsidies. This first-of-its-kind scheme globally will create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes so that flying becomes affordable to the common man even in small towns.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151850

7. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change recently invited public comments on an expert sub-committee report on “Assessment of Food and Environmental Safety for Environmental Release of…” which Genetically Engineered crop?

(a) Mustard

(b) Brinjal

(c) Potato

(d) Corn

Solution: a.

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has invited public comments on an expert sub-committee report on “Assessment of Food and Environmental Safety for Environmental Release of Genetically Engineered Mustard”. The last date for submission of comments is October 5, 2016.
- The sub-committee was constituted by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The GEAC is responsible for the approval of proposals related to release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment, including conducting field trials. Field trials refer to a controlled release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment (e.g., through reproductive isolation and site monitoring).

Page 5, PRS MPR – September 2016;
1. This festival occurs once in 12 years, and is known as the “Kumbh of the Himalayas”. It is a celebration of the birth of the scholar-saint ‘Naropa’, head of Buddhism’s Drukpa or ‘dragon’ lineage. Where is the ‘Naropa festival’ celebrated?

(a) Tawang
(b) Ladakh
(c) Namdroling
(d) Bylakupe

Solution: b.

“Being the Year of the Monkey that comes once in 12 years, preparations for this year’s Naropa celebrations had been underway for over a year. This year marked the millennial birth anniversary of the scholar-saint Naropa, head of Buddhism’s Drukpa or ‘dragon’ lineage."


2. Forces led by Mir Jafar, one of Sirajuddaulah’s commanders, never fought the battle. The result was that the English East India Company won the battle. Which ‘battle’ is being referred to here?

(a) Battle of Buxar
(b) Battle of Wandiwash
(c) Battle of Plassey
(d) Third Battle of Panipat

Solution: c.

“Not so long ago, in the mid-18th century, Mir Jafar, commander-in-chief of the Nawab of Bengal, conspired with the British to overthrow the Nawab.”

Page 13, Our Pasts III Part 1, Class 8

Improvisation:

3. The ‘Radcliffe Line’, named after its architect – Sir Cyril Radcliffe – today serves as the

(a) India-Pakistan border
(b) India-China border
(c) India-Bangladesh border
(d) Both a and c

Solution: d.

“Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who’d never travelled east of Paris, was assigned the mammoth task.” … The Border Commission, chaired by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, demarcated the boundary line (‘Radcliffe Line’) between India and Pakistan (both – West and East Pakistan [Bangladesh today]).


Improvisation:

4. India recently beat Iran in the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup final. Where was the world cup held?

(a) India
(b) Iran
(c) South Korea
(d) Thailand

Solution: a.

It was hosted by Ahmedabad.


5. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City / Port in the news recently</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mosul</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Calais</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aleppo</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Solution: d.

- Mosul – Iraq;
- Calais – France;
- Aleppo – Syria;

The Hindu, World Page, 23rd October;

6. With reference to India’s ‘National Physical Laboratory’, consider the following statements:

1. It is the keeper of measurement standards such as the kilogram, second and the centimetre.

2. It is a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) organisation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“The National Physical Laboratory, a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research organisation, best known for the being the repository of physical standards such as the kilogram, second and the centimetre, has set up instruments in Palampur that will measure atmospheric levels of a wide range of pollutants including ozone, nitrous oxides, ammonia and particulate matter.”


7. With reference to Ancient India, what was common to ‘Sreni’, ‘Kulani’ and ‘Puga’?

(a) They all were village assemblies.
(b) All refer to trade guilds.
(c) These bodies each had mechanisms to settle disputes between parties.
(d) They were fairs organised at different times of the year which served as the congregation area for members of 84 villages in which tributes also were made to the chief.

Solution: c.

“Resolution of disputes through arbitration is not new to us. In ancient India, there were several mechanisms for settlement of disputes between the parties. These included the Kulani, or village council; Sreni, or corporation; and Puga, or assembly. Likewise, commercial matters were decided by Mahajans and Chambers.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151887

8. Consider the following statements:

1. The World Bank does not invest in coal and associated technologies.

2. Super critical and ultra super critical technology-based coal plants substantially reduce carbon dioxide emissions and particulate matter emissions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

By not financing coal projects, the World Bank is actually pushing countries to use inefficient technologies leading to higher emissions, Mr. Sporton told The Hindu. “The World Bank has taken a policy view that they don’t want
to finance coal,” Mr. Sporton said in an interview. “But we have seen evidence from some countries where, because the World Bank does not invest in coal and so does not invest in super critical and ultra super critical plants, these countries invested in sub-critical plants, which have much higher CO2 and particulate matter emissions. Super critical and ultra super critical (USC) plants substantially reduce carbon dioxide emissions and virtually eliminate particulate matter emissions, Mr. Sporton added, saying that India must invest in them despite their higher up-front cost.

http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/world-bank-must-aid-countries-to-manage-shift-away-from-coal/article9258696.ece

9. ‘Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan’ is a national campaign to

(a) Provide the homeless and destitute persons with skill training and suitable sources of livelihood.

(b) Make available the fundamental rights of libertarian character to all women, regardless of their religious affiliations.

(c) Achieve universal accessibility that will enable persons with disabilities to live independently.

(d) Promote sustainable livelihoods of the urban poor by facilitating easy access to low-cost finance.

Solution: c.

“The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has conceptualised the “Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)” as a nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility that will enable persons with disabilities to gain access for equal opportunity and live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society. The campaign targets at enhancing the accessibility of built environment, transport system and Information & communication eco-System.”

http://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/differently-abled-welfare/schemes-programmes/accessible-india-campaign

Improvisation:

10. Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development that recently took place. In this context, consider the following statements:

1. Habitat III witnessed the adoption of the ‘Habitat Agenda of Istanbul’.

2. This UN Conference is a bi-decennial event.

3. Sustainable Development Goal 11 is associated with making urban spaces safe and sustainable.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Solution: b.

SDG 11 was mentioned in the Hindu Editorial (link provided below).

- Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to take place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 – 20 October 2016.
- In Resolution 66/207 and in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the Habitat III Conference to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization, to focus on the implementation of a New Urban Agenda, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996.
- “UN Habitat plans to review country-level progress on its New Urban Agenda in Kuala Lumpur in 2018. India’s performance on improving the quality of life in its cities will be watched.”

https://habitat3.org/about
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/making-cities-inclusive/article9258735.ece
11. In the context of India’s bid to become a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The NSG is a body that was set up in response to India’s Pokhran-II test.
2. India is neither a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
3. The New Agenda Coalition, of which India is not a member, seeks to relax the preconditions for admission into the NSG.

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 only

Solution: c.

A similar question was earlier posted here.

- The NSG was set up in response to India’s Pokhran-I (not Pokhran-II) test.
- Today, the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) is a ministerial-level group of states within the framework of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) focused on building international consensus to make progress on nuclear disarmament, as legally called for in the Nonproliferation Treaty.
- “There are still four or five countries that have not budged on their stand since June, and New Zealand is among those,” a western diplomat tracking the negotiations told The Hindu, indicating that apart from China, countries such as Ireland, Austria, New Zealand and members of the ‘New Agenda for coalition’ that takes a hard line on the NPT, are still the sticking point.

http://thediplomat.com/2015/02/india-and-the-nuclear-suppliers-group/

Improvisation:  
http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/john-kerrys-india-visit-to-discuss-nsg/article9258986.ece

12. India’s Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) membership bid was recently thwarted. Which among the following list of nations from the NSG are demanding a set criteria for non-signatories of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which seek to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group?

1. Ireland  
2. New Zealand  
3. China  
4. Pakistan

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

Trick question. Pakistan is not a member of the NSG. The question states, “Which among the following list of nations from the NSG are demanding a set criteria........”.

http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/john-kerrys-india-visit-to-discuss-nsg/article9258986.ece
1. What are some of the associated issues with reference to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016?

1. It may be violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.

2. The bill provides for cancellation of Overseas Citizen of India registration for violation of any law, for instance, parking a vehicle in a no parking zone.

3. Some provisions of this bill have been placed under the prohibited categories of the RTI Act, 2005.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

Question framed from a mains perspective.

- **Article 14** guarantees equality to all persons, citizens and foreigners. It only permits laws to differentiate between groups of people if the rationale for doing so serves a reasonable purpose. The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill does not explain the rationale behind differentiating between illegal migrants on the basis of the religion they belong to.

- Under the 1955 Act, an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder’s registration may be cancelled if he violates a law for which he is: (i) sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more, and (ii) within five years of his OCI registration. The Bill adds another ground for cancelling OCI registration, which is violation of any law of the country by an OCI. This means that even offences with: (i) lesser penalties, or (ii) which have been committed after five years of registration could be covered under the Bill. This makes the earlier provision redundant.

2. Several groups in Assam have been protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016. What is the basis for their protest?

(a) It violates the Assam Accord of 1985.
(b) Unlike before, some groups of illegal migrants under the bill will now not be imprisoned or deported.
(c) The population of illegal migrants in Dispur and Guwahati has surpassed that of Indian citizens.
(d) None of the above.

Solution: a.

Once again, not a question for prelims. The **Assam Accord of 1985** marked the end of a six-year-long anti-foreigners agitation. The protesting groups in Assam against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill argue that the Bill contradicts the terms of the Assam accord.

3. Junko Tabei was the first woman to scale the summit of Mount Everest. What other achievement is she known for?

(a) She was the first woman to ascend the Seven Summits by climbing the highest peak on every continent.
(b) She led the expedition which found and recovered George Mallory’s body from the Everest.

Solution: (a) She was the first woman to ascend the Seven Summits by climbing the highest peak on every continent.
(c) She first highlighted the plight of the Snow Leopard and incessantly fought for its protection in the international fora.

(d) She was a human rights activist who highlighted the plight of inmates at the United States’ Guantanamo Bay prison.

Solution: a.

“To be out among the women who resolved to break through the ice ceiling of mountaineering. Apart from Everest, she was the first woman to scale all Seven Summits – the tallest point in each continent…”


4. ‘To prohibit the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health’ is a provision made by which article of the Constitution?

(a) Article 44
(b) Article 46
(c) Article 47
(d) Article 48

Solution: c.

Chapter 8, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

Improvisation:

http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/bihar-alcohol-liquor-prohibition-3101130/

5. Sports infrastructure was recently included in the harmonised master list of infrastructure sub-sectors. This master list consists of which of the following as ‘core sectors’?

1. Water and Sanitation
2. Communication
3. Social and commercial infrastructure
4. Transport
5. Energy
6. Water and sanitation
7. Communication
8. Social and commercial infrastructure

Solution: d.

- The Ministry of Finance has included sports infrastructure in the harmonized master list of infrastructure sub-sectors. This list consists of five core sectors: (i) transport, (ii) energy, (iii) water and sanitation, (iv) communication, and (v) social and commercial infrastructure. Sports has been included as a subsector under social and commercial infrastructure. This inclusion pertains to provision of sports stadia and infrastructure for academies involved in training and research in sporting activities.
- This status makes the sports sector eligible for obtaining long term financial support from banks and other financial institutions at par with other infrastructure projects.

6. With reference to the report on reviewing the impact of social service obligations by Indian Railways released by NITI Aayog, consider the following statements:

1. Inefficiency in the railways’ cost structure too is a significant contributor to losses in its passenger service business.
2. The higher cost of the freight segment – earnings from which cross subsidises low passenger fares – is eventually passed on to the common public.
Which of the statements given above is/are observations made by the report?

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

Solution: c.

- **Other reasons for losses**: The report noted that while lower tariffs and concessions contribute substantially to losses in passenger business, they are not the only factors. Inefficiency in Railways’ cost structure also significantly contributes to the losses in passenger service business. For example, the report noted that while Railway fares for AC passenger services are higher than similar bus services, fares for second class services are lower than similar bus fares. Therefore, Railways can price tariff as per the prevalent market rates. However, it also noted that in a competitive market where the demand for transport is elastic, Railways can only increase fares up to a certain limit depending on competition. It recommended that tariff increase must not be the only mechanism to address such social costs.

- **Freight Business**: Railways ends up using profits from its freight business to provide for losses of the passenger segment, and also to manage its overall financial situation. The higher cost of freight segment is eventually passed on to the common public in the form of increased costs of electricity, cement, steel, etc. It recommended that the measures to address social costs of passenger service business should also consider ways to rationalize goods tariff distortions.

Page 6, PRS MPR – September 2016

1. The ‘Ease of Doing Business’ reports were introduced in 2004, in order to review business regulations and their enforcement across countries. These reports are issued by
   (a) World Bank
   (b) World Economic Forum
   (c) Global Business Indicators’ Association
   (d) Asian Development Bank

Solution: a.

“Word Bank Doing Business reports, introduced in 2004, review business regulations and their enforcement across countries — 190 this year. The latest edition takes into account developments in one year up until June 1, 2016."


2. Apart from issuing the ‘Ease of Doing Business’ ranking, the same institution in question issues along with it a ‘Distance to Frontier’ score. What is this?

   (a) The distance of each economy to the ideal standard for indicators, set by the World Bank.
   (b) It measures the distance of each economy to the best performance observed on each of the indicators across all economies in the ‘Doing Business’ samples.
   (c) The distance of each economy to the performance observed on each of the indicators in the country which has been ranked first in the ‘Ease of Doing Business’ ranking.
   (d) None of the above.

Solution: b.

“The distance to frontier score helps assess the absolute level of regulatory performance over time. It measures the distance of each economy to the “frontier,” which represents the best performance observed on each of the indicators across all economies in the Doing Business sample since 2005. One can both see the gap between a particular economy’s performance and the best performance at any point in time and assess the absolute change in the economy’s regulatory environment over time as measured by Doing Business.”

Primary Source: http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/distance-to-frontier/dtf-map/overall

Improvisation: http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/what-will-we-tell-the-pm-we-are-often-asked-hence-the-matrix-dtf/article9268020.ece

3. A recent report showed that India – along with Iraq – reported the highest number of incidents involving government mandated shutdown of internet access. Under what provisions have governments in India effected such shutdowns?

   1. Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure
   2. The Telegraph Act, 1885
   3. Information Technology Act, 2000

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.
Most of these disruptions are being carried out by state government agencies, often under the terms of broad legal powers — such as Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure — derived from 19th century British Raj era provisions meant to empower police units and district administration officials to enforce curfew and confiscate property.

The Telegraph Act — via Section 5(2) — provides for a more specific legal power to restrict or otherwise interfere with the transmission of messages on the direction of the Union or state governments. But this provision lacks defined procedure when it comes to internet shutdowns.

The Information Technology Act, India’s principal information technology sector law, has provided for another tool, even if not a perfect one. Instead of a larger suspension of the internet itself, it provides for a proportional, limited power in favour of the Central government — and state government officials in emergency cases — to issue individual web content blocking orders when certain grounds are met.


4. Quetta, often seen in the news, is located in the geographical region represented by which of the following groups?

(a) Gulf Cooperation Council
(b) Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
(c) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
(d) The European Union

Solution: c.

5. The Rajasthan Government recently launched a district-level campaign, “Sajha Abhiyan”, in association with the United Nations Children’s Fund and the UN Population Fund. This campaign has been launched in a bid to

(a) Make Rajasthan child marriage-free.
(b) Rid the state of female foeticide.
(c) Provide adolescents and young adults alike, comprehensive sexual health education.
(d) a, b and c.

Solution: a.

Under the banner of “Sajha Abhiyan” of the Rajasthan government, UNFPA and UNICEF, a district-level Abhiyan Yatra was flagged off in Dausa on Tuesday for complete elimination of child marriages in the State. Child marriage in Rajasthan continues to be much higher than the national average. In order to address the issue, the State government, with the support of UNFPA and UNICEF, has taken the lead in developing a comprehensive strategy and action plan for doing away with the marriages of minor boys and girls.

http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/rajasthan-drive-to-end-child-marriages/article9268762.ece
1. The ‘Galilee Basin’ is located

(a) Off the northeast coast of Australia.
(b) In northeast Australia.
(c) Off the west coast of Australia.
(d) In west Australia

Solution: b.

“The Galilee Basin is a 247,000 square kilometre thermal coal basin in the central region of the Australian state of Queensland (Red coloured block in image). It is one of the largest untapped coal reserves on the planet.”

2. The “Royal Flying Service of Australia”, popularly known as “Flying Doctors” provides aid and primary health care service in rural and remote areas of Australia. A “Mobile Air Dispensary” along similar lines has been proposed to serve which part/region of India?

(a) Fifth Schedule areas
(b) It is a state initiative launched by Odisha.
(c) Northeast
(d) The Red Corridor

Solution: c.

“Dr. Jitendra Singh has proposed “Mobile Air Dispensary” service for remote and far-flung areas of Northeast, which would envisage a mobile dispensary in a Helicopter with a doctor, necessary equipment and medicines that can fly to remote and far-flung on regular basis and also, as and when required. He said, particularly in areas from where patients find it difficult to reach a dispensary, a doctor with dispensary can reach them. The same experiment, which would possibly be the first of its kind in the country, can also be replicated in other hill States and remote areas having poor connectivity like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh etc, he added.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151915

3. Which of the following statements about ‘PRAGATI’ is/are correct?

1. It stands for ‘Pro-Active-Governance Aimed at Transformation of India’.
2. It brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) None of the above
Solution: b.

A question posted here earlier. “The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today chaired his sixteenth interaction through PRAGATI – the ICT-based, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.”

- **PRAGATI is an ICT-based** multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.
- The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies: Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology. It offers a unique combination in the direction of cooperative federalism since it brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.
- The platform is aimed at addressing common man’s grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- The PM gives suitable directions for redressal of grievances and compliance on the projects and programmes and motivated all officers to work in coordinated manner for outcome; A built-in feature of PRAGATI is that these directions will remain in the system for further follow up and review till the finality of the matter.

What is PRAGATI?

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=152006

4. With reference to the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 consider the following statements:

1. Every employer is required to constitute an ‘Internal Complaints Committee’ at all offices and branches with staff strength of 10 or more women employees.

2. The law provides for the process of inquiry into the complaint to be completed in a time-bound manner.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- The Bill lays down the definition of sexual harassment and seeks to provide a mechanism for redressing complaints. It provides for the constitution of an ‘Internal Complaints Committee’ at the workplace and a ‘Local Complaints Committee’ at the district and block levels. A District Officer (District Collector or Deputy Collector), shall be responsible for facilitating and monitoring the activities under the Act.
- Every employer is required to constitute an ‘Internal Complaints Committee’ at all offices and branches with staff strength of 10 or more employees (and not ‘10 or more women employees’).
- An additional ‘Local Complaints Committee’ shall also be constituted at the block/ward level to address complaints (i) where the complainant does not have recourse to an Internal Complaints Committee (applicable in cases where the workplace employees less than 10 people); (ii) where the complaint is against the employer himself.
- The Committee shall provide for conciliation before initiating an inquiry if requested by the complainant. If a settlement is reached, no further inquiry shall be conducted. If conciliation is not desired, or when settlement fails, the Committee shall initiate an inquiry into the complaint. The inquiry must be completed within 90 days.

Primary Source:

Improvisation: “Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi expresses concern at the inadequate implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013”
5. In the wake of outbreak of H5N8 Avian Influenza, ‘Biosecurity’ measures are being strictly enforced. What are ‘Biosecurity’ measures?

(a) It refers to ways to avoid contact between animals and microbes.
(b) These refer specifically to measures to mitigate the transmission of avian flu in cases of its outbreak.
(c) Steps to be taken to avoid transmission of microbes which infect animals, to humans.
(d) Keeping humans and animals in quarantine and maintaining strict vigilance on their health conditions.

Solution: a

6. The ‘23rd Rehabilitation International World Congress’ was recently held at Edinburgh, Scotland. This Congress, since its inception, has been associated with

(a) Offering protection for, and rehabilitating people displaced due to wars, insurgency, or violence in any form.
(b) Rehabilitation for, and reintegration of victims of human trafficking.
(c) Rights and inclusion of people with disabilities.
(d) Rehabilitation of wrong-doers in the eyes of the law, especially individuals convicted of criminal acts.

Solution: c.

- RI World Congress is staged every four years, in the name of the parent organisation – Rehabilitation International (also known as RI Global) – and hosted by a trusted member.
- RI Global is the world’s leading network for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. This network includes people with disabilities, service providers, government agencies, academics, researchers and advocates. Comprising an assembly of 100+ member organisations, it uses advocacy, habilitation and rehabilitation to achieve an inclusive world where all people can enjoy active participation and full human rights.

Primary Source: http://riworldcongress.com/about-us/

Improvisation: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151998

7. The World Bank, for measuring the various indicators to rank India on the ‘Ease of Doing Business’ rank list, focusses on two cities. Which two cities are these?

(a) Delhi and Bangalore
(b) Mumbai and Hyderabad
(c) Kolkata and Bangalore
(d) Delhi and Mumbai

Solution: d.

“For its part, the government has argued that the Bank only focusses on two big cities while reforms are happening across States. But that, in fact, frames a larger problem because with an eye on the index officials had focussed on simpler procedures in Mumbai and Delhi. By May this year, an e-biz platform allowed investors to apply for 20 Central government services online, along with two services in Delhi and 14 each in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. In Maharashtra, a $5-billion investment announced by Foxconn remains on paper. Other BJP-run States had, in fact, not signed up. Certainly, investment (and job creation) are not driven by rankings alone.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/running-to-stand-still/article9272269.ece
1. With reference to ‘bulk drugs’, consider the following statements:

1. This refers to the ingredient in a pharmaceutical drug that gives its therapeutic effect.
2. India imports most of its bulk drugs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 Only
(b) 2 Only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

“Last week, the prime minister’s office instructed Niti Aayog to prepare a plan on an issue critical to the pharmaceutical sector. The planning agency has been asked to find ways to reduce the country’s dependence on China for active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). Also called bulk drugs, APIs are ingredients that give any medicine its therapeutic effect. The country imports more than 80 per cent of its bulk drugs; 65 per cent from China.”


2. Consider the following statements about the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016:

1. According to the bill, a transgender is a person whose sense of gender – gender identity – does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth.
2. It makes no provision for reservation in either education or employment to transgender persons.
3. It provides for the setting up of National and State Transgender Welfare Commissions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 3 only

Solution: b.

- To start with, the government’s bill gives a degrading and scientifically incorrect definition of transgender — as part male and part female or an incompleteness with the binary gender as the reference point. This is in contravention of the definition of transgender provided by the Supreme Court’s NALSA judgement, the private member’s bill and the Union government’s own expert committee on transgender persons. A transgender is a person whose sense of gender — gender identity — does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth.
- The removal of the clauses which provided for the setting up of National and State Transgender Welfare Commissions is another incapacitating deletion. The National Council for Transgender Persons which the government’s bill envisions would be a massive bureaucratic structure without enforcement abilities, rendering it powerless to be a protector of rights. According to the bill, “the Council will advise the central government on the formulation and monitoring of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons.”
- The government’s bill has also dropped the provision for reservation in education and employment to transgender persons, which was directed by the Supreme Court and provided for under the private member’s bill.

http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/transgenders-persons-bill-rajya-sabha-private-member-bill-3195872/

3. A ‘Private Member’ is a member of the Parliament who is not a minister. Which of the following statements with reference to Private members is/are correct?

1. Private Members can move motions – a discussion on a matter of general public importance initiated with consent of the presiding officer.
2. The committee on Private Members’ Bills and Resolutions comprises of members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

This question was posted here earlier.

- Ministers as well as Private Members can move motions.
- Private Member’s Resolutions can be discussed only on alternate Fridays.
- **Committee on Private Members’ Bills and Resolutions**: This committee classifies bills and allocates time for the discussion on bills and resolutions introduced by private members (other than ministers). This is a special committee of the Lok Sabha and consists of 15 members including the Deputy Speaker as its chairman.
- The Rajya Sabha does not have any such committee. The same function in the Rajya Sabha is performed by the Business Advisory Committee of that House.

Chapter 22, Parliament and Chapter 23, Parliamentary Committees, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

**Improvisation:**
http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/trainsexers-persons-bill-rajya-sabha-private-member-bill-3195872/

4. Which among the following list are considered to be devices of direct democracy?

1. Referendum
2. Plebiscite
3. Recall
4. Initiative

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

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.

Chapter 4, Preamble of the Constitution, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

**Improvisation:**
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/nicolas-maduro-faces-rough-weather/article9277426.ece
5. The phrase ‘Speedo Diplomacy’ seen recently in the news in the context of climate change negotiations, refers to

(a) A series of meetings led by the United States to illustrate to the Indian Government the requirement and necessity of amending the Montreal Protocol to phase out Hydrofluorocarbons.

(b) The ‘BIMARU’ states’ efforts to convince the Central Government of applying the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities among Indian states while simultaneously adhering to the country’s international commitments.

(c) The United Nations Patron for the Oceans’ series of meetings with Russian officials to convince them of the value of the Marine Protected Area in the Arctic Ocean.

(d) None of the above.

Solution: d.

“I’m absolutely overjoyed,” said Lewis Pugh, the UN Patron for the Oceans, and someone who has campaigned for years in support of this new MPA.

“This is the biggest protected area on the land or the sea, this is the first large scale MPA on the high seas, they are largely unprotected.”

The ocean advocate and swimmer drew attention to the Ross Sea (in the Southern Ocean) with a series of swims in the icy waters – and for two years he has engaged in a series of meetings, dubbed “speedo diplomacy” with Russian officials to convince them of the value of the MPA.

6. In 1981, Israel bombed a nuclear reactor which was barely three days away from going on stream. This reactor, provided by France, was located in

(a) Iran
(b) Iraq
(c) Palestine
(d) Syria

Solution: b.

General Knowledge-based question, and because it’s been in the news.

“The mission to scuttle Osirak had been planned for over a year — and was cleared by Menachem Begin, the Nobel Peace Prize nestled comfortably in his pocket — when Israel’s attempt to destroy the core of the reactor before it left the shores of France succeeded only partially, and after espionage, sabotage, and targeted killings of nearly a dozen nuclear scientists working on the programme failed to stop the construction and development of Osirak. Israel’s single-point agenda was to surgically destroy Iraq’s nuclear capability, thereby preventing it from ever becoming a threat. It was the mother of all surgical strikes, with a deterrent message. Folklore has it that so precise was the strike that the adjacent nuclear fuel complex was untouched after the attack, and so there was no risk of radiation deaths. And of the 11 dead, there was only one French casualty. So stunned were the Iraqis, at that time embroiled in an intermittent war with Iran, by the strike that not once on the flight back did their radars lock on to the F-16s, let alone fire at them. It was a Sunday, June 7, 1981. Twenty three days later was the election to the Knesset. No prizes for guessing who won. It was Begin Doctrine at work.”

Primary Source: http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/shy-of-fighting-causes/article9277440.ece
7. In economics, the ‘Laffer curve’ is?

(a) A representation of the relationship between rates of taxation and the resulting levels of government revenue.

(b) It indicates that there is a level of government spending that maximises economic growth - the optimal level of government spending accordingly is 15–25% of GDP.

(c) A graphical representation of the distribution of income, viz. representing inequality of wealth distribution.

(d) It illustrates the relationship between market forces and economic inequality.

Solution: a.

“One day in 1974, the American economist Arthur Laffer went to lunch at a restaurant in Washington, D.C. with two senior White House staff of President Gerald Ford. In the midst of an animated discussion on tax policy, Mr. Laffer pulled out a paper napkin and drew a curve. He argued that there is an optimum level of tax rate that will maximise revenues for the government. Any tax rate higher or lower will decrease tax revenues. Mr. Laffer became a celebrity and the napkin, memorabilia. This is famously called the “Laffer curve” in economics. However, Mr. Laffer failed to mention that finding that optimum tax rate is a near impossible task.”

Currently, more than 25 different tax rates on various goods and services are levied by 29 States and the Centre combined. This yields nearly Rs.9 lakh crore as total indirect tax revenues for the nation. The GST Council is attempting to collapse these 25 different rates into three or four tax rates to yield at least the same amount, preferably more. What are those magical three-four rates? This is the “Lafferian” dilemma confronting the GST Council that led to the abrupt adjournment of its third meeting recently.”

8. Ross Sea is set to become the world’s largest marine protected area (MPA). It will gain protection from fishing for 35 years. Where is this sea located?

(a) Between the east coast of Japan and the Bering Sea, in the Pacific Ocean.

(b) Off the north coast of Greenland and North America, linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

(c) In the Southern Ocean.

(d) The southern-most portion of the Indian Ocean.

Solution: c.

Delegates from 24 countries and the European Union have agreed that the Ross Sea in Antarctica will become the world’s largest marine protected area (MPA). Some 1.57 million sq km (600,000 sq miles) of the Southern Ocean will gain protection from fishing for 35 years.

Environmentalists have welcomed the move to protect what’s said to be the Earth’s most pristine marine ecosystem. The region is important to the rest of the planet as the upwelling of nutrients from the deep waters are carried on currents around the world.

The Ross Sea is also home to huge numbers of krill, a staple food for species including whales and seals. Their oil is critical for salmon farming. However there are concerns that overfishing and climate change are having significant impacts on their numbers.
1. Consider the following list of countries:
   1. Brazil
   2. Russia
   3. India
   4. China
   5. South Africa

Which of the above are members of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)?

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

Solution: d.

If you read the BBC article whose link was provided yesterday with the solution of two questions, you would have noticed that the ‘CCAMLR’ was mentioned, and you would have read that “24 countries and the EU have agreed that the Ross Sea......”. This ought to have made you wonder whether India is a member of CCAMLR or not. Had you checked that, you could have answered this question, because India’s mentioned in only one option.

- The goal of CCAMLR, now numbering 25 members (24 nations and the European Union), is to preserve marine life and environmental integrity in and near Antarctica. It meets every year in late October to deliberate on the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Antarctic Ocean.
- At this meeting in Hobart, Australia, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) agreed unanimously to designate the Ross Sea as an MPA, after years of protracted negotiations, New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully announced.


2. The practice of ‘Maitri Karar’ has found a mention in the Uniform Civil Code Questionnaire prepared by the Law Commission. This custom is practiced mostly in the state of

(a) Gujarat
(b) Bihar
(c) Uttar Pradesh
(d) Assam

Solution: a.

A general question based on the ongoing debate about the UCC. “The commission in its questionnaire not only referred to the practice of triple talaq but also to the right of inheritance of Hindu women and Maitri Karar, being practised in Gujarat.”

Maitri Karar – “In Gujarat, is a social tradition that is used to circumvent the provisions of the Hindu Marriage Act by men so they can “have another woman” in their lives....”


3. Sardar Vallabhai Patel’s organisational capacities are well known, especially in association with his diplomacy in winning over several hundred princely states as independence approached. However, the state of Hyderabad and Junagadh had to be coerced into joining India, post Independence. Who is considered responsible for their accession to India?

(a) Sardar Vallabhai Patel
(b) C. Rajagopalachari
(c) Lord Mountbatten
(d) Abul Kalam Azad

Solution: a.
Solution: a.

Trick question. Sardar Vallabhai Patel himself, along with V.P. Menon are considered responsible for the integration of all Indian states. Lord Mountbatten’s talk to the Chamber of Princes on 25th July, 1947 is considered an important event, for it put across a message to most of the princes that “independence for them was a mirage”. But Mountbatten was not responsible for the implementation of the process of integration, and certainly not with coercing Hyderabad and Junagadh into acceding to India.

“Apples in the Basket”, India after Independence by Ramachandra Guha;


Solution: b.

- Whereas the ‘Ashram’ leaders argued that the entire land revenue demand must be withheld to have any effect on the government, the constitutionalist leaders advised the peasants to resist by withholding only the enhanced amount.
- The Bardoli taluq was selected during the Non-Cooperation days as the place from where Gandhiji would launch the civil disobedience campaign which, though, never took off due to the events at Chauri Chaura.

Page 204-206, India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipan Chandra;


4. With reference to the no tax movement that was launched in Bardoli taluq of Surat district in Gujarat in 1928, consider the following statements:

1. Whereas the constitutionalist leaders argued that the entire land revenue demand must be withheld to have any effect on the government, the ‘Ashram’ leaders advised the peasants to resist by withholding only the enhanced amount.

2. The Bardoli taluq was selected during the Non-Cooperation days as the place from where Gandhiji would launch the civil disobedience campaign which, though, never took off.

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.

Page 206-207, India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipan Chandra;


5. The ‘Bardoli Satyagraha’ of 1928 was lead by

(a) Mahatma Gandhi
(b) Sardar Vallabhai Patel
(c) Kunverji Mehta
(d) Dayalji Desai

Solution: b.

Page 206-207, India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipan Chandra;


6. With reference to the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It defines a benami transaction as a transaction where a property is held by or transferred to a person, but has been provided for or paid by another person.

2. A person caught with ‘Benami’ property, or for giving false information will face rigorous imprisonment and have to pay a fine.

Solution: a.

Page 206-207, India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipan Chandra;
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.

- According to the new law, people caught with ‘benami’ properties could serve up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and have to pay a significant fine. Additionally, the properties will be confiscated.
- Under the Act, a transaction is named ‘benami’ if property is held by one person, but has been provided or paid for by another person.
- A person could also face rigorous imprisonment for up to five years for knowingly giving false information and will have to pay a fine of up to 10 per cent of the market value of the property.


Primary Source: http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/new-benami-act-to-take-effect-from-nov-1/article9282344.ece

8. Which nation in India’s neighbourhood recently left the Commonwealth of Nations?
   (a) Pakistan
   (b) Maldives
   (c) Sri Lanka
   (d) Bangladesh

Solution: b.

http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/why-maldives-left/

*Clarifications*

QS, October 27th (Click Here): An unexpected error while uploading the solutions. Here’s the explanation for the ‘Biosecurity’ measures question –

- Biosecurity helps protect farms against every disease, not only avian flu.
- Biosecurity refers mainly to good farm practices.
- It is a way to avoid contact between animals and microbes.
- If there are outbreaks of avian flu, stronger measures than in normal times must be taken.

Improvisation: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=151999

Source for ‘Biosecurity’ definition (Need not be read! We are just providing the source): http://www.fao.org/3/a-ai005e/ai005e03.pdf
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