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INSIGHTS TEST SERIES FOR UPSC PRELIMINARY EXAM 2017 (GS PAPER-1)

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- NCERT and other Standard Books based highly conceptual Tests for General Studies Paper - 1
- Emphasis on Self Study by providing practical Timetable for whole year that can be followed on a regular basis
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SUBSCRIBE
1. Which one of the following pairs of emission standard-associated technology is/are correctly matched?
   (a) BS-IV – Diesel Particulate Filter
   (b) BS-VI – Selective Catalytic Reduction Technology
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: b.

BS-V compliant engines require a Diesel Particulate Filter, not BS-IV.

IE: The race over speed bumps;

2. Unlike Operation Zarb-e-Azb, Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, recently in the news, is
   (a) A Pakistani counter-terrorism operation directed at dismantling jihadist infrastructure across the country
   (b) A Pakistani counter-terrorism operation directed at weakening, if not eliminate, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in North Waziristan
   (c) An Indian Army operation aimed at weakening the support provided by individuals obstructing the Army’s counter-terrorism missions
   (d) Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Weapons programme

Solution: a.

A GK question.

Radd-ul-Fasaad is the latest in a string of Pakistani counter-terrorism operations, directed at dismantling jihadist infrastructure within the country. It marks an official acceptance of the well-known fact that terrorists are active in Northern Sindh and Punjab, and that there’s a need to act against them if terrorism in the country is to be defeated.

Pakistan’s new war on terror;

3. ‘Al Nagah’ and ‘Naseem Al Bahr’ are military exercises that India and which one of the following countries participate in?
   (a) United Arab Emirates’
   (b) Saudi Arabia
   (c) Bahrain
   (d) Oman

Solution: d.

The armies of India and Oman are scheduled to conduct their second bilateral exercise, Al Nagah-II 2017, in March with a focus on counter-terrorism. India and Oman already have extensive cooperation in the maritime domain. The navies of the two countries have been holding the bilateral maritime exercises called ‘Naseem Al Bahr’ since 1993.

India, Oman to hold counter-terror exercises;

4. What is ‘LiDAR’?
   (a) A detection system which works on the principle of radar, but uses light from a laser
   (b) A laser-based system that helps self-driving cars “see” what is around them
   (c) A system consisting of water-penetrating light that measures sea floor and riverbed elevations
   (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

Uber is being sued for stealing trade secrets and technology from Google. The technology in question is LiDAR (also called LIDAR, LADAR), a laser-based radar system that helps the self-driving cars “see” what is around them.
LIDAR—Light Detection and Ranging—is a remote sensing method used to examine the surface of the Earth.

LIDAR uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth. These light pulses—combined with other data recorded by the airborne system—generate precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics.

NOAA: What is LiDAR?

BBC: Google’s self-driving firm sues Uber;

5. Tagging species with transponders that communicate via satellite or radio has become an increasingly common way to study species. According to a new study, what, though, is the problem associated with this method of studying species?

(a) Survival rates reduces substantially in tagged animals

(b) They have become an inadvertent aid to poachers, hunters, photographers and nature lovers

(c) Most of the tagged animals have been observed to become aggressive

(d) A few months after being tagged, each of these animals are isolated, almost ‘ostracised’, by fellow members of the same species

Solution: b.

At-risk species, including wolves and sharks, are being targeted by hunters using signals sent by radio tags to home in on the animals. The behaviour of non-endangered species is also being skewed as nature-lovers use the signals to get close to wild animals, say biologists.

Tagged Animals at risk from hunters and nature-lovers;
1. The World Health Organisation’s guideline value for permissible limit of arsenic in drinking water in India, in the absence of an alternative source to groundwater, is
   (a) 125 micrograms per litre (μg/l)
   (b) 100 μg/l
   (c) 50 μg/l
   (d) 10 μg/l

Solution: c.

“While the World Health Organisation (WHO) has set the permissible limit for arsenic in drinking water at 5 ppm, in Ballia, over 300 villages have arsenic above that limit, with one third having concentration levels above 100 ppm...”

WHO’s provisional guideline value for arsenic in drinking water – 0.01 mg/l (10 μg/l) (Source: Guidelines for drinking water quality, 4th edition, WHO, 2011). Permissible limit of arsenic in India in absence of an alternative source (to groundwater) – 0.05 mg/l (50 μg/l).

WHO India: Arsenic;

Improvisation: TH: Arsenic in vein, a village atrophies;

2. The Defence Research and Development Organisation has successfully carried out tests of which one of the following?
   (a) Endo-atmospheric interceptor missile
   (b) Exo-atmospheric interceptor missile
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

“The DRDO on Wednesday successfully carried out a test of an interceptor missile (in this instance, an endo-atmospheric missile, which can intercept missiles at ranges of 15-30 km) further validating the reliability of the under-development, two-layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) in shooting down enemy missiles. Last month, the DRDO carried out a successful test of the exo-atmospheric interceptor missile destroying the target outside the earth’s atmosphere at an altitude of over 85 km.”

The BMD consists of two interceptor missiles, the Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) for exo-atmospheric ranges and the Advanced Area Defence (AAD) missile for endo-atmosphere or lower altitudes.

Interceptor missile test successful;

3. The Central Statistics Office recently projected Gross Domestic Product to have expanded 7 per cent in the fiscal third quarter, when about 86 per cent of the currency in circulation was withdrawn from the system. Growth in which of the following sectors helped maintain the growth momentum in the third quarter?
   1. Agriculture
   2. Mining
   3. Manufacturing
   4. Real Estate

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

Solution: b.

“The resilience of India’s economy has been reaffirmed by the latest data, with both the third-quarter and full-year growth estimates belying widespread concerns that the November 8 decision to withdraw high-value currency notes would significantly dampen momentum.”

While the Central Statistics Office stuck with its January advance estimate for gross domestic product in the 12 months ending March 2017 to post a healthy 7.1% growth, it projected GDP to have expanded 7% in the fiscal third quarter, reflecting only a marginal slowdown from the 7.3% registered in the preceding three-month period.

This expansion occurred in the October-December quarter, when about 86% of the currency in circulation was abruptly sucked out of the system, potentially resulting in what the Economic Survey termed an “aggregate demand shock” and the Reserve Bank of India referred to as “demand
Daily Quiz

2nd March 2017

1.  Compression associated with adverse wealth effects.

2.  Undergirding this better-than-expected performance were the agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors and, interestingly, government expenditure. It is only the financial, real estate and professional services segment, which is linked to consumption, that lagged, with the pace of expansion more than halving from the fiscal second quarter.

TH: Resilience reaffirmed;

4.  Consider the following statements in the context of climate change:

1.  2014 is the hottest year on record, followed by 2015 and then 2016

2.  The increase in temperature in India over the long term average is more than NASA’s corresponding global figure

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 Only

(b) 2 Only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: d.

Facts that can be of use for answer-writing.

- NASA and NOAA recently released independent analyses of global temperatures that each came to the same conclusion: 2016 is very likely the hottest year on record, followed by 2015 and then 2014.

- India, a major emitter of GHGs, has classified 2016 as the century’s warmest year, with an increase of 0.91°C over the long-term average; NASA’s corresponding global figure is 0.99°C.

Livescience;

TH: Withering high;

5.  Amnesty International is

(a) an agency of the United Nations to help refugees of civil wars

(b) a global Human Rights Movement

(c) a non-governmental voluntary organization to help very poor people

(d) an inter-governmental agency to cater to medical emergencies in war-ravaged regions

Solution: b.

As per the website of Amnesty International, “Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.”

Amnesty: Who we are;

Q3, CS(P) 2015;

6.  Which one of the following is the best description of the term “biodiversity”?

(a) A community of organisms together with the environment in which they live

(b) The interaction between biotic and abiotic elements within a given area

(c) The part of land, sea and atmosphere in which organisms are able to live

(d) All kinds of living organisms within a given area

Solution: d.

Statement ‘a’ and ‘b’ refer to Ecosystems; Statement ‘c’, to Biosphere.

- Biodiversity refers to all the different kinds of living organisms within a given area. Biodiversity includes plants, animals, fungi, and other living things. Biodiversity can include everything from towering redwood trees to tiny, single-cell algae that are impossible to see without a microscope.

TH: Earthly matters;
1. Consider the following statements with reference to findings of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4:
   1. The national figure for sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five years declined
   2. Domestic violence has reduced since NFHS-3 was conducted

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.

- While the latest, the fourth NFHS 4 conducted in 2015-16 shows that critical indicators of women's empowerment like literacy, economic empowerment (women with bank accounts/mobile phones) have shown a dramatic improvement and domestic violence and child marriages are down, the girl child still remains unwanted.

- The sex ratio at birth (number of girls per 1,000 boys) for children born in the last five years showed a dip in most major states although the overall national figure went up marginally from 914 in the last survey (NFHS 3, conducted in 2005-06) to 919.

- In Assam, West Bengal, Gujarat, among others, the overall sex ratio in urban areas is better than the sex ratio at birth in children in the past five years. Chandigarh is an exception, where the last five years’ sex ratio at birth is better than the overall sex ratio. Sex ratio has traditionally been worse in urban areas than rural because of better access to technology and trained doctors. However, the fact that it has gone further downhill in the last five years, experts say, is because little has changed in mindsets on the ground.

2. The Central Food Technological Research Institute is a national research laboratory set up under the aegis of
   (a) Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
   (b) Indian Council of Agricultural Research
   (c) Indian Institute of Science Education and Research
   (d) Department of Food Product Development

Solution: a.

- CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute (CSIR-CFTRI), is one of the 40 national research laboratories in India, set up under the aegis of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

3. The term 'flesh trade', often in the news, is related to
   (a) Wildlife smuggling
   (b) Red Sanders smuggling
   (c) Prostitution rackets
   (d) Illegal human-organ trade

Solution: c.

- Improvisation: TH: 30 women rescued from flesh trade;

4. With reference to the Competition Commission of India (CCI), which of the following statements is/are correct?
   1. It promotes and sustains competition
   2. It regulates combinations, viz. mergers and acquisitions
   3. It is required to create public awareness on competition issues

Solution: a, b, c.
Select the correct answer using codes given below:
(a) 1 Only
(b) 2 and 3 Only
(c) 1 and 2 Only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: d.

Competition Commission of India is a body responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition in India.

- CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
- The duty of the Commission is to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
- The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

The **Competition Act, 2002** prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and Merger and acquisition), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

From 2015: [Insightsonindia Daily Current Events](https://www.insightsonindia.com);

Improvisation: TH: ‘Public procurement needs to be opened up’;

6. The Central Adoption Resource Authority is
   1. The Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions
   2. Mandated to monitor and regulate in-country adoptions

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.

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.
- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with

5. That “a sentence of death can only be imposed by a court when the alternative of life imprisonment is unquestionably foreclosed”, was laid down by the Supreme Court in which one of the following cases?
   (a) Bachan Singh
   (b) Santa Singh
   (c) Dagdu
   (d) Mohamed Arif

Solution: a.

“On February 3, the Supreme Court passed an order in the December 16, 2012 gang-rape case which could have far reaching consequences on the administration of the death penalty in India. Recognising that neither the trial court nor the high court considered any evidence regarding the mitigating circumstances of the accused before sentencing him/her to the death penalty, the court granted defense counsel extensive access to the accused in prison and sought relevant mitigating evidence.”

“In the landmark case of Bachan Singh (1980), the SC resoundingly laid down that a sentence of death can only be imposed by a court when the alternative of life imprisonment is unquestionably foreclosed. In aid of this determination, the court held that “great weight” be given to mitigating factors including the probability of reformation of the accused or the existence of extreme mental disturbance. However, India’s death penalty jurisprudence has since suffered from the lack of judicial guidelines on the collection or presentation of mitigating factors.”

IE: Hard cases and good law;

- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

About CARA;
Improvisation: IE;
1. Rotary India will support the National Mission for Clean Ganga through their ‘WASH in Schools’ programme. Here, ‘WASH’ refers to

(a) Water, sanitation and hygiene

(b) Promotion of waste segregation at source which will help River Ganga become ‘healthy’

(c) Reforming teacher training to impart basic environment education to students

(d) Incentivising behavioural change

Solution: a.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1, 2 and 3

(b) 2, 3 and 4

(c) 1, 2 and 4

(d) 1, 3 and 4

Solution: c.

Panchgavya includes milk, curd, ghee, dung and urine. The use of Panchgavya in food, medicine, agriculture, etc. is already in practice in various parts of rural India.

IE: Chewing the cud;

2. The cow-based rural economy and the use of ‘Panchgavya’ is a part of daily life in the Indian Subcontinent. ‘Panchgavya’ includes

1. Milk
2. Curd
3. Butter
4. Ghee

Solution: c.

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Milk from desi (indigenous) cows naturally contain A2 type milk protein.

2. A2 type milk protein is known to protect humans from various chronic health problems such as Cardio Vascular Diseases and Diabetes.

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.

This question has been posted here before.

“...”
4. Which one of the following is the best description of the term “Merchant Discount Rate”?

(a) The discount offered by banks to incentivise merchants to promote cashless payments among their customers

(b) A transaction charge levied by the settlement provider in every card transaction

(c) A transaction charge levied by the sponsoring bank of the point-of-service device

(d) A charge that merchants are supposed to pay every time a debit card or credit card is swiped at their end for a transaction by a customer

Solution: d.

- **Merchant Discount Rate** or **MDR** is a charge that merchants pay every time a debit card or credit card is swiped at their end for a transaction by a customer.

- This charge, typically 1% of the transaction, is divided among three parties – to the company that has installed the Point of Sale (PoS) machine (usually a ‘sponsoring bank’), the network provider (or, ‘settlement provider’) such as MasterCard, Visa or RuPay, and the card-issuing bank (the issuer).

IE: MDR Explained;

IE: Conditions for a less-cash India;

5. Which State Assembly recently passed a Bill aimed at overhauling private healthcare and taking stringent measures against health institutions indulging in medical negligence and corrupt practices?

(a) Kerala

(b) Madhya Pradesh

(c) West Bengal

(d) Rajasthan

Solution: c.

- The **West Bengal** Assembly on Friday passed a Bill aimed at overhauling private healthcare and taking stringent measures against health institutions indulging in medical negligence and corrupt practices, The **West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency Bill) Bill 2017** was passed by voice vote.

- Participating in the discussion on the Bill, Ms. Banerjee said the law was aimed at bringing transparency, ending harassment of patients and checking medical negligence in private hospitals and nursing homes.

- The law also covers clinics, dispensaries and polyclinics.

TH: WB passes Bill to rein in private hospitals;

6. Arrange the following list of rivers as one would come across them while moving broadly from North to South in India:

1. Chenab
2. Jhelum
3. Beas
4. Ravi

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1-2-3-4

(b) 2-1-4-3

(c) 3-4-1-2

(d) 4-3-2-1

Solution: b.
Improvisation: TH: Crossing a bridge;

7. The Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) consists of
   1. A senior technical expert in the realm of hydrology and water usage
   2. Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs
   3. Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

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

Solution: a.

About the PIC:
   o India and Pakistan each nominate a senior technical expert in the realm of hydrology and water usage as the Indus Commissioner. The Indus Commissioners constitute the PIC. The PIC meets at least once a year.

   o There is a basic purpose for which this mechanism was built into the Treaty. It is the first tier where hydrological engineers are expected use their techno-economic acumen in a cooperative spirit to arrive at an agreed view or give their analyses on the differing views on interpretation of water flow and usage data, incidental structures constructed or planned in the Indus basin, etc., and submit a report annually... to the two governments.

   o In the event it is unable to proceed because of differences between the Indus Commissioners or if there is a delay in arriving at decisions by a Commissioner or both, there is a provision for attempting a political solution. However, the idea of the initial negotiators of the Treaty was that mutual cooperation and understanding should be feasible at the PIC level itself.

IDSA; Article VIII, IWT;

Improvisation: TH: Crossing a bridge;
1. Gross Domestic Product in India is measured by
   1. Product method
   2. Expenditure method
   3. Income method
   Select the correct answer using the code given below:
   (a) 1 and 2 Only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) 2 and 3 Only
   (d) 3 only

   Solution: a.

   GDP in India is measured in two ways: by the 
   **expenditure approach** or the **output approach**.

   - In the output approach, the CSO measures 
     economic activity and arrives at the total value of 
     goods and services produced under eight different 
     heads. The problem with this approach is of timely 
     availability of data for calculating the value of goods 
     and services.

   - Ideally, the same numbers should be reached by 
     using either of the two approaches. But getting the 
     real picture of Private Final Consumption 
     Expenditure (required for measuring GDP by 
     expenditure method) is difficult — and hence, a 
     new “Discrepancies” head inserted under the 
     expenditure approach takes care of the difference 
     in value reached by employing the two approaches.

   IE: [Demonetisation and the ‘surprise’ over high GDP numbers](#);

2. The International Olympic Committee has proposed to make shooting ranges across 
   the world bullet-free by introducing laser shooting. How does shooting in its present 
   format harm the environment?

   (a) Bullets that the shooters use are made of lead, which gets into the 
       atmosphere every time a shot is fired

   (b) It’s contribution to noise pollution is considered to be a reason for the 
       decline in biodiversity around shooting ranges

   (c) Bullets or pellets used in shooting are manufactured predominantly in 
       developing nations, where compliance by manufacturers with international 
       environmental standards has been found to be poor

   (d) Shooting does not harm the environment in any manner; the 
       proposed change is meant to make the sport appealing to millennials

   Solution: a.

   The most important reason is to make shooting more 
   appealing to millennials — young people who reached 
   adulthood in the early 21st century, and whose support 
   and interest all sport needs to survive. The change will 
   also make shooting television-friendly, an aspect where 
   it lacks sorely at present. It will also take care of the 
   complications involved in carrying weapons and 
   ammunition by shooters while travelling from one 
   country to another. The bullets that the shooters use 
   are made of lead, which gets into the atmosphere every 
   time a shot is fired. The chemical can potentially have 
   an adverse effect on the nervous system. Thousands of 
   bullets are used at each shooting range every day.

   IE: [Star wars at the range](#);

3. The maximum tax rate, according to the 
   revised draft of the model GST law, that 
   can be levied on any good or service — 
   taking the sum of the central and state 
   GST – will be

   (a) 18 per cent
   (b) 28 per cent
   (c) 36 per cent
   (d) 40 per cent

   Solution: d.

   - The GST levy may go up to 40% after the GST 
     Council proposed raising the peak rate in the Bill to 
     20%, from the current 14%, to obviate the need for 
     approaching Parliament for any change in rates in 
     future.

   - The model Goods and Services Tax Bill will replace 
     the clause which states the tax rate “not exceeding 
     14%, with “not exceeding 20%” when it comes up
for debate in Parliament during the second phase of Budget session beginning next week.

- The change in the peak rate will not alter the 4-slab rate structure of 5, 12, 18 and 28% agreed upon last year for the moment, but is only a provision being built into the model law to take care of contingencies in future.
- The revised draft of model GST law, which was made public in November 2016, provides for a maximum rate of tax under the new regime at 14% (14% central GST and an equal state GST, taking the total to 28%).

GST levy may go up to 40 per cent.

4. ‘Womenomics’, sometimes in the news, refers to the efforts of which one of the following nations to bring more women into the workforce?

(a) India
(b) Japan
(c) Germany
(d) Norway

Solution: b.

“Womenomics, the popular term for Japan’s efforts to bring more women into the workforce, clearly does not extend to the imperial throne. Women are barred from royal succession.”

- “Womenomics” has become a well-known term in Japan since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made it one of the main pillars of his government growth strategy in 2013. The point of Womenomics is to pull more women into the workforce, primarily to boost the economy and make up for the decline in the nation’s working-age population, which is projected to shrink by about a third by 2060.

TH: A people’s war against terror;

5. ‘East Turkistan Islamic Movement’ refers to an insurgency in which one of the following countries?

(a) China
(b) Turkistan
(c) Turkey
(d) Iraq

Solution: a.

“The mobilisation of the armed forces in Urumqi (capital of Xinjiang Autonomous Region) followed the mid-February knife-attack near Hotan, in which eight people were killed. These killings are the result of an ethnic Uighur militancy, which has been draped as an identity and power contest between the indigenous Uighurs and Han settlers of Xinjiang.”

- According to Wikipedia, “The Turkistan Islamic Party or Turkistan Islamic Movement, formerly known as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, is an Islamic extremist separatist organization founded by Uyghur militants in western China. Its stated goals are to establish an independent state called “East Turkestan” in Xinjiang.”

TH: A game of thrones rigged against women;

6. Which of the following is/are changes that the draft Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2014 makes to the MTP Act of 1971?

1. A pregnancy can be terminated (within the prescribed length of pregnancy) if registered health care providers are of the opinion that continuance of the pregnancy would involve a risk of grave injury to mental health of the pregnant woman

2. The length of the pregnancy as prescribed in the act shall not apply to the termination of a pregnancy, where such termination is necessitated by the diagnosis of any substantial foetal abnormalities
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.
The first statement is provided for in the original (and at present, in force) MTP Act; with respect to this provision, the only difference is that the length of pregnancy should not exceed 20 weeks in the original MTP Act whereas in the draft MTP amendment bill, the length is 24 weeks. Statement 2 is correct.

- “Had the draft Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill of 2014 been implemented as law, this case would not have come to court at all. The Bill amends Section 3 of the principle Act of 1971 to provide that “the length of pregnancy shall not apply” in a decision to abort a foetus diagnosed with “substantial foetal abnormalities as may be prescribed”.

- “Besides increasing the legal limit for abortion from 20 weeks to 24 weeks, the draft Bill allows a woman to take an independent decision in consultation with a registered health-care provider. Under the 1971 Act, even pregnant rape victims cannot abort after 20 weeks, compelling them to move court.”

- “With the 2014 Bill in limbo, the Supreme Court has agreed to look into whether a wider interpretation ought to be given to phrases like “risk to the life of the pregnant woman” and “grave injury to her physical and mental health”.”

Page 4, Draft MTP Amendment Bill, 2014;

Improvisation: TH: The right to choice;

7. What may be the reason for the likely possibility that Tamil Nadu may witness a rise, not decline, in rubella infections in spite of the measles-rubella vaccine campaign?

(a) The state has witnessed an unusual number of adverse reactions to the vaccine, rendering the campaign unsuccessful
(b) A unique strain of Rubella, found only in Greece and Brazil, known to have caused an unexpected rise in infections post-vaccination, was recently found in the state
(c) Vaccination coverage is around 50 per cent
(d) Both a and b

Solution: c.
- Only about 50% of children aged nine months to 15 years in Tamil Nadu have been vaccinated by the measles-rubella (MR) combination vaccine since the campaign was launched.
- Unless and otherwise the vaccination coverage is increased to over 90%, there is a high possibility that the State would witness more rubella infections among older age groups (pregnant women, for instance).
- This would, in turn, lead to an increase in the number of newborns with congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) — hearing impairments, eye and heart defects and brain damage — when women get infected with rubella virus during the early stages of pregnancy.
- “When the rubella childhood immunisation coverage in communities is sub-optimal, there will more number of CRS cases than before as the infection shifts to an older age group. This is called the paradoxical increase in CRS,” says Dr. Jacob John.
- “There will be fewer CRS cases initially (one-three years) after immunisation. But in four-five years, as the infection shifts to an older age group, there will be more CRS cases than before.”
- “In order to avoid this we need high coverage during both the campaign and the universal immunisation programme (UIP),” he says. There is a compulsion that the UIP becomes more efficient than before.
- Greece and Brazil witnessed the paradoxical increase in CRS due to shift of age distribution of rubella cases (due to consistently low vaccination coverage).

TH: Low MR vaccine coverage in TN a worry;
8. ‘Gadgil Committee Report’ and ‘Kasturirangan Committee Report’, sometimes seen in the news, are related to
(a) Constitutional reforms
(b) Ganga Action Plan
(c) Linking of rivers
(d) Protection of Western Ghats

Solution: d.
Q43, CS(P) 2016;
TH: Centre dithers on Western Ghats issue;

9. ‘Gahirmatha Sanctuary’ was recently in the news for which one of the following reasons?
(a) Having been listed in the Montreux Record in 2011, the Bhitarkanika Mangroves – a part of this sanctuary – was recently removed from it
(b) A record-breaking mass nesting by the endangered olive Ridley turtles took place here
(c) It has been recognised by the UNESCO as a natural World Heritage Site
(d) The National Tiger Conservation Authority has approved a proposal to bring in tigers from the Sariska Tiger Reserve

Solution: b.

- Tens of thousands of eggs laid by Olive Ridley sea turtles this year in Gahirmatha Sanctuary in Odisha, one of the world’s largest nesting grounds, are getting destroyed due to shrinking coastal space.
- The Odisha Forest and Environment Department estimates that 6,04,046 turtles have come to lay eggs at Nasi II island of Gahirmatha from February 22. The turtles had largely given the island a miss in 2016, with only 50,000 coming to nest.
- A female sea turtle scoops beach sand out to lay 80 to 120 eggs, but its effort is undone when a second digs at the same place to lay its own. This season, turtles are estimated to have laid close to 60 million eggs along a 1,000-metre beach of Nasi II.

- What may have prompted the record-breaking mass nesting – this too could be asked as a question in the preliminary exam. In brief, it was the formation of a sand bar at the mouth of Rushikulya river which diverted fresh water away from the sea onto the coast (north of the mouth of the river), thereby reducing salinity of water along the coast. Reduced salinity attracts more small fish and insects (this is also food for turtles). And lesser salinity means reduced corrosive effect on egg shells (Information from this article).

TH: For Olive Ridleys, it’s paradise lost;
Daily Quiz
7th MARCH 2017

1. With reference to the ‘ICE 360°’ survey, consider the following statements:

1. It is conducted by an independent, not-for-profit organisation
2. “Income and Consumption”, and “Debt Situation of Households” are the only themes explored by this survey across households in emerging economies
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 Only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: a.

- Peoples Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE) is an independent, not-for-profit research centre, a ‘think tank’ and ‘facts tank’ engaged in building and disseminating seminal knowledge and insights about India’s Macro Consumer Economy and Citizen’s Environment, for use in formulating public policy and in shaping business strategy.
- The core of PRICE’s work focuses on “how India, earns, spends, saves, lives, thinks, accesses public goods and amenities”.
- The survey name has “360°” mentioned in it. You could guess that the scope of the survey must then be wide, and not just restricted to two themes. ICE 360° stands for “Household Survey on India’s Citizen Environment & Consumer Economy” (ICE 360° Survey, 2016).
- “The survey is designed to be multi-dimensional and goes beyond incomes and savings. It also takes a deeper look at the economic and social well-being of Indian households, provides normative measures of social, political and financial inclusion, degree of access to public goods and infrastructure and welfare measures of the government”. The point for you to be aware of, is that this is a multi-dimensional survey, that’s all.

About ICE 360°:

Improvisation: TH: All those who are out of the tax net;

2. Which of the following are ‘priority areas’ of the Indian Ocean Rim Association?

1. Maritime Security
2. Trade and Investment Facilitation
3. Disaster Risk Reduction
4. Fisheries Management
5. Tourism Promotion and Cultural Exchanges

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

Ans: d.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the apex pan-Indian Ocean multilateral forum, has identified six priority areas namely,
- Maritime Security,
- Trade and Investment facilitation,
- fisheries management,
- disaster risk reduction,
- academic and scientific cooperation and
- tourism promotion and cultural exchanges.”

2015: PIB;
IE: Choppy waters, unsure navigator;

3. Which of the following countries are members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association?

1. Kenya
2. United Arab Emirates
3. China
4. Malaysia
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

**China is not a member.** “It was India that took the diplomatic initiative at the beginning of this decade to revive the moribund idea of Indian Ocean regionalism. That move suggested that Delhi’s sea-blindness was finally giving way to a belated recognition of the nation’s maritime imperative. India’s growing sea-borne trade and a historic power shift in the Indian Ocean compelled Delhi to pay greater attention to securing a sustainable regional order in the vast littoral.”

Wikipedia: IORA;
IE: Choppy waters, unsure navigator;

4. The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval for India’s accession to the Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention). In this context, consider the following statements:

1. The convention is an international transit system under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
2. Compliance with the convention can help India boost trade with the Central Asian Republics

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

The **TIR Convention** is an international transit system under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to facilitate the seamless movement of goods within and amongst the Parties to the Convention. At present there are 70 parties to the Convention, including the European Union.

✓ By joining the convention, the need for inspection of goods at intermediate borders as well as physical escorts en route shall be obviated due to reciprocal recognition of Customs controls. Customs clearance can take place at internal Customs locations thereby avoiding clearances at Border Crossing Points and ports that may often be congested.

✓ The TIR carnet also serves as a Customs declaration, and hence it precludes the need to file multiple declarations satisfying national laws of the different transiting countries.

✓ The TIR Convention can be an instrument for movement of goods along the International “North-South” Transport (INSTC) Corridor and would be helpful in boosting trade with the Central Asian Republics and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), particularly using ports in Iran like the Chabahar port.

PIB;

5. The Central Statistical Organisation, which is responsible for the preparation of national accounts, is an organisation under the aegis of

(a) Reserve Bank of India
(b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
(d) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Solution: c.

CSO, MoSPI;

Improvisation: TH: Cracking the GDP mystery;
1. Consider the following statements about 'The Global Fund':

1. It assists governments in implementation of programs designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics

2. India has always received its supplies of the drug for the treatment of children living with HIV from this institution

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

"After running out of the child-friendly HIV syrup, Lopinavir, India is likely to procure the drug from a rapid supply facility routed through the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), a multilateral donor agency.\text{"}, so statement 2 is incorrect.

- The Global Fund (or The Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – GFTAM) is a financing institution, providing support to countries in the response to the three diseases (HIV, TB and Malaria); \text{they do not implement programs} on the ground.

- It is a 21st-century partnership organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics.

- Founded in 2002, it is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases. It raises and invests nearly USD$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in countries and communities most in need.

The Global Fund: \text{Overview};

Improvisation: \text{TH: Global Fund to help solve India's HIV drug crisis};

2. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)

1. Can look into the wisdom, faithfulness and economy of government expenditure and comment on the wastefulness of such expenditure

2. Differs from the CAG of Britain who has powers of both Comptroller as well as Auditor General

3. Has more freedom with regard to audit of expenditure than with regard to audit of receipts

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

"Demonetisation per se is a banking and money supply issue and as such, outside the CAG’s audit jurisdiction. But the CAG is well within its rights to seek audit of fiscal impact of demonetisation, largely its impact on tax revenues. That way the issue gets linked with the public exchequer,” said CAG Shashi Kant Sharma.

- The CAG is an agent of the Parliament and conducts audit of expenditure on behalf of the Parliament. Therefore, he is responsible only to the Parliament.

- The CAG has more freedom with regard to audit of expenditure than with regard to audit of receipts, stores and stock. "Whereas in relation to expenditure he decides the scope of audit and frames his own audit codes and manuals, he has to proceed with the approval of the executive government in relation to rules for the conduct of the other audits."

- The CAG has ‘to ascertain whether money shown in the accounts as having been disbursed was legally available for and applicable to the service or the purpose to which they have been applied or charged and whether the expenditure conforms to the authority that governs it’.

- In addition to this legal and regulatory audit, the CAG can also conduct the propriety audit, that is, he can look into the ‘wisdom, faithfulness and
economy of government expenditure and comment on the wastefulness and extravagance of such expenditure. However, unlike the legal and regulatory audit, which is obligatory on the part of the CAG, the propriety audit is discretionary.

Improvisation: TH: CAG to undertake audit of demonetisation fallout;
Ch-45, CAG, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

3. Currently, the CAG of which one of the following nations is the Chairman of the United Nations Board of Auditors?

(a) Tanzania
(b) Germany
(c) India
(d) Cambodia

Solution: c.

The CAG of India has taken over as the Chairman of the UN Board of Auditors from January 1 this year, for a period of two years.

- As Chairman, his job is to report audit findings of the Board of Auditors (It is responsible for the audit of 28 United Nations entities or projects) to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which is a committee like our Public Accounts Committee.

- Currently, Auditors General of Germany and Tanzania are the other two members on the Board. (The General Assembly appoints three members, each of whom must be the Auditor-General [or officer holding the equivalent title] of a Member State. The members of the Board have joint responsibility for the audits.)

- The Board’s job is to provide independent assurance to the General Assembly on matters relating to proper use of resources by the management.

TH: Interview with CAG;
UN Board of Auditors;

4. Which of the following statements with reference to the draft Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 is incorrect?

(a) It permits infertile and legally-wedded Indian couples to have children through surrogacy
(b) It permits only altruistic and not commercial surrogacy
(c) The surrogate mother must be a close relative of the intending couple
(d) It specifically prohibits single men and women from becoming parents by means of surrogacy

Solution: d.

Statement ‘d’ is incorrect.

- A Supreme Court Bench recently allowed a representation to be made before the parliamentary committee to consider including a “specific provision” in the Bill so as to facilitate single persons also to embrace parenthood through surrogacy.

- “There is no specific provision about single parents in the Bill, but the Bill also does not specifically prohibit them,” senior advocate Shekhar Napahade, for a petitioner, submitted.

PRS Bill Summary;

Improvisation: TH: SC opens surrogacy window for singles;

5. Consider the following statements:

1. According to a recent report by the International Labour Organisation, India has one of the lowest rates of women’s labour force participation in Asia

2. The proportion of working women in India has dropped in the course of the first decade of this century

3. Currently, participation of women in MGNREGA is greater than men’s
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“According to a recent report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), India and Pakistan have the lowest rates of women’s labour force participation in Asia, in sharp contrast to Nepal, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia that have the highest, with richer nations like Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia falling in between. Moreover, even this low rate of labour force participation seems to be declining. The National Sample Survey found that while in 1999-2000, 25.9% of all women worked, by 2011-12 this proportion had dropped to 21.9%. This is in stark contrast to worldwide trends. Of the 185 nations that are part of the ILO database, since the 1990s, 114 countries have recorded an increase in the proportion of women in the workforce, and only 41 recorded declines, with India leading the pack.”

- **Budget Speech 2017-18**: “Participation of women in MGNREGA has increased to 55% from less than 48% in the past.”

TH: No economy for women;

6. The ‘Six Party Talks’, sometimes in the news, is related to

(a) The situation in Afghanistan
(b) The North Korean Nuclear Weapons Program
(c) The Naga political issue
(d) Petroleum Exploration in the Arctic

Solution: b.

- **South Korea, North Korea, the USA, China, Japan and Russia** are a part of these talks. The talks aim to find a peaceful resolution to the security concerns as a result of the North Korean nuclear weapons program (in the aftermath of North Korea withdrawing from the NPT).

Wikipedia: Six Party Talks;

TH: Sparks in a tinder box;

7. In what ways do naturally-occurring wildfires play an integral role in nature?

1. They help return nutrients to the soil
2. They act as a disinfectant
3. They allow sunlight to reach the forest floor, enabling a new generation of seedlings to grow

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

“Although often harmful and destructive to humans, naturally occurring wildfires play an integral role in nature. They return nutrients to the soil by burning dead or decaying matter. They also act as a disinfectant, removing disease-ridden plants and harmful insects from a forest ecosystem. And by burning through thick canopies and brushy undergrowth, wildfires allow sunlight to reach the forest floor, enabling a new generation of seedlings to grow.”

“How to control or stop them” – NatGeo: Wildfires;

Improvisation: TH: How to tame our forest fires;
1. The ‘Destination North East-2017’ is being organized by the Ministry of Development of North-East Region to
   (a) Showcase the North East as a potential destination for investment
   (b) Highlight the rich traditions and customs of the North East, promoting the region as a tourist destination
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) None

   Solution: c.

   • The ‘Destination North East-2017’ is being organized by the Ministry of DoNER to showcase North East as a potential destination for investment and highlight the rich traditions and customs of the region.
   • The core theme of the festival is to highlight the use of appropriate technologies in all sectors of development for North Eastern Region.
   • The festival was organized in New Delhi in 2016, and in Chandigarh in 2017.

PIB;

2. ‘Tejaswini’, a programme aired on Doordarshan channel, is about
   (a) Divyangjans who have built a successful career despite all the odds stacked against them
   (b) Women achievers who had the courage to tread unusual paths
   (c) Men who have established a work-life balance so as to share the responsibilities of nurturing their families at home
   (d) Children belonging to marginalized communities who cracked the Joint Entrance Examination sans any coaching

   Solution: b.

   “The Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has lauded the efforts of Doordarshan to highlight the lives of those women who have distinguished themselves in taking up challenges & realizing high aspirations. The WCD Minister was speaking at an event organized in New Delhi today on the occasion of completion of 100 episodes of flagship programme for women ‘Tejaswini’, produced by Doordarshan News.”

PIB;

3. The ‘Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women’, often described as an international bill of rights for women, is an international treaty adopted by which one of the following organisations/entities?
   (a) Women International
   (b) Liberal Women’s Organisation
   (c) United Nations General Assembly
   (d) Global Fund for Women

   Solution: c.

   CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. It was adopted in 1979 by the UNGA.

   “The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United Nations Entity of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).”

   • The proposal seeks to provide technical support to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in strengthening capacities of governance institutions including Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to better leverage opportunities created for gender equality through legislation, policies and programmes.
   • In the long run, it will enable an improvement in the status of rural women in India, as well as contribute to meeting India’s commitment to the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN: CEDAW;
Improvisation: PIB;
4. Which of the following is/are the key features of India’s new Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy?
   1. A single, uniform license for the extraction and exploration of all hydrocarbons, except shale gas and shale oil
   2. An Open Acreage Licensing Policy, whereby a bidder may apply to the government seeking exploration of any block not already covered by exploration
   3. A concessional royalty regime for shallow-water blocks

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

Solution: b.

The key features of HELP are:
- Single, uniform license for extraction and exploration for all types of hydrocarbon prospects (including unconventional hydrocarbons, that is shale oil and shale gas)
- Open acreage licensing (OAL) which will permit investors to explore blocks not already covered by exploration
- Simple and easy to administer Revenue Sharing Model
- Full marketing freedom and free pricing for crude oil and natural gas
- Exploration allowed during entire contract period
- Zero royalty rates for deep water & ultra-deep water blocks for first 7 years
- Equal weightage to work program and fiscal share
- No oil cess
- Custom duty exemption

5. Consider the following statements about the Indian Ocean Rim Association:
   1. The Association was created before India embarked upon economic reforms
   2. The first IORA Leaders’ Summit was organised in Indonesia this year

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

Solution: b.

The IORA was created in 1997.

“The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has said that the outcomes of the First Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Leaders’ Summit were satisfying. He was addressing the Media onboard Air India One Special Aircraft while returning back from Jakarta, Indonesia after participating in the Summit, on March 07, 2017.”

“The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) celebrated its 20th Anniversary when Indonesia, as the current Chair of IORA, hosted the first ever IORA Leaders’ Summit on 7 March 2017 in Jakarta under the theme “Strengthening Maritime Cooperation for a Peaceful, Stable, and Prosperous Indian Ocean”. In a historic first, the Summit brought together the Leaders of the 21 IORA Member States and its 7 Dialogue Partners as well as other special invitees including the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.”

Background, IORA:
PIB;

6. The ‘General Financial Rules’ are rules and orders dealing with matters involving
   (a) Public Finances
   (b) Loan Disbursals by the banking sector
   (c) Foreign Direct Investments
   (d) Strategic Disinvestments

PIB;
Solution: a.

- GFRs are rules and orders dealing with matters involving public finances.
- General Financial Rules were issued for the first time in 1947 bringing together in one place all existing orders and instructions pertaining to financial matters. These have subsequently been modified and issued as GFRs 1963 and GFRs 2005.
- In the last few years, the Government has made many innovative changes in the way it conducts its business. Reforms in the Government Budgeting like removal of distinction in non-plan and plan expenditure, merger of Railway Budget with General Budget, focusing on outcomes through an improved Outcome Budget document, all needed to be reflected in the GFRs.

PIB;
Daily Quiz

1. ‘Border Haats’ aim at promoting the wellbeing of people dwelling in remote areas across the borders, by establishing the traditional system of marketing local produce through local markets. Currently, these border haats are operational along
   1. India-Bangladesh Border
   2. India-Myanmar Border
   3. India-Nepal Border
   4. India-Bhutan Border

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

Solution: b.

According to this [PIB release] dated December 14th, 2016, border haats are operational only along India-Bangladesh border, and an MoU has been executed between GoI and GoMyanmar on border haats.

According to this [TH article] dated today, the government is mulling opening more ‘border haats’ (border markets), encouraged by its success at the India-Myanmar border.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is the parent ministry for these border haats.

2. With reference to ‘Submarine Canyons’, consider the following statements:
   1. These are formed when one tectonic plate slides over another
   2. No such canyons are found in Indian waters

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

Solution: d.

Britannica: Submarine canyons;
3. Should a submarine canyon be found in Indian waters, what are the potential benefits that may accrue to India?
   1. India’s crude oil import bill will fall
   2. It will help us develop new treatment systems for heart diseases

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.

These are the probable, not definite, benefits.

**Submarine Canyon:** Any of a class of narrow steep-sided valleys that cut into continental slopes and continental rises of the oceans. Submarine canyons originate either within continental slopes or on a continental shelf.

The new canyon system is very huge and **probably** formed by the river Kandivalasa. The depth of the canyon varies from about 90 metres from the starting point to about 2,500 metres at the deepest point, and it extends to about 50 to 70 km deep into the sea and the width varies from 50 metres to two km.

- **Justification for Statement 1:** Most of the canyons in the ocean system across the world act as channels for depositing sediments in the shelf region. “The more the deposit, the more are the chances of finding hydro-carbons. But it is too early to say on this aspect, as we have just discovered the canyon and the shelf region is yet to be explored,” said Dr. Prasanna Kumar.

- The discovery of the canyon is not only a major breakthrough in underwater geological formations, but also gives us immense scope to study and explore new benthic ecosystem.

- **Justification for Statement 2:** The study of ecology and fauna and micro organisms will not only tell us about our past but also throw light on new science. The study of how organisms live and flourish at low oxygen level and high current system can lead us to understand human heart diseases better and help us develop new treatment system.

4. The Punjab Agricultural University recently announced that it was the first in India to develop genetically-modified varieties of cotton. What is it that is unique about these indigenous GM varieties?
   (a) They are resistant to bollworms
   (b) Not only are they resistant to hitherto unaffected insects and pests, these crops are expected to double the cotton production in India
   (c) They are effective against the whitefly insect that destroyed two-thirds of Punjab’s cotton crop in 2015
   (d) The seeds of these GM varieties of cotton can be reused by farmers

Solution: d.

“Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana has announced that it has developed the country’s first genetically-modified varieties of cotton — the seeds of which could be reused by farmers with no commercial restrictions, resulting in savings on repeat purchases every season… with these varieties, farmers would not have to buy costly Bt cotton seeds every year. The farmers can keep their own harvest for next year’s sowing..”

**TH:** Punjab varsity develops new Bt cotton varieties;

5. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section, Representation of the People Act, 1951</th>
<th>Provision regarding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Use of religion in the electoral arena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123(3)</td>
<td>Elected Representatives convicted of certain offences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126(A)</td>
<td>Exit polls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 2 Only
(c) 3 Only
(d) 2 and 3 Only
Solution: c.

- **Section 126A(1)** of RP Act prohibits the conduct and publicising of an **exit poll** by the media for a period specified by the EC.

- “The Supreme Court has grappled with the question whether a provision in electoral law that makes it a corrupt practice to use religion, race, caste or language as a ground for canvassing votes in an election is a bar limited to the groups to which candidates or their rivals belong, or whether it is a general prohibition on sectarian appeals. Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, as amended in 1961, gave rise to this doubt. By a four-three majority, a seven-member Bench has ruled that it is a general prohibition on the use of religion or any other communal or sectarian value in the electoral arena.”

- **Section 8** of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, says that MPs or MLAs convicted of certain offences, including for corruption, are disqualified from the time they are convicted until six years have passed after their prison sentence is completed.

Improvisation: **TH: Making a clean break**;

6. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security is the regulatory authority for civil aviation security in India. It is under the administrative control of

(a) Ministry of Civil Aviation

(b) Ministry of Home Affairs

(c) Ministry of Defence

(d) Ministry of Urban Development

Solution: a.

The BCAS was reorganized into an independent department on 1st April, 1987 under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The main responsibility of BCAS are lay down standards and measures in respect of security of civil flights at International and domestic airports in India.

About **BCAS**;

Improvisation: “In Brief”, ‘News’ Page, The Hindu; **NIE**;

7. Which among the following are among the five key issues under consideration of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the United Nations Security Council Reform?

1. Categories of membership
2. Regional representation
3. The question of veto
4. Relationship between the Council and the General Assembly

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1, 3 and 4 only

(b) 1 and 3 only

(c) 2 and 4 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Solution: d.

The five key issues under consideration in these negotiations are:

- categories of membership to the Council (i.e. permanent, non-permanent, or a third option),
- the question of the veto,
- regional representation,
- size of an enlarged council and working methods, and
- the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

**Centre for UN Reform; Page 3, Framework Document**;

Improvisation: **TH: No change in India’s stance on UNSC Veto**;

1. Twenty-six weeks maternity leave to working women for the first child
2. Twelve weeks maternity leave to commissioning mothers
3. Every establishment with more than fifty women employees to provide for crèche facilities for working mothers

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.

Statement 1: Maternity leave available to the working women to be increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for the first two children. Naturally, 26 weeks maternity leave is available to the mother for the birth of her first child.

Statement 2: Maternity leave of 12 weeks to be available to mothers adopting a child below the age of three months as well as to the “commissioning mothers”. The commissioning mother has been defined as biological mother who uses her egg to create an embryo planted in any other woman.

Statement 3: Every establishment with more than 50 employees (no mention of '50 women employees') to provide for crèche facilities for working mothers and such mothers will be permitted to make four visits during working hours to look after and feed the child in the crèche.

2. With reference to the Global Maritime Energy Efficiency Partnership (GloMEEP) project, which one of the following statements is not correct?

(a) It was developed jointly by the International Maritime Organisation and the World Trade Organisation
(b) It is funded by the Global Environment Facility
(c) India is one among the ten Lead Pilot Countries of the project
(d) a, b and c are all incorrect

Solution: a.

Statement 1&2: The GloMEEP project was developed, jointly by UNDP and IMO, and funded by the GEF.

GloMEEP is a GEF-UNDP-IMO project aimed at supporting the uptake and implementation of energy efficiency measures for shipping, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions from shipping. The GloMEEP Project is being executed by a dedicated Project Coordination Unit (PCU) established within the Marine Environment Division of IMO.

GloMEEP supports ten Lead Pilot Countries of the project to implement these measures, through:

- Legal, policy and institutional reforms
- Awareness raising and capacity-building activities
- Establishment of public-private partnerships to encourage technology transfer

About GloMEEP:

Improvisation: PIB;

3. Seen recently in the news, Section 16 of the Right to Education Act, 2009 is related to

(a) Student-teacher ratio
(b) Reservation for students from economically disadvantaged communities in all private schools
(c) No-detention policy
(d) Distance of a school from the child’s residence

Solution: c.
Section 16, RTE: Prohibition of holding back and expulsion: No child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary education (till Class 8).

The following link provides a brief write-up about the committees that have been set up regarding the No-detention policy and the recommendations – PIB;

4. ‘Vision Zero’ is a term frequently used across the world in the context of
   (a) Improving the quality of manufactured products
   (b) Reducing transport sector emissions
   (c) Safety of humans
   (d) Preventing illegal trade of endangered plant and animal species

Solution: c.

“The international conference on the VISION ZERO and its relevance to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), is being organized in New Delhi. The conference aims to focus on the Occupational Safety and Health issues and challenges in the Manufacturing, Construction and Mining sector. The conference is expected to introduce the fast emerging internationally accepted concept of ‘Vision Zero’ in India.”

A Google search for ‘vision zero’ will throw up results regarding road safety projects across countries.

Improvisation: PIB;

5. NASA recently found India’s first lunar probe Chandrayaan-1, which was considered lost, still orbiting the moon. In this context, the term ‘mascon’ refers to
   (a) Regions on the moon with higher-than-average gravitational pull that can cause, over time, spacecrafts to crash into the moon
   (b) Lunar orbiters that are very small to be detected from Earth
   (c) Spacecrafts that are no longer under any form of communication with earth, causing them to wander in any direction in space
   (d) The telescope that received the reflected beam of microwaves that were sent in the direction of the moon, confirming the find of the lost lunar probe

Solution: a.

- To find a spacecraft 380,000 km away, JPL’s team used NASA’s 70-metre antenna at NASA’s Goldstone Deep Space Communications Complex in California to send out a powerful beam of microwaves towards the moon. Then the radar echoes bounced back from lunar orbit were received by the 100-metre Green Bank Telescope in West Virginia.
- Finding LRO was relatively easy, as we were working with the mission’s navigators and had precise orbit data. Finding Chandrayaan-1 required a bit more detective work because the last contact with the spacecraft was in August of 2009.
- Finding a derelict spacecraft at lunar distance that has not been tracked for years is tricky because the moon is riddled with mascons (regions with higher-than-average gravitational pull) that can dramatically affect a spacecraft’s orbit over time, and even cause it to have crashed into the moon.

TH: ‘Lost’ Chandrayaan-1 found orbiting moon;

6. The Indian Railways for the first time relocated a monument in one piece. Which monument was this?
   (a) Descent of the Ganges rock relief in Mahabalipuram
   (b) Tipu Sultan’s Armoury near Mysore
   (c) Lotus Mahal in Hampi
   (d) Lomas Rishi Cave in Barabar Hills

Solution: b.

TH: When history moved on wheels;
7. Four states which comprise India’s most human-elephant conflict-prone region have decided to count elephants synchronously. The census will be conducted by the states of

(a) Odisha, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal

(b) West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh

(c) Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh

(d) Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh

Solution: a.

- Four States — Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand — which comprise India’s most human-elephant conflict-prone region, have decided to count elephants synchronously between May 9 and 12.

- This will be the first regional synchronous elephant census with an identical set of rules for direct and indirect counting methods.

- The direct elephant counting method is based on sightings of elephants, while in the indirect method, surveyors follow a dung decay formula for arriving at a population estimation.

TH: Synchronous elephant count by four states in May;
1. The United Nations recently stated that the world is facing its largest humanitarian crisis since 1945. More than 20 million people are facing the threat of starvation and famine in
   (a) Syria, Iraq and Jordan
   (b) Libya, Tunisia and Algeria
   (c) Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria
   (d) Myanmar, North Korea, Gabon and Ghana

Solution: c.

Of course, there may be cases within other nations mentioned above, of people faced with the threat of famine and starvation. But the most appropriate answer in this instance is option 'c'. This is because, the UN Secretary General made an appeal last month for funds to deal with the situation in these four nations (Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia), and the UN Humanitarian chief very recently made a similar appeal with reference to the same issue.

BBC;

2. Which of the following statements with reference to the BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile is/are correct?
   1. It has been named after River Brahmaputra and River Moskva (flows in Western Russia).
   2. No ramjet engine can move any aircraft/missile from standstill. This is because a ramjet engine is “a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the engine’s forward motion to compress incoming air without an axial compressor”. That is, a ramjet engine “requires an assisted take-off to accelerate it to a speed where it begins to produce thrust”.
   3. The technology upgrade comes after India’s full membership to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which removed caps on range of BRAHMOS cruise missile. With this missile, the Indian Armed Forces will now be able to knock down enemy targets far beyond 400 kms.

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

Solution: d.

Statement 1: It has been named after River Brahmaputra and River Moskva (flows in Western Russia).

Statement 2: No ramjet engine can move any aircraft/missile from standstill. This is because a ramjet engine is “a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the engine’s forward motion to compress incoming air without an axial compressor”. That is, a ramjet engine “requires an assisted take-off to accelerate it to a speed where it begins to produce thrust”.

Learning: BRAHMOS is a two-stage missile with a solid propellant booster engine as its first stage which brings it to supersonic speed and then gets separated. The liquid ramjet or the second stage then takes the missile closer to 3 Mach speed in cruise phase.

Statement 3: The technology upgrade comes after India’s full membership to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which removed caps on range of BRAHMOS cruise missile. With this missile, the Indian Armed Forces will now be able to knock down enemy targets far beyond 400 kms.

TH; BrahMos Extended Range missile successfully test-fired;

About BrahMos;

NASA: Ramjet Propulsion;

3. Lake Baikal is
   1. The world’s largest freshwater lake
   2. Entirely located in Russia
   3. A UNESCO World Heritage Site

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.

Statement 1: It is the deepest continental body of water, and it contains around 20% of the world’s total unfrozen freshwater reserve.
**Daily Quiz**

12th & 13th MARCH 2017

- **Learning**: Known as the ‘Galapagos of Russia’, its age (it is the oldest existing freshwater lake) and isolation have produced one of the world’s richest and most unusual freshwater faunas, which is of exceptional value to evolutionary science. Hence, its status as a [UNESCO WHS](https://wwwunesco.org).  

- **In the news**: A vision document of the Lanzhou Urban and Rural Planning Design Institute has proposed a water pipeline starting from the southwest point of Lake Baikal. It will stretch for around 1,000 km to bring freshwater from the deepest lake in the world to Lanzhou (capital of a province in Northwest China). The proposal, still on paper, is likely to trigger a major controversy, with eco-conservationists in Russia possibly taking the lead. RT, Russia’s news network, has already reported that water levels of the pristine lake have fallen to a critical low of 456 metres, mainly due to the dwindling inflows. Consequently, residents near the lake have been advised to reduce consumption of water and power.

**TH: From Siberia to Lanzhou, via pipeline;**

**Britannica: Lake Baikal;**

4. ‘Europa Clipper’, in the news recently, is  
   (a) A spacecraft that will probe the habitability of one of Jupiter’s icy moons, belonging to the European Space Agency  
   (b) A very fast sailing vessel of the 19th century used by colonial Britishers  
   (c) An device that can trim grass without adversely affecting microbial life at the soil level  
   (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

NASA’s ‘Europa Clipper’, set for launch in the 2020s, will probe the habitability of Jupiter’s icy moon Europa. Europa has long been a high priority for exploration because it holds a salty liquid water ocean beneath its icy crust.

**TH: NASA’s Europa Clipper to probe habitability of Europa;**

5. Having suffered its most severe bleaching on record last year due to warming sea temperatures, this coral reef is experiencing its second straight year of mass coral bleaching. The reef in question is  
   (a) Australia’s Great Barrier Reef  
   (b) Red Sea’s Coral Reef  
   (c) The Amazon Reef  
   (d) Andaman and Nicobar Island’s Coral Reef

Solution: a.

Australia’s Great Barrier Reef is experiencing an unprecedented second straight year of mass coral bleaching, scientists said Friday, warning many species would struggle to fully recover. The 2,300-km reef suffered its most severe bleaching on record last year due to warming sea temperatures during March and April. Importantly, this is the first time ever that the Great Barrier Reef has been seen to bleach two years in sequence.

**TH: A mass coral bleaching again;**

6. The ‘Vaccine Safety Net’ site has been launched by  
   (a) The State Government of Tamil Nadu  
   (b) The World Health Organisation  
   (c) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India  
   (d) The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Solution: b.

The extent to which rumours about the safety of vaccines can impact the number of children vaccinated was witnessed in Tamil Nadu during the measles-rubella vaccination drive last month. Though the slip in vaccination coverage due to rumour-mongering is unprecedented for the State, patently wrong, misleading and unbalanced information about vaccine safety has been a menace across the world for many years now.

- As is the norm today, parents and caregivers often turn to the Internet for information about vaccine...
safety. Chances are that many people inadvertently land on websites that contain wrong and alarmingly misleading information. With such websites mushrooming, the World Health Organization launched the Vaccine Safety Net to provide doctors, parents and others access to “accurate and trustworthy information about vaccines.

- **Launched in 2003, the Vaccine Safety Net is a global network of vaccine safety websites, evaluated by the WHO.** Websites are subjected to severe vetting by the Vaccine Safety Net before being approved to become a member. The Indian Academy of Paediatrics’ Advisory Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation Practices (ACVIP) (an independent entity) is one of the members of the network.

**TH: Why did WHO launch a website for vaccines?**

7. ‘Colostrum’ is associated with
   
   (a) A gene found exclusively in the seafood and aquatic environment of Kerala
   
   (b) Early initiation of breastfeeding
   
   (c) Non-GMO drought-resistant wheat
   
   (d) An injectable contraceptive for women

Solution: b.

- Despite institutional delivery being as high as nearly 79% nationally, the number of children in India breastfed within one hour of birth is less than 42% — near 43% in urban areas and 41% in rural India, according to the National Family Health Survey 4 (NFHS-4) data released a few days ago.

- **WHO: Early initiation of breastfeeding:** Provision of mother’s breast milk to infants within one hour of birth is referred to as “early initiation of breastfeeding” and ensures that the infant receives the colostrum, or “first milk”, which is rich in protective factors.

Improvisation: **TH: On track, but more needed**;

8. ‘Mission Fingerling’, recently in the news, is associated with the
   
   (a) Ministry of Power
   
   (b) Ministry of Food Processing Industries
   
   (c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
   
   (d) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

Solution: d.

Mission Fingerling will help achieve Blue Revolution.

- When they have developed to the point where they are capable of feeding themselves, the fish are called fry.

- When, in addition, they have developed scales and working fins, the transition to a juvenile fish is complete and it is called a fingerling. Fingerlings are typically about the size of fingers.

**PIB:**

9. ‘Capital Control’ represents any measure taken to
   
   (a) Redirect all foreign capital inflows to infrastructure projects only
   
   (b) Reallocate budgetary resources to meet the social infrastructure needs of the rural poor
   
   (c) Limit the flow of foreign capital in and out of the domestic economy
   
   (d) Resolve a sovereign debt crisis situation

Solution: c.

- Capital control represents any measure taken by a government, central bank or other regulatory body to limit the flow of foreign capital in and out of the domestic economy. These controls can be economy-wide or specific to either a sector or industry.

- Tight controls are most often found in developing economies, where the capital reserves are lower and more susceptible to volatility.
Daily Quiz 12th & 13th March 2017

- Capital controls are often put in place after an economic crisis, to prevent domestic citizens and foreign investors from pulling funds out of a country.
  
  *Investopedia: Capital Control;*  
  *Improvisation: BBC: Iceland to end capital controls from 2008 financial crisis;*

10. The Union Cabinet recently approved acquisition by State Bank of India of which of the following banks?  
1. State Bank of Mysore  
2. State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur  
3. State Bank of Travancore  
4. Bharatiya Mahila Bank  
Select the correct answer using the code given below:  
(a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 4 only  
(c) 1, 2, 3 and 4  
(d) None of the above  

Solution: a.

The Union Cabinet recently approved the acquisition by the State Bank of India of its subsidiary banks namely State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore. No decision regarding the proposal to merge Bharatiya Mahila Bank with SBI has been taken so far.

15th February: PIB;  
March 5th: TH: When SBI, associate Banks merge;  

(a) Ministry of External Affairs  
(b) Ministry of Earth Sciences  
(c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
(d) Ministry of Law and Justice  

Solution: b.

The description in the statement 1 refers to the purpose of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

- India’s current member to the 21-person body, called Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) and part of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), said he was “anguished” by India’s decision not to field a candidate for the upcoming election. The Ministry of External Affairs formally nominates Indian Candidates.

- “The Ministry of Earth Sciences is the nodal Ministry of the Government for the Law of the Sea-related issues. However, the MEA went on to nominate a retired Joint Secretary-level officer for International Tribunal for the Law Of the Sea membership, whereas the MoES candidate for CLCS was not agreed to by the MEA,” an official source said. (Also, questions in the Parliament regarding the Continental Shelf, its limits, etc. are addressed to the MoES).

TH: India to lose presence on UN Scientific Panel;  

12. Which of the following statements with reference to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf is/are correct?  
1. It is a judicial body established by the UNCLOS to adjudicate disputes arising out of the interpretation and application of the Convention  
2. India has had continuous representation in the CLCS since its inception  
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.

The purpose the CLCS is to facilitate the implementation of the UNCLOS in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental
shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Under the Convention, the coastal State shall establish the outer limits of its continental shelf where it extends beyond 200 M on the basis of the recommendation of the Commission. The commission’s recommendations and actions shall not prejudice matters relating to the delimitation of boundaries between States with opposite or adjacent coasts.

**Statement 2:** Refer to the solution of the next question.

- **Learning:** Apart from signalling prestige, a membership of the commission allows India to gauge the scientific strength of claims by countries to parts of the seabed that, like territorial waters, are often hard to demarcate. Such information is privy only to participants. India has had disputes with several neighbours over how the continental shelf can be fairly distributed. For instance, India has applied for extending the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) up to 350 nautical miles from the existing 200. India’s submission to the CLCS is numbered 48, whereas Sri Lanka’s submission, numbered 43 and which has claimed a larger area than India, will be examined first, later this year.

**UN:** Purpose of the CLCS

**Improvisation:** TH: India to lose presence on UN Scientific Panel;

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**13. Iron ore is found in which of the following regions?**

1. Balaghat mines
2. Chikkamagaluru-Tumakuru
3. Durg-Bastar-Chandrapur
4. Panchpatmali

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Solution:** b.

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**14. Which of the following is/are bodies established by the UNCLOS?**

1. Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
2. International Seabed Authority
3. International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Solution:** d.

All three are bodies established by the UNCLOS.

- **Learning:** India became a signatory to the UNCLOS in 1982 and has had continuous representation in CLCS, ITLOS and the International Seabed Authority (ISA) since their inception in 1997, 1996 and 1994 respectively.

**UN:** Oceans and Law of the Sea

**Improvisation:** TH: India to lose presence on UN Scientific Panel;
1. The Fourth Schedule of the Constitution deals with
   (a) Distribution of powers between the Union and States
   (b) Provisions regarding the administration of tribal area
   (c) Languages listed in the Constitution
   (d) Allocation of seats in the Council of States

Solution: d.

“In almost a year from now, elections will be held to 58 Rajya Sabha seats, including the largest chunk of 10 from Uttar Pradesh, eight of which the BJP is in a position to win.”

Improvisation: U.P. To boost BJP’s tally in RS;

Table 3.3, ‘Schedules of the Constitution at a glance’, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth, 4th Edition; List of 12 Schedules;

2. The President is elected not directly by the people but by members of electoral college consisting of:
   1. Elected and nominated members of both the Houses of Parliament
   2. Elected members of the legislative assemblies of the states
   3. Elected members of the legislative assemblies of the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry
   4. Elected members of the state legislative councils

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

Solution: c.

“When it comes to the presidential election too, the BJP has nearly covered the gap to the magic number.”

The President is elected not directly by the people but by members of electoral college consisting of:
   • the elected members of both the Houses of Parliament;

   • the elected members of the legislative assemblies of the states; and

   • the elected members of the legislative assemblies of the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry.

Thus, the nominated members of both Houses of Parliament, the nominated members of the state legislative assemblies, the members (both elected and nominated) of the state legislative councils (in case of the bicameral legislature) and the nominated members of the Legislative Assemblies of Delhi and Puducherry do not participate in the election of the President.

Improvisation: U.P. To boost BJP’s tally in RS;

3. The Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD), was recently in the news. In this context, which one of the following statements is correct?
   (a) The Indian Armed Forces has begun deploying the first parts of this missile defence system in the Eastern Himalayas
   (b) The DRDO successfully test-fired the missile for the third time, paving its way for induction into the Armed Forces’ arsenal
   (c) It shoots down ballistic missiles in the mid-course phase of their flight
   (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

What is the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD)?

• Shoots down short and medium-range ballistic missiles in the terminal phase of their flight

• Uses hit-to-kill technology – where kinetic energy destroys the incoming warhead

• Has a range of 200km and can reach an altitude of 150km

• US has previously deployed it in Guam and Hawaii as a measure against potential attacks from North Korea

China’s and Russia’s concerns regarding its deployment in South Korea: Despite having a range only of 200km, the system has powerful X-band radars that can “reach” far; this could be used to spot Chinese/Russian missile
launches and thereby assist US defensive systems, potentially affecting China's/Russia's deterrent capability.

Improvisation: **BBC: China fuels anger over Seoul’s missile move**;

**BBC: US begins deploying Thaad in South Korea**;

4. Consider the following statements:
   1. The President can be removed from office by a process of impeachment for proved misbehaviour or incapacity
   2. The Prime Minister holds office during the pleasure of the President
   3. The PM can be removed from office by the President for 'violation of the Constitution'

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

- The President can be removed from office by a process of impeachment for 'violation of the Constitution'. The President can be removed from office by a process of impeachment for 'violation of the Constitution'. However, the Constitution does not define the meaning of the phrase 'violation of the Constitution'. The impeachment charges can be initiated by either House of Parliament.

- The term of the Prime Minister is not fixed and he holds office during the pleasure of the President. However, this does not mean that the president can dismiss the Prime Minister at any time. So long as the Prime Minister enjoys the majority support in the Lok Sabha, he cannot be dismissed by the President. However, if he loses the confidence of the Lok Sabha, he must resign or the President can dismiss him.

Improvisation: **TH: End of a chapter**;

5. With reference to the process of impeachment of the President, which of the following statements is/are correct?
   1. Impeachment charges can be initiated by either House of Parliament
   2. One-third of the members of the House initiating the process must support the charges framed
   3. Following approval by at least two-thirds of total membership of both Houses, a constitutional bench of the Supreme Court must rule on whether to impeach the President or not

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

The 2nd and 3rd statements are related to the process for impeachment of the President of South Korea (read [THIS NYT article](https://www.nytimes.com)) to clearly understand it. The procedure for Impeachment of President of India is as follows:

- **An impeachment** is a quasi-judicial procedure in the Parliament (unlike in the case of South Korea, there is no role of the judiciary here). The impeachment charges can be initiated by **either House of Parliament**.

- These charges should be signed by one-fourth members of the House that framed the charges (1/3rd of in the case of South Korea), and a 14 days' notice should be given to the President.

- After the impeachment resolution is passed by a majority of two-thirds of the total membership of that House, it is sent to the other House, which should investigate the charges (In South Korea: after it is passed by a majority of 2/3rd in the National Assembly [NA], the Constitutional Court is formally asked to impeach the President. The Court
must decide whether the President is guilty or not. The NA is not required to prove the charges; thus it is not a quasi-judicial procedure in the NA).

- The President has the right to appear and to be represented at such investigation. If the other House also sustains the charges and passes the impeachment resolution by a majority of two-thirds of the total membership, then the President stands removed from his office from the date on which the bill is so passed.

Improvisation: TH: End of a chapter;

6. In which one of the following cases does the Governor not have constitutional discretion?
   (a) Dismissal of the council of ministers when it cannot prove the confidence of the state legislative assembly
   (b) Dissolution of the state legislative assembly if the council of ministers has lost its majority
   (c) Appointment of chief minister when no party has a clear-cut majority in the state legislative assembly
   (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

“The Goa Suraksha Manch (GSM) on Monday accused Governor Mridula Sinha of violating the spirit of the Constitution by allowing the BJP to ‘grab power’ through a cobbled-up majority, when it was not even the single largest party in the recent Assembly election.”

In addition to the constitutional discretion (i.e., the express discretion mentioned in the Constitution) the Governor has in certain cases, he, like the president, also has situational discretion (i.e., the hidden discretion derived from the exigencies of a prevailing political situation) in the following cases:

- Appointment of chief minister when no party has a clear-cut majority in the state legislative assembly or when the chief minister in office dies suddenly and there is no obvious successor.
- Dismissal of the council of ministers when it cannot prove the confidence of the state legislative assembly.

- Dissolution of the state legislative assembly if the council of ministers has lost its majority.

Ch-26, Governor, ‘Constitutional Position of Governor’, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: TH: It’s a power grab by BJP in Goa, says GSM;

7. The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative is
   1. A global South-based Nongovernmental Organisation
   2. Headquartered in India
   3. Not accredited to the Commonwealth

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

Solution: a.

“On the occasion of Commonwealth Day, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), an NGO, on Monday urged the intergovernmental organisation to ensure liberty and rule of law in its member-nations as in many of these countries, governance was marked by “abuse of power, corruption and human rights violations”…”

- “Our vision is to establish ourselves as a global South-based NGO, which is international in its work and this vision has over the years come to fruition. The difficulty in achieving this recognition cannot be taken lightly; it has required twice the purposefulness of any NGO based in the North to establish credibility and overcome the perception that if based in India, an NGO can only be capable of being a regional body, not truly an international human rights organisation.”

- CHRI’s charter objectives are to achieve the practical realisation of human rights in the Commonwealth. CHRI has its Headquarters in New Delhi, and offices in London and Accra; they are accredited (officially recognised) to the Commonwealth.

CHRI: Who we are;

Improvisation: CHRI seeks end to rights abuse;
1. ‘Floatovoltaics’, sometimes in the news, refers to
(a) Solar systems installed in dried-up lakes
(b) Grid-connected photovoltaic power systems
(c) Solar systems floating on water
(d) Cities with more than 75 per cent area of their constructed roof spaces occupied by rooftop solar panels

Solution: c.

Extracts from a TH BusinessLine article dated May, 2016:
- It is possible to achieve most of India’s solar ambitions without using up much land. How? By putting solar plants on water. Enter floatovoltaics.
- According to India’s National Register of Large Dams, the country has 4,862 large dams. Can floating solar power plants be put in them? It is technically possible.
- In January (2016), Japan’s Kyocera announced it would build the world’s largest floating solar system — 13.2 MW — on the reservoir of the Yamakura dam, with technical support from a French company.

Improvisation: Insights on India: Current Affairs;

2. The case ‘Union of India v. Raja Mohammad Amir Mohammad Khan’, sometimes in the news, is associated with
(a) Definition by the Supreme Court of the term ‘Public Interest Litigation’
(b) The Enemy Property Act, 1968
(c) Constitutionality of a Governor calling upon a party which has not won the majority seats in a state assembly election to form the government
(d) The validity of the Centre’s “encroachments” along border areas for the purpose of construction of border fences

Solution: d.

- Before the Parliament, in 1988, inserted Section 61A in the RP Act and Rules, legitimising them, EVMs were used in select constituencies by the EC by invoking its emergency powers under Article 324.
- Some parties had suggested that in order to increase transparency, the EC should explore the possibility of introducing VVPAT, in which a voter immediately gets a printout of her vote, which is then deposited in the ballot box. So, every voter can see whether her vote has been registered correctly. VVPAT does not record the voter id.
4. ‘Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan’ is a national campaign to
   (a) Provide the homeless and destitute persons with skill training and suitable sources of livelihood.
   (b) Make available the fundamental rights of libertarian character to all women, regardless of their religious affiliations.
   (c) Achieve universal accessibility that will enable persons with disabilities to live independently.
   (d) Promote sustainable livelihoods of the urban poor by facilitating easy access to low-cost finance.

Solution: c.

The same question was posted here earlier.

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

Vikaspedia;

Improvisation: TH – Not so accessible after all;

5. Commonly referred to as the Anti-Defection Law, which one of the following amendments to the Constitution provided for the disqualification of the members of Parliament and the state legislatures on the ground of defection from one political party to another?
   (a) 44th Amendment Act of 1977
   (b) 52nd Amendment Act of 1985
   (c) 71st Amendment Act, 1992
   (d) 91st Amendment Act of 2003

Solution: b.

The 91st Amendment Act modified the Tenth Schedule and made certain other amendments that strengthened the Anti-Defection Law.

Improvisation: TH: Competing to make up the numbers; Ch-67, Indian Polity 4th Edition by M Laxmikanth;

6. Scientists recently discovered the world’s first fluorescent frog. Fluorescence is
   (a) Any substance that contains radium in it, which emits a bright green light
   (b) Emission of light by a substance for as long as external source of light is incident upon it
   (c) Emission of light by a substance even after an external source of light has ceased to be incident upon it
   (d) The production and emission of light by a living organism, independent of any external source of light

Solution: b.

Statement ‘c’ refers to phosphorescence; Statement ‘d’ refers to bioluminescence. All these are forms of luminescence.

Improvisation: TH: Glow-in-the-dark frog found in Argentina;

Wikipedia: Fluorescence;
INSIGHTS TEST SERIES FOR UPSC PRELIMINARY EXAM 2017 (GS PAPER-1)

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SUBSCRIBE
1. On the basis of fossil evidence, found in ancient rocks from India, the origins of plants resembling red algae may go back hundreds of millions of years earlier than previously thought. Where in India were these fossils discovered?

(a) South India  
(b) Central India  
(c) Meghalaya  
(d) Himalayan region

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

(a) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia  
(b) Economic Commission for Africa  
(c) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
(d) Economic commission for Europe

Solution: a.

About UNESCWA;

TH: Crimes of Apartheid;

2. Consider the following statements:

1. It is one of the five regional commissions created by the United Nations in order to fulfil the economic and social goals set out in the UN Charter

2. Its permanent headquarters is in Beirut

3. It recently released a report that proclaimed Israel to be ‘guilty of the crime of apartheid’

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The Bill proposes a Single Standing Tribunal (with multiple benches) instead of existing multiple tribunals, which shall consist of one Chairperson, one Vice-Chairperson and not more than six other Members.

While the term of office of the Chairperson is five year or till he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier, the term of office of Vice Chairperson and other member of tribunal shall be co-terminus with the adjudication of the water dispute.

TH: India hosts world’s oldest algae fossil; BBC;
1. It also provides for the appointment of assessors to provide technical support to the tribunal.

2. The total time period for adjudication of dispute has been fixed at maximum of four and half years.

3. The decision of the Tribunal shall be final and binding.

4. The Bill also proposes to introduce mechanism to resolve the dispute amicably by negotiations, through a Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) to be established by the Central Government consisting of relevant experts, before such dispute is referred to the tribunal.

5. The Bill also provides for transparent data collection system at the national level for each river basin and for this purpose, an agency to maintain data-bank and information system shall be appointed or authorized by Central Government.

PIB;

4. Coalbed Methane is
   (a) A form of natural gas
   (b) A sweet gas
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

Sweet Gas is natural gas that contains very little or no hydrogen sulphide (H2S). H2S is undesirable due to its toxicity in addition to being corrosive to all metals used in the equipment for gas processing, handling and transportation.

Coalbed methane, coalbed gas, coal seam gas, or coal-mine methane is an unconventional form of natural gas extracted from coal.

According to the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, “India has the fifth largest proven coal reserves in the world and thus holds significant prospects for exploration and exploitation of CBM.”

Wikipedia;

Improvisation: PIB;

5. Implementation of an Integrated, Multi-Modal Logistics and Transport Policy will

1. Help India achieve its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
2. Reduce logistics costs
3. Make Indian products more competitive

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Statement 1: If you know what India’s INDCs contain, you would know that this statement is correct.

“...the government is working towards formulating an integrated, multi-modal logistics and transport policy which will reduce logistics costs in the country by nearly half, making Indian products more competitive. The strategy would be to adopt a “hub-and–spoke” model for the logistics sector in place of the present “point-to-point” model. This is the first time ever that the development of the transport sector is being done in such an integrated manner. The plan would serve to make the economy competitive by reducing logistics costs, bring down pollution levels by reducing congestion on roads, give a boost to industry and create employment.”

PIB;

6. The “red corridor”, often in the news, is most appropriately related to

(a) The human trafficking network
(b) Insurgency-affected regions
(c) Regions documenting unusually high number of cancer cases
(d) The drug trafficking network

Solution: b.

TH: Gauntlet at Sukma;
7. The Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme will
   1. Address quality and certification measures
   2. Provide assistance for the upgradation of infrastructure related to Border Haats

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 scheme would provide assistance for setting up and up-gradation of infrastructure projects with overwhelming export linkages like the Border Haats, Land customs stations, quality testing and certification labs, cold chains, trade promotion centres, dry ports, export warehousing and packaging, SEZs and ports/airports cargo terminuses.

- This support is imperative to act as an inducement to the States to channelize funds from their increased devolution towards creation of export infrastructure.

- The objective of the proposed scheme is to enhance export competitiveness by bridging gaps in export infrastructure, creating focused export infrastructure, first mile and last mile connectivity for export-oriented projects and addressing quality and certification measures.
1. With reference to the Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) index, which measures the burden of disease, consider the following statements:

1. One DALY can be thought of as one lost year of “healthy” life
2. It is a measurement of the gap between current health status and an ideal health situation

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

Solution: c.

- To “establish regular tracking of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) Index as a measure of burden of disease and its trends by major categories by 2022” is one key target that the National Health Policy 2017 (NHP) seeks to achieve.

- One DALY can be thought of as one lost year of “healthy” life. The sum of these DALYs across the population, or the burden of disease, can be thought of as a measurement of the gap between current health status and an ideal health situation where the entire population lives to an advanced age, free of disease and disability.

WHO: Metrics – DALY;
Improvisation – PIB: National Health Policy 2017;

2. DALY is calculated as

(a) The sum of years of life lost due to premature mortality across the population
(b) The sum of years of life lost due to premature mortality and the years lost due to disability
(c) The number of deaths multiplied by the standard life expectancy at the age at which death occurs
(d) Weighted disability multiplied by the average duration of the disease by the number of incident cases for the period under consideration

Solution: b.

Statement ‘b’ is nothing but Statement ‘c’ plus ‘d’;

**DALY = YLL + YLD**;

The following diagram sourced from [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org) makes it very simple to understand DALY:

![DALY Diagram](https://example.com/daly-diagram)

Improvisation: PIB: National Health Policy 2017;

3. The target of 90-90-90 is an ambitious global treatment target to help end which one of the following epidemics?

(a) AIDS
(b) Cholera
(c) Tuberculosis
(d) Zika fever

Solution: a.

- The 90-90-90 target: By 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status. By 2020, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy. By 2020, 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

- To “achieve the global target of 2020 which is also termed as target of 90:90:90, for HIV/AIDS”, is one of the key targets that the NHP seeks to achieve.

UNAIDS;
PIB: National Health Policy 2017;

4. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Target year to achieve elimination status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kala-Azar</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leprosy</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

Solution: a.

- Announced in the **Budget**: The Government has prepared an action plan to eliminate Kala-Azar and Filariasis by 2017, Leprosy by 2018, Measles by 2020 and Tuberculosis by 2025 is also targeted.


- **NHP 2017**: To achieve and maintain a cure rate of >85% in new sputum positive patients for TB and reduce incidence of new cases, to reach elimination status by 2025.

**PIB: National Health Policy 2017**;

**5. The National Health Policy 2017**

1. Proposes raising public health expenditure to 5 per cent of the GDP in a time-bound manner
2. Envisages providing a larger package of assured comprehensive primary health care which includes care for major non-communicable diseases and geriatric health care
3. Aims to ensure availability of 2 beds per 1000 population

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.

- As a crucial component, the Policy proposes raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP in a time bound manner.

- The Policy advocates a progressively incremental assurance-based approach. It envisages providing larger package of assured comprehensive primary health care through the ‘Health and Wellness Centers’ and denotes important change from very selective to comprehensive primary health care package which includes care for major NCDs, mental health, geriatric health care, palliative care and rehabilitative care services.

- It aims to ensure availability of 2 beds per 1000 population distributed in a manner to enable access within golden hour.

- In order to provide access and financial protection, it proposes free drugs, free diagnostics and free emergency and essential healthcare services in all public hospitals.

**PIB: National Health Policy 2017**;

**6. The Central Health Council of Health and Family Welfare**

1. Is the apex policy-making body in the Health Sector
2. Is chaired by the Prime Minister
3. Has been set up under provisions of the Constitution

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

“The policy was placed before the Central Council for Health & Family Welfare, the apex policy making body and was unanimously endorsed by it.”

- **PIB, 2016**: It is chaired by the Health and Family Welfare Minister.

- The CCHFW was set up under Article 263 of the Constitution to provide support and advice to the Department of Health on policy formulation.

**Proceeding of the CCHFW**;
1. Despite possessing the world’s fifth largest reserves of coal, India is one of the largest importer of coal. What may be the reason for this?

1. Power plants in India have been so designed, that they cannot run on domestic coal

2. India does not have enough reserves of good quality coal required for steel manufacturing units

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 country has abundant coal reserves and the domestic production capacity, yet power plants in India are dependent on imported coal. This is because a major portion of our thermal power plants cannot use more than 30% of domestic coal. The power plants are so designed that they are imported-coal dependent.

- Coal in India is used either from domestic sources, mostly mined by coal India, or is imported. The imports are mainly to compensate the lack of good quality coal, especially coking coal from the mining sources in the country.

- Coking coal is imported by state-run Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and other steel manufacturing units mainly to bridge the gap between the requirement and indigenous availability and to improve the quality.

2. With reference to India’s 'National Physical Laboratory (NPL)', consider the following statements:

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

2. It has been set up by the Indian Institute of Science

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

The National Physical Laboratory, an organisation of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, is best known for the being the repository of physical standards such as the kilogram, second and the centimetre.

About NPL;

Improvisation: PIB;

3. The Atmospheric Monitoring Station, set up by the NPL at Palampur will

1. Determine accurately the composition of polluted atmosphere in an industrial area

2. Measure levels of black and brown carbon suspended in the air

3. Serve as a base station for inter-comparison of air quality monitoring equipment being used in India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.
• NPL has established an atmospheric monitoring station in the campus of Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) at Palampur (Himachal Pradesh) at an altitude of 1391m for generating the base data for atmospheric trace species & properties to serve as reference for comparison of polluted atmosphere in India.

• It is India’s first “Pristine Air-Quality Monitoring Station” at Palampur.

• In India, air quality parameters are mostly measured in industrial and residential areas, however, data for air quality of pristine atmosphere is not available in India. NPL’s station will contribute to fill this important gap.

• One of the instruments that has been employed is the Raman Lidar – this instrument “provides height-and-time-resolved measurements of water-vapor mixing ratio, temperature, aerosol, and cloud optical properties.”

• The NPL’s station will also serve as a base station for inter-comparison of air quality monitoring equipment being used in India to improve quality of monitored data in India.

• This station houses calibrated state-of-the-art equipment for the continuous measurements of ambient and greenhouse gases (CO, NO, NO2, NH3, SO2, O3, PM1, PM2.5, PM10, hydrocarbons, black carbon, CO2 & CH4), and weather parameters. (Notice, it does not measure Brown Carbon).

• In addition, this new station has the experimental facilities to investigate the aerosol/cloud interactions, and such investigations would be helpful in generating a better understanding of the Earth’s climate system.

PIB;

4. Regarding ‘Aadhaar Enabled Payment System’, recently in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct?

   1. The person seeking to execute a transaction need not know her Aadhaar number, her fingerprint impression will suffice
   2. Financial transactions such as remittances and balance enquiry can be done

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.

AEPS empowers the marginalised and excluded segments to conduct financial transactions (Credit, Debit, Remittances, Balance Enquiry, etc) through microATMs deployed by Banks in their villages. The key steps in doing transactions via AEPS are:

• Resident provides his/her Aadhaar number, details of financial transaction sought and fingerprint impression at the microATM device.

• Digitally signed and encrypted data packets are transferred via Bank Switch to NPCI to UIDAI.

• UIDAI processes the authentication request and communicates the outcome in form of Yes/No.

• If the authentication response is Yes, bank carries out the required authorization process and advises microATM on suitable next steps.

UIDAI: Aadhaar enabled payments;

Improvisation: PIB;

5. With reference Consultative Committees which are attached to various ministries of the Central Government, consider the following statements:

   1. These are constituted by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in consultation with the respective Ministries
   2. They consist of members of both the Houses of Parliament
   3. They stand dissolved upon dissolution of every Lok Sabha

   1. These are constituted by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in consultation with the respective Ministries
   2. They consist of members of both the Houses of Parliament
   3. They stand dissolved upon dissolution of every Lok Sabha

Solution: b.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- Consultative committees are attached to various ministries/departments of the Central Government.
- Statement 2: They consist of members of both the Houses of Parliament.
- The Minister / Minister of State in charge of the Ministry concerned acts as the chairman of the consultative committee of that ministry.
- Statement 1: These committees are constituted by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. The guidelines regarding the composition, functions and procedures of these committees are formulated by this Ministry.
- These committees provide a forum for informal discussions between the ministers and the members of Parliament on policies and programmes of the government and the manner of their implementation. PIB: “...the Union Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution briefed the members of Parliamentary Consultative Committee about the achievements and activities of the Department of Food & Public Distribution to in New Delhi, yesterday.”
- Statement 3: These committees shall stand dissolved upon dissolution of every Lok Sabha and shall be reconstituted upon constitution of each Lok Sabha.

Ch-23, ‘Parliamentary Committees’, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

6. With reference to an institution known as ‘PRS Legislative Research’, which of the following statements is not correct?

(a) The Laws of India website is a public database, created by it, of all laws passed by the legislatures of different states in India
(b) It provides Members of Parliament with the necessary data and analysis for debates in the Parliament
(c) It is funded entirely by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
(d) a, b and c

Solution: c.

A general question. Many of us source much of our information on legislations and ancillary matters from this website, but almost none of us would have read about PRS Legislative Research or about what exactly they do.

- PRS was founded in 2005 as an independent research initiative. The initiative was incubated in the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi, which is a leading Indian think tank. Recently, the initiative has been institutionalised as a not-for-profit Section 25 Company, the Institute for Policy Research Studies.
- The work of PRS was initiated with a grant from Ford Foundation, and subsequently by Google.org. Currently, the work of PRS is supported by a number of Indian institutions and individuals.
- Given that MLAs across states face constraints similar to those faced by MPs, PRS aims to strengthen the legislative process through research support, policy updates and workshops for MLAs to interact with policy experts and academics and exchange policy ideas and best practices. Hence, statement ‘b’ is also applicable to MLAs.
- The Laws of India website is a searchable web based public database created by PRS of all laws passed by the legislatures of different states/UTs in India.
7. The “rollback provision”, which appears in the context of Advance Pricing Agreements (APA), most appropriately refers to

(a) Applicability of the APA provisions retrospectively

(b) A penalty levied in the event of new evidence surfacing regarding subversion of laws by group companies involved in the transactions

(c) Discounting the Arm’s Length Price (ALP) if the transaction is carried out between group companies headquartered within Indian borders

(d) Cancellation of the APA in case of changes in any assumptions that were made by the tax payer while entering into an APA with the government

Solution: a.

- In many countries the APA scheme provides for “roll back” mechanism for dealing with ALP issues relating to transactions entered into during the period prior to APA.

- The “roll back” provisions refers to the applicability of the methodology of determination of ALP, or the ALP, to be applied to the international transactions which had already been entered into in a period prior to the period covered under an APA.

- However, the “roll back” relief is provided on case to case basis subject to certain conditions.

- Providing of such a mechanism in Indian legislation would also lead to reduction in large scale litigation which is currently pending or may arise in future in respect of the transfer pricing matters.

Roll back provision in the scheme of APA;

Improvisation: PIB;
1. ‘Tripitaka’, in the context of Ancient India, refers to
   
   (a) A traditional term used for Buddhist scriptures
   
   (b) A form of classification of agricultural labourers in the Mauryan Empire
   
   (c) The association of the upper echelons of all guilds during the Gupta Age
   
   (d) Three baskets made of gold that were recently excavated at the Harappan site of Kalibangan

Solution: a.

Tripitaka or Three Baskets is a traditional term used for various Buddhist scriptures. It is known as Pali Canon in English. The three pitakas are Sutta Pitaka, Vinaya Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka.

GKtoday;

In the news: Publication of Tripitaka in Devanagari script – PIB;

2. Which one of the following pairs is not correctly matched?

   Name of bilateral military exercise – Country participating with India
   
   (a) Surya Kiran – Nepal
   
   (b) Bold Kurukshetra – Singapore
   
   (c) Al Nagah – Bangladesh
   
   (d) Yudh Abhyas – United States of America

Solution: c.

- A question on Al Nagah-II exercises was posted here on March 1st. It is a military exercise with Oman.
- Pay attention to the fact that military exercises usually have different names when carried out by different armed services of the forces. An example: The Indian Navy’s exercise with Singapore’s is termed ‘SIMBEX’, but the Army exercise between the two nations is termed ‘Bold Kurukshetra’.

3. India’s longest road tunnel, set to open to traffic soon, will be the first in India to be equipped with world-class integrated tunnel control system. This tunnel will help reduce the travel time between

   (a) Mumbai and Nagpur
   
   (b) Madurai and Rameswaram
   
   (c) Tawang and Guwahati
   
   (d) Jammu and Srinagar

Solution: d.

The tunnel, which is located at an elevation of 1,200 metre, will be the first in India to be equipped with the world-class integrated tunnel control system, through which ventilation, fire control, signals, communication and electrical systems will be automatically actuated. The tunnel will reduce the travel time between Jammu and Srinagar by two-and-a-half hours. The road distance from Chenani and Nashri will now be 10.9 km, instead of the present 41 km, officials said.

TH: India’s longest road tunnel all set to ease travel in Jammu and Kashmir;

4. Consider the following statements about a country:

   1. It passed legislations in the 1990s mandating waste segregation
   
   2. The capital’s International Airport is built on an artificial island made of garbage
   
   3. This country, set to host the 2020 Olympics, will be making the medals with recycled materials

Which country do the above statements refer to?

   (a) Brazil
   
   (b) China
   
   (c) Japan
   
   (d) Qatar
Daily Quiz

5. Consider the following statements:
1. This wetland was included in the Montreux Record in 1993, only to be removed from it subsequently
2. It is connected to the Bay of Bengal
3. It is considered to be the largest lagoon in India
4. It is also the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian subcontinent
Which one of the following Ramsar Wetlands is being referred to in the statements given above?
(a) Chilika Lake
(b) Kolleru Lake
(c) Bhoj Wetland
(d) Sasthamkotta Lake

Solution: c.
A GK question (could be of use for the main examination).

- Legislation dating to the late 1990s mandates that every household must segregate waste. There is a vertiginous array of categories to sort into.
- Households must put out their trash for collection in local authority-designated clear bags. If the trash is sorted incorrectly, it is simply not collected. Instead, a large, red sticker explaining the error is put on the bags, leaving the miscreant crushed under the weight of neighbourhood social shame.
- Toyota and other carmakers are designing cars that are made almost completely of recyclable materials. Tokyo’s Haneda Airport is built on an artificial island made of garbage.
- Tokyo will host the 2020 Games, and from next month, collection boxes are going up all over the city for residents to donate old mobile phones, computers and small household appliances. The idea is to collect enough metal to make all 5,000 Olympic and Paralympic medals with recycled materials.

TH: A touch of recycling, Japanese style;

6. ‘Rafatazmia Chitrakootensis’, recently in the news, is
(a) A type of legless skink which was long considered lost and “rediscovered” in the Chilika Lake region
(b) A newly discovered species of night frog from the Eastern Himalayan region
(c) A type of phosphorite rock, recently discovered in Central India, which contains large deposits of shale oil
(d) A set of fossils which suggest that the origins of plants may go back hundreds of millions of years earlier than previously thought

Solution: d.
“On March 14, news agencies across the world reported the discovery of a group of fossils of a 1.6-billion-year-old red algae, a precursor to plant and animal life, from Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh... What has been eclipsed in the announcement is that one set of these fossils are called Rafatazmia chitrakootensis, named after Rafat Jamal Azmi, a Dehradun-based geologist at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, who was the first to report these unique fossils over two decades ago.”

TH: 1.6 billion year old fossil puts life into Indian geologist’s theories;

7. All arsenic-affected river plains in India have their rivers originating from the
(a) Himalayan region
(b) Western Ghats
(c) Eastern Ghats
(d) Amarkantak region

Solution: a.

UNESCO Tentative list: Chilika lake;
Improvisation: TH: Converts to the birdsong;

“As of 2008, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh in flood plain of Ganga River; Assam and Manipur in flood plain of Brahmaputra and Imphal
Daily Quiz

19th MARCH 2017

Arteson contamination is largely geogenic in nature (a result of geological processes) but it is also partly a result of anthropogenic activities like intense exploitation of groundwater, application of fertilisers, burning of coal.

As per Bengal, followed by Bihar and then Assam occupy the top three spots with respect to the number of arsenic-affected persons.

Source: CGWB Document (no need to read it; we are just providing the source);

Improvisation: TH: 1.04 crore hit by As contamination in Bengal;

8. A judge of a high court can be removed from his office
   (a) By a special majority of each house of the parliament and of the respective state legislative assembly
   (b) In the same manner as a Supreme Court judge
   (c) By an order of the President, who shall be bound by the recommendations of the Union Cabinet
   (d) None of the above

Solution: b.

- A judge of a **high court** can be removed from his office by an **order of the President**.
- The President can issue the removal order only after an address by the Parliament has been presented to him in the same session for such removal.
- The address must be supported by a **special majority of each House of Parliament** (i.e., a majority of the total membership of that House and majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting). The grounds of removal are two—proved **misbehaviour or incapacity**. Thus, a judge of a high court can be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.

9. Which one of the following statements with reference to the National Strategic Plan for Tuberculosis Elimination (2017-2025) is correct?
   (a) The emphasis will be on undertaking universal testing for drug-resistant TB instead of waiting for patients to walk in to get tested
   (b) It seeks to make the daily treatment regimen universal
   (c) Patients approaching the private sector will be provided with free treatment
   (d) a, b and c

Solution: d.

All statements are correct. Read this **TH article** to get an idea of how the new plan is different from its predecessor.

10. With reference to the GRAPES-3 experiment located at Ooty in India, which one of the following statements is correct?
    (a) It is a collaboration between institutions from India and Russia
    (b) It studies the role of sunspots in generation of coronal mass ejections
    (c) It studies the origin of cosmic rays
    (d) It issues warnings to the International Space Station of imminent impact of space junk larger than one centimetre

Solution: c.

- **GRAPES-3** (Gamma Ray Astronomy PeV EnergieS phase-3) is designed to study **cosmic rays** with an array of air shower detectors and a large area muon detector (muons are a type of cosmic ray).
- The GRAPES-3 experiment located at **Ooty** in India started as a collaboration of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, India and the Osaka City University, Osaka, Japan. At present
many institutions from India and Japan are in collaboration.

- In the news: The GRAPES-3 experiment at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research’s Cosmic Ray Laboratory in Ooty is getting upgraded. The telescope made news last year when it detected the effect of a solar storm that hit the earth in June 2015. The upgrade will play a major role in getting precise information about the propagation of storms in ‘the last million miles’ (from the L-1 point) of their journey from the Sun to the earth.

- The upgraded detector will have an increased coverage of the sky and improved capacity to determine the direction of incident cosmic rays. The latter property, of being able to discern the direction of detected particles, makes it unique among cosmic ray detectors in the world; it can also to measure the intensity of the particles.

**TH: Telescope upgrade to sniff out solar storms**;

11. ‘Aleppo’, seen often in the news, is a city in

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

Solution: a.

**TH: When Mohammed Anis refused to leave his home in Syria**;

12. The ‘vernal window’, recently in the news, is

(a) The period of transition into spring from winter
(b) The gap in the Earth’s ionosphere which enables dedicated ground detectors to study muons
(c) The brief period between the HIV virus entering the blood stream and infecting the T cells
(d) Any process which has a time period equal to the duration between two consecutive heartbeats

**TH: What is a ‘vernal window’?**;

13. With reference to the Infrared-based Wi-Fi system, recently in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The set up requires optical fibres for data transmission
2. At the user’s end, it requires no power to work
3. It is several times faster than ‘Li-Fi’

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**TH: When Mohammed Anis refused to leave his home in Syria**;

Solution: d.

- With the first day of spring around the corner, temperatures start to rise, ice melts away, and the world around us starts to blossom. Scientists refer to this transition from winter to the growing season as the “vernal window”, and a new study led by the University of New Hampshire, U.S., shows this window may be getting longer.

- Research shows that the extent of snow cover over the Northern Hemisphere has declined significantly in the past 30 years. Climate change is altering the timing and duration of the vernal window.

**TH: Telescope upgrade to sniff out solar storms**;

11. ‘Aleppo’, seen often in the news, is a city in

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

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

Solution: d.
• **Statement 3**: Li-fi can deliver internet access **100 times faster than traditional wi-fi**, offering speeds of up to **1Gbps** (gigabit per second). On the other hand, the capacity of the Infrared-based Wi-Fi is not only huge (more than 40Gbps per ray) but also there is no need to share since every device gets its own ray of light. The average connection speed in the Netherlands is two thousand times less than the speed offered by this system..

• **Additional Information**: If you walk around and your device moves out of the light antenna’s line of sight, then another light antenna takes over. The network tracks the precise location of every wireless device using its radio signal transmitted in the return direction. It is a simple matter to add devices: they are assigned different wavelengths by the same light antenna and so do not have to share capacity.

Primary Source: Science Daily;

TH: New wi-fi system to offer super-fast connectivity;

14. ‘Namami Brahmaputra’ is

(a) A programme for prevention and control of pollution in River Brahmaputra

(b) A campaign to bring attention to Chinese authorities the fragility of ecosystems that depend on river Brahmaputra

(c) A river festival

(d) None of the above

Solution: c.

“**Assam Government** will be hosting the biggest river festival ‘Namami Brahmaputra’ planned all along the mighty river with the main venue being a river island at Guwahati. The five-day festival is to be held from March 31 to April 4 where the Assam Government led by its Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and his team has planned out a host of activities to showcase the region’s art, heritage and culture.”

March 1st: TH;

TH: China to take part in Namami Brahmaputra;

15. With reference to ‘**Mahi**’, an ancient herbal ink, consider the following statements:

1. Emperor Harshavardhana is believed to have divulged the secret ingredients that go into manufacturing the ink, to Chinese traveller Xuan Zang

2. China recently gifted India a copy of the manuscript containing the secret ingredient-list which Emperor Harshavardhana is believed to have given Xuan Zang

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 Only

(b) 2 Only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: d.

• The technique involves extracting ‘mahi’ using **cow urine** from a cocktail of fruit pulp and tree bark such as haritaki, amla, bibhitaki or bhomora, mango and jamun — often infused with the blood of eels or catfish. Rust from iron tools or nails was added for an intense black hue.

• ‘Mahi’ was used in early and medieval Assam for writing on ‘**sancipat**’ (folios made of the bark of the sanci tree) manuscripts. Some folios were gifted by Kumar Bhaskar Barman, the then King of Pragjyotishpura (ancient Assam) to Harshavardhana, an emperor who ruled north India from 606 to 647 C.E., a testimony to the period of use.

• The endurance of the ink is proven by the stability of sancipat manuscripts. The key factor for this long-lasting marriage between ‘mahi’ and ‘sancipat’ is the herbal concoction’s resistance to aerial oxidation and fungal attacks. In contrast, some formulations of acidic iron gall ink — which was in use at the same time in Europe — can render documents illegible by causing loss of text, bleeding and fading due to ink corrosion. No external stabiliser is used in making Mahi, whereas gum Arabic is used for the purpose in iron gall ink.

• Another interesting feature is that the **pH of mahi remains neutral because of cow urine** and the
absence of acidic ingredients like vinegar. Iron gall ink has an acidic character that leads to destruction of the manuscript.

- Though there are several recorded recipes for ‘mahī’ formulation, one commonality exists for all: the season during which it is concocted. It is only prepared (in natural settings) in the winter season. The low temperature and dry conditions in winter ensure minimum exposure of the mixture to microbes and heat, which may decompose the dyes during the long time needed for extraction.

TH: Reviving Assam’s ancient ink;

*Clarifications*

Quiz, 17th March, 2017

(Click HERE): According to M. Laxmikanth’s Indian Polity, “Under the above provisions of Article 263, the President has established the following councils to make recommendations for the better coordination of policy and action in the related subjects: Central Council of Health, Central Council of Local Government and Urban Development, Four Regional Councils for Sales Tax for the Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Zones” ... So, these too are inter-state councils. They serve an exclusive purpose (ex – for health, or for local government and urban development, etc) , unlike the Inter-State Council established in 1990 whose scope is a lot wider. The same can be gleaned from the recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission which is, “in order to differentiate the Inter-State Council from other bodies established under the same Article 263, it must be called as the Inter-Governmental Council.”
1. In the context of River Ganga and Yamuna being declared as ‘living persons’ by the Uttarakhand High Court, consider the following statements:

1. These rivers are the first in the world to be granted the same legal rights as a person
2. The Constitution will now have to be amended to accord the fundamental rights to treat the rivers as legal entities
3. The rivers’ tributaries too are to be considered as ‘living persons’

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Regarding Statement 2 – no such amendment is required. The High Court order is sufficient.

The Uttarakhand High Court, on Monday, declared that the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, all their tributaries and streams were “living persons”, having the status of a legal person with all corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a living person. The court ordered that the Director of the Namami Gange programme, the Uttarakhand Chief Secretary, and the Advocate-General of Uttarakhand would serve as “parents” for the rivers and would be the human faces to “protect, conserve and preserve” the rivers and their tributaries.

A river in New Zealand, The Whanganui River, was the first in the world to be granted the same legal rights as a person (March 15th, 2017). The NZ Parliament passed a bill recognising the river as a legal entity. The river’s interests will be represented by two people – one from the Maori tribes (who had been fighting for over 160 years to get this recognition for their river) and one from the crown.

TH: Ganga, Yamuna termed ‘living persons’;

BBC;

2. In which one of the following regions is the India-based Neutrino Observatory proposed to come up?

(a) Singara, Nilgiris
(b) Sikkim Himalayas
(c) Mishmi Hills
(d) West Bodi Hills

Solution: d.

Singara (Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu) was the first choice for the location of the INO. However, permission was not granted for the same.

Since the laboratory cavern needs to be more than 1000 m underground (so that there is at least 1000 m cover all-round to absorb/reduce natural cosmic radiation), the choice of site is primarily dictated by the rock quality, in order to obtain a stable safe environment for such long-term activity. Geologically, southern Indian mountains have the most compact, dense rock while the Himalayas are mostly metamorphic sedimentary rock. The mountains of Tamil Nadu (Specifically, the West Bodi Hills), in general, are the most attractive possibility, offering stable dense rocks with maximum safety for locating such a laboratory.

Under the guidelines laid down by the MoEFCC, any project that falls within 5 km from an inter-State boundary or within a notified national park or a sanctuary has to be considered a Category ‘A’ project that involves a number of processes before an Environmental Clearance is granted.

Since it was near a national park (Madhikettan Shola National Park in Kerala), the INO was also asked to get clearance from the National Board for Wildlife. Taking into account these new facts, the NGT Bench asked the INO to make a fresh application for the Environmental Clearance.

TH: Green nod for Neutrino project suspended;
INO: Factors in deciding location of project;
3. With reference to the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO), which one of the following statements is correct?

(a) The observatory will store nuclear waste in underground tunnels
(b) Its primary goal is to study the properties and interactions of radioactive neutrinos
(c) This will be the first laboratory in India that will carry out neutrino research
(d) Neither a, b or c

Solution: d.

• “We led neutrino research when our physicists used a gold mine at Kolar in Karnataka to set up what was then (1960s) the world’s deepest underground laboratory. This was called the Kolar Gold Field Lab.”

• “Neutrinos are so abundant among us that every second, there are more than 100 trillion of them passing right through each of us — we never even notice them. This is the reason why INO needs to be built deep into the earth — 1,300 metres into the earth. At this depth, it would be able to keep itself away from all the trillions of neutrinos produced in the atmosphere and which would otherwise choke an over-the-ground neutrino detector.”

• “Can neutrinos cause cancer? Not at all! Neutrinos are the least harmful of all elementary particles, as they almost never react with solid bodies. A few people with whom we have discussed this topic, tend to confuse the “neutrino” for the “neutron”. This has also led to the confusion that neutrinos can be weaponised, which is far from the truth.”

An article by APJ Abdul Kalam and Srijan Pal Singh regarding neutrinos and INO which appeared in The Hindu in 2015: Going all out for neutrino research; INO: FAQs; Improvisation: TH: Green nod for Neutrino project suspended;

4. Consider the following statements:

1. India is the world’s largest manufacturer of cut and polished diamonds
2. India Diamond Trading Centre, the only Special Notified Zone in the country, enables rough diamonds to enter and exit duty-free, for the purpose of viewing

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

“At the World Diamond Conference held in Delhi, I had announced in the presence of the Russian President that we would set up a Special Notified Zone to achieve this. This promise has been kept. Amendments have been made to our laws to enable rough diamonds to enter and exit, duty free for the purpose of viewing. The Special Notified Zone at the Bharat Diamond Bourse became operational in November, 2015. This has already shown good results. Earlier only eighty to ninety big merchants used to get access to global rough diamonds by travelling to Belgium, Africa and Israel. Now, about three thousand small and medium merchants have this privilege through the new Special Notified Zone.”

2016: Bharat Diamond Bourse celebrates first anniversary of IDTC; PM’s speech at International Diamond Conference;  

5. Consider the following pairs related to Goods and Services Tax (GST) legislations and the provisions they contain:

1. The Central GST Bill 2017 – tax on inter-state supply of goods or services or both by the Central Government
2. The Integrated GST Bill 2017 – compensation to the states for loss of revenue arising on account of implementation of the GST Tax for a period of five years
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

Solution: d.

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the following four GST related bills:

1. **The Central Goods and Services Tax Bill 2017** – provisions for levy and collection of tax on intra-state supply of goods or services or both by the Central Government.

2. **The Integrated Goods and Services Tax Bill 2017** – provisions for levy and collection of tax on inter-state supply of goods or services or both by the Central Government.

3. **The Union Territory Goods and Services Tax Bill 2017** – provisions for levy and collection of tax on intra-UT supply of goods and services in the Union Territories without legislature. Union Territory GST is akin to States Goods and Services Tax (SGST) which shall be levied and collected by the States/Union Territories on intra-state supply of goods or services or both.

4. **The Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to the States) Bill 2017 (The Compensation Bill)** – provides for compensation to the states for loss of revenue arising on account of implementation of the goods and services tax for a period of five years as per section 18 of the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016.

**PIB:** Cabinet approves four GST Bills;

6. **The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre**

1. Is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resource and Development
2. Will train the public at large for understanding and using Indian Sign Language

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.

The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) is an autonomous organization of the Government of India established under Society Registration Act, 1860 under the aegis of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The main objectives of the ISLRTC are:

- to develop manpower for using, teaching and conducting research in Indian Sign Language (ISL),
- to promote the use of ISL as an educational mode,
- to carry out research in collaboration with universities, national and international bodies to create linguistic records in ISL,
- to train and orient various professionals (and community leaders and the public at large for understanding and using Indian Sign Language) and
to collaborate with organizations of the Deaf.

**DEPwD Order:**

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

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

Solution: b.
- **Members of ASEAN**: Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore.
- **Members of BIMSTEC**: India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Improvisation: PIB;

2. ‘Grand Challenges India’ is
   (a) A mission-directed research initiative funded by the Department of Biotechnology and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
   (b) A fund which will finance innovative solutions to societal problems not only within India but also developing nations, managed by the NGO We The People
   (c) A periodic inter-ministerial meeting that seeks innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems in implementation of the Union Government’s flagship programmes
   (d) An online-competition organised by NITI Aayog seeking innovative solutions to make the transition from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals

Solution: a.
- The **Grand Challenges India (GCI)** is a mission-directed research initiative, collaboratively launched in 2012 under the umbrella of Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of BioTechnology and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- As India transitions from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals, the GCI partnership has ushered a new wave of innovative solutions to help address issues that are inextricably linked to social impact.
- GCI aims to achieve the said goals by reconnecting Science to People and available scientific data & evidences to the societal problems for finding tangible solutions.
- It is working towards funding innovative solutions to societal problems not only within India but also has a reference to the developing nations.
- The GCI covers all kinds of health and developmental priorities, ranging from maternal and child health, infectious diseases, vaccines, point-of-care diagnostics, agriculture, food and nutrition to other related arenas of developing nations as per individual requirements.
- The first GCI meeting is being held this year.

PIB;

3. An individual named ‘Dev Raj Sikka’ was recently in the news. He
   (a) Is the project director of the India-based Neutrino Observatory
   (b) First proposed the idea of Sustainable Development Goals as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals
   (c) Is also known as the ‘Monsoon Man’
   (d) Invented the world’s first leprosy vaccine

Solution: c.
A GK question.
- Dev Raj Sikka, former director of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, who first proposed
4. According to the International Solar Alliance, a ‘solar resource-rich country’ is one that is
(a) Located fully between the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn
(b) Located partially between the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn
(c) Located fully between 45 degrees North and 45 degrees South latitudes
(d) Both a and b

Solution: d.

- The ISA as launched as a coalition of solar resource-rich countries on the first day of the Paris Climate Conference or CoP21 (2015).
- It is a coalition of solar resource-rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to specifically address energy needs by tapping solar energy from the sun.
- ISA has been envisioned as a dedicated platform which will contribute towards the common goal of increasing utilization and promotion of solar energy and solar applications in its prospective member countries to help the world transition to a low-carbon and greener society.

ISA FAQ;
PIB: ISA full-time director appointed;

5. The United Nations celebrates the International Day of Forests annually on the 21st of March. In this context, consider the following statements:
1. Wood is a major renewable energy resource
2. Strategically placed trees in urban areas can cool the air by up to 8 degrees centigrade
3. The theme for this year’s International Day of Forests is ‘Forests and Energy’

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

Solution: d.

- Wood provides the world with more energy than solar, hydroelectric or wind power, accounting for roughly 45 percent (27 in Africa, 13 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 5 in Asia-Oceania) of current global renewable energy supply.
- Strategically placed trees in urban areas can cool the air by between 2 to 8 degrees Centigrade.
- Forests provide clean air, water and energy. Sustainably managed forests can provide renewable and carbon neutral energy for a greener future. Greater investment in technological innovation and in sustainably managed forests is the key to increasing forests’ role as a major source of renewable energy.
- Statement 3 is correct.

PIB: MoEF celebrates International Day of Forests;
UN: IDF;
6. A ‘circular economy’, sometimes seen in the news, is an economy in which

(a) Economic development and environmental sustainability are interdependent

(b) There is no diversification of its import or export baskets

(c) Emphasis is placed on promoting purchase of new goods by means of the ‘Green Argument Theory’

(d) Majority of contributions to the growth of the economy in any particular financial year is by domestic and not foreign companies

Solution: a.

“A circular economy is one in which economic development and environmental sustainability are interdependent, with a strong emphasis on minimising pollution, while maximising reuse and recycling.”

- A circular economy is an industrial system in which the potential use of goods and materials is optimized and their elements returned to the system at the end of their viable life cycles.

- The philosophy is based on a holistic perspective of processes and technologies that goes beyond the focus of delivery, inventory and traditional views of cost. The underlying principle is that responsible products and practices are not only good for the environment, but are also important for long-term profitability.

- The circular economy is in direct opposition to consumerist culture, which is considered a linear structure that is sometimes expressed as take, make, dispose. Waste is an integral element of consumerism because its emphasis is on promoting the purchase of new goods — which often translates to disposing of older but still viable products.

[Source: TechTarget: Circular Economy; TH: Wastewater management receives little attention]

7. Consider the following statements:

1. According to the latest United Nations World Water Development Programme’s World Water Development Report, more than 80 per cent of the world’s wastewater is released into the environment untreated

2. The Global Risks Report’ is an annual publication of the World Economic Forum

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 Only

(b) 2 Only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

“The 2017 United Nations’ Water Development Programme’s World Water Development Report (WWDR) – Wastewater: The Untapped Resource to be officially released today on World Water Day, notes that more than 80% of the world’s wastewater — over 95% in some least developed countries — is released into the environment untreated.”

“Last year, the World Economic Forum warned that the water crisis would be the greatest global risk faced by people and economies over the next 10 years”.

[Source: WEF: Global Risks Report 2017; TH: Wastewater management receives little attention]

*Clarification*

19th & 20th March Quiz, Question 14 (http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/03/21/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-19-20-march-2017/): Regarding the infrared-based wifi system – Statement 1 should have been better-worded. Instead of “the setup requires optical fibres for data transmission”, the sentence should have been, “wireless data comes from ‘light antennas’ which direct rays of light supplied by optical fibres”.

© INSIGHTS ACTIVE LEARNING 63
1. ‘Uniting for Consensus’, sometimes seen in the news, is

(a) A strategy to tackle climate change in the pre-2020 period, an outcome of the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

(b) A declaration of the United Nations General Assembly with regards to refugees and migrants – to save lives, protect rights and share responsibility on a global scale

(c) A movement of nations including Turkey, which aims to counter the bids for permanent seats proposed by G4 nations (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan)

(d) None of the above

Solution: c.

“Turkey is also a member of the Uniting for Consensus group of countries that oppose U.N. Security Council Memberships to be increased, another source of friction between the two countries, where India would like to see some flexibility.” … (The UfC is calling for a consensus before any decision is reached on the form and size of the Security Council.)

TH: Delhi gets ready to welcome Erdogan

2. According to the Human Development Report 2016 released by the UNDP, India has slipped places in terms of Human Development among 188 countries. In this context, consider the following statements:

1. India’s Human Development Index value puts it in the “medium category of development”

2. Among SAARC nations, Sri Lanka and Maldives are ranked higher than India

3. It is ranked third among the BRICS countries, behind Russia and China

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- India’s human development index (HDI) value of 0.624 puts it in the “medium human development” category, alongside countries such as Congo, Namibia and Pakistan.
- It is ranked third among the SAARC countries, behind Sri Lanka (73) and the Maldives (105), both of which figure in the “high human development” category.
- India still has the lowest rank among the BRICS nations.

UNDP – HDI 2015;
TH: India slips in HDI;

3. Which of the following hydroelectric projects are associated with the waters of River Indus and its tributaries in India?

1. Miyar
2. Lower Kalnai
3. Pakal Dul
4. Kishenganga
5. Ratle

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

A question on Kishenganga has been asked here earlier. If you had noticed the headline of the article (whose link
has been provided below) in yesterday’s newspaper, you would have been able to guess the right answer.

**TH: India, Pakistan to review Miyar project**

4. The Union Cabinet recently approved an amendment to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which will consequently improve the learning outcomes of children.

With regards to which one of the following issues is this amendment related?

(a) No Detention Policy
(b) Minimum Standard Qualification of Teachers
(c) Proliferation of unrecognized schools
(d) School Infrastructure

Solution: b.

“According to Section 23 of the RTE Act, teachers at elementary level who, at the commencement of this Act, did not possess the minimum qualifications as laid down under the RTE Act, need to acquire these within a period of five years i.e., 31st March, 2015. However, several State governments have reported that about a fifth of the teachers are yet to attain the minimum qualifications. In order to ensure that all teachers, in position as on 31st March, 2015, acquire the minimum qualifications prescribed by the academic authority, it is necessary to carry out appropriate amendment in the RTE Act, 2009 to extend the period for such training for four years up to 31st March, 2019.”

**PIB**

5. A technique called “Aari work”, recently in the news, is

(a) A very fine chain stitch traditional to the Kutch area of Gujarat
(b) A form of rock painting unique to the Lambada gypsy tribes of Andhra Pradesh who now have adopted the technique onto canvas
(c) A quilting technique, traditionally made of worn out clothes and sarees in North Bengal
(d) A natural inking technique involving rituals and festivities practised by the Abor tribes of Arunachal Pradesh

Solution: a.

IE: ‘Beauty and the Beast’ outfits hand embroidered in Bhuj;
Wikipedia: Aari;

6. The Union Cabinet recently approved a hike in the Minimum Support Price of Copra. In this regard, farmers mainly of which of the following states will be incentivised to step up their investment?

(a) Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh
(b) Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chattisgarh
(c) Punjab, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir
(d) Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur

Solution: a.

**Copra** is a coconut product. Coconut oil is extracted from it, and it is also consumed as a dry fruit.

“In India, coconut is cultivated mainly in the coastal tracts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh (these four account for about 90 per cent of the total production in India) Orissa, West Bengal, Pondicherry, and Maharashtra and in the islands of Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar. Of late, coconut cultivation has been introduced to suitable locations in non-traditional states including Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Tripura, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh and in the hinterland regions of the coconut growing states.”

**Coconuts in India**;
Improvisation: **PIB**;
7. The states most severely affected by Arsenic and Fluoride contamination of drinking water respectively are

(a) Bihar and Jharkhand
(b) Bihar and Andhra Pradesh
(c) West Bengal and Rajasthan
(d) West Bengal and Telangana

Solution: c.

Whereas Arsenic contamination is concentrated in states drained by the Rivers Ganga, Brahmaputra and their tributaries, the same is not the case with Fluoride contamination of water. Rajasthan, Telangana, West Bengal, Karnataka and Bihar are some states affected badly by fluoride contamination.

Additional Information: Bureau of Indian Standards has set standards for drinking water. However, this standard is only voluntary in nature and not legally supported for enforcement. This standard has two limits:

- Desirable limits
- Maximum permissible or cause for rejection limits

If any parameter exceeds the cause for rejection limit, that water is considered as contaminated. Broadly speaking, water is defined as contaminated if it is biologically contaminated (presence of microscopic organisms such as E. coli, zoo-plankton etc) or chemical contamination exceeds permissible limits (e.g. excess fluoride, salinity, etc).

Table on Page 1 and 2: MDWS: National Sub-Mission on Arsenic and Fluoride Guidelines

8. With reference to the National Sub-Mission on Arsenic and Fluoride to provide safe drinking water, which one of the following statements is incorrect?

(a) Water purification plants plants will be set up in affected villages as a short-term-immediate measure to provide safe water for drinking and cooking purpose

(b) As a permanent solution, safe and perennial surface water-based piped water will be supplied to all arsenic and fluoride affected habitations

Solution: It has set March 2020 as a deadline for completion of the project in mission-mode

Solution: a.

The Goal of the National Sub-Mission is option ‘b’. Option ‘c’ is a short-term measure that is already being implemented.

MDWS: National Sub-Mission on Arsenic and Fluoride Guidelines

Improvisation: PIB;

9. The theme for World Water Day 2017 is

(a) Preventing Water Wars
(b) Wastewater
(c) Water and Energy
(d) Water for Cities

Solution: b.

UPSC is quite unpredictable. There are several such ‘days’ that are celebrated annually, each with its own worldwide theme. However, we asked this question only because there was an article on wastewater in The Hindu yesterday, and thus you could have guessed the answer.

- Regarding World Water Day: World Water Day is held annually on March 22, as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. An international day to celebrate freshwater was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) also known as The Earth Summit or Rio Summit. The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating March 22 1993 as the first World Water Day.
1. The display of the National Flag is governed by the provisions of
   1. Flag Code of India, 2002
   2. Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950
   3. Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971

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

   Solution: d.

   Apart from non statutory instructions issued by the Government from time to time, the display of the national flag is governed by the provisions of the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950 and the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971. The Flag Code of India, 2002, is an attempt to bring together all such laws, conventions, practices and instructions for the guidance and benefit of all concerned.

   Improvisation: PIB;

   Appendix IX, Flag Code of India, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

2. With reference to the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 which of the following statements is/are correct?

   1. The Election Commission allots symbols only for recognised political parties whose candidates can use it while contesting in polls
   2. An independent candidate has to approach the EC with his symbol before contesting in polls to ensure it does not match any from the EC’s list

   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.

   As per the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, the Election Commission allots symbols for anyone contesting in polls.

   A person contesting on behalf of a recognised political party will inherit the party’s symbol. An independent candidate or someone contesting on behalf of an unrecognised political party has to approach the Commission and get a symbol allotted from the list of ‘free’ symbols available.

   TH: ‘Free’ Election Symbols;

3. With reference to the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 which of the following statements is/are correct?

   1. If a political party recognised in a particular State wishes to contest in elections in another State, it can ‘reserve’ the symbol being used by it.
   2. Two or more recognised political parties can have the same symbol provided they are not contenders in the same State or Union Territory.
   3. In case a recognised state party splits, the State EC gives its recommendations to the EC which decides as to which faction can use the symbol

   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.

- State Election Commissions are concerned with elections to panchayats and municipalities. They play no role in allotment of settling disputes related to symbols of recognised parties.

- Two or more recognised political parties can have the same symbol provided they are not contenders in the same State or Union Territory. Both Federal Party of Manipur and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) use ‘Rising Sun’ as their symbol. But if one of the parties wish to open their account in the other State, it will have to contest on a different symbol. This is why the Bahujan Samaj Party will have to choose a different symbol if it contests in Assam, since Asom Gana Parishad also uses ‘Elephant’ symbol.

- In case a recognised political party splits, the Commission decides which faction can use the symbol. In the case of Samajwadi Party, the EC allotted ‘Bicycle’ to the Akhilesh Yadav faction. The Commission may also choose to freeze the symbol and ask both factions to contest in fresh symbols, just as how it did with AIADMK’s ‘Two Leaves’ now and with Congress in 1969 when the party had split as Congress (R) and Congress (O).

TH: ‘Free’ Election Symbols;

Solution: d.

- NCST has approved the proposal for five additional seat for tribals in Sikkim assembly. The Commission gave its approval to the proposal of increasing reserve seats for STs from 12 to 17 in Sikkim assembly.

- The Chairman said that the Commission is very serious about the illegal transfer of land holdings of Scheduled Tribes. He said a detailed study will be carried out of all such incidents.

PIB;

Ch-43, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

5. ‘Limbu’ and ‘Tamang’ tribes can be found in which part of India?
   (a) Western India
   (b) North East India
   (c) South India
   (d) Central and East India

Solution: b.

- At present there are 32 members in Sikkim assembly and it would be increased to 40. Out of the proposed additional eight seats, five seats would be reserved for Limbu and Tamang tribes.

PIB;

6. “Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana”, is a scheme for
   (a) Training the youth in geriatric care
   (b) Providing physical aids and assisted-living devices for senior citizens belonging to BPL category
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: b.

As per the Census figures of 2011, the population of senior citizens in India is 10.38 crore. More than 70% of the population of senior citizens live in rural areas of the country. A sizeable percentage (5.2%) of the senior
citizens suffers from some sort of disabilities related to old age.

- “Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana”, a ‘Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to BPL category’ will be launched in District Nellore, Andhra Pradesh on 1st April, 2017.

- The scheme will be implemented through the sole implementing agency, ‘Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)’, (a PSU under M/o SJ&E), which will undertake one year free maintenance of the aids & assisted living devices.

PIB;

NOTES
Daily Quiz

25th MARCH 2017

1. As per the World Health Organisation, Body Mass Index values for adults are
   (a) Age-independent
   (b) Same for both sexes
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: c.

• BMI values are **age-independent** and the **same for both sexes**. However, BMI may not correspond to the same degree of fatness in different populations due, in part, to different body proportions.

• The health risks associated with increasing BMI are continuous and the interpretation of BMI gradings in relation to risk may differ for different populations.

**WHO: BMI Classification**;

**Improvisation: Calcutta HC seeks report on pot-bellied policemen**;

2. Consider the following statements about the Animal Welfare Board of India:
   1. It provides grants to Animal Welfare Organizations
   2. The board consists of members from both Houses of Parliament
   3. The Prevention of Cruelty Act, 1960 mandates the appointment of either a veterinarian, an animal welfare activist or a retired judge as the chairperson

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

Solution: b.

“**The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)**, a statutory advisory body under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF), will now be permanently chaired by a senior MoEF official, according to a notification made public earlier this month. In its 55-year history the organisation has always been chaired by somebody outside government, such as veterinarians, animal welfare activists or retired judges.” So, statement 3 is incorrect.

• The Animal Welfare Board of India is a **statutory advisory body** on Animal Welfare Laws and promotes animal welfare in the country.

• Established in **1962** under Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (No. 59 of 1960), the Animal Welfare Board of India was started under the stewardship of Late Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale, well known humanitarian.

• From ensuring that animal welfare laws in the country are diligently followed, to provide grants to Animal Welfare Organizations and advising the Government of India on animal welfare issues, the Board has been the face of the animal welfare movement in the country for the last 50 years.

• The Board consists of 28 Members (4 LS MPs and 2 RS MPs included). The term of office of Members is for a period of 3 years.

**TH: Environment Ministry Official to chair AWBI**;

**About AWBI**;

3. Consider the following statements:
   1. A single time-zone for India was adopted before Independence
   2. The Standard Meridian of India passes through Allahabad

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

Solution: c.

• The longitude against which Indian Standard time is set (also known as the ‘Standard Meridian of India’) passes through Allahabad.
British India did not adopt the international standard time zones until 1905 when the meridian passing through Allahabad at 82.5° east (of Greenwich Meridian) longitude was picked as the central meridian for India, corresponding to a single time zone for the country at 5 hours and 30 minutes in advance of GMT.

This went into force on January 1, 1906. However, Calcutta time was officially maintained as a separate time zone until 1948. Bombay time was maintained but only informally until about 1955.

Greenwich mean time: IST;

Improvisation: TH: One India, two time zones;

4. The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval to provide constitutional backing to which one of the following bodies?
   (a) National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes
   (b) National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
   (c) Attorney General of India
   (d) National Human Rights Council

Solution: a.

Insights Daily Current Affairs – 24th March 2017;

5. According to the amendments made to the Finance Bill of 2017 and passed recently by the Lok Sabha,

1. Corporate donations to political parties will no longer face any ceiling linked to firms' profitability

2. Companies don’t have to reveal the extent of their financing of parties

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.

“Till now, companies could only contribute up to 7.5% of their average net profits in the past three financial years to political parties. They were required to disclose in their profit and loss accounts the amount of contributions and the names of political parties to which they were made. The ceiling has now been dropped, paving the way for a firm to deploy unlimited capital into political coffers irrespective of its own financial and operational health. Companies would still have to reveal the extent of their financing of parties, but no longer have to name their preferred parties.”

TH: Cloak of invisibility;

Insights Daily Current Affairs – 24th March 2017;

*Clarification*

Quiz 24th March 2017 [Click HERE]: Regarding Q2 – Typo; Answer should be ‘d’, that is, neither ‘a’ nor ‘b’.

Regarding Q3 – First, a very important point to note: With respect to the statement, “if one of the parties wish to open their account in the other State, it will have to contest on a different symbol”, please read the entire point once again to understand the context.

Next, regarding statement 1 of the same question: It is correct, but incomplete. Similar to Statement 2, we should have included the condition upon which a recognised state political party can ‘reserve’ the symbol being used by it for contesting elections in another state (the condition is: provided the symbol is not already being used by someone else).
1. Syed Mir Nisar Ali was a peasant leader, who led which one of the following rebellions?
   (a) Indigo revolt
   (b) Chuar rebellion
   (c) Narkelberia uprising
   (d) Santhal rebellion

Solution: c.

“Nearly 190 years after his death, Syed Mir Nisar Ali, or Titu Mir, a peasant leader, who led the Narkelberia Uprising in 1831 — often considered the first armed peasant uprising against the British — has made a controversial comeback in Bengal’s politics through a chapter in a prescribed tenth grade history textbook. Celebrated in folklore as a peasant leader, Titu Mir remains a controversial political figure in Bengal for his religious identity as an Islamic preacher after he converted to Wahabism. The current row has been sparked by the chapter in the textbook, approved by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, that claims Titu Mir “killed” many Hindus and destroyed several temples.”

Th: Titu Mir returns to roil Bengal;

2. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Lower House / Name of bicameral legislature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Japan</td>
<td>National Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Germany</td>
<td>National Diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. France</td>
<td>Bundestag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the pairs mentioned above is/are correctly matched?
   (a) 1 and 2 only
   (b) 2 and 3 only
   (c) 1, 2 and 3
   (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

Terms used for these and legislatures of other Nations often appear in the news.

- The Bundestag is a constitutional and legislative body at the federal level in Germany. For its similar function, it is often described as a lower house of parliament along the lines of the US House of Representatives and the Canadian or the British House of Commons.
- The National Assembly is the lower house of the bicameral Parliament of France.
- The National Diet is Japan’s bicameral legislature (consisting of directly elected members to the House of Representatives and House of Councillors).

Improvisation: TH: Indo-US Civil nuclear pact likely to miss June deadline;

3. In what way is neem-coating of urea beneficial?

1. It makes diversion of urea to non-agricultural users difficult
2. Agricultural yields increase

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 interim report prepared by Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Centre (ADRTC), Bengaluru has been submitted by Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DACFW). The brief findings of the study are as follows:

- Improvement in soil health;
- Reduction in costs with respect to plant protection chemicals;
- Reduction in pest and disease attack;
- An increase in yield of paddy, sugarcane, maize, soybean and tur/red gram to an extent of 79%, 17.5%, 7.14%, 7.4% and 16.88% respectively;
- Diversion of highly subsidized urea towards non-agricultural purposes negligible among farmers
after the introduction of the mandatory policy of production and distribution of only Neem coated urea.

PIB;

4. Hallmarks are official marks used as a guarantee of purity or fitness of precious metal articles. In this context, consider the following statements:

1. The Bureau of Indian Standards Hallmarking Scheme is a compulsory scheme
2. No hallmarking centre has been set up either by the Central Government or by the Bureau of Indian Standards

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

Solution: c.

The Hallmarking Scheme is a voluntary scheme being operated by BIS under the BIS Act 1986. BIS is operating the scheme through its network of Regional/ Branch Offices all over the country. As per this scheme the licence is granted to a jeweler for certification of purity of gold (or silver) jewellery. A licensee jeweler has to get the jewellery hallmarked through any of the BIS recognized Assaying and hallmarking centres (no hallmarking center has been set up by Central Government or by Bureau of Indian Standards. Hallmarking centres are generally set up by private entrepreneurs).

BIS: FAQs;

Improvisation: PIB;

5. ‘NIKSHAY’ is a web-based platform for
(a) Monitoring tuberculosis patients
(b) Monitoring all World Bank-funded projects
(c) Grievance redressal in oil and gas related service issues
(d) Tracking and finding missing children

Solution: a.

- To monitor the Revised National Tuberculosis Programme (RNTCP) effectively, a web enabled and case based monitoring application called NIKSHAY has been developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- “IT based E-Nikshay platform has been made user-friendly so that Private Doctors find it easy to notify.”

PIB;

About Nikshay;

*Clarification*

Quiz, 25th March, 2017 (Click HERE): Regarding Q3 – The first statement should have been better-framed. Barring only Calcutta, officially, rest of British India was under the single time-zone.
1. The ‘World Conference on Environment’, recently inaugurated by the President, is organised by which one of the following Indian entities?
   (a) National Green Tribunal
   (b) The Energy and Resources Institute
   (c) Navdanya
   (d) Centre for Science and Environment

Solution: a.

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the 3rd ‘World Conference on Environment’ organized by the National Green Tribunal in New Delhi on March 25, 2017.

PIB;

2. This year, India observes the centenary of which one of the following events in the struggle for India’s Independence?
   (a) The return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa
   (b) Champaran Satyagraha
   (c) Ahmedabad mill-workers’ strike
   (d) The Lucknow Pact

Solution: b.

- Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1915
- Champaran Satyagraha – 1917
- Ahmedabad mill-worker’s strike – 1918
- Lucknow Pact – 1916

PIB;

3. Which of the following Naval aircraft/crrier was/were recently decommissioned?
   (a) TU142M Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft
   (b) INS Vikrant
   (c) Both a and b
   (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: a.

- India’s second Aircraft Carrier, INS Viraat (not INS Vikrant), was decommissioned on the 7th of March.
- TU142M will be de-inducted on 29th of March (Yes, that means tomorrow, but the answer is not going to change).

PIB: De-induction of Tu142M;

TH: The end of a voyage;

4. ‘TROPEX’, is
   (a) A bilateral naval exercise between India and France
   (b) A multilateral naval exercise between India, Maldives, Indonesia and Singapore
   (c) An inter-service military exercise of the Indian Armed Forces
   (d) A joint bilateral military exercise between India and China

Solution: c.

It is an inter-service military exercise of the Indian Armed Forces.

January, 2017: IE;

Improvisation: PIB: De-induction of Tu142M;

5. With reference to the G-20 Framework Working Group (FWG), consider the following statements:
   1. It deliberates on the policy options that countries can pursue to counter the important development challenges
   2. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development is a member
   3. India along with Canada has been co-chairing this group since its inception
Daily Quiz

28th MARCH 2017

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

All statements are correct.

- G20 Leaders at the Pittsburgh Summit held in September 2009 had committed to work together to ensure that global growth is strong, sustainable and balanced. To that end, the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth was launched.

- G-20 Framework Working Group (FWG) is one of the core working groups of G-20. The mandate of FWG is to deliberate on the challenges facing the global economy and the policy options that countries can use to address these challenges. It is co-chaired by Canada and India.

- Since the inception of the FWG in 2009, this is the fourth occasion that India is hosting this meeting.

- In the forthcoming meeting in Varanasi, one important focus of the G-20 FWG will be to deliberate on the inclusive growth agenda of G-20 and to formulate a framework that will enable countries to help frame country specific inclusive growth policies.

PIB; G20 FWG; OECD;

6. With reference to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, consider the following statements:

1. The Central Government and the State Governments are required to consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting Scheduled Tribes

2. The Commission can suo moto take cognizance of violation of constitutional and other legal safeguards of Scheduled Castes

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

The Commission can suo moto take cognisance of violation of constitutional and other legal safeguards of Scheduled Tribes (not SCs, as mentioned in the statement).

Improvisation: PIB: NCST issues notices to the CS and DGP of Chattisgarh;

Ch-43, NCST, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

7. With reference to a relatively recently evolved spiritual movement, consider the following statements:

1. Its headquarters is in Mount Abu, Rajasthan

2. It is the world’s largest spiritual organisation led by women

3. It was set up by Dada Lekhraj Kripalani in 1937 with the intention to teach the principles and practices of a virtuous and meditative life

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

(a) Spiritual World
(b) Brahma Kumaris
(c) Adidam
(d) Heaven’s Gate

Solution: b.

- Brahma Kumaris is a worldwide spiritual movement dedicated to personal transformation and world renewal. Founded in India in 1937, Brahma Kumaris has spread to over 110 countries on all continents and has had an extensive impact in many sectors as an international NGO. However, their real commitment is to helping individuals transform
their perspective of the world from material to spiritual.

- The spiritual headquarters of Brahma Kumaris is in Mount Abu, India. Brahma Kumaris is the largest spiritual organisation in the world led by women.
- Although women hold the top administrative positions, the women who hold these positions have always made decisions in partnership with the men.
- Brahma Kumaris was founded by Dada Lekhraj Kripalani, a retired Indian businessman, in 1937 in Hyderabad, a city now in Pakistan.

PIB;
About Brahma Kumaris;

*Clarification*

Quiz, 27th March 2017
(Click HERE): Regarding Q4, the correct answer is option ‘b’, as can be gleaned from the explanation.
1. The Mental Health Care Bill was recently passed by the Parliament. Consider the following statements in this context:

1. The bill adopts an ‘Assurance-based’ approach as opposed to a ‘Rights-based’ approach.
2. Every person who is not a minor and is suffering from mental illness has a right to make an ‘Advance Directive’.
3. It decriminalises suicide.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- The bill adopts a ‘Rights-based’ approach as opposed to the latest National Health Policy’s ‘Assurance-based’ approach.

- Every person, who is not a minor, shall have a right to make an advance directive in writing, specifying any or all of the following, namely:- (a) the way the person wishes to be cared for and treated for a mental illness; (b) the way the person wishes not to be cared for and treated for a mental illness; (c) the individual or individuals, in order of precedence, he wants to appoint as his nominated representative.

- The Advance Directive will be valid only after it is certified by a Mental Health Board or a medical Practitioner.

2. Which of the following Indian states share their borders with Nagaland?

1. Assam
2. Arunachal Pradesh
3. Mizoram
4. Myanmar

Solution: a.

Improvisation: IE;

3. The ‘Neutrino’, one of the least-understood fundamental particles of the universe, is very similar to a/an

(a) Neutron
(b) Proton
(c) Electron
(d) Positron

Solution: c.

A neutrino is a subatomic particle that is very similar to an electron, but has no electrical charge and a very small mass, which might even be zero.

Read the following carefully in order to understand the very basics regarding the neutrino: The so-called Standard Model of Particle Physics suggests the material universe is assumed to be built by a small number of fundamental particles:

- quarks
- electron-like particles called leptons.
Quarks bind together through the strong interaction to make, for example, protons and neutrons. Leptons do not take part in the strong interaction, and only interact via the electromagnetic and weak forces. Quarks, at least in normal circumstances, exist only in bound states (Protons, Neutrons). Leptons, on the other hand, can be individually observed. We have experimental evidence for six different kinds of leptons – three negatively electrically charged leptons, and three electrically neutral. The best known electrically charged leptons are:

- the electron
- the muon
- the tauon

The three electrically neutral leptons are the neutrinos (ν). Associated to each charged lepton, there are three distinct kinds of neutrinos:

- the electron neutrino
- the muon neutrino
- the tauon neutrino

Additional Information: The Nobel Prize in Physics 2015 was awarded jointly to Takaaki Kajita and Arthur B. McDonald "for the discovery of neutrino oscillations, which shows that neutrinos have mass".

PHYS.ORG: What are leptons?

Improvisation: IE: Search for ghost particle hits wildlife clearance wall;

4. Consider the following statements with reference to the Finance Bill, the passing of which, by the Parliament, is a part of enactment of the budget:

1. The Finance Bill is a Money Bill
2. It can propose legislative changes that are unrelated to taxation

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

- Since the Finance Bill is a Money Bill, it only needs the approval of Lok Sabha, and Rajya Sabha may only make recommendations.

- Regarding Statement 2: This year, the Finance Bill has been passed by Lok Sabha with not only changes to applicable taxes, but also structural changes to institutions and sectors. For instance, the bill replaces certain existing Tribunals and transfer their functions to other Tribunals. It also allows the central government to specify the appointments, tenure, removal, and reappointment of chairpersons and members of Tribunals through Rules (and not laws, as is the current method).

- This, however, is not the first time that the Finance Bill has proposed legislative changes that are unrelated to taxation. In earlier years, the Finance Bill has envisaged substantive provisions relating to the creation of an independent agency to manage government debt, the Monetary Policy Committee to target inflation, and the merging of the Forward Markets Commission with the Securities regulator. MPs from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have objected to such structural provisions being included in the Finance Bill.

IE: How Finance Bill amendments affect tribunals;

5. The ‘Smart India Hackathon 2017’ is the first massive-scale hackathon initiative in India. Which one of the following ministries is collaborating with NASSCOM and Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, among others, to conduct this event?

(a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
(b) Ministry of Human Resource and Development
(c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
(d) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Solution: b.

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and in collaboration with
i4c, My Gov, Persistent Systems, NASSCOM and Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodini (a charitable organisation) is conducting a unique initiative ‘Smart India Hackathon 2017’.

- For the first time ever, 29 different government ministries and departments came together and posed 598 problem statements to 30 lakh technical students from India.
- During the 36-hour Grand Finale scheduled to be held on April 1&2, 2017 teams of thousands of technology students will build innovative digital solutions for problems posed by different central govt. ministries/ departments.

PIB;

6. The issue of incorporating caste discrimination into this nation’s legislation has been a matter of public debate for a number of years now. This government recently published details of a public consultation on the same issue. The nation in question is?
   
   (a) United Kingdom
   
   (b) South Africa
   
   (c) United States of America
   
   (d) Bangladesh

Solution: a

“The British government on Tuesday published details of a long-awaited 16-week public consultation on whether caste should be introduced as an aspect of race in anti-discrimination legislation.”

TH: UK begins consultation on caste discrimination;
1. The ‘Lisbon Treaty’, often in the news, is related to which one of the following?
   (a) European Union  
   (b) A non-binding international agreement on certification of films  
   (c) Nuclear Suppliers Group  
   (d) The International Air Transport Association’s guidelines on dealing with unruly passengers

Solution: a.

- The question includes the words, “often in the news” – options ‘b’ and ‘d’ can easily be eliminated.
- The Lisbon Treaty is an international agreement that amended the Maastricht Treaty, Treaties of Rome, and other documents to simplify and streamline the institutions that govern the European Union (EU).
- Britain became the first nation in history to trigger Article 50, the six-paragraph-long section of the Lisbon Treaty, briefly outlining the process for exiting the union.

TH: May triggers UK exit from EU; Britannica: Lisbon Treaty;

2. Bavaria  
   (a) Is the capital of Moldova  
   (b) Is a region through which flows River Danube  
   (c) Opens out to the Black Sea  
   (d) All of the above

Solution: b.

Bavaria is a state in Southeastern Germany, bordering Liechtenstein, Austria and the Czech Republic. River Danube, the second-longest river in Europe after River Volga

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

Solution: d.

The same question was posted here a few months ago.

- ‘Mission 11 Million’ programme has been launched in coordination with FIFA in about 30 cities across the country. The primary objective of the programme is to engage more than 11 million children in activities relating to Football.

PIB: Speaker to present footballs to all MPs;
4. Consider the following pairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art forms</th>
<th>Corresponding states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheriyal</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patachitra</td>
<td>Odisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharnapatachitra</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) None of the above

Solution: b.

- Cheriyal – Telangana;
- Patachitra – Odisha;
- Jharnapatachitra – West Bengal;

Page 109, Living Craft Traditions of India, Class XI NCERT;
PIB: National Tribal and North East Art Conclave;
From 2015 – TH: Story-telling on canvas;

5. The nodal body in India for cross border trade of electricity is
(a) Directorate General of Foreign Trade
(b) SAARC Energy Centre
(c) Engineering Export Promotion Council
(d) Central Electricity Authority

Solution: d.

“As per the Central Electricity Authority, the Designated Authority of Government of India for Cross Border Trade of Electricity, India has turned around from a net importer of electricity to Net Exporter of electricity for the first time.”

Additional Information: The SAARC Energy Centre is in Islamabad. Also, a SAARC Energy Agreement – a regional cooperation agreement on electricity trade – was signed in 2014 at the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu.

6. The ‘Magnus Effect’ can be utilised for which of the following purposes?
(a) Swinging a cricket ball by a fast bowler
(b) Producing electricity
(c) Deviation of a spinning table tennis ball from its typical path/trajectory
(d) Both b and c

Solution: d.

- Magnus effect occurs only in the case of a spherical (or cylindrical) solid spinning in a fluid (liquid or gas). A spinning tennis or table tennis ball ‘swings’ in the air due to the Magnus effect. The cricket ball ‘drift’ or ‘dip’, terms used in spin bowling, is due to the Magnus effect.

- Magnus effect is not the cause for fast bowlers’ swing bowling (this requires the ball to have a rough and shiny surface on either side of the seam).

Source and Improvisation: TH: Japan scientist’s ‘typhoon turbine’;
Science of the drift and dip in cricket;
Britannica: Magnus Effect;
Watch Magnus Effect in action;

*Clarifications*

Q4. Quiz, 29th March 2017 (Click HERE):
Regarding Statement 1: Please read the question carefully, once again. Most have confused Financial Bills for the Finance Bill which is passed as a part of the budget. The first statement is correct. For further clarification, you should refer to M. Laxmikanth’s Indian Polity – Ch22 (Parliament) -> Budget in Parliament -> a) Constitutional Provisions and b) Stages in Enactment. To better correlate what you read
from Indian Polity, read THIS Livemint article, dated yesterday, in its entirety. ‘Recommendations’ of the Rajya Sabha for money bills are in the form of ‘Amendments’. If the RS passes ‘amendments’ to a money bill, this means the Lok Sabha must ‘reconsider’ the Bill, but it may or may not accept these ‘amendments’ (read recommendations).

Regarding Statement 2: Furthermore, a plain reading of Articles 110(1) and 110(2) make it appear that the finance bill, being a money bill, cannot include non-tax proposals. But Article 110(3) provides leeway to the Speaker to decide whether a bill is a money bill or not. Remember, the Speaker’s decision is final in this matter. Hence, whether the finance bill can include non-tax proposals or not is, in fact, a grey area. There are precedents, and thus governments in the past as well as present have included non-tax proposals in the finance bill. The second statement should have reflected this aspect clearly, which it did not. It should instead have read, “Going by precedent, it can include legislative changes that are unrelated to taxation”. Finally, if the statement reads, “when a bill substantially deals with the imposition, abolition etc of a tax, the other provisions necessary for the achievement of the bill cannot take away from it the category of money bills”, this should be marked correct. Read the third paragraph of THIS IE article.

Q2, Quiz, 29th March 2017
(Click HERE): Please read the question once again. Nagaland shares its borders with the following Indian States – Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh only. Myanmar is not an Indian State. There is only one correct option thus.
1. With reference to the Sulu-Celebes Sea, consider the following statements:

1. China’s so-called ‘Nine-Dash Line’ include select within its perimeters this sea
2. This is the only region where there has been a decline in piracy since the turn of the millennium
3. Its waters touch Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia

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

Solution: c.

A question on the ‘Nine-Dash Line’ was posted here a few months ago. That would have helped you eliminate statement 1, leaving you with just one option, that is, ‘c’.

- Across the world there has been a decline in piracy and sea robbery, but one precarious expanse of ocean waters in South East Asia is bucking that trend and could potentially be one of the riskiest regions in the maritime world.
- Few people will have heard of it and it has barely hit the global headlines, compared to key waterways such as the Malacca Strait, but the Sulu-Celebes Sea, encompassing the waters around Indonesia, Malaysia’s eastern Sabah state and the Philippines, has become an area of growing concern.

BBC: Is this the most dangerous backwater in the world?

2. India recently signed its first loan agreement with the New Development Bank for the project of upgradation of major district roads in Madhya Pradesh. New Development Bank is

(a) An associate bank of the State Bank of India
(b) The India branch of the BRICS Development Bank
(c) A China-led Infrastructure Investment Bank
(d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- During the sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014), the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).
- In the Fortaleza Declaration, the leaders stressed that the NDB will strengthen cooperation among BRICS and will supplement the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global development, thus contributing to collective commitments for achieving the goal of strong, sustainable and balanced growth.
- The NDB is a multilateral development bank established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa with the objective of financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries.

PIB; TH;
About NDB;

3. The ‘Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana’ has been launched for

(a) Providing irrigation facilities for organic farming
(b) Promoting sprinkler-irrigation among agriculturists in water-scarce and hill regions
(c) Promoting the utilisation of renewable energy in irrigation-intensive regions
(d) Providing some means of protective irrigation to all agricultural farms in the country

About PIB; TH;
Daily Quiz

31st MARCH 2017

Solution: d.

“The overreaching vision of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) is to ensure access to some means of protective irrigation to all agricultural farms in the country, to produce ‘per drop more crop’, thus bringing much desired rural prosperity.”

Vikaspedia;
Improvisation: PIB;

4. Consider the following statements:

1. According to the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) ‘India Energy Outlook’ report, India’s energy demand is expected to more than double over the next 25 years
2. India is a member country of the IEA

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

Solution: c.

- Statement 1: Thanks to rising income, population growth and urbanization, there is a huge potential for energy demand growth in India, which is home to about a fifth of the world’s population but uses only about 6% of the world’s energy. India’s energy demand is expected to more than double over the next 25 years, according to the IEA’s India Energy Outlook.
- India recently declared its ‘Association’ status with the IEA. To be a member country of the IEA, a country must first be an OECD member, which India is not.

‘Association’ Status and Benefits to India:

- ‘Association’ is a bridge and platform for wider-ranging and deeper co-operation and collaboration between IEA member and Association countries.
- Shared areas of co-operation under ‘Association’ include energy security, energy data and statistics, energy policy analysis, energy efficiency, energy technologies, renewables, electricity security, and grid integration.
- With enhanced cooperation with the IEA, India would be able to play a more visible and influential role in the future global energy governance landscape. “Association” status would facilitate India’s participation in meetings of the standing groups, committees and working groups that constitute the IEA governance structure.
- India has a vision of ensuring 24×7 affordable and environment friendly ‘Power for All’ and deeper engagement with IEA is a component of achieving this vision.
- This does not cast any additional obligation on India, however it gives an opportunity for the country to become the voice of the developing countries.

IEA: FAQs; IEA: India joins IEA family; PIB;

5. According to the Law Commission’s 267th report,
(a) Incitement to violence cannot be the sole test for determining whether a speech amounts to hate speech or not
(b) Although offensive speech can have devastating effects on people’s safety, freedom of speech and expression is supreme and should not be curtailed
(c) Any attempt to fortify democracy against hate speeches will further burden a pendency-ridden Judiciary
(d) None of the above

Solution: a.

- The Law Commission of India laid out bare the danger of hate speech to the Central government in its 267th Report released recently.
- The Commission headed by former Supreme Court judge, Justice Balbir Singh Chauhan, called for action from the government and Parliament.
- The top law advisory body to the government urged the expansion of the penal law. It drafted a
new law — The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2017 — inserting new Sections to fortify democracy against hate speeches.

- “Indisputably, offensive speech has real and devastating effects on people’s lives and risks their health and safety. It is harmful and divisive for communities and hampers social progress. If left unchecked, hate speech can severely affect right to life of every individual,” the Commission warned.

- It said even a speech that does not incite violence has the potential of marginalising a section of the society, thus contradicting popular legal and judicial concepts about the ambit of hate speech.

- The Supreme Court in 2014 had referred to the Law Commission for means to arm the Election Commission to crack down on hate speech. Its reference to the Law Commission was on whether it was “proper to define hate speech and make recommendations to Parliament to strengthen the Election Commission to curb the menace of hate speeches irrespective of, whenever made.”

**TH:** Law Commission asks government to fortify democracy from hate speech;
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