DAILY QUIZ

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. NO.</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. ECONOMY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. ECOLOGY &amp; ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI. POLITY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII. HISTORY &amp; ART AND CULTURE</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIII. STATES</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IX. DEFENCE &amp; SECURITY</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IX. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. ECONOMY

1. Consider the following statements about AT1 or Additional Tier-1 bonds:
   1. An AT1 bond owner receives an interest payment as long as the bond is held, viz. these bonds have no maturity date
   2. These are considered to be high-risk, high-yield investments
   3. Banks in India have issued such bonds to enable them to comply with Basel III norms

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.

- In an attempt to comply with Basel III norms to have higher tier I capital by financial year (FY) 2019, many public sector banks have raised capital through perpetual bonds, better known as AT1 bonds or additional tier 1 bonds.
- These bonds have **no maturity date**. Technically they can continue to pay the coupon forever.
- The issuing bank has the option to call back the bonds or repay the principal after a specified period of time.
- The attraction for investors is higher yield than secured bonds issued by the same entity.
- But this comes with a two-fold risk: First, the issuing bank has the discretion to skip coupon payment. Second, the bonds can get written down in certain circumstances. In some cases there could be a clause to convert into equity as well. Given these characteristics, AT1 bonds are also referred to as quasi-equity.

Improvisation: TH: ‘Bonds recall: PSBs may fail requirement’;
      Livemint: AT1 bonds;

2. By giving focused attention to the twelve recently identified ‘Champion Services Sectors’ for their development, it is envisaged that
   1. The share of India’s services sector in global services exports will increase
   2. Competitiveness of the manufacturing sector will 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.

- As the Services sector contributes significantly to India’s GDP, exports and job creation, increased productivity and competitiveness of the Champion Services Sectors will further boost exports of various services from India.
3. The initiative for ‘Champion Sectors’ will be spearheaded by
   a) Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
   b) Ministry of Science and Technology
   c) Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion and Department of Commerce
   d) NITI Aayog

Solution: c.

- The Group of Secretaries in their recommendations to the Prime Minister, had identified ten Champion Sectors, including seven manufacturing related sectors and three services sectors, for promoting their development and achieving their potential. It was subsequently decided that Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, the nodal department for ‘Make in India’, would spearhead the initiative for the Champion Sectors in manufacturing and Department of Commerce would coordinate the proposed initiative for the Champion Sectors in Services.

4. The CRISIL Inclusix financial inclusion index measures progress on financial inclusion based on which among the following dimensions?
   1. Branch penetration
   2. Deposit penetration
   3. Credit penetration
   4. Insurance penetration

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

Solution: d.

A mains-oriented question.

- India’s first financial inclusion index was launched in 2013 with the objective of becoming a crucial gauge and policy input.
- It is based on four dimensions—branch penetration, deposit penetration, credit penetration and insurance penetration.
5. Consider the following statements about ‘Buyers’ Credit’:
   1. It is availed mainly by multinational companies
   2. Interest rates for such credit are the highest among credit products due to the market risks involved

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.

PNB scam hits buyers’ credit

Interest rates go through the roof

6. In the context of investment on research and development as a percentage of a country’s GDP, consider the following statements:
   1. Indian investment has been consistently ramped up on a year-on-year basis since 2000
   2. China’s investment is presently comparable to many developed countries’ investments

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
7. Which among the following trade financing instruments issued by banks were recently banned by the RBI?
   1. Letters of Comfort
   2. Letters of Credit
   3. Letters of Undertaking

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: c.

- Banks can continue to issue Letters of Credit and Bank Guarantees.

http://www.livemint.com/Industry/kie0j5CYbKiqweWAnyZ9s1/RBI-stops-use-of-LoUs-for-trade-credit-for-imports.html;
http://www.thehindu.com/business/lou-ban-hits-importers-as-cost-goes-up/article23246763.ece;

8. Consider the following statements:
   ‘Letters of Undertaking’
   1. Are issued to avail both short-term and long-term credit
   2. Are availed mainly by the gems and jewellery sector
   3. Make a difference to the competitiveness of Indian exports

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

- Importers prefer taking loans based on **LoUs** as they are denominated in foreign currency and are cheaper.
- A **letter of credit**, on the other hand, is used to establish the credit worthiness of the buyer in the purchase of goods.
- LoUs are issued by banks in India to customers importing goods to avail short-term credit in a foreign country.
- LoUs and LoCs (**Letters of Comfort**) are used widely in several industries including gems and jewellery, oil and gas, electronic goods, solar panels and metals. The gems and jewellery sector was the main sector availing LoUs/LoCs.
- Charges on such credit had already started rising as banks became more cautious following the PNB fraud. The ban means importers will have to make do with costlier credit, affecting export competitiveness of Indian goods.

[http://www.livemint.com/Industry/kie0j5CYbKlqweWAnyZ9sl/RBI-stops-use-of-LoUs-for-trade-credit-for-imports.html](http://www.livemint.com/Industry/kie0j5CYbKlqweWAnyZ9sl/RBI-stops-use-of-LoUs-for-trade-credit-for-imports.html);

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9. Consider the following statements with regard to the government’s budgetary allocations for the Indian defence services:

1. As a percentage of total central government expenditure, the share of the defence budget has reduced over the past few years
2. As a percentage of GDP, India spends lesser than does China and Pakistan

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.

A mains-oriented question; both statements are correct.

- The defence budget (excluding pensions) for the coming financial year is Rs 2,79,305 crore, having risen steadily from Rs 2,03,499 crore in FY13-14.
- But as percentage of total central government expenditure, the budget has come down to 11.44% in FY18-19 from 13.05% in FY13-14.
- The numbers are starker when seen as a percentage of GDP — going down from 2.08% in FY13-14 to 1.49% in FY18-19 (see box). This is perhaps lower than even pre-1962 levels, when the Budget hovered around 1.6% of GDP.
- As per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a Swedish organisation conducting research in conflict and armaments, Pakistan spends 3.4% of its GDP on defence; the figures for the US, UK and Russia are 3.3%, 1.9% and 5.3% respectively (see box).

**IE:**

Improvisation: TH;
10. The ‘World Employment Social Outlook Trends’ report is published by
   a) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
   b) UN Conference on Trade and Development
   c) International Labour Organisation
   d) World Bank

Solution: c.

DATA POINT

Worrying trends on jobs in India

Among workers worldwide who are involved in vulnerable forms of employment, a large number belong to India. “Worryingly, the significant progress achieved in the past in reducing vulnerable employment has essentially stalled since 2012,” observes the ILO’s World Employment Social Outlook Trends 2018 report. After 2009, when India’s share of the unemployed fell steeply, it remained constant for some years but began to grow recently.

Note: Vulnerable labour: Self-employed family workers who are typically engaged in informal work and lack social security. Unemployed: Currently not in employment
Source: International Labour Organisation

The Hindu, 19th March;

11. Consider the following statements:
   1. China has the largest reserves of lithium in the world
   2. Presently in India, lithium attracts the highest tax slab rate under the GST regime

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
12. According to the economic theory of ‘Backstop Resources’,
   a) As the demand for a limited resource increases, it incentivises processes that result in the exploitation of alternative resources to meet human needs
   b) When a country is deprived of foreign technological know-how, it relies on its own human capital to reverse-engineer foreign technological goods it already possesses
   c) Some countries that have hitherto remained poor will see their wealth multiply over the next few decades due to the ongoing “green metal resources boom”
   d) None of the above

Solution: a.

This theory states that as the demand for a resource that is in limited supply increases, it will kick in a process that results in the exploitation of other alternative resources to meet human needs. For instance, as the demand for oil increases even as its available supply decreases, this will cause the price of oil to shoot up and push businesses to look for alternative sources of energy. The theory implies that humans need not worry about running out of resources as prices will always provide an incentive to tap into alternative resources and develop technology for efficient use of these resources.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/what-is-backstop-resources-theory-in-economics/article23366603.ece

13. ‘Vanishing Companies’ refer to companies
   a) That raised funds from public through initial public offers but failed to comply with regulatory requirements and were not found at their registered office address
   b) Whose promoters flee the country following exposure of their companies’ financial irregularities
   c) That have been created for the purpose of diverting money or for money laundering, viz. they do not manufacture any product or deal in any product or render any service
   d) That do not commence business within one year of their incorporation

Solution: a.

Vanishing Companies are those companies which raised funds from public through initial public offers (IPOs) and subsequently failed, inter-alia, to comply with the listing/filing requirements of Registrar of Companies (ROC) and the Stock Exchanges for a period of two years and were not found at their registered office address at the time of inspection done by authorities / Stock Exchange.

Thus, a company would be deemed to be a vanishing company, if it is found to have:
• Failed to file returns with Registrar of Companies (ROC) or with Stock Exchange (if it continues to be a listed company) for a period of two years;
• It is not maintaining its registered office at the address notified with the Registrar of Companies/ Stock Exchange;
• None of its Directors are traceable.
• All the three conditions mentioned above would have to be satisfied before a company is declared as a vanishing company.

The criteria for “vanishing companies” are identified by the Coordination and Monitoring Committee – a joint mechanism between the securities market regulator, SEBI, the central bank, RBI and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) – set up by Government of India in 1999 (active still). Otherwise, there is no formal definition of vanishing companies in the Companies Act, 2013.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177391;
http://arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Vanishing_Companies;
II. ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

1. The recently developed ‘Carbon-dioxide Brayton cycle test loop facility’ will
   a) Help generate clean energy from future power plants
   b) Result in reduction of emissions from Diesel engines
   c) Provide access to real-time information on air quality for any location across India
   d) Permit for extended durations of human space flight

Solution: a.

- Indian scientists have developed a super critical carbon dioxide Brayton test loop facility that would help generate clean energy from future power plants including solar thermal. This next generation technology loop was developed indigenously by Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.
- This is India’s first test-bed for next-generation, efficient, compact, waterless super critical carbon dioxide Brayton cycle test loop for power generation.
- The new generation high efficiency power plants with closed cycle CO₂ as the working fluid have the potential to replace steam based nuclear and thermal power plants, thus reducing the carbon footprint significantly.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176729;
Source: Ministry of Science and Technology Advertisement, 28th February edition of the Hindu;

2. India is not a participant in which one of the following international scientific endeavours?
   a) Global Monitoring for Environment and Security
   b) Thirty Meter Telescope
   c) Mission Innovation for Clean Energy
   d) LIGO Gravitational Wave detection

Solution: a.

We have posted questions here earlier on all four options mentioned in the question. GMES is a European Programme for Earth Observation, and has been renamed ‘Copernicus’.

Source: Ministry of Science and Technology Advertisement, 28th February edition of the Hindu;

3. The International Waterbird Census, of which forms the Asian Waterbird Census a part, is coordinated by
   a) ebird
   b) Wetlands International
   c) BirdLife International
   d) Convention on Migratory Species
Solution: b.
- The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) is an integral part of the global waterbird monitoring programme, the International Waterbird Census (IWC), coordinated by Wetlands International.
- The IWC, coordinated by Wetlands International, is a monitoring programme operating in 143 countries to collect information on the numbers of waterbirds at wetland sites.

**Improvisation:** TH: Waterbird species down by half in EGREE region;

4. Which one among the following forms the bulk of animal species that are either critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable in the IUCN Red List for 2017 in India?
   a) Birds
   b) Reptiles
   c) Mammals
   d) Fish

Solution: d.

**DATA POINT**

**Red List Alert**

Fish form the bulk of animal species that are either critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable in the IUCN Red List for 2017 in India.

- Plants: 36.6%
- Other invertebrates: 12%
- Fish: 21.4%
- Molluscs: 0.7%
- Amphibians: 7.0%
- Reptiles: 5.1%
- Birds: 8.4%
- Mammals: 8.8%

Source: International Union for Conservation of Nature
5. Which among the following tiger reserves/national parks is nearest to Kolkata?
   a) Buxa Tiger Reserve
   b) Jaldapara National Park
   c) Simlipal Tiger Reserve
   d) Mudumalai National Park

Solution: c.

On the map:
A – Simlipal (Odisha)
B – Buxa (West Bengal)
C – Jaldapara (WB)


6. The International Solar Alliance
   1. Is the first international and inter-governmental body that will house its secretariat in India
   2. Requires a hundred billion dollars worth dedicated investments to achieve its solar power generation capacity target by 2030
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.

- The ISA has set a target of 1 TW (1,000 GW) of solar energy by 2030, of which India will account for one-tenth by 2022 (India has set a target to produce 100GW of solar energy by 2022). It has been estimated that this to achieve this target, the alliance will have to mobilise more than 1 trillion US dollars of investments.

Statement 1 is correct.

http://www.thehindu.com/business/what-is-international-solar-alliance/article23041912.ece;

From 2016: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=135794;

Clarification:

Q1 (ISA): For India, it will be the first time an international treaty-based body will have its secretariat in this country. The first statement in the question should have reflected the highlighted text. GTF is not a treaty-based body.

7. ‘PEER’ and ‘EDGE’ ratings certification are issued for
   a) Healthcare systems of countries
   b) Road safety of countries
   c) Disaster resilience of cities
   d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- For the mass housing segment, the EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies) rating, requiring compliance on lesser specifications, has been developed by GBCI (Green Business Certification Inc., a part of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)) with the help of IFC and the World Bank.

- EDGE, will help save 20% in energy, 20% on water costs and 20% reduction in embodied energy that goes into materials, reducing the energy components. If LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the preferred choice, savings will be more.

- GBCI has also introduced its global rating system called Performance Excellence in Electricity Renewal (PEER) in India with an aim to issue certification for the power sector, as it has done with LEED for buildings.


8. Presently, biofuels in India are made from

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, 3 and 4
9. Consider the following statements:

‘Climate Justice’
1. Focuses attention on people, rather than greenhouse gases
2. Entails planning for evacuation of climate refugees due to rising seas
3. Is a moral argument

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: c.

“Climate justice focuses our attention on people, rather than ice-caps and greenhouse gases”

“No world leader should have to plan for evacuation from the land of their ancestors”

“The world is unprepared for a situation where adaptation fails & people are displaced due to climate”

- Climate Justice is a moral argument in two parts. Firstly it compels us to understand the challenges faced by those people and communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Often the people on the front lines of climate change have contributed least to the causes of the climate crisis.

- Climate justice also informs how we should act to combat climate change. We must ensure that the transition to a zero carbon economy is just and that it enables all people to realise their right to development.

Principles of Climate Justice:

- Respect and Protect Human Rights
- Support the Right to Development
- Share Benefits and Burdens Equitably
- Ensure that Decisions on Climate Change are Participatory, Transparent and Accountable
- Highlight Gender Equality and Equity
- Harness the Transformative Power of Education for Climate Stewardship
- Use Effective Partnerships to Secure Climate Justice

Improvisation: http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/always-a-rule-maker/article23163765.ece;
10. The ‘Nile Red’ dye can bind to
   1. Water molecules
   2. Algae
   3. Shells

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

Solution: b.

- Nile Red (NR) can be used for the rapid detection of microplastics without the need for additional spectroscopic analysis. The dye sticks to free-floating pieces of plastic and makes them fluoresce under certain wavelengths of light.
- NR also adsorbs to some common organic (algae, seaweeds, wood and feathers) and inorganic (shells) environmental contaminants.
- NR is well-established to selectively adsorb to hydrophobic (‘water-fearing’) materials and, as such, will not adsorb to the only contents reasonably expected to be within bottled water, water &/or its mineral components.

This study by Orb Media was a follow-up to a tap water study released in September 2017. The methods used in this study differed slightly in comparison to this earlier study, most notably in the use of a different stain. ‘Rose Bengal’ was used in the earlier study, while ‘Nile Red’ was used here.

“Some of these particles – large enough to be handled individually – were then analysed by infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), confirmed as plastic and further identified as particular types of polymer. Particles smaller than 100 microns – and down to a size of 6.5 microns – were much more numerous (an average of 314 per litre) and were counted using a technique developed in astronomy for totalling the number of stars in the night sky. The make-up of these particles was not confirmed but Prof Mason said they can “rationally expected to be plastic”. This is because although Nile Red dye can bind to substances other than plastic – such as fragments of shell or algae containing lipids – these would be unlikely to be present in bottled water.”

The full scientific report (absolutely no need to go through this): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/14_03_13_finalbottled.pdf;

11. Consider the following statements:
   1. The ‘Great Pacific Garbage Patch’ is a collection of marine debris that spans waters from the West Coast of North America to Japan
   2. Ocean Gyres are formed by the Earth’s wind patterns and the forces created by the rotation of the planet

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

Both statements are correct.

- The **Great Pacific Garbage Patch** also known as the **Pacific trash vortex**, spans waters from the West Coast of North America to Japan.
- The patch is actually comprised of the Western Garbage Patch, located near Japan, and the Eastern Garbage Patch, located between the U.S. states of Hawaii and California (see image).
- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is not the only marine trash vortex—it’s just the biggest. The Atlantic and Indian Oceans both have trash vortexes.
- The entire Great Pacific Garbage Patch is bounded by the **North Pacific Subtropical Gyre**. The area in the centre of a gyre tends to be very calm and stable. The circular motion of the gyre draws debris into this stable centre, where it becomes trapped.
- Oceanographers and ecologists recently discovered that about 70% of marine debris actually sinks to the bottom of the ocean.


12. All projects and activities under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 are broadly categorised in to two categories namely Category A and Category B based on the

1. Spatial extent of potential impacts
2. Potential impact on human health
3. Potential impact on natural and man made resources

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- All projects and activities are broadly categorized in to two categories – Category A and Category B, based on the spatial extent of potential impacts and potential impacts on human health and natural and man made resources.
- All projects or activities included as Category ‘A’ in the Schedule shall require prior environmental clearance from the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).
- All projects or activities included as Category ‘B’ in the Schedule will require prior environmental clearance from the State/Union territory Environment Authority (SEIAA).

[http://envfor.nic.in/legis/eia/so1533.pdf](http://envfor.nic.in/legis/eia/so1533.pdf)


13. Which among the following species of rhinoceroses has been rendered “functionally extinct” following the death recently of its only surviving male?

a) Javan  
b) Sumatran  
c) Black Rhinoceros  
d) Northern White
Solution: d.

- Sudan, who was 45, lived in Kenya. He was put to sleep on Monday after age-related complications worsened significantly. His death leaves only two females – his daughter and granddaughter – of the subspecies alive in the world.

- Rhinoceroses – of which there are five species – are the second-largest land mammal after elephants. The white rhinoceros consists of two sub-species: the southern white rhino and the much rarer and critically endangered northern white rhino.

- The subspecies’ population in Uganda, Central African Republic, Sudan and Chad was largely wiped out during the poaching crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. Poaching was fuelled by demand for rhino horn for use in traditional Chinese medicine, and for dagger handles in Yemen.


14. The ‘World Water Development Report’, an annual and thematic report, is published by
   a) UN-Water
   b) The World Bank
   c) International Water Management Institute
   d) US Environmental Protection Agency

Solution: a.

In the news: “As World Water Day draws closer (March 22), this year’s World Water Development Report makes it clear that nature-based solutions — which are also aligned with the principles and aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — can offer answers to our most pressing water-related challenges.”

The WWDR is an annual and thematic report that focuses on different strategic water issues each year and aims to provide decision-makers with the tools to implement sustainable use of our water resources.

- WWDR 2018 – Nature-Based Solutions for Water
- WWDR 2017 – Wastewater the Untapped Resource
- WWDR 2016 – Water and Jobs
- WWDR 2015 – Water for a Sustainable World
- WWDR 2014 – Water and Energy

http://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/world-water-development-report/
15. Consider the following statements about the High Level Panel on Water which recently issued a new agenda, ‘Making Ever Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action’:

1. It was set up by the UN and the World Bank
2. India was represented on the panel

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 High Level Panel on Water, consisting of 11 Heads of State and a Special Advisor (India was not represented on the panel) was convened in January 2016 by the United Nations Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President.


16. The second-largest source of freshwater on Earth is

a) Atmosphere  
b) Rivers  
c) Lakes  
d) Ground water

Solution: d.

Where is Earth’s Water?

Source: Igor Shiklomanov’s chapter “World fresh water resources” in Peter H. Gleick (editor), 1993, Water in Crisis: A Guide to the World’s Fresh Water Resources. NOTE: Numbers are rounded, so percent summations may not add to 100.

[https://water.usgs.gov/edu/earthwherewater.html](https://water.usgs.gov/edu/earthwherewater.html)

17. The ‘Water Scarce Cities Initiative’ programme was launched by
   a) UN-Water
   b) The World Bank
   c) International Institute of Water Management
   d) Asian Development Bank

   Solution: b.
   • Cities are becoming thirstier – a 50 percent increase in urban water demands is anticipated within the next 30 years. Rapid urban population growth, economic expansion, and competing demands are increasing thirst and tightening the availability of water in areas where water scarcity is already a reality.
   • In a bid to develop concrete solutions for a water scarce future, the World Bank launched the Water Scarce Cities Initiative (WSC), to bolster awareness of integrated and innovative approaches to managing water resources and service delivery in water scarce cities as the basis for water security and climate resilience.

   http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/making-every-drop-count/article23311134.ece;

18. The supersonic cruise missile BrahMos was recently successfully flight-tested for the first time with an indigenous ‘Seeker’. So far, the ‘Seeker’, a critical technology in missiles, was imported from
   a) France
   b) Israel
   c) China
   d) Russia

   Solution: d.
   The seeker technology, which determines the accuracy of a missile, is a closely guarded secret. Mastering it is a significant milestone in missile technology and would reduce import dependence. So far, the seeker had come from Russia.


19. ‘Earth Hour’ is a global initiative of the
   a) World Wide Fund for Nature
   b) Conservation International
   c) Earth Day Network
   d) UN Environment Programme

   Solution: a.
   • WWF is the parent organisation of earth hour and started earth hour with teams and partners in Sydney, Australia back in 2007.
On the occasion of Earth Hour 2018, WWF-India is launching the ‘Give Up to Give Back’ initiative to inspire organisations, institutions and individuals to make the choice to curb some habits, practices and lifestyles that burden our lives and the environment.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177909;
https://www.earthhour.org/about;

20. Data generated by NASA’s ‘MODIS’ and ‘VIIRS’ satellites is utilised by
   a) The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to curb wildlife crime
   b) The Central Ground Water Board to study the decline and usage patterns of groundwater levels across India
   c) The Indian Meteorological Department to forecast weather and predict the tracks of cyclones
   d) The Forest Survey of India to detect forest fires in real time

Solution: d.

- When a fire anywhere in the world is detected by NASA’s MODIS (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) and VIIRS (Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite) satellites, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) analyses the data by overlaying the digitised boundaries of forest areas to pinpoint the location to the exact forest compartment.
- The resolution of these satellites are up to 375m x 375m, which means that such fires can be detected if their extent is above half the pixel, i.e. about seven hectares.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/fighting-forest-fires/article23349772.ece;
III. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES

1. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is
   1. Aimed at generating self-employment opportunities in the non-farm sector
   2. Being implemented to help only unemployed rural youth
   3. Implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

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: a.

- PMEGP is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by the Ministry of MSME since 2008-09. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at the national level.
- The Scheme is aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth in rural as well as urban areas.

In the news: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs recently approved the continuation of PMEGP beyond the 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs.5,500 crore. It will create sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in these three financial years.

2. The New Swajal Project, recently in the news, is
   a) A solid and liquid waste management scheme
   b) A community-owned drinking water programme
   c) A tree plantation drive in the Ganga catchment area
   d) a, b and c

Solution: b.

- **Swajal**: A community-owned drinking water programme for sustained drinking water supply.
- **Gangotri as Swachh Iconic Places project**: ONGC with its CSR fund will help in taking Gangotri to a higher level of cleanliness.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176689;

3. The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) focuses on
   1. Delivery of rehabilitative and educational services for disabled people
   2. Policy and legal advocacy for the rights of people with all types of impairments

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 NCPEDP, which Javed led, is an unusual entity both within the NGO community and among institutions working in the area of disability. The organisation’s unique identity derives from its single-minded focus on advocacy for the rights of people with all types of impairments. Ever since its inception, the organisation steered clear of assuming any role in the delivery of rehabilitative, educational and other services. What it did was to fill the vacuum in terms of policy and legal advocacy for disabled people. What marked Javed’s highly visible, intense leadership was to reject the NGO straitjacket. The NCPEDP is as much a lobby group, pressing the government, public institutions and the private sector on policies.

- NCPEDP is a cross-disability, non-profit organization, working as an interface between the Government, Industry, International Agencies, and the Voluntary Sector towards empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- NCPEDP advocates for the need to move away from traditionally held views of charity and welfare to those of productivity and enabling of disabled people.

Javed Abidi: Be ready to fight your own battle;

http://www.ncpedp.org/aboutus;

4. The ‘National Financial Reporting Authority’, whose proposal for establishment was recently approved by the Union Cabinet, will

a) Be an independent regulator for the auditing profession in India
b) Promote transparency in banking sector related regulatory functions
c) Replace the Banks Board Bureau
d) Take over RBI's role of public debt management

Solution: a.

- The decision of the Cabinet aims at establishment of NFRA as an independent regulator for the auditing profession which is one of the key changes brought in by the Companies Act, 2013.
- The jurisdiction of NFRA for investigation of Chartered Accountants and their firms under section 132 of the Act would extend to listed companies and large unlisted public companies, the thresholds for which shall be prescribed in the Rules. The Central Government can also refer such other entities for investigation where public interest would be involved.
- The need for establishing NFRA has arisen on account of the need felt across various jurisdictions in the world, in the wake of accounting scams, to establish independent regulators, independent from those it regulates, for enforcement of auditing standards and ensuring the quality of audits to strengthen the independence of audit firms, quality of audits and, therefore, enhance investor and public confidence in financial disclosures of companies.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176918;
http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/post-nfra-formation-what-is-icais-role/article22925689.ece;

5. The Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region

1. Aims to provide 4G mobile coverage in uncovered areas of NER
2. Aims to provide seamless connectivity on national highways in NER
3. Will be funded from the Universal Service Obligation Fund
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

From 2014 (PIB): This project will provide 2G mobile coverage in identified uncovered areas of the NER, it will provide 2G seamless mobile coverage along National Highways in the NER and ensure reliability of the transmission network at State capitals and district headquarters in the NER. It will be funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund.

“Improving mobile connectivity in the northeast region was one of the pet projects of the NDA government. However, it has suffered repeated delays due to issues with equipment testing and “indecisiveness from USOF,” accompanied by a difficult terrain. It is targeted to be completed by March 2019.”


6. The National Nutrition Mission

1. Will create synergy and link the existing nutrition schemes
2. Targets to reduce anaemia among adolescent girls by 3 per cent per annum
3. Will be responsible for achieving ‘Mission 25 by 2022’

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.

- NNM targets to reduce **stunting, under-nutrition, anemia** (among **young children, women** and **adolescent girls**) and reduce **low birth weight** by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively. Although the target to reduce Stunting is at least 2% p.a., Mission would strive to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).

- There are a number of schemes directly/indirectly affecting the nutritional status of children (0-6 years age) and pregnant women and lactating mothers. Inspite of these, level of malnutrition and related problems in the country is high. There is no dearth of schemes but lack of creating synergy and linking the schemes with each other to achieve common goal. NNM through robust convergence mechanism and other components would strive to create the synergy.

For features and other information of the NNM, click HERE;
7. The ‘Aspirational Districts’ programme will enable India to improve its ranking in
   a) Global Innovation Index  b) Renewable Energy Attractiveness Index
   c) Global Slavery Index  d) Human Development Index

Solution: d.

In the news: “…He added that development in the 115 districts would be a work of social justice and if the lawmakers worked sincerely for one year, with people’s participation, it would bring about a sea change, and help India go up in the Human Development Index.”

About the programme: The Prime Minister has given a Vision for a new and vibrant India by 2022, the year when India celebrates its 75th year of Independence. One of the initiatives in this regard is to make a dramatic improvement in overall socio-economic development of backward districts. The strategy envisaged is to adopt a focussed approach, ensure convergence of efforts of the Central, State and local Government and establish a real time monitoring mechanism to focus on outcomes that matter to common people in these districts beside giving rise to a virtuous cycle of economic development.

- A total of 115 districts have been identified for this purpose on the basis of objective criteria. Such criteria include education, health, nutrition basic infrastructure like rural road connectivity, rural household electrification, access to potable water and individual toilets etc.

- These districts include 35 districts which are affected by violence by Left Wing Extremists.

- While selecting these districts, it has been ensured that Ministries of Government of India, implementing social sector Scheme would select at least one most backward districts in every State for extending the reach of the programme in different parts of the country. Improvement in one district is likely to spur similar growth in neighbouring districts through demonstration effect.

8. Under the ‘Khelo India’ programme
   1. A uniform financial assistance is provided to all players selected for the sports scholarship scheme
   2. Some universities across the country will be promoted as hubs of sporting excellence
   3. Traditional sports such as kabaddi and kho-kho are also promoted

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 statements are correct. Some of the salient features of the Khelo India programme include:

- A pan-Indian Sports Scholarship scheme, which would cover 1,000 most talented young athletes each year across select sports disciplines. Each athlete selected under the scheme shall receive an annual scholarship worth Rs.5 lakh for 8 consecutive years.

- This is the first time ever that a long-term athlete development pathway would be made available to talented youngsters to excel in competitive sports and will create a pool of highly competitive athletes who can compete to win at the world stage.
• It aims to promote 20 universities across the country as hubs of sporting excellence, which would enable talented sports persons to pursue the dual pathway of education and competitive sports.
• It would cover about 200 million children in the age group of 10-18 under a massive national physical fitness drive, which will not only measure the physical fitness of all children in the age group, but also support their fitness related activities. It will create an active population with a healthy life-style.

PIB; TH;

Revamped Khelo India:

9. The recently-launched advertisement on yoga, ‘Yogi of the Racetrack’, is a part of the
   a) Incredible India campaign
   b) Aarogyame Maha Bhagyam campaign
   c) Swachh Hum Swasth Hum campaign
   d) Khelo India programme

Solution: a.

• In a bid to spur domestic travel, the government plans to promote religious tourism in the country, said the tourism minister… The Tourism Ministry recently launched ‘Yogi of the Racetrack’, a minute-long advertisement on yoga, that received more than 11.5 million hits in a week.
• “With this ad, we are addressing a completely new group of people. Earlier, it was thought that yoga is just for people over 40 and Ayurveda too is for older people. Now we are addressing the millennials.”… Six more similar advertisements on topics, including Ayurveda, will be released soon.
• “The whole idea is to storm the world with what the true essence of India is.”


10. ‘POSHAN Abhiyaan’ will be implemented and coordinated by
   a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
   b) Ministry of Women and Child Development
   c) Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
   d) Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Solution: b.

• POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on 8th March 2018 by the Prime Minister in Jhunjhunu. The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively. The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
• Convergence between different Ministries will be a crucial aspect in making the mission successful. The Ministry of Women and Child Development is responsible for its implementation and coordination.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177746;
11. The recently launched ‘LaQshya’ programme is aimed at
   
   a) Improving quality of life in towns and cities
   b) Reducing maternal mortality rates
   c) Tripling the railways’ freight traffic by 2030
   d) Elimination of tuberculosis by 2025

Solution: b.

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has recently announced the launch of programme ‘LaQshya’, aimed at improving quality of care in labour room and maternity Operation Theatre (OT).
- The programme will reduce maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality and provide Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) to all pregnant women attending public health facilities.
- It aims at implementing ‘fast-track’ interventions for achieving tangible results within 18 months.
- Under the initiative, a multi-pronged strategy has been adopted such as improving infrastructure up-gradation, ensuring availability of essential equipment, providing adequate human resources, capacity building of health care workers and improving quality processes in the labour room.
- The Quality Improvement in labour room and maternity OT will be assessed through NQAS (National Quality Assurance Standards). Every facility achieving 70% score on NQAS will be certified as LaQshya certified facility.
- India has come a long way in improving maternal survival as Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has reduced from 301 maternal deaths in 2001-03 to 167 in year 2011-13, an impressive decline of 45% in a decade. India is further committed to ensuring safe motherhood to every pregnant woman in the country.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177532

12. Consider the following pairs:

   Mobile app – Released by
   2. Farmer Connect – Ministry of Commerce and Industry
   3. Ash Track – Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

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

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

Solution: b.

- National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, Ministry of Home Affairs) recently celebrated its 33rd Inception Day and released ‘Citizen Services’ mobile app. This single App is a bouquet of various essential police related services to the citizen. The App can be used by citizen for various services such as Complaint Registration & Status Check, View FIR Detail, SOS – Stay Safe, Locate Police Stations, Emergency Contact List, Police Stations Telephone Directory etc.
- Hortinet is an integrated traceability system developed by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA, Ministry of Commerce & Industry) for providing Internet based electronic services to the stakeholders for facilitating farm registration, testing and certification of Grape, Pomegranate and Vegetables for export from India to the European Union in compliance with standards. To harness the potential of
mobile technology, APEDA has developed a mobile app ‘**Farmer Connect**’ to allow farmers to apply on-line to facilitate their farm registration, tracking the status of application & approvals by State Government and Lab sampling by authorised Laboratories. The app will also assist State Horticulture/Agriculture Department to capture real time details of farmers, farm location, products and details of inspections like date of inspection, name of inspecting directly from field.

- The **Ministry of Power** launched a fly ash mobile application ‘**Ash Track**’ It will enable better management of the ash produced by thermal power plants by providing an interface between fly ash producers (Thermal Power Plants) and potential ash users such as – road contractors, cement plants etc.

  http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177272
  http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=170439
  http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176421

13. The Nari Shakti Puraskars (multiple awards), conferred by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on institutions and individuals who have rendered distinguished services to the cause of women, does **NOT** include an institutional award named after

   a) A spiritual leader and freedom fighter from Northeast India
   b) The central character of the Tamil epic ‘Silappatikaram’
   c) A queen of the Kakatiya dynasty in the Deccan from medieval India
   d) A social worker who was a disciple of a famous Indian monk

Solution: d.

The institutional awards are named after the following illustrious women of India:

- Rani Gaidinliu Zeliang (option ‘a’)
- Kannagi Devi (option ‘b’)
- Rani Rudramma Devi (option ‘c’)
- Mata Jijabai (Shivaji’s mother)
- Devi Ahilyabai Holkar (An 18th century queen of Maratha Malwa kingdom)
- Rani Lakshmibai (Jhansi Ki Rani, 19th century)

Option ‘d’ refers to Sister Nivedita. No institutional award (under Nari Shakti Puraskars) is named after her.

http://www.wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Paraforwebsite_0.pdf
http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177194


   a) Ancient and indigenous water harvesting systems of states in northeast India will be documented and adapted for sustainable management of groundwater in other states
   b) All rural habitations will achieve a ‘fully-covered’ status (40 litres of water per person per day) by way of access to piped water supply by 2022
   c) Wetlands will be constructed in peri-urban areas to help replenish aquifers in urban areas
   d) None of the above

Solution: d.
The Government has proposed Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY) aimed at sustainable ground water management with community participation in select over-exploited and ground water stressed areas in seven States:

- Karnataka,
- Maharashtra,
- Madhya Pradesh,
- Gujarat,
- Rajasthan,
- Haryana and
- Uttar Pradesh.

ABHY is designed as a Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 6,000 Crore and is proposed to be implemented with World Bank assistance.

Source/Improvisation: [http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/making-every-drop-count/article23311134.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/making-every-drop-count/article23311134.ece);

15. Which of the following statements about AB-NHPM (Ayushman Bharat – National Health Mission) is/are correct?

1. It will be launched as a Central Sector Scheme
2. All pre-existing conditions will be covered
3. It will subsume only one on-going scheme – the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- AB-NHPM will be a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- It will subsume two on-going centrally sponsored schemes – Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).
- To ensure that nobody is left out (especially women, children and elderly) there will be no cap on family size and age in the scheme.
- The benefit cover will also include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses.
- All pre-existing conditions will be covered from day one of the policy.
- A defined transport allowance per hospitalisation will also be paid to the beneficiary.

For complete information regarding AB-NHPM, click [HERE](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/making-every-drop-count/article23311134.ece);
For the differences between a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and a Central Sector Scheme, click [HERE](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/making-every-drop-count/article23311134.ece);

16. Consider the following statements:

The “Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry”

1. Is expected to treble silk production in the country by 2022
2. Aims to achieve self-sufficiency in silk production by 2022
3. Will be implemented in convergence with other schemes such as MGNREGA

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1 only  
b) 2 and 3 only  
c) 1 and 3 only  
d) 1 and 2 only
The scheme is expected to increase the silk production from the level of 30348 MTs during 2016-17 to 38500 MTs by end of 2019-20 with the following interventions:

- Production of import substitute bivoltine silk to the tune of 8500 MTs per annum by 2020.
- Research & Development to improve productivity from the present level of 100 Kgs to 111 kgs of silk per ha. of plantation by the end of 2019-20.
- Large scale propagation of improved reeling machines under Make in India programme to produce quality silk to cater to the market demand.

The scheme has following improvement over the earlier scheme:

- The scheme aims to achieve self-sufficiency in silk production by 2022.
- For the first time, there is clear focus on improving production of highest grade quality of silk.
- The implementation strategy is clearly based on convergence at the State level with the schemes of other Ministers like MGNREGS of Rural Development, RKVY & PMKSY of Ministry of Agriculture, for maximising benefits to the sericulturists.
- The R&D projects will be done in cooperation with Ministries of Science and Technology, Agriculture and Human Resource Development.

All three statements are correct.

Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country

- A beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public and/or private empanelled hospital across the country.
- For beneficiaries, availing insurance benefits will be a cashless, paperless transaction.
18. What incentives will the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS) provide to new industrial units being set up in the North Eastern States?

1. Interest incentive
2. Comprehensive insurance incentive
3. Income-tax reimbursement
4. CGST and IGST reimbursement

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Apart from the above four, there is a ‘Transport Incentive’, an ‘Employment Incentive’ and a ‘Central Capital Investment Incentive for Access to Credit’.

In order to promote employment in the North East States, Government is incentivizing primarily the MSME Sector through NEIDS.

To understand what these incentives mean, click HERE;

19. Consider the following statements:

1. Sign language in India varies across different regions
2. The first ‘Indian Sign Language Dictionary (ISLD)’ developed by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre has nearly 10,000 terms

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 “First Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 words” was launched by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment recently.

- The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to compile representations of words of everyday use in different parts of the country.
- As per the census 2011, there are around 50 lakh deaf people and 20 lakh people with speech disability in India.
- Experts have shown how in a diverse country like India, not only does sign language vary as per region, certain villages such as those in the Naga hills and Alipur in Karnataka, with a history of high incidence of congenital deafness, have their own variant of rural sign languages.
- The ISLD contains videos to show some of the signs and explain the meaning of words they represent.
- The ISLD consists of words of five categories: 1) Everyday terms, 2) Legal terms, 3) Academic terms, 4) Medical terms and 5) Technical terms.
20. The objectives of the ‘Study in India’ programme are primarily to
   1. Stem the outflow of Indian students going abroad to pursue education
   2. Attract foreign students to study in India
   3. Attract Non-Resident Indians to study in India

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

Solution: c.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has approved ‘Study in India’ programme with, inter-alia, the following objectives:

- To improve the soft power of India with focus on the neighbouring countries and use it as a tool in diplomacy.
- To boost the number of inbound International students in India; Growth of India’s global market share of International students; To reduce the export – import imbalance in the number of International students.
- To double India’s market share of global education exports from less than 1 percent to 2 percent.
- Increase in global ranking of India as educational destination.
- Increase in contribution of international student in the form of direct spends, indirect spends, spillover effects.
- Improvement in overall quality of higher education.

The policy also proposes fee waivers to meritorious foreign students based on certain criteria.


21. ‘India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians’ was set up in 2008 by the Government of India to
   a) Facilitate overseas Indian philanthropy into social and development projects into India
   b) Provide for a platform to promote knowledge-exchange between Indian and overseas Indian scientists
   c) Enable overseas Indians’ engagement in research in IITs to solve major engineering and technology challenges relevant to India
   d) Enhance job opportunities of Indian students studying abroad

Solution: a.

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for closure of India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians. IDF-OI was set up by Government of India with the approval of Cabinet in 2008 as an autonomous not-for-profit Trust, to facilitate Overseas Indian philanthropy into social and development projects in India.

To read why it is being discontinued, refer: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177813;
22. The ‘GOBAR-Dhan’ scheme will be implemented by
   a) Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
   b) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
   c) Ministry of Rural Development
   d) Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

Solution: d.

The scheme falls under Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin which is being implemented by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

- To accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation, the Prime Minister of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October, 2014.
- The Mission Coordinator for SBM is Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) with two Sub-Missions, the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) and the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).
- Together, they aim to achieve Swachh Bharat by 2019, as a fitting tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th Birth Anniversary.
- In Rural India, this would mean improving the levels of cleanliness through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making villages Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitised.

http://swachhbharatmission.gov.in/SBMCMS/about-us.htm;
From February: http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/gobar-dhan-swachh-bharat-open-defecation-5074575/;

23. ‘Smart India Hackathon’, the second edition of which is currently ongoing, is organised by
   a) All India Council for Technical Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development
   b) Department of Cyber Laws and e-security, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
   c) Cell for IPR Promotion and Management), Ministry of Commerce and Industry
   d) National Skill Development Corporation, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Solution: a.

Launched in Pune, Smart India Hackathon 2018 harnesses creativity & expertise of students, builds funnel for ‘Startup India, Standup India’ campaign, crowdsources solutions for improving governance and quality of life, and provides opportunity to citizens to provide innovative solutions to India’s daunting problems.

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and in collaboration with i4c, MyGov, Persistent Systems and Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini is organizing Smart India Hackathon 2018.
- With 27 Union Ministries and Departments and 17 State Governments having joined this grand initiative, SIH2018 is much bigger than its previous edition (2017).
- It includes 2 sub-editions – Software edition, which is a 36-hr software product development competition and scheduled to be held on Mar 30 & 31, 2018. The Hardware edition, involving building of hardware solutions will be held later this year.
24. The Telecommunications Consultants India (TCIL), recently in the news,
   1. Is a 100% owned Government of India Undertaking
   2. Has executed Telecommunication and Information Technology projects in several countries
   3. Will set up a ‘C Corporation’ in the USA for doing business there

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

Solution: d.

The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval for formation of 100% owned C Corporation of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. (TCIL) in USA.

- TCIL is a 100% owned Government of India Undertaking. It provides consultancy and turnkey project execution service from concept to completion, in the field of telecommunications, IT and civil infrastructure.
- ‘Google Fiber’ will provide high capacity Broadband Internet and cable television to many cities in the USA. Google has selected few international Companies as their technical partners who in turn have further sub-contracted the works to various companies for different activities. M/s Teletech is one such company tasked with the rollout works in Austin (Texas) and San Jose (California). M/s Teletech Team in turn approached TCIL for providing full techno commercial and logistic support for three projects.
- TCIL being a foreign entity needs to form a C Corporation which is recognized as a separate tax paying entity. This would also enable TCIL to have L-1 Visas for its manpower resources.

Solution: d.

25. SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018’ will enable
   a) Rural Self-Help Group women to exhibit and sell traditional arts and craft items produced by them
   b) Minority craftsmen and artisans to establish national and global market linkages
   c) Farmers to adopt the latest technological developments in agriculture and allied sectors
   d) a, b and c

Solution: a.
The Rural Development Ministry has been organising SARAS fairs and also Shishir Mela and Aajeevika Mela. Inspired by their success, the ministry is organizing the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 in which SHG women from all states of the country will be participating for exhibition and sale of their products in over 350 stalls.

The stalls will display the skills, potential and hard work of our women from across India. The products ranges from handlooms, handicrafts, artefacts and heritage products, tribal ornaments, decorative items, metallic products, earthen utensils, paintings, organic food items, spices, processed food products, soft toys, utility items, brass and wrought iron products.

It will provide rural women producers a national platform and an opportunity to showcase their products, and seek buyers, either individuals or bulk buyers for sale nationally/internationally.

http://pib.nic.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1526353

26. The Indian MyGov portal

a) Is a citizen-engagement platform to crowd-source governance ideas
b) Is a single platform to access the myriad online services of Union Ministries
c) Offers information on schemes of both, the Central and State Governments, that are available for any sector
d) None of the above

Solution: a.

In an embarrassing blooper, Doordarshan used the Australian government’s “MyGov” website’s logo instead of the Indian MyGov website for the broadcast of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Mann Ki Baat programme on Sunday.

Both the web portals have distinct functions. The Australian website offers access to online services of the Australian Taxation Office, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Victorian Housing Register Application and so on.

The Indian MyGov portal is a citizen engagement platform to crowd-source governance ideas. The Prime Minister’s Mann Ki Baat address is in response to the ideas given by citizens on the portal. For example, in his address on Sunday, he invited ideas on how to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, and urged citizens to send them to the website.


27. Which of the following schemes/initiatives is/are a part of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)?

1. DeenDayal Upadhyaya – Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)
2. DDU Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY)
3. Mahila Kisan Sahshaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)
4. Start Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

- **DAY-NRLM** is one of the flagship programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India to alleviate rural poverty. The programme aims to organise the rural poor women into their own institutions like Self Help Groups and their federations, Producers’ Collectives etc. and also ensure their financial inclusion and livelihoods support.

- **DDU-GKY** is a placement-linked Skill Development scheme which seeks to build the skills of the poor rural youth and place them in relatively higher wage employment sectors of the economy.

- **MKSP** aims to promote agriculture-based livelihoods of rural women by strengthening community institutions of poor women farmers to promote sustainable agriculture. MKSP focuses on agriculture, non-timber forest produce and livestock interventions.

- **SVEP** aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set up local enterprises.

**Other initiatives/schemes under DAY-NRLM include:**

- **Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana** – it aims to provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services to connect remote rural village.

- **DAY-NRLM** also provides support for establishing Rural Self Employment Training Institutes in each district of the country in collaboration with the Banks and the State Governments to provide training to the rural youth from the poor households to take-up economic activities.

- In order to empower the rural women artisans and to bring them above the poverty line, through access to better market and marketing systems, the Ministry has been supporting the organisation of exhibitions under the brand name of SARAS where Self Help Groups from different states participate and sell their products.


28. Consider the following statements with reference to the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA):

1. The scheme is largely based on the conditional release of funds linked to reforms in areas such as governance and learning-teaching outcomes
2. It seeks to increase the infrastructure spending on premier institutions such as IITs and IIMs
3. Priority under the scheme will be given to Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

Statements 1 and 3 are correct.

About 94% of students of higher education study in 369 State universities. But the Central government’s slant toward premier institutions has continued ever since the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12), where in spite of a nine-fold increase in budget allocation State institutions have been left to fend for themselves with funding mainly directed towards starting more IITs, IIMs and Central universities. Today about 150 Centrally-funded institutions (less than 6% of students study in them) — corner almost the entire funding by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

It was to address these critical concerns that the MHRD launched RUSA.
RUSA is an overarching scheme, operated in a mission mode for funding the state universities and colleges in order to achieve the aims of equity, access and excellence. It seeks to improve the overall quality of existing State higher educational institutions by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards.

The scheme is largely based on the conditional release of funds linked to reforms in the key areas of governance, learning-teaching outcomes, reaching out to the unreached and infrastructure support.

The funding to States is based on critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans. These plans are required to address each State’s strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education.

All funding under the RUSA are norms-based and future grants are outcome dependent.

To read more about RUSA 2.0, click HERE;

Source/Improvisation: http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-game-changer-for-higher-education/article23366942.ece;

29. The Election Commission will be employing new IT applications in the forthcoming elections to the State of Karnataka. In this context, which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IT application</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Samadhan</td>
<td>Public grievance redressal and monitoring system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Suvidha</td>
<td>System for voter-centric election-related services and information dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sugam</td>
<td>System for electronic transmission of postal ballot for service voters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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: a.

- **SAMADHAN** (Public Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System): A common platform for all complaints, grievances, concerns and suggestions lodged by any member of the public, including our various stakeholders like political parties, candidates, civil society groups etc. A citizen has the multi-modal facility to lodge any election-related complaint via bouquet of channels/sources like website, email, letter, fax, SMS, call center (Call center number is 1950) etc. A mobile app shall also be made available for the people, so that they can submit complaints with photographs/videos on the common platform.

- **SUVIDHA** (Single Window Permission System): A single window system for giving election-related permission/clearness within 24 hours has been created. In this system, candidates and political parties can apply for permissions for meetings, rallies, vehicles, temporary election office, loudspeakers etc at a single location, where back-end convergence of various authorities/departments has been done. This system is put in place at every RO level in each sub-division.

- **SUGAM** (Vehicle Management System): It is an IT based Vehicle Management System with the facility of issuance of requisition letters for vehicles, capturing of vehicle details with address, mobile number and bank details of owner and drive, transfer of vehicles from one district to another district etc.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178019;
IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. ‘PRATYUSH’ and ‘MIHIR’ seen recently in the news are
   a) High Performance Computers
   b) The military and commercial versions of CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories’ Light Transport Aircraft
   c) Climate-resistant rice plant varieties
   d) Low-cost indigenous medical implants

Solution: a.

![Image showing PRATYUSH & MIHIR]

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176000;

Source: Ministry of Science and Technology Advertisement, 28th February edition of the Hindu;

2. ISRO’s ‘Rohini’ series of rockets are classified as
   a) Sounding Rockets
   b) Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicles
   c) Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles
   d) Reusable Launch Vehicles

Solution: a.

- **Sounding rockets** are one or two stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research. They also serve as easily affordable platforms to test or prove prototypes of new components or subsystems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites. With the establishment of the **Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS)** in 1963 at **Thumba**, a location close to the magnetic equator (THIS image shows the magnetic equator in green), there was a quantum jump in the scope for aeronomy and atmospheric sciences in India.

- ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called **Rohini series**, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm.
3. The ‘Turing Test’, sometimes in the news, is seen in the context of
   a) UNAIDS 90-90-90 target
   b) International border security
   c) Long duration space travel
   d) Artificial intelligence

Solution: d.

- A Turing Test is a method of inquiry for determining whether or not a computer is capable of thinking like a human being. The test is named after Alan Turing, an English mathematician who pioneered machine learning during the 1940s and 1950s. The original test is also referred to as the Imitation Game.


4. ‘Mirai’, ‘Reaper’, and ‘Saposhi’, terms recently seen in the news, refer to/are related to
   a) Cryptocurrencies
   b) Distributed Denial of Services attacks
   c) Artificial Intelligence
   d) Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication

Solution: b.

- After Mirai and Reaper, cybersecurity agencies have detected a new malware called Saposhi, which is capable of taking over electronic devices and turning them into ‘bots’, which can be then used for any purpose, including a Distributed Denial Of Service (DDoS) attack which, with enough firepower, can cripple entire industries.

5. ‘Saras PT1N’, recently in the news, has been designed and developed by
   a) National Aerospace Laboratories
   b) Indian Space Research Organisation
   c) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
   d) Defense Research and Development Organisation

Solution: a.

- Saras is an indigenous light transport aircraft designed and developed by CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL).
- The Minister of Science and Technology said that NAL proposes to get the Saras-Mk 2 (improved version of PT1) certified initially for military and subsequently for civil version. He said that Saras would be at least 20% to 25% cheaper than any imported aircraft in the same category. The improved version will be a 19-seater aircraft instead of 14-seater.
- “The unit cost of the aircraft, with more than 70 per cent indigenous content, will be around Rs 40 crore to Rs 45 crore compared to Rs 60 crore and Rs 70 crore for the imported ones and has far more benefits than what the imported aircraft offer,” he said, adding that it would be ideal for regional connectivity under the Centre’s Udaan scheme.
- Defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has been identified as the production agency for the military version of Saras, while the production of civil version will be given to identified private industries.


In the news: Saras’ successful test flights; PIB;

6. NASA’s Parker Solar Probe
   1. Will fly through the sun’s atmosphere
   2. Will expand our knowledge of the origin and evolution of the solar wind
   3. Is a part of the Living With a Star program

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

Solution: d.

- Parker Solar Probe will travel through the sun’s atmosphere, closer to the surface than any spacecraft before it, facing brutal heat and radiation conditions — and ultimately providing humanity with the closest-ever observations of a star.
- The spacecraft will fly through the sun’s atmosphere as close as 3.9 million miles to our star’s surface, well within the orbit of Mercury and more than seven times closer than any spacecraft has come before. (Earth’s average distance to the sun is 93 million miles; Mercury’s is 42 million miles).
- Flying into the outermost part of the sun’s atmosphere, known as the corona, for the first time, Parker Solar Probe will employ a combination of in situ measurements and imaging to revolutionize our understanding of the corona
and expand our knowledge of the origin and evolution of the solar wind. It will also make critical contributions to our ability to forecast changes in Earth’s space environment that affect life and technology on Earth.

- Parker Solar Probe is part of NASA’s Living With a Star (LWS) – this program emphasises science to understand aspects of the sun-Earth system that directly affect life and society. LWS missions target the linkages across the interconnected system with an ultimate goal of enabling a predictive understanding.

In the news: NASA is inviting people around the world to submit their names online to be placed on a microchip aboard its historic solar probe launching this summer.

7. The ‘Kochon Prize’ is awarded to individuals/organisations who have made significant contributions to
   a) Social entrepreneurship in developing countries
   b) Combating tuberculosis
   c) Climate change research
   d) Genome editing

Solution: b.

About the Kochon Prize:
- The Kochon Prize is awarded annually by Stop TB Partnership to individuals and/or organizations that have made a significant contribution to combating TB.
- The Kochon Prize was established in 2006 in honour of the late Chairman Chong-Kun Lee (a South Korean) who was committed throughout his career to improving access to low-cost lifesaving antibiotics and anti-TB drugs. “Kochon” was a pen name that he used.

In the news: The 2017 Kochon Prize was awarded to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recently for building a tradition of excellence in TB research and development. TB research by the ICMR has shaped the global DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course) strategy.

8. Singularity’, ‘Event Horizon’ and ‘Information Paradox’, terms recently seen in the news, are related to
   a) Quantum satellites
   b) The sun’s atmosphere
   c) Black holes
   d) Artificial intelligence

Solution: c.

These are among Stephen Hawking’s most important discoveries:
- With the Oxford mathematician Roger Penrose, he showed that if there was a Big Bang, it must have started from an infinitely small point – a singularity.
- Black holes radiate energy known as Hawking radiation, while gradually losing mass. This is due to quantum effects near the edge of the black hole, a region called the event horizon.
- He predicted the existence of mini-black holes at the time of the Big Bang. These tiny black holes would have been incredibly hot, shedding mass until they vanished – potentially ending their lives in a powerful explosion.
- Hawking considered whether the particles and light entering a black hole were destroyed if the black hole evaporated. Hawking initially thought this “information” was lost from the Universe. But US physicist Leonard Susskind disagreed. These ideas became known as the information paradox. In 2004, Hawking conceded that the information must be conserved.

9. ‘VX’, ‘Sarin’, ‘Tabun’, ‘Soman’ and ‘Novichok’, terms recently seen in the news, are all
   a) Nerve agents that were used in combat during the world wars
   b) Types of neonicotinoid pesticides known to adversely affect reproduction in pollinators such as bees
   c) Persistent Organic Pollutants whose manufacture has recently been banned by the Indian Environment Ministry
   d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- These are nerve agents (but at least two of them have been developed in the post world wars period). The first nerve agents were discovered by accident in the 1930s by scientists trying to find a cost-effective pesticide. They proved to be highly toxic chemicals that eventually ended up in the hands of the German military.
- Russia, the US and the UK also started to experiment on chemical agents after World War Two and it was British scientists who developed the VX nerve agent in the early 1950s.
- The name Novichok means ‘newcomer’ in Russian and applies to a group of advanced nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Sarin was invented in Germany in the 1930s but was not used in combat during World War II.
- Novichok agents are one of three classes of nerve agents – the other two are G-Agents and V-Agents. G-agents include sarin while V-agents include VX, an oily amber-coloured liquid.

Improvisation: Novichok in the news; http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-skripals-in-salisbury/article23287922.ece;

10. India recently joined the European Commission’s Copernicus Programme. In this context, consider the following statements:

1. India will be able to access to data from space science (or astronomical) satellites of other members that are part of the programme
2. Apart from India, some other countries from Asia and North America are part of this programme

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.

- ‘Partner Countries’ or Countries that have signed cooperation arrangements with the Copernicus Programme are Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, USA and Australia (no other country from Asia is presently a part of this programme).
- ‘Copernicus Participating Countries’ include 28 members of EU and Norway and Iceland.
- Data from a band of Indian remote sensing satellites (used for earth observation and not for space science/astronomical purposes) will be available to the European Copernicus programme while designated Indian institutional users will in return get to access free data from Europe’s six Sentinel satellites and those of other space agencies that are part of the programme.
• The space-based information will be used for forecasting disasters, providing emergency response and rescue of people during disasters; to glean land, ocean data; and for issues of security, agriculture, climate change and atmosphere.
• Earth Observation open data under the programme is also regarded as a tool of economic development which can benefit EU and partner countries businesses and entrepreneurs through increased collaboration and partnerships.


11. Terms such as ‘Fermi Paradox’, ‘Drake equation’ and ‘SETI’ are all related to/associated with
   a) Extraterrestrial life
   b) Space debris
   c) Artificial Intelligence
   d) Habitable exoplanets

Solution: a.

• There’s a whole field of science, known as Seti (The Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) dedicated to listening for signals from intelligent beings elsewhere in the Universe. But Hawking cautioned against trying to actively hail any alien civilisations that might be out there. In 2010, he told the Discovery Channel that aliens might simply raid Earth for resources and then move on.
• Fermi Paradox refers to the lack of any evidence of ET life forms despite the high probability of such existence.
• The Drake equation is an important tool that has been used to estimate the odds of ET life.


Hawking’s warnings;
V. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

1. The ‘Boao Forum for Asia (BFA)’ is China’s equivalent of the
   a) International Transport Forum
   b) United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
   c) World Economic Forum
   d) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Solution: c.

“All eyes are also on India’s participation at the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) meeting in Beijing from April 8 to 11, which is China’s equivalent of the World Economic Forum...”

- BFA is a non-governmental and non-profit international organisation with the purpose to promote and deepen economic exchange, coordination, and cooperation within Asia and between Asia and other parts of the world.

http://english.boaoforum.org/gylten/index.jhtml;

2. The ‘Demilitarised Zone’ or ‘DMZ’, sometimes seen in the news, refers to the region that demarcates
   a) North Korea from South Korea
   b) Iran from Iraq
   c) Turkey from Syria
   d) Israel from Palestine

Solution: a.

- Demilitarized zone (DMZ) refers to the region on the Korean peninsula that demarcates North Korea from South Korea. It incorporates territory on both sides of the cease-fire line as it existed at the end of the Korean War (1950–53) and was created by pulling back the respective forces 2 km along each side of the line.

- Located within the DMZ is the “truce village” of Panmunjom, about 5 miles (8 km) east of Kaesong, North Korea. It was the site of peace discussions during the Korean War and has since been the location of various conferences over issues involving North and South Korea, their allies, and the United Nations.

In the news: The leaders of North and South Korea will hold a historic summit in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) next month after Pyongyang expressed willingness to give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for security guarantees. The
meeting will take place in Panmunjom. It will be the third between the leaders of North and South, but the first to take place in the DMZ after summits in Pyongyang in 2000 and 2007.

https://www.britannica.com/place/demilitarized-zone-Korean-peninsula;

3. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oilfield/Natural Gas field/Export facility</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Susangerd Oilfield</td>
<td>Louisiana, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rovuma Offshore Basin</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sabine Pass LNG Export Facility</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Solution: d.

- **Susangerd Oilfield** – Southwest Iran;

_In the news:_ ONGC Videsh, the overseas arm of government-owned ONGC, has signed a cooperation agreement with Iran’s IDRO Oil to jointly bid for a $900 million development plan of Susangerd oilfield in southwest Iran.

- **Sabine Pass LNG Export Facility** – Louisiana, USA;

_In the news:_ India will receive its first LNG import from the U.S. later this month. The cargo from Cheniere Energy’s Sabine Pass LNG export facility in Louisiana was loaded on to GAIL’s chartered LNG ship ‘Meridian Spirit’ on March 5. The sale purchase agreement was signed in December 2011 and the cargo is expected to discharge LNG at the Dabhol terminal of GAIL on or around March 28.

- **Rovuma Offshore Basin** – Mozambique;

_In the news:_ ONGC Videsh recently announced that the Government of Mozambique had given its approval for the development plan for the Golfinho-Atum natural gas field in the Area 1 block in the Rovuma Offshore Basin of Mozambique.

First US LNG shipment to reach India this month;

ONGC Videsh, Iran’s IDRO Oil sign accord;

4. The Union Cabinet recently approved an MoU between India and Hellenic on Renewable Energy Cooperation. The Hellenic Republic is located in

a) Southern Europe       b) South Pacific Ocean

b) Central America       d) Western Indian Ocean

Solution: a.

Greece is officially known as the Hellenic Republic.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177119;
5. Consider the following statements about the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), recently signed by some Asia-Pacific countries:

1. The countries signing the agreement account for about 30 per cent of the world economy
2. No South American country has signed the agreement

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.

- On Thursday, 11 Asia-Pacific countries have signed the CPTPP in Chile.
- The CPTPP is, in effect, the original Trans-Pacific Partnership struck during the Barack Obama presidency minus the U.S.
- The countries signing the agreement (see figure; omit USA) which account for more than 13% of the world economy, have agreed to bring down tariffs on cross-border trade by as much as 98% after domestic ratification.
- More countries are expected to sign the CPTPP in the future, and there is hope that a post-Trump U.S. may join the bloc.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/trade-goes-on/article23009872.ece;

Clarification:

Q1, 12th March: South Korea was **not** party to TPP, neither is it to CPTPP (incorrect image provided by us). The countries thus that have signed on to CPTPP **are**: Japan, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Peru, Mexico and Canada.

6. The ‘Freeze for Freeze’ plan, recently in the news, is related to the issue of

a) Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula 

b) Afghan-Taliban truce talks 

c) Cease fire in Syria 

d) Petroleum exploration in the Arctic
Solution: a.

- China has been proposing ‘freeze for freeze,’ i.e discontinuation of tests by the North and exercises by the South and the U.S., as an initial step towards a diplomatic breakthrough.
- Pyongyang’s apparent willingness to act outside of this framework might allow Mr. Trump to work independently of China on the crisis.


7. Formation of the ‘State International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDCA)’ will increase reliance on economic and foreign aid as levers to project the influence of
   a) The Quad
   b) India
   c) Japan
   d) China

Solution: d.

- China is setting up a new agency that will channel foreign aid and plan strategic projects related to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- The decision is in tune with Beijing’s emergence as a global aid donor, nearly at par with the United States. According to a study by U.S.-based AidData, released in October, China pitched $350 billion in foreign aid and other forms of State financing in five major regions of the world, between 2000-14. The U.S. overseas aid in the same period was marginally higher at $394.6 billion. But China could catch up soon as it started becoming a serious aid donor only in 2009.
- Analysts say that the formation of SIDCA suggests China’s increasing reliance on economic and foreign aid as levers to project its international influence.


8. India was the world’s largest importer of major arms during 2013-17 and accounted for 12% of the global total. Which among the following countries accounted for the largest share of India’s imports of arms during the same period?
   a) France
   b) Russia
   c) Israel
   d) USA

Solution: b.
9. The ‘World Happiness Report’ is brought out by the
   a) Royal Government of Bhutan
   b) World Bank
   c) World Economic Forum
   d) UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Solution: d.

- India’s ranks 133rd in the annual World Happiness report (2018), coming behind Pakistan and Nepal.
- Every South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nation barring Afghanistan is ahead of India – with Pakistan at 75, Bhutan at 97, Nepal at 101, Bangladesh at 115 and Sri Lanka at 116.
- India’s ranking dipped from 122 last year. We’ve been getting more and more depressed with each passing year – India fell four notches below its previous rank of 118.

TH: MP to measure happiness;
The Wire;

12. Consider the following pairs:

   **Militia sometimes in the news** – **Country they belong to**

1. People’s Protection Units – Turkey
2. Revolutionary Guard – Iraq
3. Salwa Judum – India

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

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

- Salwa Judum (declared illegal and unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2011) was a militia that was mobilised and deployed as part of anti-insurgency operations in Chhattisgarh, India, aimed at countering Naxalite violence.
- The YPG or People’s Protection Units are the the armed wing of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party.
- The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is a branch of Iran’s Armed Forces founded after the 1979 Revolution by order of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Embattled Iranian regime mulls early polls;
Turkey-led forces seize control of Afrin;
http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/against-human-rights/article22885113.ece;

13. The Union recently approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa over a four year period from 2018-2021. Consider the following statements in this context:

1. One of these missions will come up in the country where China opened its first overseas military base recently
2. By 2021, there will be an Indian Mission in every African country
3. This decision is in line with commitments of the third India-Africa Forum Summit

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: c.

- The 18 new Indian Missions in Africa will be opened in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Djibouti (where China operationalised its first overseas military base last year), Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sao Tome& Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Swaziland and Togo over a four year period from 2018-2021 thereby increasing the number of Resident Indian Missions in Africa from 29 to 47 (54 countries make up Africa).


14. With which among the following countries/organisation does India NOT have an exclusive annual summit?

a) Russia
b) Japan
c) USA
d) European Union

Solution: c.

- A summit can be defined as “a meeting between heads of government”.

48
Apart from Russia, Japan and EU, India has/participates in annual summits with/of other regional organisations such as ASEAN, BRICS, G20, East Asia Summit, among others, as well.

Improvisation:  
VI. POLITY

1. The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 will
   1. Set up designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of cases
   2. Institute a rehabilitation fund to provide for legal aid for victims
   3. Make the National Anti-Trafficking Bureau the nodal Agency for international coordination
      to address the transnational nature of the crime

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.

- **Rehabilitation Fund** created for the first time. To be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the victim including education, skill development, health care/psychological support, legal aid, safe accommodation, etc.
- **Designated courts** in each district for the speedy trial of the cases.
- The Bill comprehensively addresses the transnational nature of the crime.
- The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau will perform the functions of international coordination with authorities in foreign countries and international organisations; international assistance in investigation; facilitate inter-State and trans-border transfer of evidence and materials, witnesses and others for expediting prosecution, etc.

For the other salient features, refer: [http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176878](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176878);

2. The Rule of Law Index which measures rule of law adherence in 113 countries and jurisdictions worldwide is released by
   a) International Court of Justice, The Hague
   b) International Criminal Court, The Hague
   c) National Law School of India University, Bangalore
   d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- The **World Justice Project (WJP)** is an independent, multidisciplinary and non-profit organization working to advance the rule of law worldwide.

**In the news**: India ranks 62 in the 2017-18 list. With the exception of Afghanistan, which stayed in 111th place, all of the countries in the South Asian region improved in the global ranks. Nepal is the top performer in the index; it is ranked 58.
3. Unlike decisions taken by other Cabinet Committees that are made public, those taken by this Committee remain unannounced. The Committee in question is?
   a) Cabinet Committee on Security
   b) Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs
   c) Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs
   d) Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs

   Solution: a.

   Improvisation: [link to news article]

4. The Supreme executive authority of the Central Government is
   a) The President
   b) The Vice President
   c) The Prime Minister
   d) The Cabinet

   Solution: d.

   The sentence has been copy-pasted from Laxmikanth’s Indian Polity (Role of Cabinet, Chapter Central Council of Ministers). The Cabinet is the
   • Highest decision-making authority in our politico-administrative system
   • Chief policy formulating body of the central government
   • Supreme executive authority of the central government
   • Advisory body to the president and its advice is binding on him
   • Chief coordinator of central administration
   • Chief crisis manager and thus deals with all emergency situations

   In the news/Improvisation: Cabinet decisions;

5. ‘Appointment of chief minister when no party has a clear-cut majority in the state legislative assembly’ is a
   a) Constitutional discretion of the Governor
   b) Situational discretion of the Governor
   c) Statutory discretion of the Governor
   d) Situational discretion of the President

   Solution: b.

   It is a situational discretion of the Governor of the concerned state.

   Improvisation: [link to news article]

   Chapter ‘Governor’, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;
6. Which of the following statements about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 is/are correct?
   1. It allows the Central Government to notify any other category of specified disability that has not already been recognised under the act
   2. The act shall apply only to individuals identified as being disabled by the latest available census
   3. It provides for penalties for violation of its provisions and for offences committed against PwDs

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

   Solution: a.

   “Many sections of disabled people rejected the new 2016 law, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, but he (Javed Abidi) argued that under the circumstances, this was the best that could be done. He saw the recognition given to 21 disability conditions as major progress, considering that the 1995 law defined only seven types... Javed welcomed the new law also because it provided for penalties, which the 1995 Act did not.”

   From 2016 (IE): The 2011 Census put the number of disabled in India at 2.68 crore, or 2.21% of the population. This a gross underestimation, especially in the light of the bill (now the Act), which greatly widen the current Census definition of disability.

   From 2016: Bill as passed by Parliament;

   Source/improvisation: Javed Abidi: Be ready to fight your own battle;

7. Consider the following statements in the context of the parliamentary system of government that the Constitution has provided:
   1. The term of the Chief Minister is not fixed
   2. The Chief Minister holds office during the pleasure of the governor
   3. A council of ministers must always exist to advise the governor, even after the dissolution of the state legislative assembly

   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.

   - The term of the Chief Minister is not fixed and he holds office during the pleasure of the governor. However, this does not mean that the governor can dismiss him at any time. He cannot be dismissed by the governor as long as he enjoys the majority support in the legislative assembly. But, if he loses the confidence of the assembly, he must resign or the governor can dismiss him.
8. Collective responsibility, the fundamental principle underlying the working of parliamentary system of government, can be achieved only through the instrumentality of the
   a) Prime Minister
   b) Vice President
   c) Parliament
   d) President

Solution: a.

Article 75 clearly states that the council of ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. This means that
   • all the ministers own joint responsibility to the Lok Sabha for all their acts of omission and commission. They
     work as a team and swim or sink together.
   • Cabinet decisions bind all cabinet ministers (and other ministers) even if they differed in the cabinet. It is
     the duty of every minister to stand by cabinet decisions and support them both within and outside the
     Parliament. If any minister disagrees with a cabinet decision and is not prepared to defend it, he must
     resign.

Article 75 also contains the principle of individual responsibility. It states that the ministers hold office during the
pleasure of the President. However, the President removes a minister only on the advice of the Prime Minister.
In case of a difference of opinion or dissatisfaction with the performance of a minister, the Prime Minister
can ask him to resign or advice the President to dismiss him. In this context, Dr B R Ambedkar observed:

“Collective responsibility can be achieved only through the instrumentality of the Prime Minister. Therefore, unless
and until we create that office and endow that office with statutory authority to nominate and dismiss ministers, there
 can be no collective responsibility.”

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

9. The President can exercise which among the following veto powers if a bill returned by him for the reconsideration of the state legislature is passed again and presented to him again?
    a) Suspensive veto
    b) Qualified veto
    c) Absolute veto
    d) None of the above

Solution: c.

The President of India is vested with three veto powers:
   • **Absolute veto**: It refers to the power of the President to withhold his assent to a bill passed by the Parliament.
     The bill then ends and does not become an act. (This can be exercised in both, the first instance as well as the second
     instance in case of a state legislature’s bill reserved for his consideration by the governor.)
• **Suspensive veto:** The President exercises this veto when he returns a bill for reconsideration of the Parliament. However, if the bill is passed again by the Parliament (not state legislature) with or without amendments and again presented to the President, it is obligatory for the President to give his assent to the bill.

• **Pocket veto:** In this case, the President neither ratifies nor rejects nor returns the bill, but simply keeps the bill pending for an indefinite period.

All three veto powers can be exercised by the President in the case of a bill of a state legislature reserved for his consideration by the governor too; however, with regard to the given situation— a bill having been returned (exercise of suspensive veto) for the reconsideration of the state legislature by the President, which the state legislature passed again — the president may give or withhold his assent [absolute veto]; Further, the Constitution has not prescribed any time limit within which the President has to take decision with regard to a bill reserved by the governor for his consideration. Hence, the President can exercise pocket veto in respect of state legislation also.

**Improvisation:** [http://www.livemint.com/Politics/3AA0sIx8mhk8eosdWLulM/Telangana-assembly-passes-bill-increasing-quotas-for-STs-Mu.html](http://www.livemint.com/Politics/3AA0sIx8mhk8eosdWLulM/Telangana-assembly-passes-bill-increasing-quotas-for-STs-Mu.html);

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

10. If a state is granted a ‘Special Category Status’,

1. The central government pays 100 per cent of the funds required in a centrally-sponsored scheme to be implemented in the state

2. The state may have a sizeable share of tribal population

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 concept of a special category state was first introduced in 1969 when the 5th Finance Commission sought to provide certain disadvantaged states with **preferential treatment** in the form of **central assistance** and **tax breaks**. The rationale for special status is that certain states, because of inherent features, have a low resource base and cannot mobilize resources for development. Some of the features required for special status are:

(i) hilly and difficult terrain;  
(ii) low population density or sizeable share of tribal population;  
(iii) strategic location along borders with neighbouring countries;  
(iv) economic and infrastructural backwardness; and  
(v) non-viable nature of state finances.

The Centre pays 90 per cent of the funds required in a centrally-sponsored scheme to special category status category states as against 60 per cent in case of normal category states, while the remaining funds are provided by the state governments.

[http://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-special-category-status-5090274/](http://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-special-category-status-5090274/);
11. In the context of the recent Supreme Court judgment on passive euthanasia, consider the following statements:

1. The Law Commission has in the past recommended that passive euthanasia should be allowed
2. The court has held that the right to die with dignity is a part of the basic right to life
3. The court has granted legal status to advance directives

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

- The SC recently ruled that the fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the “right to die with dignity.” Dignity is lost if a man is allowed or forced to undergo pain and suffering because of “unwarranted medical support.”

- Passive euthanasia was recognised by a two-judge Bench in Aruna Shanbaug in 2011; now the Constitution Bench has expanded the jurisprudence on the subject by adding to it the principle of a ‘living will’, or an advance directive, a practice whereby a person, while in a competent state of mind, leaves written instructions on the sort of medical treatment that may or may not be administered in the event of her reaching a stage of terminal illness. The court has invoked its inherent power under Article 142 of the Constitution to grant legal status to advance directives.

- The 241st report of the Law Commission states that passive euthanasia should be allowed with certain safeguards and there is a proposed law—Medical Treatment of Terminally Ill Patient (Protection of Patients and Medical Practitioners) Bill, 2006 in this regard.

http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/sc-upholds-passive-euthanasia/article23016537.ece;
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/death-with-dignity/article23009854.ece;

12. The recent ruling by the Supreme Court on the question of passive euthanasia and advance directives was on a petition filed by

a) Pinki Virani  
b) H.B. Karibasamma  
c) NGO Common Cause  
d) NGO Public Health Foundation of India

Solution: c.

- The court’s ruling was pronounced on a 2005 plea filed by Prashant Bhushan on behalf of NGO Common Cause that sought recognition of a living will so that an individual could exercise the right to refuse medical treatment at a terminally-ill stage of life.

http://www.livemint.com/Politics/kSasxfVJaqmBNd1QlaoSol/Supreme-Court-allows-passive-euthanasia-in-landmark-judgment.html;
13. With reference to the Panel of Vice-Chairpersons of Rajya Sabha, consider the following statements:

1. The Vice-Chairpersons are elected by members of the house
2. Any one of them can preside over the house when the office of the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman is vacant

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.

- Under the Rules of Rajya Sabha, the Chairman nominates from amongst the members a panel of vice-chairpersons. Any one of them can preside over the House in the absence of the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman.
- It must be emphasised here that a member of the panel of vice-chairpersons cannot preside over the House, when the office of the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman is vacant. During such time, the Chairman’s duties are to be performed by such member of the House as the president may appoint for the purpose.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

- Woman presiding officer: Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu announced the nomination of JD(U) member Kahkashan Parveen to the panel of presiding officers to conduct the proceedings of the House. The move came a day after the International Women’s Day, when the members had expressed concern that there was no woman member on the panel.


1. Deals with sexual offences against persons only below sixteen years of age
2. Provides for the protection of children from the offence of pornography
3. Provides for the setting up of designated special courts for speedy trial of offences

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 deals with sexual offences against persons below 18 years of age, who are deemed as children.
- An offence under this act is considered graver if it is committed by a police officer, public servant, any member of the staff at a remand home, protection or observation home, jail, hospital or educational institution, or by a member of the armed or security forces.
The Act is a comprehensive law to provide for the protection of children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.

It safeguards the interests of the child at every stage of the judicial process by incorporating child-friendly mechanisms for reporting, recording of evidence, investigation and speedy trial of offences through appointment of Special Public Prosecutors and designated Special Courts.

The Act provides for stringent punishments which have been graded as per the gravity of offence.


15. The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution had recommended that

1. There should be a minimum number of days for sittings of the Parliament and State Legislatures
2. The minimum number of days for sittings of State Legislatures should vary according to the strength of the house

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.

- State Legislatures with less than 70 members should meet for at least 50 days in a year and other State Legislatures for at least 90 days.
- Similarly, the minimum number of days for sittings of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha should be fixed at 100 and 120 days respectively.

Chapter NCRWC, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

16. A ‘three-line whip’, issued by party whips to their respective party members, is/refers to

a) A compulsory attendance requirement in the Parliament for three specified days
b) Text underlined three times, reflecting the urgency and importance of the whip
c) A list of three alternative positions that party members must opt one from and must stand-by during the course of a debate
d) None of the above

Solution: b.

- In practice, the whip is “an official appointed to maintain discipline among, secure attendance of, and give necessary information to, members of his party.” Party whips are persons who are expected to be a channel of communication between the political party and the members of the party in the legislature. They also serve the function of gauging the opinion of the members, and communicating it to party leaders.
The actual whips issued to members can be of three types: one-line, two-line or three-line, depending on the number of times the text is underlined, reflecting the urgency and importance of the whip.

http://www.prsindia.org/media/articles-by-prs-team/the-whip-hand-1044/;


17. Consider the following statements:
   1. The Corruption Perceptions Index is published by Global Integrity
   2. India’s ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index has remained more or less unchanged in the past ten years

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.

Data Point, The Hindu (15th March);

DATA POINT
Corruption is here to stay?
India's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index has remained more or less unchanged in the past 10 years. Data collated by Transparency International show that the country has made little or no progress in ending corruption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>India's rank</th>
<th>Number of countries analysed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>180</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<td>180</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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<td>174</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Corruption Perceptions Index
18. The ‘Guillotine’, a device of parliamentary proceeding, is associated with which among the following stages in the enactment of a budget?

a) General discussion on budget  
b) Voting on demand for grants  
c) Passing of finance bill  
d) Passing of appropriation bill

Solution: b.

- In the light of the reports of the departmental standing committees, the Lok Sabha takes up voting of demands for The demands are presented ministry wise. A demand becomes a grant after it has been duly voted.
- In total, 26 days are allotted for the voting of On the last day the Speaker puts all the remaining demands to vote and disposes them whether they have been discussed by the members or not. This is known as ‘guillotine’.

In the news: This year, thanks to the ongoing impasse in Lok Sabha over issues like the Punjab National Bank fraud, Andhra Pradesh’s demand for a special package, distribution of Cauvery water, and Telangana’s plea to raise the quota limit, there was no debate on the Budget and related business. Last Wednesday, therefore, all Demands for Grants were “guillotined”: the Finance Bill and Appropriation Bill (containing the consolidated Demands for Grants) with a spending plan of Rs 89.25 lakh crore, were introduced, voted on, and passed by voice vote, all within 30 minutes. It was an unusual step because there were still three weeks left in the Budget Session.

19. Which among the following fundamental rights is available to both citizens and foreigners?

a) Article 15  
b) Article 16  
c) Article 19  
d) Article 21

Solution: d.

- Articles 15, 16, 19, 29 and 30 are available only to citizens and not to foreigners.
- “The government does not discriminate between an Indian and a non-Indian while providing medical care in public hospitals, the Centre said, addressing allegations that Rohingya living in refugee camps were denied health care in government medical establishments.”

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

20. Consider the following statements with reference to the various features of administration related to tribal areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution:

1. District and regional councils can make laws on certain specified matters like shifting cultivation, land, water and so on, all of which require the governor's assent
2. The President has no responsibility in the administration of sixth schedule areas

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

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
Solution: a.
- The tribal areas in the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram have been constituted as autonomous districts. If there are different tribes in an autonomous district, the governor can divide the district into several autonomous regions. Each autonomous district has a district council. Each autonomous region also has a separate regional council.
- The district and regional councils administer the areas under their jurisdiction. They can make laws on certain specified matters like land, forests, canal water, shifting cultivation, village administration, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs and so on. But all such laws require the assent of the governor.
- The acts of Parliament or the state legislature do not apply to autonomous districts and autonomous regions or apply with specified modifications and exceptions. The power of direction, in this regard, lies either with the president or governor. Thus, in the case of Assam, it lies with the Governor, both in respect of acts of Parliament or state legislature. In the case of Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, it lies with the president in respect of acts of Parliament and governor in respect of acts of state legislature.

Improvisation: [Link to article](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/meghalaya-rti-activist-murdered/article23303487.ece)

21. ‘Swajal’ is a model for self-ownership and self-management of water resources in a community by members of the community itself. The ‘Swajal’ model was first tried in
   a) Rajasthan
   b) Uttarakhand
   c) Assam
   d) Jammu and Kashmir

Solution: b.
- The Swajal project has frequently been in the news (government press releases – HERE, HERE2, HERE3, HERE4) and thus this question.
- The Swajal model was first tried in the Uttarakhand area of undivided-UP around 20 years back, and is now being scaled up at national level with special focus on water-scarce areas.
- The Swajal Pilot Project has been planned in six States viz. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The initiative will also be launched in the 115 aspirational districts (on which we have already asked a question earlier) selected by the Prime Minister for focus on all-round development.
- The main objective of the re-launch of the initiative is to make an effort to deliver tapped water to every household in the country through decisions made by the community, for the community, of the resources of the community.
[Link to release](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177895)

22. Consider the following statements:
   1. The first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/UT is by an act of the Parliament
   2. Subsequent inclusions or exclusions in the list of STs can be made only by an order of the President, after consultation with the State Government/UT concerned

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
The Union Cabinet has, in principle, approved the inclusion of the communities, namely, ‘Parivara and Talawara’ as synonym of “Nayaka’ in the list of STs of Karnataka.

- The first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State or Union territory is by a notified Order of the President, after consultation with the State Government / UT concerned. Any subsequent inclusion in or exclusion from and other modifications in the list of Scheduled Tribes can be made only through an amending Act of Parliament.

Additional Information:

- NLCPR, presently funded by M/o DoNER, provides resources to the concerned line Ministries/their agencies for projects like checking erosion in Majuli Island. This Scheme will be transferred to NEC for implementation.
- Previously, there was no fixed arrangement for distributing the funds into the state or central component. Now, the total funds available to the NEC are proposed to be bifurcated in two components (state component 60 per cent and central 40 per cent). The state component would be utilised for the projects in each state as per their share on normative allocation basis. For the central component, the projects having regional character, requiring inter-ministerial intervention are to be taken up.
- Priority sectors have been identified such as bamboo; piggery; regional tourism; higher education, tertiary healthcare and special intervention in backward areas, etc.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178173;
VII. HISTORY & ART AND CULTURE

1. Which among the following legislations were introduced following the British Government’s declaration that its “objective was the gradual introduction of responsible government in India”?
   a) Government of India Act of 1858
   b) Morley-Minto Reforms
   c) Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms
   d) Government of India Act of 1935

Solution: c.

- “It is argued that in the thirty years before Independence, there had been a slow and incremental development of representative institutions in India…”
- On August 20, 1917, the British Government declared, for the first time, that its objective was the **gradual introduction of responsible government in India**. The Government of India Act of 1919 was thus enacted, which came into force in 1921.

Improvisation: TH: The 1947 Singularity;

**Govt. of India act 1919**

- Montague Chelmsford reform, in line with Montague’s August 1917 statement
- Dyarchy (rule of two) introduced in provinces, relaxation of central control over provinces
- Popular ministers & governors to be executive head
- Reserved (by governor) & transferred (by ministers) subjects
- Reserved subjects s.a. finance, Law & order, land revenue, irrigation, to be administered by governor through its executive council & was not responsible to legislature
- Governor could veto the bill
- Women were given right to vote
- Transferred subjects s.a. health, education, industry, local govt.
- Indian legislature made more representative & bicameral, Legislative assembly and Council of state to consist of 140 & 60 members

2. The ‘Aapravasi Ghat’, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and ‘Geet-Gawai’, inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, are both found in
   a) Uttar Pradesh
   b) Bihar
   c) West Bengal
   d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- In the district of Port Louis, lies a site where the modern indentured labour diaspora began. In 1834, the British Government selected the island of Mauritius to be the first site for what it called ‘the great experiment’ in the use of ‘free’ labour to replace slaves. Between 1834 and 1920, almost half a million indentured labourers arrived from India at Aapravasi Ghat to work in the sugar plantations of Mauritius, or to be transferred to Reunion Island, Australia, southern and eastern Africa or the Caribbean. The buildings of Aapravasi Ghat are among the earliest explicit manifestations of what was to become a global economic system and one of the greatest migrations in history.
- **Geet-Gawai** is a pre-wedding ceremony that combines rituals, prayer, songs, music and dance. It is performed mainly by Bhojpuri-speaking communities in Mauritius who have Indian descent.
3. Teachers of Indian Culture (TICs), appointed by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations to Indian Missions abroad do NOT teach
   a) Yoga
   b) Sanskrit
   c) Vedas
   d) Ayurveda

Solution: d.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has intimated that they have appointed Teachers of Indian Culture (TICs) to Indian Missions & Posts abroad to teach Yoga, Sanskrit and Vedas. The ICCR has been promoting the teaching of Yoga overseas through its Cultural Centres since 1980 by deploying yoga teachers in Indian Cultural Centres.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177960

4. The ‘Madhavpur Mela’ of Gujarat is associated with which among the following tribes from Northeast India?
   a) Nyishi
   b) Mishmi
   c) Bodo
   d) Jaintia

Solution: b.

- Madhavpur Ghed (near Porbandar) is a small but culturally significant village.
- It is the place where, according to folklore, Lord Krishna married Rukmini (the daughter of King Bhishmaka).
- The Mishmi Tribe (Arunachal Pradesh) traces its ancestry to the legendary King Bhishmaka and through him to his daughter Rukmini and Lord Krishna.
- For the first time ever, the Madhavpur Mela will celebrate the immortal journey which Rukmini undertook from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat with Lord Krishna.

http://pib.nic.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1526308
1. Which among the following states do/does not share its/their border(s) with the state of Chhattisgarh?
   1. West Bengal
   2. Maharashtra
   3. Andhra Pradesh
   4. Uttar Pradesh

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

Solution: b.

Chhattisgarh (Click HERE) has borders with Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.


2. Which state is nearest to Siliguri, which lends its name to the corridor also known as ‘Chicken’s Neck’?
   a) Bihar
   b) Sikkim
   c) Assam
   d) Arunachal Pradesh

Solution: a.

- Siliguri is located in West Bengal. Bihar is closer to Siliguri than is Sikkim.
Improvisation: [Link to Article]

3. Which one of the following states does not have a border with Myanmar?
   a) Arunachal Pradesh
   b) Nagaland
   c) Nagaland
   d) Tripura

Solution: d.
4. Which state recently became the first to pass a bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below?
   a) Rajasthan  
   b) Madhya Pradesh  
   c) Uttar Pradesh  
   d) Haryana  

Solution: b.  
- **Madhya Pradesh** became the first state in the country to introduce this stringent provision – to punish rapists of girls **below 12 years** with a maximum punishment of death penalty – by passing the amendments in December 2017.  

Rajasthan passes bill to give death penalty for rape;  

5. Consider the following pairs:  
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hill range</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodi Hills</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javadi Hills</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abor Hills</td>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gawilgarh Hills</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
   a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
   b) 1 and 2 only  
   c) 3 and 4 only  
   d) 2, 3 and 4 only  

Solution: c.  
- Both Bodi and Javadi Hills are in Tamil Nadu. Bodi hills is also where the Indian Neutrino Observatory was to be set up (green nod for the project was suspended last year).  

Refer any atlas or the Survey of India Map;  
Source/Improvisation:  

6. Farmers in Maharashtra recently walked nearly 200 kilometres over six days to reach Mumbai. Which among the following cities is roughly the same distance from Mumbai?
   a) Wardha  
   b) Dhule  
   c) Nagpur  
   d) Nashik  


Over 40,000 farmers converged in Mumbai's Azad Maidan early on Monday morning, culminating their six-day long 180-km march that began from the CBS Chowk in Nashik.

7. From among the following list, the southernmost hills are the
   a) Dafla Hills
   b) Bhuban Hills
   c) Mishmi Hills
   d) Barail Range

Solution: b.
- Bhuban Hills (refer to an atlas) borders Mizoram and Manipur; it extends into Assam.


8. Consider the following statements:
   1. Maize is a Kharif crop which is also grown in rabi season in some states
   2. Major maize-producing states include Bihar and Andhra Pradesh

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.
- It is a crop which is used both as food and fodder.
- It is a kharif crop which requires temperature between 21°C to 27°C and grows well in old alluvial soil.
- In some states like Bihar maize is grown in rabi season also.
- Major maize-producing states are Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh.

Contemporary India II, Class 10 NCERT;

9. Which among the following is not a major iron ore belt in India?
   a) Durg-Bastar-Chandrapur belt
   b) Ballari-Chitradurga-Chikkamagaluru-Tumakuru belt
   c) Maharashtra-Goa belt
   d) Andhra Pradesh-Odisha belt
Solution: d.

- The fourth major iron ore belt is the Odisha-Jharkhand belt.

Improvisation: [link](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/red-earth-and-fine-dust/article23275120.ece);
Contemporary India II, Class 10 NCERT;

10. Which among the following statements is incorrect?

a) The Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Assam  
b) The Pir Panjal Range is spread over one state only  
c) River Satluj flows through two states only  
d) Gawilgarh hills is spread over two states only

Solution: b.

The Pir Panjal Range is spread over Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh  
River Satluj flows through Himachal Pradesh and Punjab.
Improvisation: TH1; TH2; TH3;
Refer Atlas for Gawilgarh Hills – it is spread over two states – Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
1. Of the total number of people to have been arrested for smuggling narcotics, arms and cattle between 2015 and 2017 along various stretches of the Indian border, majority were apprehended at the
   a) India-Bangladesh border
   b) India-Nepal border
   c) India-Myanmar border
   d) India-Pakistan border

Solution: b.

2. Consider the following pairs:
   
   **Fighter plane** – **Manufacturer**
   1. Typhoon – Mikoyan
   2. F-18 – Boeing
   3. Gripen – Dassault Aviation

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

A similar question was posted here earlier (we asked you to match the fighter plane with the country that the manufacturer belonged to).

**Single Engine fighter aircrafts:**
- **F-16**: Lockheed Martin, USA
- **Gripen**: Saab, Sweden

**Twin engine fighter aircrafts:**
- **Rafale**: Dassault Aviation, France
- **F-18**: Boeing, USA
- **Typhoon**: Eurofighter (a consortium of Leonardo, Airbus, and BAE Systems)
- **MiG-35**: Mikoyan, Russia

_In the news:_ Earlier, the IAF was looking for a single-engine jet to replace the MiG-21s and MiG-27s. The new jets were to be manufactured in India by the private industry under the Strategic Partnership model. However, the contest is now being opened up. While the Lockheed Martin F-16 and SAAB Gripen are single-engine fighters, the contest will be now open to Boeing F-18, Dassault Rafale, Eurofighter Typhoon and Russian MiG-35.


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3. The ‘S-400’, associated with which is a potential defence deal under consideration by India, is a/an
   a) Long Range Surface to Air Missile system
   b) Intercontinental Ballistic Missile system
   c) Hypersonic Anti-Ship Cruise Missile system
   d) Land Attack Missile system

Solution: a.

**About the S-400 system:**
- **Range**: 400 km;
- **Speed**: up to 4.8 km per second;
- **Max target height**: 30 km – can track up to 80 targets simultaneously;
- **Types of target**: aircraft, cruise missiles, medium-range missiles, drones, other airborne surveillance systems;
- **Long-range** surveillance radar _tracks objects_ and _relays information_ to command vehicle, which assesses potential targets.
- **Target** is identified and command vehicle orders missile launch.
- **Launch data** is sent to the best placed launch vehicle and it releases _surface-to-air_ missiles.
- **Engagement radar** helps guide missiles towards target.


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4. Which among the following states has seen the most number of surrenders and outlay for the Security Related Expenditure Scheme?
   a) Nagaland
   b) Manipur
   c) Assam
   d) Mizoram
Solution: c.

- For the first time since 1998, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has increased the monthly stipend of surrendered militants in northeast India. The pressure to increase the stipend came after several requests from the government of Assam, which has seen the most number of surrenders and outlay for the scheme in the region. According to the policy (surrender policy), the MHA reimburses the amount paid to the surrendered militants by the State governments under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme.
- There is another SRE scheme that is for Left Wing Extremism-affected districts across ten states.

https://mha.gov.in/scheme;
1. In which among the following mountain ranges was the ‘Alpine Ejder 3200 Cup’ recently held?
   a) Pontic Alps
   b) Dinaric Alps
   c) Atlai Mountains
   d) Ural Mountains

Solution: a.

HT: Twenty-one-year-old Aanchal Thakur scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win a medal at an international skiing event after bagging bronze at the Alpine Ejder 3200 Cup, organized by the International Ski Federation (FIS). Aanchal won in the slalom race at the Palandoken Ski Centre in Turkey. This ski centre is located in the Pontic Alps (mountain range in Turkey’s north).

TH: Aanchal Thakur, the first Indian to win an international medal in skiing;

2. Vietnam opens out to the
   1. Gulf of Thailand
   2. South China Sea
   3. East China Sea

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

Solution: a.

In the news: State visit of President of Vietnam;
3. The ‘Pritzker Prize’ is annually awarded to
   a) Architects
   b) Mathematicians
   c) Environmentalists
   d) Sportspersons

Solution: a.

- **Nonagenarian** (a person who is between 90 and 99 years old) architect and reputed urban planner Balkrishna Doshi has been named this year’s winner of architecture’s highest honour (considered architecture’s Nobel equivalent) — the Pritzker Prize, becoming the first Indian to do so.

- The 90-year-old Mr. Doshi — one of the last living architects to have apprenticed with the Franco-Swiss trailblazer Le Corbusier — distinguished his work by committing to sustainable architecture and inexpensive housing, bringing modernist design to a country rooted in traditionalism.


4. ‘The Lancet’, often seen in the news, is a family of
   a) Science journals affiliated to the United States’ Department of Health and Human Services
   b) Social science and medical journals affiliated to the European Union’s Public Health Programme
   c) Medical journals affiliated to the World Health Organisation
   d) Independent science journals

Solution: d.

- **The Lancet** began as an independent, international weekly general medical journal founded in 1823 by Thomas Wakley. Since its first issue (October 5, 1823), the journal has strived to make science widely available so that medicine can serve, and transform society, and positively impact the lives of people.

- Over the past two centuries, The Lancet has sought to address urgent topics in our society, initiate debate, put science into context, and influence decision makers around the world.

- The Lancet has evolved as a family of journals but retains at its core the belief that medicine must serve society, that knowledge must transform society, that the best science must lead to better lives.

In the news (**Health savings outweigh costs of limiting global warming**): According to The Lancet Planetary Health Journal, “depending on the strategy used to mitigate climate change, estimates suggest that the health savings from reduced air pollution could be between 1.4-2.5 times greater than the costs of climate change mitigation, globally... The countries likely to see the biggest health savings by pursuing measures to limit earth-warming are air pollution-ridden India and China.”

5. The colour of the gun-control movement in the USA is
   a) Chartreuse Yellow
   b) Fluorescent Green
   c) Blaze Orange
   d) Hunter Red
Solution: c.

A GK question.

- The particularly vivid shade of orange that has been adopted by gun control activists is also known as “blaze orange,” or “safety orange.”
- It is associated with hunting garments, road safety markers and caution signs.
- Many US states require hunters to don caps, shirts, and vests in “hunter orange” to help them stand out in the woods, offering a clear “don’t shoot” signal to fellow hunters.

http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-students-seek-action-on-gun-control/article23246839.ece;

6. The Annual Survey of India’s City-System, the fifth edition of which was recently released, is conducted by
   a) Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy
   b) Mercer
   c) Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, GoI
   d) CARE India

Solution: a.

Pune, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram and Bhubaneswar have the best quality of governance among Indian cities in 2017, a study has found. The fifth edition of the Annual Survey of India’s City-Systems (ASICS) by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy spans 23 Indian cities.

ASICS groups questions into four categories:

- urban planning & design;
- urban capacities & resources;
- transparency, accountability & participation; and
- empowered & legitimate political representation.

Indian cities in general, noted the report, face the following problems:

- A weak urban planning framework,
- low levels of empowerment of mayors and councillors,
- Inadequate platforms for engagement with citizens ,
- Instability of finances and
- Lack of skilled staff and poor management


7. The ‘Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index’ is published by
   a) UN World Tourism Organisation
   b) International Air Transport Association
   c) World Economic Forum
   d) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Solution: c.
The WEF publishes the ‘Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report’. India has improved its position from 65th to 40th position in this index in four years.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177969;

8. The ‘Angalwaltha’ movement, recently mentioned in the news, most closely resembles the
   a) African-American Civil Rights Movement
   b) Kisan Morcha in Maharashtra
   c) Chipko Movement
   d) LGBT Rights Movement

Solution: c.

**About Chipko Movement**: The success of this nonviolent, grassroots resistance was felt around the globe, serving as the inspiration for future environmental movements. The Chipko Andolan also stands out as an eco-feminist movement. Women formed the nucleus of the movement, as the group most directly affected by the lack of firewood and drinking water caused by deforestation.

The original Chipko movement dates back to the 18th century, when a group of 363 people from 84 different villages, led by Amrita Devi, laid down their lives to protect a group of khejri trees that were to be cut down at the order of the maharaja, or king, of Jodhpur. After this event, the maharaja decreed that the trees were to be left standing. The original movement was called “angalwaltha”, the Garhwali word for “embrace,” as the protesters protected the trees by surrounding them and linking hands, physically preventing the loggers from touching the plants. The movement was later named for the Hindi word “chipko,” which means “to stick.”

Google Doodle;

9. The latest Global Innovation Index report (GII 2017), in which India continued to improve its ranking, focused on
   a) Innovation in agriculture and food systems
   b) The rising share of innovation carried out via globalised innovation networks
   c) Innovation policies that are key to addressing pressing societal problems such as pollution and unemployment
   d) The role of human capital in the innovation process

Solution: a.

The GII 2017 focused on innovation in agriculture and food systems.

**Improvisation (PIB)**: An Innovation Cell in the Ministry of Human Resource Development will be created to further strengthen the innovation efforts. It will be headed by a Scientist and comprise of a senior Ministry official and young professionals who bring to the table new ideas in promoting innovation.. The decision comes close on the heels of India moving 6 ranks up in the Global Innovation Index Ranking from 66 in 2016 to 60 in 2017, out of 127 countries. This increase has happened for the 2nd year in succession.

**Additional Information**: The GII relies on two sub-indices – the Innovation Input Sub-Index and the Innovation Output Sub-Index – each built around key pillars.

- Five input pillars capture elements of the national economy that enable innovative activities: (1) Institutions, (2) Human capital and research, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Market sophistication, and (5) Business sophistication.
Two output pillars capture actual evidence of innovation outputs: (6) Knowledge and technology outputs and (7) Creative outputs.

Under the Global Innovation Index 2017, India has improved its standing in innovation inputs and innovation efficiency. The strongest points for the country happened to be a large number of science and engineering graduates, the increased investment by Global R&D companies in India, the improved QS University rankings and high rank in the highly cited research publication, global leadership in the IT service experts and leadership in export of creative goods.

https://www.globalinnovationindex.org;

10. Which of the following twitter campaigns was/were launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development?
   1. #PositionOfStrength
   2. #SelfieWithDaughter
   3. #IamThatWoman

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

Solution: c.

- **#SelfieWithDaughter** – Sunil Jaglan, a Village Sarpanch from Bibipur village of Haryana started it.
- **#PositionOfStrength** – Twitter itself launched this campaign for women empowerment in India and the MENA (Middle East and North African) region.
- In an attempt to end gender bias in women against women, the Ministry of Women and Child Development undertook an online campaign – ‘women for women’: **#IamThatWoman**.

Improvisation: **Maneka Gandhi launches #YesIBleed menstrual hygiene campaign**;

11. The NITI Aayog today launched the baseline ranking for the Aspirational Districts based on published data of 49 indicators across five developmental areas. Which one of the following developmental areas has been accorded least the weightage?
   a) Financial Inclusion
   b) Basic Infrastructure
   c) Agriculture and Water Resources
   d) Education

Solution: a.

The five developmental areas and weights accorded to them are:

- Financial Inclusion (5%) and Skill Development (5%) – 10%
- Basic Infrastructure – 10%
- Agriculture and Water Resources – 20%
- Education – 30%
12. Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media campaigns</th>
<th>Associated with/purpose of campaign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#YesIBleed</td>
<td>Menstrual hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NeverAgain</td>
<td>Open defecation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NoMore50</td>
<td>Campaign for stronger animal laws in India</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Solution: c.

These hashtags have been in the news in recent times.

- **#YesIBleed** was launched by the Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi. The objective of the campaign called “#YesIBleed” is to create a holistic approach to the issue of menstruation, which is an experience that transcends culture, class, and caste.
- ‘SheWings’ conceptualised this campaign. **SheWings** is a social movement to spread awareness about menstrual health among homeless, low income women and teens.
  - They are a social enterprise to break taboo about menstruation.
  - Their motto is to combat period poverty in India.

Some other twitter campaigns that have made the news in recent times:

- **#letstalkaboutip** – The Cell for IPR Promotions & Management (CIPAM) last year launched a social media campaign to promote Indian Geographical Indications (GIs) with #LetsTalkIP which is an ongoing movement initiated by CIPAM to make more people aware about the importance of Intellectual Property Rights.
- **#neveragain** – A movement founded by students in the USA in the aftermath of recent school shootouts; associated with this is also the ‘March for Our Lives’ campaign.
- **#iwearhandloom** – By the Ministry of Textiles encouraging users on social media to show their support for Indian weavers.
- **#cottoniscool** – Another campaign by the Ministry of Textiles to support Indian textile products.
- **#darwazaband** – For promotion of toilet usage across the country’s villages, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has come out with an aggressive new campaign called Darwaza Band
- **#gas4india** – Launched by the MoPNG, the campaign is aimed at promoting the use of gas in the country. Gas4India is a unified cross-country, multimedia, multi-event campaign to communicate the national, social, economic and ecological benefits of using natural gas as the fuel of choice to every citizen who uses, or will use in the near future, gas in any way- cook, travel, light their homes, and power their business.
• **#nomore50** – A month-old puppy lost its life in October 2017 after allegedly being thrown from the terrace by a final year mechanical engineering student. Since the news broke, a number of people took to social media to share the puppy’s photo with the hashtag #nomore50. Angered by the crime, citizens were calling for the punishment for cruelty to animals to be increased. The number ‘50’ in the hashtag is a reference to the abysmally low fine stipulated in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

• **#JeSuisCharlie** – (I am Charlie) from 2015; adopted by supporters of freedom of speech and the press following the Charlie Hebdo shooting in France.

• **#metoo** – you all know this.

**Maneka Gandhi launches #YesIBleed menstrual hygiene campaign;**