1. It is said that urea subsidies in India has led to its misuse – it is being diverted to non-agricultural uses and smuggled to neighbouring countries. Apart from its utilization as a fertilizer, what for is it used?

1. Milk adulteration
2. Manufacture of explosives
3. Manufacture of plastics
4. Reducing air pollution

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1, 2 and 4 Only
b) 2, 3 and 4 Only
c) 1, 2, 3 and 4
d) None of the above

Solution: c.

“More than Rs 40,000 crore of subsidies are provided for fertilisers. Similarly, another Rs 40,000 crore of subsidies are provided in the electricity sector. Fertiliser and electricity subsidies together amount to 1.6 per cent of the GDP, much of which leaks abroad or to non-agricultural uses, or goes to inefficient producers, or to firms given the exclusive privilege to import.”

“By volume, milk production is to the tune of about 146 million tonnes in the country. But it is feared that over 60% of the milk is contaminated due to malpractices in milk supply chain which includes dilution with unsafe water. The milk is otherwise said to be adulterated with contaminants such as urea, salt, detergent, liquid soap, boric acid, caustic soda, soda and hydrogen peroxide which have hazardous health effects.”

Sources: Wikipedia; Britannica; PIB

2. According to the Fourth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey conducted by the Labour Bureau,

1. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for rural areas is greater than that for urban areas
2. The LFPR for women is about the same as males in rural areas but significantly lower than males in urban areas

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

“The Fourth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey conducted by the Labour Bureau during the period January 2014 to July 2014 has shown that the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is 52.5 % for all persons. However, the LFPR for rural areas stands at 54.7% which is much greater than that for rural areas i.e. 47.2 %. The LFPR for women is significantly lower than that for males in both rural and urban areas.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=136875
3. The ‘Digital Gender Atlas for Advancing Girl’s Education in India’ was launched last year to help identify
   a) Low performing geographic pockets for girls, particularly from marginalised groups
   b) Low performing geographic pockets for girls from marginalised groups only
   c) Districts wherein girls’ enrollment and/or attendance in primary schools is poor in comparison to boys’
   d) Districts wherein enrollment and/or attendance in primary schools by girls from marginalised groups is poor in comparison to other girls

Solution: a.

“Economic Survey 2015-16 states that the Gender Parity Index (2013-14 Provisional) however, shows an improvement in girls’ education, with parity having been achieved between girls and boys at almost all levels of education. The Government has taken several steps to provide education to underprivileged, vulnerable and marginalized people such as SCs, STs, other Backward Classes (OBC) including Minorities and other Economically Backward Classes through various programmes of education. ‘Digital Gender Atlas for Advancing Girl’s Education in India’ was launched last year to help identify low-performing geographic pockets for girls, particularly from marginalized groups.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=136874

4. Consider the following statements with regard to Central Government finances in India:

1. Of the total receipts, revenue receipts exceed capital receipts for the fiscal year 2015-16
2. Revenue Deficit includes in it expenses incurred on creation of capital assets

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

Solution: c.

“While revenue deficit is the difference between revenue receipts and revenue expenditure, the present accounting system includes all grants from the Union Government to the state governments/Union territories/other bodies as revenue expenditure, even if they are used to create assets. Such assets created by the sub-national governments/bodies are owned by them and not by the Union Government. Nevertheless they do result in the creation of durable assets.”

“According to the Finance Ministry, such revenue expenditures contribute to the growth in the economy and therefore, should not be treated as unproductive in nature. In the Union Budget (2011-12) a new methodology has been introduced to capture the ‘effective revenue deficit’, which excludes those revenue expenditures (or transfers) in the form of grants for creation of capital assets.”
5. Which of the following statements with regard to ‘where the rupee comes from’ (Central Government Receipts), in association with the latest Annual Financial Statement is NOT correct?

   a) Direct tax revenues are more than Indirect tax revenues
   b) Capital receipts exceed indirect tax receipts
   c) Indirect tax revenues are more than Non-tax revenues
   d) Non-debt capital receipts form the lesser share of total capital receipts

Solution: b.

Direct Taxes:

Corporation Tax: 19paise
Income Tax: 14p

Indirect taxes:

Service and other taxes: 9p
Excise duty: 12p
Customs duty: 9p

Non-tax revenue: 13p

Capital Receipts:

Borrowings and other liabilities: 21p
Non-Debt Capital Receipts: 3p

To understand better, see http://pibphoto.nic.in/documents/graphic/gbig296.jpg
1. It is estimated that the incidence of renal failure is of the order of 2.2 lakh patients a year in India. With reference to Budget 2016-17, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Dialysis services will be provided in all Government district hospitals under Public-Private-Partnership mode
2. Certain parts of dialysis equipment will be exempt from basic customs duty

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.

“Shri Nadda stated that the ‘National Dialysis Services Programme’ under which dialysis services will be provided in all district hospitals under the PPP mode will bring relief to a large section of the population. He stated that the proposal to exempt certain parts of dialysis equipment from basic customs duty, excise/CVD and SAD is a step in the right direction.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/the-health-net-should-cover-all/article8300771.ece

2. The ‘Raisina Dialogue’ seeks to

a) Engage in an intensive debate on current and future security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region
b) Explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia’s integration with the larger world
c) Be a platform for a frank and open exchange of ideas, opinions and views among the myriad political parties of India
d) Gather officials and professionals of the SAARC nations in order to enhance South Asian nations’ cooperation and economic integration

Solution: b.

“The conference, attended by speakers from 40 countries, is being seen as the Indian government’s attempt to rival conferences around the world that attract global players such as the Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore, and the Munich Conference on national security.”

“The Raisina Dialogue is envisioned as India’s flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics. It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia’s integration with the larger world. It is predicated on India’s vital role in the Indian Ocean Region and how India along with its partners can build a stable regional and world order. The 2016 conclave will focus on Asia’s physical, economic, digital connectivity and fostering common global spaces with an emphasis on Asia.”

3. The ‘Shangri-La’ dialogue is
   a) A Security summit
   b) A Trade summit
   c) A Tax dialogue
   d) A Women’s summit

Solution: a.

“The conference, attended by speakers from 40 countries, is being seen as the Indian government’s attempt to rival conferences around the world that attract global players such as the Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore, and the Munich Conference on national security.”


4. Consider the following statements:

1. Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) contributions have, prior to Budget 2016-17, been Exempt-Exempt-Exempt (EEE)
2. The EEE status is also available for Public Provident Fund and life insurance policies

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

The latest Economic Survey deals with the concept of EEE as well as EPF, in detail.

EPF has so far been EEE, or Exempt-Exempt-Exempt. What does this mean?

“EEE means that the investment in the EPF is tax-free at all the three stages of investing, interest accumulation, and withdrawal. The EEE status is also available to Public Provident Fund, equity linked savings schemes and life insurance policies.”

5. Which of the following statements about the EPF is/are incorrect?

1. All workers must involuntarily contribute at least 12 per cent of their basic salary to it
2. It is an example of a ‘subsidy’ for the rich

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.

“More precisely, those who, when they first started working, had a basic salary below a certain threshold (which moved from R6,500/month to R15,000/month in September 2014) must contribute to EPF while those with initial salaries above the threshold may choose whether or not to contribute.”

“While mandatory for the poor, many rich people choose to contribute to EPF as well, though it seems they do so primarily for tax reasons. In many ways, the EPF is an example of a subsidy for the rich. EPF contributions have an EEE status—Exempt, Exempt, Exempt—meaning that contributions, interest earned and withdrawals are all exempt from tax.”

Page 150, Economic Survey 2016-17, Volume 1 (The Survey explains in detail
about the case of the EPF, relevant especially now because of the changes on its EEE status)


—

reference for Q1, Quiz 58 (Mar 1):

1. VPM1002 is
   a) An ISRO-designed Microgravity Fluid-Shift Receptor used by NASA on its long-duration space flight study
   b) A drug derived from the Himalayan Gentiana flower for cancer treatment
   c) A Tuberculosis Vaccine
   d) The European Union’s Earth Observer Satellite

Solution: c.

“For more than 90 years, scientists have been working on an improved vaccine against TB. The only one available — Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) — was developed in the early 20th century. It is the only licensed one, is inexpensive, and requires only one contact with health services. However, standard BCG, while protecting children in most cases against the disease, loses its effectiveness in young people and adults, and has not contributed to reducing the global incidence of TB. Increasing rates of drug-resistant TB now require an effective vaccination strategy.”

“Prof Stefan H E Kaufmann, who heads the team that developed the vaccine, told that they have exchanged a gene in the existing BCG vaccine, thus improving its immunogenicity (that is, providing a stronger defence response).”

http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/a-new-tb-vaccine-is-in-the-works-and-heres-why-india-is-excited/

2. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?
   1. In Indian art and architecture, both types of caves – man-made and natural – are found
   2. In Buddhist architecture, ‘vihara’ is a prayer hall while ‘chaitya’ is a monastery

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
   a) 1 Only
   b) 2 Only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: b.


3. Which of the following statements with regard to the ‘36th International Geological Congress (IGC)’ is/are correct?
   1. This will be the first time that India hosts the IGC
   2. It will be hosted jointly by the Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Earth Sciences
   3. Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan will be co-hosts

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: b.
“The IGC is a prestigious geoscience conference organized at an interval of 4 years under the aegis of International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) an affiliate of International Council of Science (ICSU).”

“India successfully made a bid to host the 36th IGC in India along with its co-host neighboring countries, namely, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. India had earlier hosted the 22nd session of IGC, which was the first IGC in Asia, in year 1964 in Delhi. The event will showcase India as a scientific destination for human resource development and training, and this will help improve Indian position in the South Asian and African regions on a long term basis. It will also contribute towards increasing tourism revenue by opening new avenues for geo-tourism.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137230

4. The Government of India (GoI) has NOT recently signed, with which of the following countries, agreements in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy?

a) Government of Australia
b) Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
c) Government of Japan
d) None of the above

Solution: c.

India has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan on peaceful use of civil nuclear energy, not an agreement. A MoU is a precursor to an agreement.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137180

5. With reference to the Maintenance, Repair and Overhauling (MRO) operations under the Civil Aviation sector in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. About 90 per cent of MRO operation expenses of Indian carriers is currently spent outside India
2. The tools and tool-kits used by the MRO operations have recently been exempted from Customs and Excise duty

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.

You don’t have to know the nitty-gritties of budget allocations. The basic idea of this question is to know that much of the MRO business of Indian carriers is going abroad, a situation for which the Indian government is taking steps to change. And as seen in the statement of the Civil Aviation Minister, “the Budget 2016-17 has paved the way for developing India as a Maintenance, Repair and Overhauling (MRO) hub of Asia. The budget has made provisions for incentivising domestic value addition to help Make in India.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137188
6. The ‘Setubharatam’ project will
   a) make all National Highways railway-crossings free
   b) build bridges with hitherto unconnected-by-road villages
   c) develop the ‘Ram Setu’ as a cultural heritage project
   d) improve air-connectivity between India and nations in the Indian Ocean-littoral nations

   Solution: a.

   http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137187

7. Economic Relief in India is being provided to certain industries in order to achieve which of the following objectives?

   1. Promoting social equity
   2. Provide a level playing field for Indian exports in the international markets
   3. Encourage savings and capital investment in the economy
   4. Promoting industry and commerce in certain backward areas

   Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

   Solution: d.

   http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137219
1. With reference to the pardoning power of the President of India, consider the following statements:

1. Remission denotes the substitution of one form of punishment for a lighter form
2. Reprieve implies a stay of the execution of a sentence for a temporary period
3. Respite denotes awarding a lesser sentence in place of one originally awarded due to some special fact

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Ans: b.

Commutation denotes the substitution of one form of punishment for a lighter form. Remission implies reducing the period of sentence without changing its character (if you have not yet read polity but had read today’s Hindu editorial, you would have been able to eliminate options a, c and d).

President, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

2. ‘Bhuvan’, an Indian government portal, is a

a) National geo-portal run by ISRO which offers multi-themed Geographic Information System data sets
b) Single window access to information and services being provided by the various Indian Government entities
c) One-stop shop for meeting all informational needs relating to Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries sectors production
d) Commercial arm of the Geological Survey of India which evaluates and prices the existing technical unpublished reports, maps and other databases

Solution: a.

“ISRO’s BHUVAN (www.bhuvan.nrsc.gov.in) is a well-known national geo-portal, which is being widely, used by the Government, public, NGOs and Academia. Bhuvan is developed with a clear focus of addressing Indian requirements of satellite images and theme-oriented services to enable planning, monitoring and evaluation of stakeholder’s activities in governance and development.”

“Bhuvan is designed, developed, deployed and managed by a small team of scientists within ISRO. It primarily focuses on societal-benefits and is not a commercial venture.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137293

3. ‘Force 18’ is

a) The world’s largest Multinational Field Training Exercise to be hosted by India in 2018
b) A military training exercise involving the 18 ASEAN-Plus nations, being hosted by India
c) A bilateral military exercise between Indian and an Australia, hosted by Australia
d) A joint military operation in ISIS-occupied territories being led by the USA of which India is a participant

Solution: b.

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Cartagena Protocol, a subsidiary agreement to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, prohibits the collection of plant materials by a foreign country without an agreement with host countries on the sharing of benefits arising from such resources.
2. India’s Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is applicable for the protection of some plant species.

Which of the statements above is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: a.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity is a 2010 supplementary agreement to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. It prohibits the collection of plant materials by a foreign country without an agreement with host countries on the sharing of benefits arising from such resources.

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is applicable for the protection of some plant species.


2. It was stated that Budget 2016-17 was to be ‘built on a transformative agenda with nine distinct pillars’. Which among the following are NOT these pillars?

1. Financial Sector Reforms  
2. Ease of Doing Business  
3. Defense Indigenisation  
4. Fiscal Discipline  
5. Blue Revolution

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The 9 pillars are:

Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare: with focus on doubling farmers’ income in five years;
Rural Sector: with emphasis on rural employment and infrastructure;
Social Sector including Healthcare: to cover all under welfare and health services;
Education, Skills and Job Creation: to make India a knowledge based and productive society;
Infrastructure and Investment: to enhance efficiency and quality of life;
Financial Sector Reforms: to bring transparency and stability;
Governance and Ease of Doing Business: to enable the people to realise their full potential;
Fiscal Discipline: prudent management of Government finances and delivery of benefits to the needy; and
Tax Reforms: to reduce compliance burden with faith in the citizenry

3. Consider the following statements with regard to the Motor Vehicles Act (MVA):

...
1. Budget 2016-17 states it will be amended so that more entrepreneurs would be able to operate bus services
2. It is up to the States whether or not to accept the amendments to the MVA made by the centre
Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/a-better-deal-for-bus-commuters/article8314757.ece

4. Article 110 of the Indian Constitution deals with the definition of money bills. A money bill is one, if it contains which of the following conditions?

   1. The custody of the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)  
   2. The custody of the Contingency Fund of India  
   3. Increasing the amount of any expenditure charged on the CFI
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Page 22.18-19, Indian Polity 4th Edition
by M Laxmikanth

“…Article 110 of the Constitution, defining the money bill, states that in addition to taxation matters, “the custody of the Consolidated Fund or the Contingency Fund of India, the payment of moneys into or the withdrawal of moneys from any such Fund” is also part of a money bill. The opening paragraph of the Aadhaar bill, not surprisingly, states that the purpose of the bill is to “provide for… efficient, transparent, and targeted delivery of subsidies, benefits and services, the expenditure for which is incurred from the Consolidated Fund of India” (emphasis added). And remember, if any question arises whether this bill can qualify as a money bill, the decision lies with the speaker of the Lok Sabha, and is final. Therefore, the argument that the Aadhaar bill cannot be a money bill is invalid…”

http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/aadhar-scheme-kanhaiya-kumar-narendra-modi-parliament-fiddling-while-rome-is-built/

5. Under which of the following acts/policies are telecom licenses issued to companies in India?

   a) Indian Telegraph Act, 1885  
   b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997  
   c) India Wireless Act, 1933  
   d) New Telecom Policy, 1999

Solution: a.

1. Which among the following conventions/protocols aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of Genetically Modified Organisms?

   a) Nagoya Protocol  
   b) Rotterdam Convention  
   c) Basel Convention  
   d) Cartagena Protocol

Solution: d.

“An appreciable number of people have concerns about the potential risks that GMOs pose to the environment (through geneflow) and human health (through allergies). However, no such harmful effects have been recorded over the 20 years of commercialisation of GMO crops. It is in recognition of such concerns that the global community devised the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of the Convention on Biological Diversity which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of GMOs,” Chikelu said.

http://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverag e/agricultural-biotechnologies-a-boon-to-family-farmers-52862

2. 2016 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of

   a) Family Farming  
   b) Pulses  
   c) Soils  
   d) Light and Light-based Technologies

Solution: b.

2014 was the International Year of Family Farming. 2016 is the International Year of Pulses.

“… During an international symposium hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director-General José Graziano da Silva said, “We cannot lose sight that biotechnologies, knowledge and innovation must be available, accessible and applicable to family farmers, including small holders.” “…

Improvisation:  
http://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverag e/agricultural-biotechnologies-a-boon-to-family-farmers-52862

3. The ‘Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG)’ recently seen in the news, consists of

   a) Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and USA  
   b) India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran  
   c) Pakistan, China, Iran and India  
   d) Russia, China, USA and Afghanistan

Solution: a.

“India, Iran and Russia should be included in the talks with the Taliban, says former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, who said that the current talks among the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) were Afghanistan’s “only hope for peace” despite the fact that the talks were being held in Pakistan. Mr. Karzai’s comments came as there was uncertainty in Islamabad over just when the next round of QCG talks that include representatives from the U.S., China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, would be scheduled.”

4. Consider the following statements:

Assertion (A): Global firms that offer online advertisement services in India cannot claim a tax credit (on account of the ‘Equalization Levy’ imposed by India) in their home country under the double taxation avoidance agreements.

Reason (R): ‘Equalisation Levy’ on online advertisement services is not a part of the Income Tax Act.

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 and R is correct.

Ans: a.

“Further, as the levy is not introduced as part of the Income Tax Act but as a separate legislation under the Finance Bill, global firms that offer such services in India cannot claim a tax credit in their home country under the double taxation avoidance agreements, experts point out.”

http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/levy-on-online-ads-may-hit-startups/article8319025.ece

5. The effectiveness of antibiotics to treat bacterial infections has been steadily declining. Which of the following measures, if adopted, can prevent the proliferation of Anti-Microbial Resistance?

1. Crackdown on the practice of the pharma-industry incentivising doctors to prescribe certain medicines
2. Crackdown on sale of loose antimicrobials
3. Better and greater access to diagnostic facilities
4. Better sanitation

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

“A recent study reported fixed dose combinations and loose antimicrobials for tuberculosis. Loose antimicrobials come without packaging and do not mention the name of the drug, its manufacturer, the date of manufacture, or the date of expiry.”

“Better sanitation and effective infection control measures in health-care settings will also drastically cut the spread of drug-resistant strains.”

“Inadequate diagnostic facilities, lack of antibiotic guidelines and patients’ demand for quick relief often determined doctors’ prescription habits, besides incentives from drugs companies and chemists to push certain products.”
6. Which of the following statements about ‘Asur’, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, is/are incorrect?

1. The Asur people claim to be descendants of Mahishasur, the buffalo-demon whom Goddess Durga kills after a fight lasting nine nights.
2. It is thought that these people were once iron smelters, which the Magadhan empire benefitted from.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Both statements are correct. An interesting article on the Asur people:

1. The ‘First Conference of Women Legislators in India’ was held recently. Its theme was
   a) Women in Power and Decision-Making
   b) The Role of Women Legislators in Nation Building
   c) Power Redefined
   d) Passion, Leadership, and Action

   Solution: b.

   http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137374

2. Consider the following statements:

   1. The highest ever number of women elected to the Lok Sabha (LS) was in the General Elections held to constitute the 16th LS
   2. The average number of women members in the Indian Parliament is greater than the world average of women representatives in national parliaments

   Which of the statements above is/are incorrect?

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

   Solution: b.

   “Today, our Parliament’s gender profile is woefully unbalanced with women constituting only 12 per cent of the total membership. As such, the average number of women members in Parliament has never been more than 12 per cent since the first Lok Sabha. In the states too, the average share of women legislators is only nine per cent in the Legislative Assemblies and only six per cent in Legislative Councils.”

   “This does not compare favourably with global trends. Apart from the Nordic pattern of around 40 percent women’s representation, a recent survey by the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) shows a world average of 22.7 percent in national parliaments.”

   “In the 16th Lok Sabha, 61 women leaders have made their way to the Parliament. This is the highest ever number of Lok Sabha seats won by women and constitutes 11.23 per cent of the total 543 Parliamentary seats.”

   http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137372

3. Which of the following statements with regard to the P. J. Nayak Committee report on governance of banks’ boards is incorrect?

   a) The government should transfer its holdings in Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to a Bank Investment Company (BIC)
   b) A Bank Boards Bureau (BBB) should be set up which would advise on all board appointments
   c) In the second phase of professionalizing board appointments, BIC would take over the process of the BBB
   d) None of the above

   Solution: d.

   Key recommendations of the Committee (report released in 2014) include:

   Ownership of Public Sector Banks (PSBs): All PSBs should be incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013. The government should transfer
its holdings in PSBs to a Bank Investment Company (BIC). Some of the constraints faced by PSBs could be removed if the government reduces its holding below 50%.

Board appointments in PSBs: The process of board appointments in PSBs needs to be professionalised in a three-phase process. In the first phase, a Bank Boards Bureau comprising former senior bankers should advise on all board appointments. In the second phase BIC should take over the process. In the third phase, BIC should delegate these powers to PSBs’ boards.


4. With reference to ‘Curium’, a rare element that was present during the formation of the solar system, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It does not occur naturally on earth
2. It is one of the by-products of nuclear explosions

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.

“Scientists from University of Chicago have discovered evidence of a rare element named curium that was present during the formation of the solar system. The team found evidence of curium in an unusual ceramic inclusion they called “Curious Marie”, taken from a carbonaceous meteorite. On Earth, curium exists only when manufactured in laboratories or as a by-product of nuclear explosions.”

1. Which of the following states in India do NOT have a legislative council?

1. Tamil Nadu
2. Telangana
3. Rajasthan
4. Andhra Pradesh

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

As of today, seven states have Legislative Councils. These are Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/the-council-prize-in-states-what-it-entails-where-its-available-and-how/#sthash.03Zn0Tau.dpuf

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The first step in the creation of abolition of a Legislative Council is passage of a resolution by the Legislative Assembly to that effect by a simple majority.
2. Members of Legislative Councils cannot vote in the elections of the President, Vice-President as well as Rajya Sabha members

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/six-or-more-anchor-banks-likely-to-lead-consolidation/article8324282.ece

3. ‘Anchor Banks’ recently seen in the news, are

a) Government-supported entities which will buy stressed assets from banks at a fair price (discount)
b) Private or public entities which will buy stressed assets from banks at a fair price (discount)
c) Public Sector Banks (PSBs) which will drive the consolidation process among the state-owned banks
d) Scheduled Commercial Banks which will drive the consolidation process among state-owned banks

Solution: c.

http://www.InsightsonIndia.com

4. The ‘cashless’ wallet quite popular with e-commerce companies is an example of

a) Closed wallets
b) Semi-closed wallets
c) Semi-open wallets
d) Open wallets

Solution: a.

OPEN WALLETS: The ones that allow you to buy goods and services, withdraw
cash at ATMs or banks and transfer funds; these services can only be jointly launched with a bank. Apart from the usual merchant payments, it also allows you to send money to any mobile number bank account. M-Pesa by Vodafone is an example.

SEMI-OPEN WALLETS: You can’t withdraw cash or get it back. In this scenario, a customer has to spend what he loads. Airtel Money is a semi-open wallet, which allows you to transact with merchants having contract with Airtel.

CLOSED WALLETS: Quite popular with e-commerce companies, where a certain amount of money is locked with the merchant in case of a cancellation or return of the order, or gift cards.

SEMI-CLOSED WALLETS: These do not permit cash withdrawals or redemption, but allow you to buy goods and services from listed merchants and perform financial services at listed locations. Paytm is an example.

1. With reference to the initiative ‘Village Convergence and Facilitation Service’, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Panchayat Raj
2. Volunteers under this initiative will mobilize village communities in order to generate awareness and create demand for financial services

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Village Facilitation &Convergence Service is an initiative aimed to linking women in need with the schemes/programs being implemented by Central/State Government impacting the lives of women such as BBBP, Sabla, Jan Dhan Yojana, Swach Bharat etc. This is being implemented initially in 100 Gender critical districts listed under BBBP.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137464

2. Land Ports Authority of India’ functions under the administrative control of the

a) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways  
b) Ministry of Home Affairs  
c) Ministry of Shipping  
d) Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

Solution: b.

“The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) came into being on March 1, 2012. LPAI was established under Land Ports Authority of India Act, 2010 as a statutory body to function as a body corporate under the administrative control of the Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs. Vested with the powers on the lines of similar bodies like Airports Authority of India, the LPAI is mandated to provide better administration and cohesive management at border crossings on India’s land borders.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137512

3. Consider the following statements about the ‘Setu Bharatam’ project:

1. It aims to make all National Highways (NHs) free of railway level crossings by 2019
2. Under this project, old and worn down bridges on NHs will be improved/repaired

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“In addition to this, about 1500 old and worn down bridges will also be improved by replacement/widening/strengthening in a phased manner at a cost of about Rs. 30,000 crore.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137325
4. With regard to the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill, 2016, consider the following statements:

1. It makes proof of Aadhaar necessary for receipt of certain subsidies, benefits and services
2. Biometric information of citizens can be made public for purposes as specified by the regulations
3. The Aadhaar number will not be considered as proof of citizenship

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/the-aadhaar-bill-dont-compromise-on-privacy/article8328008.ece

5. India’s infrastructure is susceptible to different kinds of digital intrusions. Which of the following is/are NOT correctly defined?

1. Cybercrime – involves intruding into systems to steal information of strategic or commercial value
2. Attacks – systematic digital assault on India’s critical installations

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Both are incorrect.

Espionage: which involves intruding into systems to steal information of strategic or commercial value
Cybercrime: referring to electronic fraud or other acts of serious criminal consequence
Attacks: intended at disrupting services or systems for a temporary period
War: caused by a large-scale and systematic digital assault on India’s critical installations

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/upgrading-indias-cyber-security-architecture/article8327987.ece

6. The Tallinn Manual is

a) A set of guidelines similar to the International Humanitarian Law for warring parties in an international conflict to abide by
b) A non-binding, non-governmental set of guidelines for engagement during cyber warfare
c) An agreement ratified by all members of the United Nations’ to outlaw the manufacture of chemical weapons
d) None of the above

Solution: b.

“The Tallinn Manual (originally entitled, Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare) is an academic, non-binding study on how international law (in particular the jus ad bellum and international humanitarian law) applies to cyber conflicts and cyber warfare.”
7. The 1991 volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo is said to have injected 20 megatonnes of Sulphur Dioxide into the stratosphere, cooling the globe significantly for a couple of years. Where is this volcano located?

a) Philippines  
b) Chile  
c) Hawaii  
d) Tanzania

Solution: a.

1. Consider the following statements:

Assertion (A): Each House of the Parliament can independently amend the Motion of Thanks on the President’s Address

Reason (R): Under Article 87 of the Indian Constitution, at the commencement of the first session of each year the President shall address each House of the Parliament successively

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 and R is correct

Ans: c.

Article 87

“At the commencement of the first session after each general election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first session of each year the President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons”.


2. Consider the following statements:

1. The Technology Information, Forecasting & Assessment Council (TIFAC) is an autonomous organization set up under the Department of Electronics and Information Technology
2. It recently was conferred the Rani Lakshmibai Award for its work under the scheme KIRAN-IPR

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

About the ‘Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing’ KIRAN-IPR Programme:

“A large number of women in India are highly qualified in science. Many of them are not able to pursue career in science due to domestic and social reasons. The training allows them to work from their homes and thus maintain a good balance between professional and domestic demands. The scheme is being implemented by Patent Facilitating Centre (PFC) of TIFAC on behalf of Department of Science & Technology. About 400 women have already been trained under this scheme, out of which 138 have cleared the Patent Agent Examination conducted by the Patent Office of India. Most of these women are pursuing their career in the area of IPR. Some of them are self-employed and have become entrepreneurs and has created jobs for many. 10% percent of active patent professionals as patent agent in the
3. With reference to the drug ‘Meldonium’, consider the following statements:

1. Its use aids the circulation of oxygen through increased blood flow
2. The International Tennis Federation recently added it to its list of banned substances

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

It is the World Anti-Doping Agency which is responsible for testing sportsmen and women for all Olympic sports and several hundred international sports organisations. There is no separate list under the International Tennis Federation; it is the same WADA list.

“The drug was added to the Prohibited List of 2016 on January 1 after being on the World Anti-Doping Agency’s (WADA) monitoring list in 2015. The Agency banned the substance because of “evidence of its use by athletes with the intention of enhancing performance”.”

“The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was established in 1999 as an international independent agency composed and funded equally by the sport movement and governments of the world. Its key activities include scientific research, education, development of anti-doping capacities, and monitoring of the World Anti-Doping Code — the document harmonizing anti-doping policies in all sports and all countries.”
5. In order to circumvent China’s predatory pricing strategy and exporting at prices, apparently lower than its cost of production, of steel products, the Indian Government has taken which of the following measures?

1. It has imposed a provisional Safeguard Duty for some products
2. It has imposed Minimum Import Price (MIP) for some products
3. An Anti-Dumping Duty has been levied on some products
4. The RBI’s 5:25 scheme has been extended to the steel sector

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.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137557

6. Railways Budget 2016-2017 announced some new freight corridors. Which among the following is NOT one among them?

a) East-West Corridor
b) North-South Corridor
c) East Coast Corridor
d) West Coast Corridor

Solution: d.

One of the problems associated with the idea of construction of a ‘West Coast Corridor’ is the continuous stretch of Western Ghats.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137585
1. Consider the following statements about Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, recently approved (passed) by the Lok Sabha:

1. It retrospectively amends several provisions of the Enemy Property Act, 1968
2. No laws and customs governing succession will be applicable to these properties even if the legal heir of the ‘enemy’ is an Indian citizen
3. Several loopholes present in the original act enabled relatives of the ‘enemy’ to rightfully claim these properties, hence the amendment

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

a) 1 Only  
b) 1 and 2 Only  
c) 1 and 3 Only  
d) 2 and 3 Only

Solution: b.

Why was a need felt for such amendments?

“According to Home Minister Rajnath Singh in the statement of objects and reasons in the Bill, “Of late, there have been various judgments by various courts that have adversely affected the powers of the Custodian and the Government of India as provided under the Enemy Property Act, 1968. In view of such interpretation by various courts, the Custodian is finding it difficult to sustain his actions under the Enemy Property Act, 1968.”….“

Another important provision: The Ordinance bars civil courts and other authorities from entertaining cases against enemy properties, or against actions of the central government or the Custodian under the Act.


2. What, according to Reserve Bank of India, constitutes a wilful default?

1. A borrower (or an entity) does not pay up even when it has the capacity to pay
2. A borrower has not used the loan for the purpose borrowed and diverted the money elsewhere
3. A borrower sells assets given as security against the loan without informing lenders

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

What constitutes a wilful default?

According to a Reserve Bank of India circular of July 1, 2014, and a subsequent amendment of January 7, 2015, a default — not meeting loan repayment obligations — is wilful when it fulfils one of the following four conditions:

A borrower (or an entity) does not pay up even when it has the capacity to pay
A borrower has not used the loan for the purpose borrowed and diverted the money elsewhere
A borrower has siphoned off the funds and the money is not available with it in the form of other assets. A borrower sells assets given as security against the loan without informing lenders.

http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/what-is-vijay-mallya-accused-of/#sthash.eXB4DOW6.dpuf

3. With reference to the Real Estate Bill recently passed by the Rajya Sabha, which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. The bill has a provision for imprisonment if developers are found guilty of certain violations/fraud
2. Constructions below the size of 1,000 square metres or 12 apartments are left out of the ambit of this bill
3. The bill makes it mandatory for every developer to deposit at least 70% money from buyers in an independent “third-party” bank account

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Constructions below the size of 500 square metres or 8 (not 6) apartments are left out of the ambit of this bill.


4. It is seen that multiple species thrive in laterite soil regions. Which of the following statements about laterite soils is/are correct?

1. Such soils develop in areas with high temperature and low rainfall
2. It is rich in iron oxide and aluminium and has poor humus content
3. Laterite soils are widely cut as bricks for use in house construction

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

“Laterite has been derived from the Latin word ‘Later’ which means brick. The laterite soils develop in areas with high temperature and high rainfall. These are the result of intense leaching due to tropical rains. With rain, lime and silica are leached away, and soils rich in iron oxide and aluminium compound are left behind. Humus content of the soil is removed fast by bacteria that thrives well in high temperature. These soils are poor in organic matter, nitrogen, phosphate and calcium, while iron oxide and potash are in excess. Hence, laterites are not suitable for cultivation; however, application of manures and fertilisers are required for making the soils fertile for cultivation. Laterite soils are widely cut as bricks for use in house construction.”

India Physical Environment Class XI NCERT

http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/saving-the-laterite-habitat/article8338760.ece
5. Which of the following statements about the Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy (HELP) is/are correct?

1. It is a uniform licensing system to cover all hydrocarbons, except shale gas and shale oil, under a single licensing framework
2. Bidders for hydrocarbon blocks under HELP will be required to quote revenue share in their bids and this will be a key parameter for selecting the winning bid
3. In fixing royalties, HELP will distinguish between shallow water fields and deep/ultra-deep water fields

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

Read what has been mentioned in this webpage (PIB link below) to understand why a new policy was required, and what the features of the new policy are.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137661
1. ‘Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana’ is
   a) A scheme for providing free LPG connections to women from BPL households
   b) A scheme for providing free Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) to households using solid bio-fuels
   c) A scheme to be implemented along with Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana to light up villages
   d) A scheme for providing subsidised Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) to households using solid bio-fuels

   Solution: a.

2. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?
   a) Single Super Phosphate (SSP) production units do not have to adhere to minimum capacity utilization criteria in order to avail government subsidy
   b) Minimum production criteria are applicable to urea manufacturing units
   c) SSP is considered as a substitute to Di-Ammonium Phosphate, which is largely imported
   d) 100 per cent urea produced in India is neem-coated

   Solution: b.

   “In order to push major policy reforms in the fertilizer sector, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal for removing the minimum capacity utilization criteria for the Single Super Phosphate (SSP) units to be eligible for the subsidy under the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme with immediate effect.”

   “The new SSP units were finding it difficult to achieve these production criteria as reasonable time is required to establish their brand name and to increase the market share due to inadequate availability of dealers’ network. Further, this minimum production criteria was applicable only to SSP and not to other P&K fertilizers. This new policy to remove the minimum capacity utilization criterion would put the SSP units on the same footing as other fertilizers and they would be eligible for subsidy irrespective of quantity of SSP produced and sold for agriculture purposes.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137633

3. Which of the following statements about the South Asian Regional Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC) is NOT correct?
   a) It will not prohibit additional countries to become members at a later stage
   b) It will be a collaborative venture between the International Monetary Fund and a few IMF-member countries
   c) It will, apart from providing training to central government and public sector employees, selectively cater to the capacity building needs at the State level
   d) None of the above

   Solution: d.

   “The SARTTAC will be a collaborative venture between the IMF, the member countries that is Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka and development partners for supporting the capacity development needs of the members. Additional member countries could join SARTTAC at a later stage.”
SARTTAC will also selectively cater to the capacity building needs at the State level, especially in India.”

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising which of the following nations?

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. India
4. Nepal
5. Sri Lanka
6. Myanmar
7. Thailand

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 only
b) 1, 3 and 6 only
c) 2, 4, 5 and 7 only
d) All

Solution: b.

“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.”

“The regional group constitutes a bridge between South and South East Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries. BIMSTEC has also established a platform for intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.”

Which of the following statements is/are incorrect with regard to BIMSTEC?

1. The economic bloc was initially formed without Thailand
2. It came into being through the Sittwe declaration
3. It is a sector-driven cooperative organization

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

“This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym ‘BIST-EC’ (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). Following the inclusion of Myanmar, the Group was renamed ‘BIMST-EC’ (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan, the name of the grouping was changed to ‘Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation’ (BIMSTEC).”
“Unlike many other regional groupings, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization. Starting with six sectors for sectoral cooperation, it expanded to embrace nine more sectors.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137620
1. Consider the following statements:

1. Logistics cost with regard to transportation of goods in India is more as compared to China and European countries.
2. At present, India has five National Waterways.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“Mr. Gadkari said by promoting water transport, logistics cost, which was 18 per cent in India as compared to barely 8-10 per cent in China and 10-12 per cent in European countries, would come down significantly.”

National Waterway – 6 (Lakhipur-Bhanga) was proposed earlier, but the bill lapsed.


2. Which of the following pairs is/are incorrectly matched?

1. Chandrakhani Pass – Himachal Pradesh
2. Seshachalam Hills – A Natural World Heritage Site
3. Kakrapar Atomic Power Station – Maharashtra

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: b.

Only the first pair is correct.

Seshachalam Hills is a Biosphere Reserve and does not have the World Heritage Site tag. Kakrapar Atomic Power Station is located in Gujarat.

3. India recently has imposed Minimum Import Prices (MIP) on certain steel products. In this context, consider the following statements:

1. Imposing MIP can encourage money laundering activities.
2. MIP has the potential to hurt exports from the nation which imposes it.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“In the past, following the imposition of an MIP on marble to shield the domestic industry, there were allegations that it had led to instances of over-invoicing and in turn unaccounted money being stashed away in tax havens. The revenue authorities and investigative agencies are looking into those alleged incidents, the sources said. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up to probe black money, had among other things, suggested the doing away with the MIP on (items such as) marble saying it could...
otherwise result in money laundering activities.”

“The MIP was also hurting the engineering sector. Exports from the sector were proving costly due to an increase in raw material cost of between six and 10 per cent.”

http://www.thehindu.com/business/intelligence-revenue-officials-to-investigate-mip-on-steel/article8349034.ece

4. With regard to ‘Quantitative Restrictions (QR)’ in the context of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. They are limits imposed only on the volume of goods traded by a WTO member
2. Under no circumstance can a member impose QR

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.

“Quantitative restrictions are limits imposed on the volume or value of goods traded by a WTO member. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) requires the general elimination of these restrictions — except in defined circumstances. Members’ notifications on quantitative restrictions are compiled in a WTO database which is accessible to the public.”

“The MIP is a form of quantitative restriction not seen as compliant with the World Trade Organisation norms”

http://www.thehindu.com/business/intelligence-revenue-officials-to-investigate-mip-on-steel/article8349034.ece

5. Which of the following statements is NOT correct?

a) An Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) account is termed as inoperative if there has been no fresh accretion into it for two years or more.
b) Entire unclaimed balances in inoperative accounts cannot be withdrawn by the respective account holder till they turn 58 years of age
c) Deposits into every EPF account are made by the employer as well as the employee.
d) EPF contributions are mandated only for those earning up to Rs.15,000 a month.

Solution: a.

An Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) account is termed as inoperative if there has been no fresh accretion into it for three years or more.

http://www.thehindu.com/business/inoperative-epf-accounts-may-be-paid-interest/article8349035.ece

*Clarification regarding Question 1, Quiz 68, 11th March:

Statement 3 can be considered to be correct. As mentioned in this PIB link, “The above amendments to the Enemy Property Act, 1968 will plug the loopholes in the Act to ensure that the enemy properties that have been vested in the Custodian remain so and they do
not revert back to the enemy subject or enemy firm.” .. It could be that because of these loopholes, the court could interpret the act ‘liberally’ – a manner which resulted in the Custodian having to divest enemy property under its custody.
1. With reference to the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Section 7 permits the Government of India to make Aadhaar mandatory for receipt of a subsidy, benefit or service for which the expenditure is incurred from the Consolidated Fund of India
2. Section 57 provides for conditional grant to private persons to use the Aadhaar number for establishing the identity of any individual for any purpose

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.

“Under Section 7, the Bill gives the government sweeping powers to make Aadhaar mandatory for a wide range of facilities and services. Further, Section 57 enables the government to impose Aadhaar identification in virtually any other context, subject to the same safeguards as those applying to Section 7.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/jean-dreze-on-aadhaar-mass-surveillance-data-collection/article8352912.ece

2. A ‘Goldilocks Economy’ is

a) An economy that is not so hot that it causes inflation, and not so cold that it causes a recession
b) An economy that is growing slowly or not at all over time
c) An economy in which the markets are headed in a downward, viz. towards recession
d) A nickname given to the economies of Southeast Asia

Solution: a.

“There are no exact markers of a Goldilocks economy, but it is characterized by a low unemployment rate, increasing asset prices (stocks, real estate, etc.), low interest rates, brisk but steady GDP growth and low inflation.”

Improvisation:

http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/goldilockseconomy.asp#ixzz42xVohD3S

3. ‘AlphaGo’ is

a) The European Space Agency’s rover that will drill deep into the Martian surface to look for signs of life
b) A newly discovered species of Tyrannosaur, which could hold the key to how the Tyrannosaur Rex grew so huge
c) A Birdlife project to save Europe's rarest seabird from going extinct
d) An Artificial Intelligence program

Solution: d.
4. Consider the following statements:

1. Not all cultural World Heritage Sites (WHS) of India are protected/maintained by the Archeological Survey of India
2. All natural WHS of India are protected/maintained by the Ministry of Environment & Forest
3. ‘Rani ki Vav’ in Gujarat and the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh were the latest to be accorded the WHS status

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

Clarification regarding Question 1 Quiz 70, March 14th:

The idea was to make everyone aware that prior to introduction and passage of the National Waterways Bill, there were only 5 official NWs. That’s all. And until and unless the bill which has been (will be) signed by the President is published in the Gazette, there will, officially, only be 5 NWs.
1. The state with the longest coastline in India is
   a) Maharashtra
   b) Andhra Pradesh
   c) Kerala
   d) Gujarat

   Solution: d.
   [http://www.gktoday.in/sir-creek-dispute/]

   Improvisation:
   [http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-dispute-that-begs-resolution/article8357357.ece]

2. The regulation of manufacturing of medical devices in India is entrusted with
   a) Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
   b) Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers
   c) Department of Electronics & Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and IT
   d) Department of Science and Technology

   Solution: b.
   “While India is known as the pharmacy of the world, exporting to over 200 countries, it is falling behind in medical devices whose regulation was recently entrusted with the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Union Pharmaceuticals Secretary V. K. Subburaj said.”

3. Most of the medical equipment in Indian hospitals is imported. In this context, which of the following statements is/are correct?
   1. The inverted duty structure hampers domestic manufacturing activity
   2. Baby diapers are officially regarded as a medical device

   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.
   “You will be surprised baby diapers used by the millions of babies born in our country, are also called a medical device.”

4. Consider the following statements:
   1. Manufacturing units in the Indian Pharmaceutical industry must mandatorily adopt the World Health Organisation’s standards
   2. As of 2014, Indian pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the highest for any country outside the U.S.

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

   Solution: c.
“The government is also prodding all pharma producers to adapt World Health Organisation (WHO) standards to reassure the world that Indian drugs are not only cost-effective but are also of good quality. Mr. Subburaj said though Indian standards are sufficient, the move to WHO standards would help bolster quality perception.”

“The Indian pharmaceutical industry, which is expected to grow over 15 per cent every year between 2015 and 2020, will outperform the global pharmaceutical industry, which is set to grow at an annual rate of five per cent between the same period.”

“Presently the market size of the pharmaceutical industry in India stands at U.S. $20 billion. As on March 2014, Indian pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) stood at 523, highest for any country outside the U.S.”

http://www.thehindu.com/business/india-cant-make-diapers-hospital-bed/article8357427.ece

5. Which one of the following countries of West Asia does NOT open out to the Persian Gulf?

   a) Iraq
   b) Yemen
   c) Oman
   d) Both b and c

Solution: b.

There is a small portion of Oman which opens out to the Persian Gulf.
1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 covers agricultural goods, textiles and handicrafts only
2. In contrast to European law, India’s GI Act does not lay much emphasis on inspection and monitoring mechanisms for GI protection

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

“Complying with World Trade Organisation obligations, India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 (GI Act) and has set up a registry in Chennai to register such names. Covering agricultural goods, manufactured and natural goods, textiles, handicrafts and foodstuffs, the GI Registry’s website lists 238 registered names as of March 2016.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/comment-article-by-latha-r-nair-making-india-geographical-indications-gi-brand-conscious/article8361576.ece

2. With reference to the New Pension Scheme (NPS), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. 40 per cent of its savings at the time of retirement is tax-free
2. Under this framework, a minimum 40 per cent of the corpus must mandatorily be annuitized
3. Annuities, the portion of which exceed 40 per cent of the corpus, are taxable

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.

“The government had introduced a tax on 60 per cent of EPF savings at the time of retirement in the Budget in a bid to make the NPS, savings under which were fully taxable at retirement, more attractive. At the same time, it made 40 per cent of NPS accumulations tax-free.

While the EPF tax provision was rolled back last week, the partial tax break for NPS remains.”

“Under the NPS framework, 40 per cent (of corpus) is mandatorily annuitised and that is tax free. Now, 40 per cent of the rest that may be withdrawn as a lump sum is also tax free. So if you annuitise 60 per cent of your balance (instead of 40 per cent), technically, yes, it’s tax-free (entirely),” the PFRDA chairman explained. “If you don’t buy an annuity beyond the mandatory 40 per cent, then 20 per cent of your NPS balance would be taxable,” he added.
3. Consider the following statement:

1. Discussions, recently held at this place, on a new Internet governance model was coordinated by the global Internet body ICANN
2. A treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled was signed here
3. This place is located in west Africa

Which place do the above statements refer to?

a) Nouakchott  
b) Port Louis  
c) Lagos  
d) Marrakesh

Solution: d.

Improvisation:
http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/heres-lookin-at-you/

4. The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, 2016 seeks to create a set of rights and obligations for both the consumers and developers. Which of the following statements with reference to this bill is/are incorrect?

1. 70% of collections must be maintained by the promoter is an escrow account  
2. The bill does not provide that the existing projects should stop all operations until complied with its provisions

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.

An earlier question was framed on the same bill; please go through the PIB link mentioned below for clarifications on certain provisions of this bill.

The account to be maintained by the promoter is a separate bank account and not an escrow account [An escrow account is a temporary pass through account held by a third party during the process of a transaction between two parties].

Upon passage of this Bill existing/ongoing projects would not come to a standstill, as is being made out by some respondents from the industry. The Bill only provides that upon the formation of the Regulatory Authorities all promoters of existing projects, coming within the ambit of the Bill, would need to register and provide and upload all project details on the website of the Authority.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=138014
5. Consider the following statements about ‘Monazite’:

1. Most of the Monazite resources of India are found in South and East India
2. It contains rare earth oxides
3. It contains Thorium
Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

“India has abundant quantity of thorium resources contained in the mineral monazite occurring in the beach sand placer deposits along the eastern and western coasts of the country as well as the inland placers in parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh”

“Monazite is a mineral mainly containing rare earths and thorium—a prescribed substance to be handled by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Accordingly, Indian Rare Earths Ltd. (IREL) wholly owned by the Govt. of India, under the administrative control of the Dept. of Atomic Energy (DAE) utilises monazite mainly for production of rare earth compounds, and thorium, as needed in the Department of Atomic Energy.”


Improvisation:

6. Indian Rare Earths Limited is wholly owned by the Govt. of India. It is under the administrative control of the

a) Geological Survey of India, Ministry of Mines  
b) Indian Bureau of Mines, Ministry of Mines  
c) Department of Atomic Energy  
d) Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and IT

Solution: c.


Improvisation:
1. The group ‘Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’ is known to carry out attacks in

   a) Central Africa
   b) The Balkans
   c) West Africa
   d) Horn of Africa and Yemen

Solution: c.

International Page, The Hindu 18th March 2016


2. Which of the following were some of the amendments moved to the Aadhaar legislation by the Rajya Sabha?

1. Substitute the words “public emergency and public safety” for “national security”
2. Make Aadhaar accessible only to citizens of India
3. Make Aadhaar optional
4. Give individuals the choice to opt out of the system
5. Do away with Section 57

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

“…One of the five changes successfully moved by Mr. Ramesh was to substitute the words “public emergency and public safety” for “national security”. A related amendment aimed to include the Central Vigilance Commissioner or the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in the committee to decide on requests for biometric data. He had also sought to make Aadhaar optional, by permitting alternative means of identification and giving individuals the choice to opt out of the system. According to the Bill, Aadhaar is necessary for receiving certain services and benefits. An amendment successfully moved by Mr. Ramesh sought to do away with a clause that deemed “nothing in this Act shall prevent the use of the Aadhaar number for establishing the identity of an individual for any purpose, whether by the state or anybody, company or person.”…”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-on-aadhaar-bill-aadhaar-disquiet-in-the-house/article8366438.ece

3. Consider the following statements:

1. The 42nd Law Commission report recommended the deletion of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)
2. The 42nd Law Commission report was on Section 124A of the IPC

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

The 42nd Law Commission report dealt with revision of the entire Indian Penal Code, and not specifically Section 124A.
The 42nd Law Commission report did NOT recommend the deletion of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).


4. Which of the following countries share their borders with Turkey?
   a) Iran
   b) Azerbaijan
   c) Armenia
   d) Lebanon
   e) Bulgaria
   f) Georgia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Only
b) 2, 3, 5 and 6 only
c) 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 only
d) All

Solution: c.

Remember them in a particular order – clockwise, for instance: Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Who are the Kurds?

Improvisation:

5. The ‘Death Valley Curve’ is

a) The period of time from when a startup firm receives an initial capital contribution to when it begins generating revenue
b) The period of time from when a startup firm launches its operations to when it begins generating revenue
c) The phase between when a company starts firing its employees as a cost-cutting measure and when it resumes hiring once again
d) The phase in which a country, despite possessing the potential to register a high growth rate fails to do so due to global economic turmoil

Solution: a.

Death Valley Curve: A slang phrase used in venture capital to refer to the period of time from when a startup firm receives an initial capital contribution to when it begins generating revenues. During the Death Valley Curve, additional financing is usually scarce, leaving the firm vulnerable to cash flow requirements.

“… Returns from innovation processes are skewed. Every start-up has to confront the “valley of death”. It is that early phase comprising the ‘seed’ and ‘start-up’ stages in which: (i) a novel idea or a concept is developed; (ii) its technical feasibility, market potential and economic viability are determined; (iii) a product prototype is designed; and (iv) a formal business organization is established. These early stage activities
result in sunk costs being incurred leading to negative cash flows for the nascent firm. Innovation start-ups having lesser developmental expenses to incur up-front – like website and smartphone applications – have a higher chance of surviving the ‘death valley’….”

Improvisation:
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=138112
1. ‘Internet of Things’, often seen in the news, is

   a) A concept under which no employee of a company has to attend work at a designated office, viz. every person can work from home
   b) The idea of shared office spaces located in different parts of the world wherein several companies are virtually connected to each other via the Internet
   c) A concept of basically connecting any device with an on and off switch to the Internet
   d) A Responsive Web Design system and Grid Computing being integrated with mail servers and Meta Search Engines

Solution: c.

“The next impending wave — the Internet of Things — is expected to ring in even more fundamental, technical and societal changes.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/lead-article-by-mk-narayanan-on-aadhaar-bill-the-cyberthreat-is-very-real/article8371335.ece

2. The ‘Stuxnet’ cyber-attack, often seen in the news, was associated with

   a) North Korea Missile Systems Facility
   b) Iranian Nuclear Facility
   c) Sony Pictures Entertainment
   d) Bangladesh Central Bank

Solution: b.

“Cyberspace was primarily intended as a civilian space. It has, however, become a new domain of warfare. Well before the Stuxnet cyberattack (2010) on an Iranian nuclear facility at Natanz — that was seen as a kind of ‘shot across the bow’ in the opening rounds of the cyber conflict, and demonstrated that the Internet had become a ‘free fire zone’ (and that a cyberattack could be almost as lethal as a nuclear one) — there were other instances of cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. In 2007, Estonia was almost brought to its knees through a cyberattack, presumed to be by Russian hackers.”

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/lead-article-by-mk-narayanan-on-aadhaar-bill-the-cyberthreat-is-very-real/article8371335.ece

3. In Networking, ‘Air Gap’ refers to

   a) Physical isolation of a secure computer network from unsecured networks, such as the public Internet
   b) A device which helps share a single Internet Protocol address among many devices, thereby confusing potential hackers
   c) The phenomenon whereby Internet-based companies set up servers in a host country but whose services are offered in several other countries sans any physical presence
   d) A piece of software or hardware that blocks certain types of traffic

Solution: a.

“The spectre of growing cyber-threat demands changes in the attitude of users of systems, a proactive approach to investment in hardening systems, better training in computer security practices, and careful engineering of things to be connected to networks. Almost certainly it would mean that certain critical computers and controls are unhooked from the network, a practice known as ‘air gapping’.”
4. Consider the following statements with reference to Elections in India:

1. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has the authority to nominate officers of Government as Election Expenditure Observers (EEO) for parliamentary and assembly constituencies
2. The EEO deployed by the ECI can suo moto conduct search and seizure operations on contesting candidates following information received from the Income Tax department

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.

“In the present case, the Expenditure Observer has transgressed his jurisdiction by reaching at the spot himself and acted against the instructions of the Election Commission. The Commission does not authorise any of its observers to carry out any such enforcement activities by himself/herself. The observers on receiving such information are required to pass on the same to enforcement agencies for appropriate actions and continue monitoring the taken as laid down in the Manual of ECI.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=138158

5. “The Everlasting Flame International Programme” is

a) An annual celebration of India’s diverse culture and traditions, held at different locations outside India
b) A celebration of the multicultural ethos of the Parsi-Zoroastrian community
c) A programme on Sufism being sponsored by participating nations at the World Sufi Forum
d) None of the above

Solution: b.

“The Ministry of Minority Affairs will host a cultural spectacle “The Everlasting Flame International Programme from March 19, 2016 – May 29, 2016 at premiere cultural institutes of the city under its scheme Hamari Dharohar in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Parzor Foundation. The International Everlasting Flame Programme to be inaugurated on 19th March 2016 is a celebration of the history, beliefs, practices, and contribution of Parsis, the micro-minority community whose contribution surpasses its numbers.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=138101
1. Consider the following statements:

1. He was the head of a committee to identify privacy issues
2. He chaired a Committee on Direct Tax matters whose initial mandate was to examine the matter relating to levy of MAT on FIIs/FPIs
3. He was the chairman of the 20th Law Commission of India

The statements above refer to which of the following individuals?

a) Justice Jayantilal Chhotalal Shah
b) Justice Ajit Prakash Shah
c) Justice BP Jeevan Reddy
d) Mahesh Kumar Singla

Solution: b.

Improvisation:

2. It so happened that in a state assembly election, there was one polling station in which only one person voted. In which of the following situations would the vote of this individual be protected from being disclosed, viz. would the vote secrecy be maintained?

1. Using a ‘totalizer’ for counting votes in that particular constituency
2. Using ballot papers in that particular constituency instead of Electronic Voting Machines

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 law Commission of India in its Report No. 255 on “Electoral Reforms” spoke about the ‘Totaliser’:

“The Commission reiterates and endorses the ECI’s suggestion for introducing a totaliser for the counting of votes recorded in electronic voting machines to prevent the harassment of voters in areas where voting trends in each polling station can be determined. Prior to the introduction of EVMs, ballot papers could be mixed under Rule 59A of the Election Rules, although this was not permitted for EVMs. Using a totaliser would increase the secrecy of votes during counting, thus preventing the disclosure of voting patterns and countering fears of intimidation and victimisation.”

Therefore, IF a constituency uses ballot papers instead of EVMs, then the vote of that one individual from that one polling station will remain a secret because the Election Rules itself permit mixing up of ballot papers within a constituency.

“On the items of the agenda was the need to use ‘totaliser,’ a machine that mixes votes from various polling stations and which, the EC feels, would better protect voters’ identity during counting of votes.”

Improvisation:
3. Which of the following statements with reference the 52nd Amendment Act of 1985 or the Anti-Defection Law is NOT correct?

   a) An independent or a nominated member of a house becomes disqualified to remain a member of the house if s/he joins any political party after such election/nomination
   b) The power to decide on questions of disqualification on the ground of defection is vested with the Presiding officer of the House
   c) The decision, made by the deciding authority in matters of defection, is subject to judicial review on the grounds of mala fides
   d) Disqualification on ground of defection does not apply if a member goes out of his party as a result of a merger of the party with another

Solution: a.

A nominated member of a house becomes disqualified to remain a member of the house if s/he joins any political party after the expiry of six months from the date on which he takes his seat in the house.

Chapter 67, Anti Defection Law, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth

Improvisation:

4. ‘Jan Swasthya Abhiyan’ often seen in the news is

   a) A phrase affixed to the on-going health movement in India, spearheaded by Non-Governmental Organisations which seek to address the problem of rising disparities in health status among people in India
   b) A government scheme which seeks to boost rural public health infrastructure
   c) The Indian regional circle of the global People’s Health Movement (PHM)
   d) None of the above

Solution: c.

The Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA) was formed in 2001, with the coming together of 18 national networks that had organised activities across the country in 2000, in the lead up to the First Global Peoples Health Assembly, in Dhaka, in December 2000. The JSA forms the Indian regional circle of the global People’s Health Movement (PHM).

Improvisation:
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/india-coughs-up-a-cold-call-no-more-sweet-nothings/article8375078.ece
1. Which of the following has been entrusted with the responsibility to plan, monitor and coordinate ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDG) efforts across Central Ministries and State governments in India?
   a) Prime Minister’s Office
   b) Ministry of Planning
   c) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
   d) NITI Aayog

   Solution: d.

   “Celebrating women doers, leaders and change makers from across the country, NITI Aayog – Government of India’s premier think-tank – has launched the ‘Women Transforming India’ initiative on, March 8, International Women’s Day, in partnership with the UN in India and MyGov. As a policy think tank, NITI Aayog seeks to engage directly with women leaders from across urban and rural areas of India. ‘Women Transforming India’ is, therefore, our effort at putting our ear to the ground to gather successful stories of change heralded by women at the grassroots level, within communities.”

   “This initiative is also a step forward in furthering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have Gender as a stand-alone goal. NITI Aayog has been entrusted with the responsibility to plan, monitor and coordinate SDG efforts across Central Ministries and State governments.”

   http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137721

2. Between India and East Asia, the navigation-time and distance can be greatly reduced by which of the following?
   1. Opening a new canal across the Kra isthmus between the gulf of Siam and Andaman sea
   2. Deepening the Malacca straits between Malaysia and Indonesia

   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.

   Opening a new canal in Kra Insthums CAN reduce the navigation time and distance.

   The Malacca strait is the main shipping channel between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and links the India, China, Japan and South Korea. The issue of deepening of the Malacca strait is linked to its economic importance rather than “time of navigation and distance”. The issue is that most of the ships cannot pass through it and the size of the biggest ships which can enter through it is called Malaccamax. Now the deepening of the strait would certainly help in “Increasing the volume of the business” because ships of larger sizes can pass thru it, there is no significance of distance and navigation. So statement 1 is incorrect.

   CS(P) 2011, GK Today

3. Tuting, Mechuka, Along, Tawang, Ziro, Pasighat, Walong and Vijaynagar – what is common among these places?

   a) Medieval empires/kingdoms  
   b) Advanced Landing Grounds  
   c) Medieval art and architectural fusion between local and Islamic styles  
   d) All have man-made lakes which are designated as Ramsar Wetlands

Solution: b.

“The operational capability of the Indian Air Force got a major fillip with the re-launching of” three upgraded Advanced Landing Grounds (ALG) at Ziro, Along and Walong in Arunachal Pradesh. “Other ALGs for upgradation include Tuting, Mechuka, Tawang, Pasighat and Vijaynagar in Arunachal Pradesh.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137859

4. The Korea Strait separates South Korea from which of the following states?

   a) North Korea  
   b) China  
   c) Japan  
   d) Taiwan

Solution: c.

Korea Strait, passage of the northwest Pacific extending northeast from the East China Sea to the Sea of Japan (East Sea) between the south coast of the Korean peninsula (northwest) and the Japanese islands of Kyushu and Honshu. The strait, which is 300 feet (90 m) deep, is bisected by the Tsushima islands, the passage to the east being often referred to as Tsushima Strait. The western channel was formerly called the Chōsen Strait.

Improvisation:  

5. Arrange the following water bodies of East Asia in their order of occurrence from South to North:

1. East Sea  
2. South China Sea  
3. Yellow Sea  
4. East China Sea

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

east asia
“The international name for the body of water which is bordered by Japan, North Korea, Russia, and South Korea is disputed. The Japanese government supports the use of the name “Sea of Japan”, while South Korea supports the name “East Sea”, and North Korea supports the name “East Sea of Korea”…”

Improvisation:  
1. The Government of India is promoting bio-fertilizers through which of the following schemes?

1. National Mission of Sustainable Development
2. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana
3. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
4. National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137762

2. Which among the following statements about the South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Centre (SARTTAC) is correct?

a) It will be funded by regional member countries as well as the Australian Agency for International Development and the Republic of Korea
b) It is being jointly set up by the IMF and SAARC grouping
c) It will be a centre for implementing capacity building activities for government officials in matters of building a common South Asian Economic Union
d) The centre will be hosted by Sri Lanka

Solution: a.

“The South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC) is expected to become the focal point for planning, coordinating, and implementing the IMF’s capacity development activities in the region on a wide range of areas, including macroeconomic and fiscal management, monetary operations, financial sector regulation and supervision, and macroeconomic statistics. The Center will help address existing training needs and respond to the demand for IMF training in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, while bringing the region’s training volume on par with those of other regions.”

“The IMF offers technical assistance and training to member countries in addition to economic and financial surveillance, and lending operations. The IMF’s technical assistance helps member countries develop institutions that are more effective, and legal frameworks and policies that can be used to promote economic stability and growth, while training strengthens the capacity of member countries’ officials to analyze economic developments and formulate and implement effective policies.”

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137842

3. Which of the following steps is the Election Commission of India NOT permitted to take, to ensure greater voter turnout during elections?

1. It can set up separate polling stations exclusively for leprosy patients
2. In certain areas, if women due to social practice or custom feel inhibited in mingling with male members, separate polling stations for men and women can be provided

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
a) 1 Only  
b) 2 Only  
c) Both 1 and 2  
d) Neither 1 nor 2  

Solution: d.  

The Election Commission of India can take literally any steps to ensure greater voter turnout.  

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137844  

4. Which of the following international institutional are located in Belgium :  

1) NATO Headquarters.  
2) European Parliament.  
3) European Central Bank.  

Choose from given options  

a) 1 and 2 Only  
b) 2 and 3 Only  
c) 1 and 3 Only  
d) All  

Solution : A (1 & 2 Only).  
Headquarters of ECB (European Central Bank) is in Frankfurt, Germany.  

5. Which of the following is true about Commonwealth of Nations  

1) All the member countries must have a British colonial past.  
2) Nepal is also a part of Commonwealth of Nations.  

Choose the correct answers from codes below:  

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

Solution : D.  
Having British colonial past is not a prerequisite. Rwanda is a member of commonwealth despite having no British colonial past.  

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8384930.stm  
Nepal is not a member of Commonwealth of Nations.
1. Which of the following nations do NOT open out to the Black Sea?

   a) Moldova  
   b) Romania  
   c) Russia  
   d) Bulgaria  

Solution: a. Moldova is a land-locked country.

2. Which of the following Indian states share their border with Myanmar?

   1. Tripura  
   2. Arunachal Pradesh  
   3. Manipur  
   4. Mizoram  
   5. Nagaland  

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

3. Which of the following pairs is/are NOT correctly matched?

   **City/Town  Country**
   1. Mandalay – Myanmar  
   2. Mae Sot – India  
   3. Moreh – Thailand  

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

   “Key among these agreements is a renewed commitment to complete the 3,200-km India-Asean trilateral highway that extends from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand via Mandalay, Myanmar.”

4. With reference to the Snow Leopard or the ‘Panthera Uncia’, which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. It is listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
2. In India, it can be found only in the western half of the Himalayas, stretching from Jammu and Kashmir to the western India-Nepal border

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

IUCN mentions that it can be found in Sikkim as well.


http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22732/0

5. Which of the following Montane Food Chain pairs is/are NOT correctly matched?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trophic Level</th>
<th>Animal Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Consumer</td>
<td>Marmot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Consumer</td>
<td>Pica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Consumer</td>
<td>Snow Leopard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

Solution: b.

Montane food chain:

Marmot and Pica both are Primary Consumers.

1. Consider the following statements with reference to horticulture in India:

1. Production of horticulture, including fruits and vegetables, is now larger than that of food-grains
2. Small and marginal farmers account for over 75 per cent of horticulture produce

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“The two notable points here are that the small and marginal farmers have taken a lead in this direction and that a sizable chunk of land that has been brought under horticultural crops is irrigated. According to Agricultural Census 2010-11, over 87 per cent of the total vegetables and 90 per cent of fruits are grown by small landholders. This could be because the cultivation of horticultural crops, particularly vegetables, is highly labour-intensive and, therefore, suits small cultivators who can manage it largely with family labour.”


2. With the United Arab Emirates as the starting point, arrange the following list of countries in a clockwise direction of them opening out to the Persian Gulf:

1. Kuwait  
2. Iraq  
3. Qatar  
4. Bahrain  
5. Saudi Arabia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 5-3-4-1-2  
b) 3-5-1-4-2  
c) 5-4-3-2-1  
d) 3-4-1-2-5

Solution: a.
3. Consider the following statements with regard to the Pharmaceutical sector in India:

1. Both, the Centre and/or the States approve drugs for manufacture, viz. there is no unified approver
2. India is party to the Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention
Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

“Resistance to stricter regulation comes from the states. At the moment, both the Centre and the states approve drugs. For effective control, there has to be a unified approver. But the states are unwilling to give up this power. There has been some reform here and some products have been reserved for the centre, but this is a fight that will take long to resolve.”

“There is also merit in the industry’s suggestion that India should join the Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention, based in Switzerland, which will help the country upgrade its regulatory processes.”

[Link to Business Standard Article]

4. Which of the following statements with reference to ‘Khesari Dal’, or ‘Grass Pea’, is/are incorrect?

1. The Indian Government had banned the pulse from being cultivated
2. It is historically known to have caused lathyrism, a neurological disorder affecting lower limbs
3. It is used for adulterating arhar dal (pigeon pea)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1 Only  
b) 2 and 3 Only  
c) 1 and 3 Only  
d) All

Solution: a.

“Since the bar has only been on its marketing – and not its cultivation or consumption – farmers have continued to grow it for self-consumption and feeding livestock. They even eat its succulent leaves as “sag“. people have learnt simple and effective ways of detoxifying khesari grains by boiling them and discarding the water or by soaking seeds overnight and draining away the excess water. Unsurprisingly, therefore, there has been no report from anywhere of any ill-effect of eating khesari dal for several decades. This cheap pulse has, indeed, been in demand for some other reasons as well. It is used for adulterating arhar (pigeon pea) as also for admixing with gram to produce besan (refined gram flour) to improve its lustre and enhance crispiness of the products made from it.”

[Link to Business Standard Article]
5. The Sea of Marmara lies in-between

a) Black Sea and Adriatic Sea  
b) Mediterranean Sea and Adriatic Sea  
c) Black Sea and Aegean Sea  
d) Mediterranean Sea and Tyrrhenian Sea

Solution: c.
Many companies that are unlisted entities have recently entered the capital market with their IPOs or Initial Public Offerings. Which of the following statements in this context is/are correct?

1. The category of ‘Institutional Investors (II)’ includes Foreign II and Indian Insurance companies
2. A tepid response from institutional investors is often looked upon as a sign of weak fundamentals and low prospects post listing

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.

“A tepid response from institutional investors is often looked upon as a sign of weak fundamentals and low prospects post listing though there have been exceptions as well in the past. Some of the other IPOs that hit the market in 2016 saw a strong response from all categories of investors, including institutional that comprises foreign institutional investors, mutual funds, insurance companies and banks among others.”

http://www.thehindu.com/business/mar kets/ipobound-firms-cannot-take-pricing-for-granted/article8393784.ece

The Directorate General (DG) of Safeguards had earlier recommended the imposition of the Safeguard duty and recently its extension on, largely, which of the following steel products?

a) Structural steel
b) Bearings
c) Hot-rolled steel
d) Track rails

Solution: c.

http://www.thehindu.com/business/Indu stry/govt-decision-on-extending-safeguard-duty-on-steel-imports-for-three-years-likely-soon/article8393785.ece

Consider the following statements with reference to Safeguard Duty (SD) on an imported category of product ‘X’:

1. It is a temporary measure to counter the adverse impact caused to the domestic industry due to the products’ lower prices abroad
2. It is a trade remedy recognised by the World Trade Organisation
3. SD can increase the price of raw materials required to produce the same product in the country which imposes it

Which of the statements above is/are incorrect?

a) 1 Only
b) 1 and 2 Only
c) 1 and 3 Only
d) None

Solution: a.

“The safeguard duty is a trade remedy recognised by the World Trade Organisation. It is a temporary measure to counter the adverse impact caused to
the domestic industry (local steel producers in this case) due to a **sudden and unforeseen surge in** (low-priced) imports of the item (largely hot-rolled coils in the case under review).” ..

The words written above in bold are very important, when discussing what SD is.

“Industries that are users of these steel items — including the engineering (automobile, industrial machinery and defence components) sector — have sent representations to the government stating that measures including the Minimum Import Price (MIP) as well as the provisional safeguard duty have already increased their raw material costs and are hurting their competitiveness, including in markets overseas.”

http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/govt-decision-on-extending-safeguard-duty-on-steel-imports-for-three-years-likely-soon/article8393785.ece

4. River Feni is a trans-boundary river flowing through

   a) Bangladesh and Assam
   b) Bangladesh and Tripura
   c) Bangladesh and Meghalaya
   d) Myanmar and Arunachal Pradesh

Solution: b.

“Augmenting feeder service between the two countries will also help Tripura and its six other landlocked Sister States of Northeast to have supplies in less time by transporting cargo by road from Chittagong after building a bridge over **Feni river**.”