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1. ‘CORPAT’, or ‘Coordinated Patrol’, enhances mutual understanding and inter-operability between the navies of India and

   a) United Kingdom  
   b) Malaysia  
   c) Indonesia  
   d) Australia

Solution: c.

Later this month, the Navies of India and Indonesia will hold their first bilateral exercise in the Java Sea. The bilateral with Indonesia is in addition to the CORPAT that the two sides conduct. The 31st edition of CORPAT concluded recently in which India had deployed INS Kulish, a Kora class missile corvette, and one Dornier maritime patrol aircraft.

Apart from securing the trade sea route, the Coordinated Patrol also serves to enhance mutual understanding and inter-operability between the two navies. The CORPAT thus reflects the shared concerns between the two countries for a peaceful Indian Ocean for the benefit of international community.

The bilateral exercise with Indonesia will be held after the conclusion of the Malabar trilateral naval war games between India, Japan and the U.S. which is underway off the coast of Guam. Interestingly, two of the ships participating in Malabar will head to the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), the world’s largest multilateral exercise, hosted by the U.S. biennially off the Hawaii islands.

2. He started the monthly literary journal ‘Bangadarshana’; he published a volume of poems entitled ‘Lalita O Manas’; his novels firmly established prose as a literary vehicle for the Bengali language and helped create in India a school of fiction on the European model; he also wrote in English. He was

   a) Girishchandra Ghosh  
   b) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhya  
   c) Rabindranath Tagore  
   d) Sisir Kumar Ghosh

Solution: b.

Bangadarśan, Bankim Chandra’s epochmaking newspaper, commenced publication in 1872, and in it some of his (Bankim Chandra’s) later novels were serialized.
Some of Bankim Chandra’s youthful compositions appeared in the newspaper SambadPrabhakar, and in 1858 he published a volume of poems entitled Lalita O Manas. For a while he wrote in English, and his novel Rajmohan’s Wife appeared serially in Indian Field in 1864. His first notable Bengali work was the novel Durgeśnandini, which features a Rajput hero and a Bengali heroine. In itself it is of indifferent quality, but in the philosopher Debendranath Tagore’s words, it took “the Bengali heart by storm,” and with it the Bengali novel was full born. Kapālkuṇḍalā, a love story against a gruesome background of Tantric rites, was published in 1866; and Mrṇālini, which was set at the time of the first Muslim invasion of Bengal, in 1869.

To his contemporaries his voice was that of a prophet; his valiant Hindu heroes aroused their patriotism and pride of race. In him nationalism and Hinduism merged as one; and his creed was epitomized in the song “BandeMātaram” (“Hail to thee, Mother”)—from his novel Ānandamaṭh (Set in the background of the Sannyasi Rebellion in the late 18th century)—which later became the mantra (“hymn”) and slogan of Hindu India in its struggle for independence.

Britannica; Ready Reference Data, Spectrum;

Improvisation: TH;

3. As per National Family Health Survey 2005-06 and NFHS 2015-16, in children aged under-5

1. Stunting has declined from about 45% in 2005-06 to about 25% in 2015-16.
2. Wasting rates have decreased from about 25% to about 15%.
3. The underweight rate has remained static.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

A comparison of nutrition indicators for children under five years, using the third and fourth rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2015–2016 and 2005-06, shows this: though stunting has declined from 46.3% to 34.4%, wasting rates have increased from 16.5% to 25.6%. Further, the underweight rate (36%) has remained static in the last 10 years. This is worse than in some of the world’s poorest countries — Bangladesh (33%), Afghanistan (25%) or Mozambique (15%). This level of poor nutrition security disproportionately affects the poorest segment of the population.

TH:
1. ‘Bharat-22’, recently in the news, is related to

a) Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat  
b) The disinvestment programme  
c) Gold reference standards  
d) Khelo India

Solution: b.

ICICI Prudential managed Bharat-22 ETF Further Fund Offer (FFO) will be open for subscription on June 19. The FFO is part of the government’s overall disinvestment program, announced earlier by the Ministry of Finance, using the ETF route. The FFO is open for all categories of investors, including retail investors, retirement funds and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) among others, with all investors getting an upfront discount of 2.5%.

The strength of this ETF lies in the specially created Index S&P BSE BHARAT-22 INDEX. This Index is a unique blend of shares of key CPSEs, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and also the Government owned shares in blue chip private companies like Larsen & Tubro (L&T), Axis Bank and ITC. The shares of the Government companies represent 6 core sectors of the economy - Finance, Industry, Energy, Utilities, Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and Basic Materials. This combination makes the Index broad-based and diversified. The Sector and Stock exposure limits help in risk management and reduction of concentration, providing stability to the Index. The strength of the Index has been demonstrated in its performance from the time of its launch in August 2017 wherein it has out-performed the NIFTY-50 and Sensex.

TH;
From 2017: PIB;

2. The ‘Elder Abuse Study’ report of 2018 was released by

a) HelpAge India  
b) Dignity Foundation  
c) Agewell Foundation  
d) Sneh Foundation
Solution: a.

**DATA POINT**

No country for old people?

Of the 5,014 elderly people surveyed across 23 cities, one among four reported that they had faced some kind of abuse, with their sons (52%) and daughters-in-law (34%) being the most common perpetrators. A look at the most common forms of abuse reported by the elderly

% who have reported this form of abuse:

- Disrespect: 56%
- Verbal abuse: 49%
- Neglect: 34%
- Economic exploitation: 22%
- Physical abuse: 12%
- Others: 3%
- Sexual abuse: 1%

SOURCE: HELPAGE INDIA ELDER ABUSE 2018 REPORT

3. Which one of the following made it first to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity?

   a) Tradition of Vedic chanting
   b) Buddhist chanting of Ladakh
   c) Yoga
   d) Chhau dance

Solution: a.

KumbhMela (2017) was the latest to be added on the list; First to be added (2008) include – Kutiyattam, Tradition of Vedic chanting, and Ramlila.

- Ramman (2009)
- Chhau dance, Kalbelia folk songs of Rajasthan, and Mudiyettu of Kerala (2010)
- Buddhist chanting of Ladakh (2012)
- Sankirtana of Manipur (2013)
- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab (2014)
- Yoga, and Nowruz (2016)

**INDIA: Elements on the list:**

**TH:**
1. Consider following statement related to Parliamentary Committees.
   1. Every Member of Parliament has to be a member of Parliamentary Committee.
   2. Reports of Parliamentary Committees are binding on the government.

Which of the above statements are not correct? Select the correct code.

   a. 1 only
   b. 2 only
   c. Both 1 and 2
   d. None

Solution: c


2. Consider the following statements:
   1. The President and the Governor can pardon, reprieve, respite, remit, suspend or commute
      the punishment or sentence of any person convicted of any offence against a central and
      state law respectively
   2. The President is the only authority who can pardon a death sentence

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.

Improvisation: TH;
3. Consider the following statements with reference to selection of non-permanent members of the UNSC:

1. Once every five years, the General Assembly elects non-permanent members for a five-year term
2. There are ten non-permanent members
3. These seats are distributed on a regional basis

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Each year, the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of ten in total) for a two-year term. The ten non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis:

- five for African and Asian countries;
- one for Eastern European countries;
- two for Latin American and Caribbean countries;
- two for Western European and other countries.

UN:

Improvisation/in the news (TH): Maldives and Indonesia had contested for a seat in the UNSC, but in the plenary session recently held at the UN headquarters in New York, Indonesia won the seat after securing 144 votes against 46 for the Maldives.

4. Consider the following statements about Common Service Centres (CSCs):

1. The CSC programme is a joint initiative of the Ministries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
2. The central government recently proposed to enable all CSCs to operate as business correspondents of banks
3. To become a Village Level Entrepreneur, the applicant must be fluent in the local dialect only

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Common Services Centre (CSC) programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY), Government of India. CSCs are the access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India, thereby contributing to a digitally and financially inclusive society.

Some of the preconditions for participating in the CSC scheme:
- Applicant should be a village youth above 18 years of age.
- Applicant must have passed the 10th level examination from a recognized board as minimum level of educational qualification.
- Applicant should be fluent in reading and writing the local dialect and should also have basic knowledge of English language.
- Applicant should have a valid Aadhaar number.

Vikaspedia:

TH:

5. Consider the following Parliamentary Committees:

1. Departmental Standing Committees
2. Committee on Public Undertakings
3. Estimates Committee
4. Committee on Empowerment of Women

Which of the following is the correct chronological sequence of setting up of the above committees in independent India?

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

Solution: c.

- In the post-independence era, the first estimates committee was constituted in 1950.
- The Committee on Public Undertakings was created in 1964.
- Departmental Standing Committees were set up in the Parliament in 1993.
- Committee on Empowerment of Women was constituted in 1997.

Improvisation: TH:

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth:

6. The Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell

1. Assists the government in administration of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG.
2. Is under the Ministry of Finance

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.

Periodically, the international crude oil price of Indian Basket is computed/published by the PPAC, which is under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

The mandate of PPAC is to assist the government in the following functions:
• Administration of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG and freight subsidy for far flung areas.
• Maintenance of information data bank and communication system to deal with emergencies and unforeseen situations.
• Analyzing the trends in the international oil market and domestic prices.
• Forecasting and evaluation of petroleum import and export trends.
• Operationalizing the sector specific surcharge schemes, if any.

Improvisation: **TH**;

**PPAC**;

7. Consider the following statements with reference to the Rajya Sabha:

1. The Deputy Chairman is directly responsible to the House and subordinate to the Chairman.
2. As per the Constitution, the Chairman nominates from amongst the members a panel of vice-chairpersons.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only  

b) 2 only  

c) Both 1 and 2  

d) Neither 1 nor 2  

Solution: d.

The Deputy Chairman is **not** subordinate to the Chairman and is directly responsible to the House.

Under the Rules of the RS, the Chairman nominates from amongst the members a panel of vice-chairpersons.

Improvisation: **TH**;

**Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth**;

8. Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a set of farming methods, and also a grassroots peasant movement, which has spread to various states in India. It first evolved in the state of

a) Karnataka  

b) Andhra Pradesh  

c) Himachal Pradesh  

d) Punjab  

Solution: a.

**FAQ:** ZBNF has attained wide success in southern India, especially the southern Indian state of Karnataka where it first evolved. The movement in Karnataka state was born out of collaboration between Mr Subhash Palekar, who put together the ZBNF practices, and the state farmers association Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS), a member of La Via Campesina (LVC).
‘Zero budget’ farming promises to end a reliance on loans and drastically cut production costs, ending the debt cycle for desperate farmers. The word ‘budget’ refers to credit and expenses, thus the phrase ‘Zero Budget’ means without using any credit, and without spending any money on purchased inputs. ‘Natural farming’ means farming with Nature and without chemicals.

In the news (TH): In early June, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced that the State would fully embrace Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), a chemical-free method that would cover all farmers by 2024. AP has become the first state to implement a ZBNF policy.

APZBNF: The father of ZBNF Sh.Subash Palekar has provided four important non-negotiable guidelines: Bijamrita (Seed Treatment using local cowdung and cow urine), Jiwanmrita (applying inoculation made of local cowdung and cow urine without any fertilizers and pesticides), Mulching (activities to ensure favorable microclimate in the soil), and Waaphasa (soil aeration).

9. Consider the following statements:

1. The only difference between ZBNF and conventional farming is that while the latter is chemical-intensive farming, ZNBF utilises the right quantity and proportion of chemical inputs.
2. Karnataka is the first state to implement a ZBNF policy.

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.

In early 2016, Sikkim was declared India’s first fully organic State. But organic agriculture often involves addition of large amounts of manure, vermicompost and other materials that are required in bulk and need to be purchased. These turn out to be expensive for most small farm holders.

Source: TH;

10. The greatest advantage of the Parliamentary system of government is that it

a) Ensures harmonious relationship and cooperation between the legislative and executive organs
b) Establishes a responsible government
c) Prevents despotism by way of dispersal of authority in the form of council of ministers
d) Ensures greater stability and responsibility relative to the Presidential system of government

Solution: a.
The greatest advantage of the parliamentary system is that it ensures harmonious relationship and cooperation between the legislative and executive organs of the government. The executive is a part of the legislature and both are interdependent at work. As a result, there is less scope for disputes and conflicts between the two organs.

While elaborating why the Constituent Assembly preferred the parliamentary over the presidential system, B.R. Ambedkar reflected the sense of the House that while the former is more responsible but less stable, the latter is more stable but less responsible.

Ch-12, Parliamentary System, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: TH;

11. The sixty-ninth constitutional amendment act of 1991

1. Designated the UT of Delhi as the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
2. Provided for the creation of a seventy-member legislative assembly.
3. Provided for the inclusion of the members of the legislative assembly of NCT of Delhi in the electoral college for the election of the President.

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: b.

| Sixty-Ninth Amendment Act, 1991 | Acceded a special status to the Union Territory of Delhi by designating it as the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The amendment also provided for the creation of a 70-member legislative assembly and a 7-member council of ministers for Delhi. |
| Seventieth Amendment Act, 1992 | Provided for the inclusion of the members of the Legislative Assemblies of National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union Territory of Puducherry in the electoral college for the election of the President. |

Improvisation: TH;

12. Why was the Government of India Act of 1919 significant?

a) It granted permission to Christian missionaries to freely carry out their movement in British India.
b) It introduced a system of communal representation.
c) It was enacted in pursuance of the stated objective of the British Government to gradually introduce responsible government in India.
d) It was the first act in which the British Government sought the cooperation of Indians in the administration of British India.

Solution: c.
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. This Act is also known as Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (Montagu was the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford was the Viceroy of India).

Improvisation: Th;

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

13. Why was the Government of India Act of 1919 significant?

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Solution: c.

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Improvisation: Th;

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

14. The Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell

   3. Assists the government in administration of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG.
   4. Is under the Ministry of Finance

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.

Periodically, the international crude oil price of Indian Basket is computed/published by the PPAC, which is under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

The mandate of PPAC is to assist the government in the following functions:
- Administration of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG and freight subsidy for far flung areas.
- Maintenance of information data bank and communication system to deal with emergencies and unforeseen situations.
- Analyzing the trends in the international oil market and domestic prices.
- Forecasting and evaluation of petroleum import and export trends.
- Operationalizing the sector specific surcharge schemes, if any.

Improvisation: **TH; PPAC;**

15. The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences is an organisation that is dedicated to the betterment of lives of

   a) Vulnerable women
   b) Tribal children
   c) Retired and senior citizens
   d) School dropouts

Solution: b.

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences is an organization dedicated to provide holistic quality education to 27000 tribal children to eliminate poverty and hunger.

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences; Improvisation: **Vikaspedia;**

16. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri LPG Panchayats:

   1. Each such panchayat brings together about a hundred women LPG customers on an interactive platform to discuss about safe and sustainable usage of LPG.
   2. One lakh such panchayats will be conducted across India before 31st March 2019.

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.

PM LPG Panchayats consist of meetings of Ujjwala beneficiaries. These meetings will serve as platforms for the government to interface with the beneficiaries, harness their experiences and integrate them to create a knowledge base for triggering a sustainable and viable movement around Ujjwala. These meetings will also reaffirm the need for safe and regular LPG usage.
Such panchayats bring together about 100 (women) LPG customers together near their living areas on an interactive platform to discuss about safe and sustainable usage of LPG, its benefits and the linkage between use of clean fuel for cooking and women empowerment.

One Lakh LPG Panchayats will be conducted across India before 31st March 2019.

Why LPG Panchayats:
What is LPG Panchayat:
TH:

Category - International Affairs

1. Consider following statements related to The Shangri-La Dialogue
   1. It is a "Track One" inter-governmental security forum.
   2. It is organized by an independent think tank, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).
   3. It is attended by defense ministers, permanent heads of ministries and military chiefs of 28 Asia-Pacific states.
   4. PM Mr. Narendra Modi is the first Indian PM to address the forum in 2018.

Select the correct code
   a. 1 and 2 only
   b. 1, 2 and 3 only
   c. 1, 2 and 4 only
   d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: d

The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore is the most important regular gathering of defence professionals in the Asia-Pacific region, a vital annual fixture in the diaries of ministers and their civilian and military chiefs of staff. Since its launch in 2002 the Dialogue has built confidence and fostered practical security cooperation, by facilitating easy communication and fruitful contact among the region’s most important defense and security policymakers.

Source:

2. The National Citizen Register (NCR) which is in news recently has created controversy in which state
   a. Arunachal Pradesh
   b. Assam
   c. Manipur
d. Mizoram

Answer: b

Source: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/citizenship-bill-may-have-to-wait-for-house-nod/article24061226.ece

3. Which of the following country is not a member of ASEAN
   a. Myanmar.
   b. Brunei
   c. East Tomor
   d. Indonesia

Answer: c

ASEAN is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising ten Southeast Asian countries.


4. SIMBEX is an annual bilateral naval exercise conducted by the navies of which of the following nations
   a. India and Indonesia
   b. India and Malaysia
   c. India and Singapore
   d. India and USA

Answer: c

5. Indian navy recently rescued stranded Indians from Socotra Island. This island is located in which country?
   a. Yemen
   b. Saudi Arabia
   c. Oman
   d. Djibouti

Solution: a

Cyclone Mekunu has hit Socotra Islands of Yemen.


6. Which beach in Asia is the first one to get Blue Flag certification?
   a. Kovalam beach
   b. Marari beach
   c. Anjuna beach
   d. Chandrabhaga beach

Solution: d


7. Consider the following statements:

1. The anti-nuclear group International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) had facilitated the recent summits held between the North and South Korean Presidents
2. ICAN is a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

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

Solution: b.

Statement 1 is incorrect.

Statement 2: ICAN was awarded the Peace Prize (in 2017) “for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons”.


In the news (TH): “ICAN offered to pay for next week’s historic summit between the U.S. and North Korea, including Kim Jong-un’s bill. One of many reported logistical and protocol headaches surrounding the meet concerns the issue of payment for Mr. Kim’s stay at the five-star Fullerton Hotel.”

8. Sometimes in the news, ‘COMCASA’ is most appropriately a

   a) Trade agreement
   b) Space agreement
   c) Military agreement
   d) Nuclear agreement

Solution: c.

A US military negotiating team was in Delhi recently to respond to Indian objections and formulate a mutually acceptable text for the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement.

COMCASA is meant to provide a legal framework for the transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India that would facilitate “interoperability” between their forces — and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secured data links. It is part of a set of three military agreements that the US considers “foundational” for a functional military relationship.

9. Consider the following statements with reference to the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL):

   1. All state members of the UN are members of UNCITRAL.
2. Membership entails no additional financial contribution as UNCITRAL is a permanent commission of the General Assembly.

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.

UNCITRAL is the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law.

Structured to ensure that the various geographic regions and the principal economic and legal systems of the world are represented, the 60 member States include 14 African States, 14 Asian States, 8 Eastern European States, 10 Latin American and Caribbean States and 14 Western European and other States. The General Assembly elects members for terms of six years; every three years the terms of half of the members expire. As a general rule, elections are held towards the end of the year before the year in which membership expires.

Membership does not entail any additional financial contribution, as UNCITRAL is a permanent commission of the General Assembly and its secretariat is part of the United Nations Secretariat. The UNCITRAL secretariat is not involved in the election of members of the Commission.

Origin, mandate and composition;

A guide to UNCITRAL (PDF);

Improvisation: TH;

**Category – Judiciary**

e. As laid down by the Supreme Court, in which one of the following situations would the exercise of power under Article 356 be regarded as improper?

a) Maladministration in the state.
b) Where a constitutional direction of the Central government is disregarded by the state government.
c) Where after general elections to the assembly, no party secures a majority.
d) Where a government is deliberately acting against the Constitution and the law or is fomenting a violent revolt.

Solution: a.
It would be improper to exercise power under Article 356 in the following situation: Maladministration in the state or allegations of corruption against the ministry or stringent financial exigencies of the state.

Improvisation: TH;

**Category – Economics**

1. Which of the following will have a positive impact on economic growth of India?
   1. Below normal monsoon.
   2. Increase in crude oil prices.
   3. Increase in rural consumption.
   4. Increase in private investment
   Select the correct code.
   a. 1 and 2 only
   b. 2 and 3 only
   c. 3 and 4 only
   d. 2, 3 and 4 only
   **Answer: c**

2. Under GST, transporters should carry an e Way Bill when moving goods from one place to another if the goods worth is more than:
   a. INR 10,000
   b. INR 25,000
   c. INR 50,000
   d. INR 1,00,000
   **Answer: C**
   **Source:** TH

3. GST Council is a
   - Statutory body
   - Constitutional body
   - Executive Body
   - Extra –Constitutional body
   **Solution:** B
4. Consider the following statements about Small Finance Banks (SFBs):

1. The concept of SFBs was first presented in a report by RBI 2015
2. Urban cooperative banks can convert into SFBs but these will then be subject to regulation by both State Governments as well as RBI
3. SFBs are subject to such norms and regulations of RBI as are applicable to existing commercial banks like CRR and SLR

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

**Statement 1:** The concept of small finance banks was one of the recommendations in the 2009 Report - A Hundred Small Steps - of the Committee on Financial Sector Reforms headed by Dr. Raghu Ram Rajan. In 2015, RBI decided to grant “in-principle” approval to 10 applicants to set up small finance banks under the Guidelines it issued in 2014.

**Statement 2:** The Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow urban co-operative banks (UCB) to convert into small finance banks (SFB), a move aimed at bringing these entities into mainstream banking. UCBs currently face regulation by both the RBI and the respective State governments. By turning into SFBs, they will be regulated only by the RBI.

**Statement 3:** SFBs are full fledged banks in contrast to payments banks created around the same time. Hence, they are subject to all prudential norms and regulations of RBI as are applicable to existing commercial banks like maintenance of CRR and SLR.

**Arthapedia: SFBs;**

**In the news: TH;**

5. The World Investment Report is annually published by

a) World Bank
b) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
c) WTO
d) UNCTAD

Solution: d.

The World Investment Report (UNCTAD) has been published annually since 1991. Each year’s report covers the latest trends in foreign direct investment around the World and analyses in depth one selected topic related to foreign direct investment and development.
6. A 'Bad Bank', sometimes in the news, refers to

a) A bank which has more than 5 percent of its loans categorised as Non-Performing Assets.
b) A Public Sector Bank which has more than 5 percent of its loans categorised as Non-Performing Assets.
c) A variant of an Asset Reconstruction Company.
d) The bank – whether private or public – which contributes the most to the pile of stressed assets within the Indian economic system.

Solution: c.

The idea of a ‘bad bank’ is not new. Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian had suggested the creation of a Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency (PARA) to deal with what he described as India’s “festering twin balance sheet problem”. By this he meant over-leveraged corporates unable to service debt or invest afresh, and banks hit by non-performing assets (NPAs) cagey about fresh lending. This overhang hurts new investments and continues to dent India’s medium-term growth and job creation prospects. A professionally-run PARA, or the so-called ‘bad bank’, could assume
custody of the largest and most difficult-to-resolve NPAs from lenders’ balance sheets. This would allow banks to focus on extending fresh credit and supporting the pick-up in growth. More importantly, a bad bank taking tough decisions on borrowers-gone-bad, it was argued, could free bankers from the risks entailed in large loan write-downs.

TH:

7. The Consumer Confidence Survey is conducted by
   a) Reserve Bank of India
   b) Advertising Standards Council of India
   c) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
   d) Ministry of Consumer Affairs
   Solution: a.

8. Which one of the following statements is not correct about Business Correspondents (BCs)?
   a) Only individuals like retired bank employees, teachers and government employees can be designated as BCs
   b) A BC can be a BC for more than one bank
   c) The distance between the place of business of a BC and the base branch – the specific bank branch that is designated so – should not ordinarily exceed 30kms in rural areas
   d) A BC is prohibited from charging any fee to the customers directly for services rendered by them on behalf of the bank
   Solution: a.
Statements b, c and d are correct. Regarding Statement a: Banks may engage the following individuals/entities as BCs:

- Individuals like retired bank employees, retired teachers, retired government employees and ex-servicemen, individual owners of kirana / medical /Fair Price shops, etc.
- NGOs/MFIs
- Cooperative Societies
- Post Offices; and
- Companies registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 with large and widespread retail outlets

RBI 1; RBI 2;
Improvisation: TH;

9. Consider the following statements about the ‘Output Gap’:

1. It can be viewed as an alternate evaluation metric of a country's GDP
2. If in an economy it is poised to rapidly close, the Monetary Policy Authority is likely to adopt either a neutral or hawkish stance

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.

Output gap is the difference between the actual output of an economy and the potential output an economy can generate at full capacity. The output gap measure can be viewed as both a measure of economic efficiency and an alternate evaluation metric of a country's GDP because it is essentially a comparison between actual GDP (output) and potential GDP (maximum-efficiency output).

From December 2017: “If we go by the RBI working paper’s assessment, then the output gap is poised to close very soon after which demand pressures would be enough to warrant tightening of the monetary policy. It would become easier for RBI to adopt a hawkish tone (advocating higher interest rates) if inflation moves up as it expects it to, and the central government breaches its budgeted fiscal deficit target. The chances of both are getting higher by the day…”

Investopedia:
In the news: ‘Conceptual’, OPED Page, The Hindu (13th June 2018);

10. If banks adhere to the MCLR method in their lending activities, then which one of the following naturally follows?

a) It refers to the maximum interest rate of a bank above which it cannot lend, except in some cases
b) It refers to the minimum interest rate of a bank below which it cannot lend, except in some cases.

c) The rates at which funds are lent will become less sensitive to changes in policy rates (key lending rate of the central bank).

d) None of the above

Solution: b.

The marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) refers to the minimum interest rate of a bank below which it cannot lend, except in some cases allowed by the RBI. It is an internal benchmark or reference rate for the bank. MCLR actually describes the method by which the minimum interest rate for loans is determined by a bank - on the basis of marginal cost or the additional or incremental cost of arranging one more rupee to the prospective borrower.

RBI decided to shift from base rate to MCLR because the rates based on marginal cost of funds are more sensitive to changes in the policy rates. This is very essential for the effective implementation of monetary policy. Prior to MCLR system, different banks were following different methodology for calculation of base rate /minimum rate – that is either on the basis of average cost of funds or marginal cost of funds or blended cost of funds.

Arthapedia:

TH:

11. MSME Pulse, a quarterly report on the MSME sector, the first edition of which was released this year, is brought out by

   a) KVIC
   b) RBI
   c) FICCI
   d) SIDBI

Solution: d.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), a premier Financial Institution for the Promotion, Financing and Development of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector and TransUnion CIBIL, a Credit Information Company, in a joint endeavor with TransUnion CIBIL brings out MSME Pulse, a Quarterly Report on MSME Sector, for providing the policy makers, regulators and industry with precise data-driven insights to support policy as well as business decisions. The First Edition was released in the month of March, 2018.

The 2nd Edition of MSME Pulse by SIDBI-TransUnion CIBIL for June 2018 quarter has now been released. The findings show that the overall commercial credit exposure (Y-o-Y) has shown the highest growth rate in the last five Quarters.

PIB:
Category – Geography

1. According to IMD which of the following is the criteria for normal monsoon

   a. Rainfall between 96% to 104% of Long Period Average (LPA)
   b. Rainfall between 104% to 110% of Long Period Average (LPA)
   c. Rainfall more than 110% of Long Period Average (LPA)
   d. Rainfall between 90% to 96% of Long Period Average (LPA)

Answer: a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rainfall range (%LPA)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deficient</td>
<td>&lt; 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below normal</td>
<td>90-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>96-104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above normal</td>
<td>104-110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess</td>
<td>&gt;110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. Which state is the largest producer of sugarcane in India?

   a. Maharashtra
   b. Uttar Pradesh
   c. Tamil Nadu
   d. Karnataka

Solution: b


3. Which one of the following is not regarded as part of the World Biodiversity Hotspots?

   a) Andaman group of islands
   b) Nicobar group of islands
   c) Western Himalayas
   d) Western Ghats

Solution: a.

Biodiversity Hotspots in India

- **Himalaya**: Includes the entire Indian Himalayan region (and that falling in Pakistan, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar)
- **Indo-Burma**: Includes entire North-eastern India, except Assam and Andaman group of Islands (and Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and southern China)
- **Sundalands**: Includes Nicobar group of Islands (and Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Philippines)
- **Western Ghats and Sri Lanka**: Includes entire Western Ghats (and Sri Lanka)
4. With which of the following countries does North Korea have borders?

   1. China
   2. Russia
   3. South Korea

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.
5. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will link

a) Yunan with Karachi
b) Wuhan with Chabahar
c) Xiamen with Qasim
d) Kashgar with Gwadar

Solution: d.
6. The state with the largest reserves of uranium is

- a) Rajasthan
- b) Karnataka
- c) Andhra Pradesh
- d) Meghalaya

Solution: c.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Uranium resource</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$U_3O_8$ (t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>1,44,541</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telangana</td>
<td>18,550</td>
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<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>67,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>23,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the news: TH;

7. Consider the following statements:

1. In between the islands of Java and Sumatra lies the Java Sea
2. The administrative jurisdiction of Indonesia extends to the whole of the island of Borneo

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.

In between the islands of Java and Borneo lies the Java Sea. The island of Borneo is made up of three countries – Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.
8. The Antarctic Peninsula is the ‘finger of land’ that points up to or reaches out to

   a) South Africa  
   b) Indian Ocean  
   c) Australia  
   d) South America
Solution: d.

Improvisation: BBC, TH:

9. The major causes of global sea level rise are

1. Thermal expansion caused by warming of the ocean
2. Land subsidence
3. Reduced rate of land rebounding from the compressive weight of ice age glaciers
4. Increased melting of land-based ice

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

The two major causes of global sea level rise are thermal expansion caused by warming of the ocean (since water expands as it warms) and increased melting of land-based ice, such as glaciers and ice sheets. The oceans are absorbing more than 90 percent of the increased atmospheric heat associated with emissions from human activity.
Sea level rise at specific locations may be more or less than the global average due to local factors such as land subsidence from natural processes and withdrawal of groundwater and fossil fuels, changes in regional ocean currents, and whether the land is still rebounding from the compressive weight of Ice Age glaciers. In urban settings, rising seas threaten infrastructure necessary for local jobs and regional industries. Roads, bridges, subways, water supplies, oil and gas wells, power plants, sewage treatment plants, landfills—virtually all human infrastructure—is at risk from sea level rise.

NOAA; Improvisation: BBC; TH;

10. India and Maldives are separated by the

a) Coco channel  
  b) Duncan passage  
  c) Palk strait  
  d) Eight degree channel

Solution: d.

MalikuKandu and MāmalēKandu Divehi are the traditional names of the broad Minicoy Channel between Minicoy and the northernmost atoll of the Maldives. The latter name is given after the Malabar merchant MaamaleyMarakkaaru who controlled most of the sea trade along this route before the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. The maritime boundary between the Maldives and India runs through the channel.

In the British Admiralty charts it is called Eight Degree Channel. It is so named as it lies on the 8-degree line of Latitude, north of the equator. Another local name for this channel is AddigiriKandu.

Wikipedia; Improvisation: TH;

11. Consider the following list of Russian cities:

1. Ekaterinburg  
2. Kaliningrad  
3. Moscow  
4. St. Petersburg

The correct order of their location on a map from west to east is:

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

Solution: a.
These are some of the cities that are hosting the 2018 Fifa World Cup matches.

See image:

- Kaliningrad corresponds to #9
- St. Petersburg: #8
- Moscow: #1 and #2
- Ekaterinburg: #7
- Nizhny Novgorod: #3
- Saransk: #4
- Kazan: #5
- Samara: #6
- Volgograd: #10
- Rostov-on-Don: #11
- Sochi: #12

BBC;

12. The ‘Kunar’ province, sometimes in the news, is located in
   a) Afghanistan
   b) Pakistan
   c) Nigeria
   d) Chad

Solution: a.

In the news (TH): Pakistani Taliban leader Mullah Fazlullah has been killed in a U.S.-Afghan air strike in Afghanistan, a senior Afghan Defence Ministry official said on Friday, a killing likely to ease tension between the United States and Pakistan.

13. What is the minimum number of countries would one have to traverse only by land in order to get to Russia from Iran?
a) 1
b) 2
c) 3
d) None, as Iran and Russia share borders

Solution: a.

Improvisation: TH;

14. Greece does not have borders with

a) Turkey
b) Albania
c) Macedonia
d) Montenegro
15. The Port of Hodeidah (Hudaydah) is littoral to
   a) Gulf of Guinea
   b) Red Sea
   c) Hormuz Strait
   d) Mozambique Channel

Solution: b.

See map.
16. Consider the following list of Russian cities:

1. Ekaterinburg
2. Kaliningrad
3. Moscow
4. St. Petersburg

The correct order of their location on a map from west to east is:

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

Solution: a.

These are some of the cities that are hosting the 2018 Fifa World Cup matches.

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- Volgograd: #10
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17. The ‘Kunar’ province, sometimes in the news, is located in

a) Afghanistan  
b) Pakistan  
c) Nigeria  
d) Chad  

Solution: a.

In the news (TH): Pakistani Taliban leader Mullah Fazlullah has been killed in a U.S.-Afghan air strike in Afghanistan, a senior Afghan Defence Ministry official said on Friday, a killing likely to ease tension between the United States and Pakistan.

18. Consider the following list of Russian cities:

5. Ekaterinburg  
6. Kaliningrad  
7. Moscow  
8. St. Petersburg  

The correct order of their location on a map from west to east is:

e) 2-4-3-1  
f) 1-3-4-2  
g) 3-1-2-4  
h) 4-2-1-3  

Solution: a.

These are some of the cities that are hosting the 2018 Fifa World Cup matches.

See image:
19. The ‘Kunar’ province, sometimes in the news, is located in

   a) Afghanistan
   b) Pakistan
   c) Nigeria
   d) Chad

Solution: a.

In the news (TH): Pakistani Taliban leader Mullah Fazlullah has been killed in a U.S.-Afghan air strike in Afghanistan, a senior Afghan Defence Ministry official said on Friday, a killing likely to ease tension between the United States and Pakistan.

20. Consider the following statements:

   1. Globally, Chile has the largest reserves of copper.
   2. India’s share of world copper resources is a little more than ten percent.

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
India's share of world reserve is 1.8% only.

Globally, Chile has the largest reserves of copper accounting for about 30% of the total world reserves followed by Australia 13%, Peru 12%, Mexico 7%, USA 5%, China & Russia 4% each, DR Congo and Zambia 3% each and other countries 19%.

Improvisation: Vikaspedia India May 2018:

21. Consider the following statements:

1. The Island of Assumption is located in South-eastern Indian Ocean
2. Seychelles is located in Central-east Indian Ocean

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.

Assumption Island is a small island in the Outer Islands of Seychelles north of Madagascar.
22. A project like the Pakistani provincial government’s ‘Billion Tree Tsunami’, recently in the news, can be implemented in India in regions where

   a) Desertification is taking place
   b) Mangrove cover is depleting rapidly
   c) ‘Concrete’ jungles are replacing natural ones
   d) Native tree species are outnumbered by invasive species

Solution: a.

Around the region of Heroshah (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province), previously arid hills are now covered with forest as far as the horizon. In northwestern Pakistan, hundreds of millions of trees have been planted to fight deforestation.

The Heroshah and Swat plantations are part of the “Billion Tree Tsunami”, a provincial government programme that has seen a total of 300 million trees of 42 different species planted across the province.
23. Consider the following list of national parks:

1. Rajiv Gandhi Orang
2. Govind
3. Dudhwa
4. Jaldapara

The correct order of their location on a map from west to east is

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

Solution: b.

Govind NP: (Western) Uttarakhand
Dudhwa NP: UP
Jaldapara NP: WB
RG Orang NP: Assam

Improvisation: TH;

24. Malta, often in the news, is located in the Mediterranean Sea

a) Near Libya in the Gulf of Sidra  
b) Near Spain in the Alboran Sea  
c) Near Italy south of the island of Sicily  
d) Near France north of the island of Corsica

Solution: c.
TH:

25. A phenomenon known as the ‘quiet eye’ is related to

a) Terrestrial planetary meteorites.
b) A mental process common to elite athletes.
c) Genetic differences in pet dogs that make them more loyal to humans.
d) The orange crocodiles of Gabon.

Solution: b.

Psychologists and neuroscientists have now identified some of the common mental processes that mark out elite athletes such as Serena Williams. And one of the most intriguing aspects appears to be a phenomenon known as the “quiet eye” – a kind of enhanced visual perception that allows the athlete to eliminate any distractions as they plan their next move. Intriguingly, quiet eye appears to be particularly important at times of stress, preventing the athlete from ‘choking’ at moments of high pressure. It may even lead to the mysterious ‘flow state’.
It’s not just budding sportsmen and sportswomen who should take note. The same laser-sharp focus can help doctors maintain their focus as they perform keyhole surgery, and it is of increasing interest to the military.

Category – Ecology & Environment

1. Consider following statements related snakebites. Which of the following are correct?

   1. It is on the list of Neglected Tropical Diseases.
   2. Recently WHO passed a resolution on snakebites.
   3. Snakebites are not a major public health hazard in India as compared to other tropical countries.
   4. Snakebites come under purview of States jurisdiction.

   Select the correct code
   a. 1 and 2 only
   b. 1, 2 and 3 only
   c. 1, 2 and 4 only
   d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

   Answer: c

2. Consider the following statements:

   1. Every state’s ‘green’ gross domestic project has been calculated on a yearly basis since India ratified the Paris Agreement
   2. The Green Skill Development Programme is being implemented jointly by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

   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.

   In the news (TH): Starting this year (2018), the government will begin a five-year exercise to compute district-level data of the country’s environmental wealth. The numbers will eventually be used to calculate every State’s ‘green’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The metric will help with a range of policy decisions, such as compensation to be paid during land acquisition, calculation of funds required for climate mitigation, and so on.
The government has also launched a ‘green skilling’ programme (Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change) under which youth, particularly school dropouts, would be trained in a range of ‘green jobs’ — as operators of scientific instruments used to measure environmental quality, as field staff in nature parks, and as tourist guides. Some of the labour required for the survey would also be sourced from the green-skilled workforce.

For more information regarding Green Skill Development Programme, refer solution to Q8, 15th May Quiz.

3. The ‘Half-Earth Project’, recently in the news, is related to
   a) The sixth mass extinction
   b) Good governance
   c) Free trade
   d) Nuclear non-proliferation

Solution: a.

In the news (TH): To protect life on earth, the famous American biologist E.O. Wilson has described an ambitious project he calls “Half-Earth”. He calls for formally protecting 50% of the earth’s land surface in order to conserve our rapidly disappearing natural heritage. Others have rightly argued that in the past conservation efforts have often disregarded issues of social justice and equity. Thus the goals of “Half-Earth” should not compromise the rights of indigenous people.

About Half-Earth:

4. Announced recently, the state bird of Andhra Pradesh is the
   a) Rose-ringed parakeet
   b) Jerdon's courser
   c) Great Indian Bustard
   d) Spoon-billed sandpiper

Solution: a.

The rose-ringed parakeet (PsittaculaKrameri), known as the ‘Ramachilaka’, is very popular with poets and lyricists in Andhra Pradesh. Ideal couples are compared to a pair of parakeets. The male is distinguished by a rose-pink collar. The quintessential female is ‘chilaka’.

Though there was general appreciation when the State government had announced the dimorphic bird as the State bird recently, it has also triggered a debate. For ornithologists and conservationists, it is a wrong choice but a right one for those rooted in Telugu culture.

None other than birdman of India, Salim Ali, has something unpleasant to say about them. In his The Book of Indian Birds, he describes it as “highly destructive at all times to crops and orchard
fruit, gnawing and wasting far more than it actually eats”. Britain officially declared it as a pest in 2009 and seriously considered culling them in 2016 for displacing the local birds. Conservationists feel that the new State has lost a great opportunity to project Jerdon’s Courser, which is found only in the State and is critically endangered.

TH1; TH2:

PDF: MOEF Critically Endangered Animal Species of India:

5. ‘IMBIE’, recently in the news, is

a) A project supported by the ESA and NASA that seeks to understand changes in Antarctic ice mass
b) An FAO report that for the first time presents a global analysis of trends in fish stocks
c) An intergovernmental effort led by the Worldwide Fund for Nature to protect the vulnerable snow leopard
d) An EU initiative that will monitor every active volcano on earth from space

Solution: a.

About IMBIE: The ice sheet mass balance inter-comparison exercise (IMBIE) was established in 2011 as a community effort to reconcile satellite measurements of ice sheet mass balance. IMBIE is a collaboration between scientists supported by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and contributes to assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). IMBIE has led to improved confidence in the measurement of ice sheet mass balance and the associated global sea-level contribution.

BBC; TH:

6. The deaths of the majority of the oldest and largest African baobabs over the past 12 years is an event of an unprecedented magnitude. These deaths were not caused by an epidemic and there has also been a rapid increase in the apparently natural deaths of many other mature baobabs. Researchers suspect that their demise may be associated at least in part with significant modifications of climate conditions that affect southern Africa in particular. Baobabs are

a) Mammals
b) Trees
c) Fresh water fishes
d) Vultures

Solution: b.

Also known as "dead-rat" trees, after the shape of their fruit, baobab trees have stout, branchless trunks. They store large quantities of water inside their trunks to endure the harsh conditions of the arid areas in which they live. The trees also support wildlife; they are important nesting sites for birds.
7. Most appropriately, orangutans are

   a) Arboreal
   b) Nocturnal
   c) Boreal
   d) Crepuscular

Solution: a.

Known for their distinctive red fur, orangutans are the largest arboreal mammal (spending most of their time in trees). Long, powerful arms and grasping hands and feet allow them to move through the branches. These great apes share 96.4% of our genes and are highly intelligent creatures. The name orangutan means “man of the forest” in the Malay language.

Improvisation: BBC;

8. Sacred groves

1. Are patches of forests that have been left untouched by local people and any interference with them is banned.
2. Are found only in the Western Ghats.

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
In many cultures, tracts of forest were set aside, and all the trees and wildlife within were venerated and given total protection. Such sacred groves are found in Khasi and Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya, Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan, Western Ghat regions of Karnataka and Maharashtra and the Sarguja, Chanda and Bastar areas of Madhya Pradesh. In Meghalaya, the sacred groves are the last refuges for a large number of rare and threatened plants.

Ch-2, Forest and wildlife resources, Contemporary India, Class 10 NCERT;

Ch-15, Biodiversity and Conservation, Biology, Class 12 NCERT;

Improvisation: TH;

9. The Ken-Betwa river interlinking project involves deforesting a portion of the

   a) Satpura tiger reserve
   b) Panna tiger reserve
   c) Indravati tiger reserve
   d) Pench tiger reserve

Solution: b.

The project involves deforesting about 10% of the Panna Tiger Reserve.
In the news:

WRIS:

10. Consider the following statements with reference to the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016:

1. Jurisdiction of applicability of these rules extends to rural areas.
2. It introduces responsibility of waste generators such as households.
3. These rules mark the Union Government’s first attempt at addressing the issue of scientific plastic waste management.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

To address the issue of scientific plastic waste management, the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules were first notified in 2011. Some news provisions in the 2016 rules:

- Rural areas have been brought in ambit of these Rules since plastic has reached to rural areas also. Responsibility for implementation of the rules is given to Gram Panchayat.
First time, responsibility of waste generators is being introduced. Individual and bulk generators like offices, commercial establishments, industries are to segregate the plastic waste at source, handover segregated waste, pay user fee as per bye-laws of the local bodies.

Vikaspedia:
Improvisation: TH;

11. Consider the following pairs:

UN initiative – Decade of implementation

2. International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade – 2000-2010

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

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

Solution: d.

• International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade – 1981-1990
• International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development – 2018-2028

The Water Action Decade 2018-2028 will accelerate efforts towards meeting water-related challenges, including limited access to safe water and sanitation, increasing pressure on water resources and ecosystems, and an exacerbated risk of droughts and floods.

In the news: PIB; UN1; UN2

12. The National Project On Aquifer Management

1. Will enable characterisation of the quantity, quality as well as sustainability of ground water in aquifers
2. Envisages active participation of local communities in implementation of the Aquifer Mapping Project
3. Is supported by the Department for International Development of the Government of UK

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

• Aquifer mapping is a process wherein a combination of geologic, geophysical, hydrologic and chemical field and laboratory analyses are applied to characterize the quantity, quality and sustainability of ground water in aquifers.
Since water is a State subject, execution of such a Project cannot be successful without taking the States on board. The involvement of State machinery including various departments, PRIs etc. is essential if the Aquifer Management Plans are to be implemented. The Nodal State Organisations need to be fully involved in preparation of Aquifer Maps. As India has a large rural and semi-literate population, demystification of the Science of Hydrogeology will be very crucial to enable them to understand the dynamics of ground water availability and its sustainable utilisation. The various Stakeholders need to develop a sense of ownership, for only then will such a socially relevant project can be successful. Therefore, the community needs to be made aware of the objectives and benefits of aquifer mapping exercise and their active participation through local people will be fundamental in implementation of the project.

The Ministry of Water Resources is implementing the National Aquifer Mapping Programme. Associated institutions are the Central Ground Water Board, the National Geophysical Research Institute, the World Bank, DFID, and State Ground Water Departments.

AquiferIndia; CGWB concept note; PIB;

13. Consider the following statements:
   1. Worldwide, India ranks first in the number of large dams that are in operation.
   2. India has no recorded instance of failure of a large dam.

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.

According to InternationalRivers a large dam is defined by the dam industry as one higher than 15 metres (taller than a four-story building).

Over the last fifty years, India has invested substantially in dams and related infrastructures, and ranks third after USA and China in the number of large dams. 5

The first such failure in India was recorded in Madhya Pradesh during 1917 when the Tigra Dam failed due to overtopping. The worst dam disaster was the failure of Machu dam (Gujarat) in 1979 in which about 2000 people died.

DRIP Dam Safety (PDF):

In the news (PIB): The Union Cabinet, in its meeting chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 13.6.18, approved the proposal for introduction of Dam Safety Bill, 2018 in the
Parliament. The objective of this Bill is to help develop uniform, countrywide procedures for ensuring the safety of dams.

14. Consider the following statements:

1. Worldwide, about 29% of plastic produced gets recycled.
2. India has pledged to do away with single-use plastic by 2022.
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.

India hosted this year’s World Environment Day and Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a high-profile pledge, to international acclaim, that it would do away with all single-use plastics by 2022. This goal is not yet backed by an action plan so that State governments and local bodies can be in sync. Worldwide, the problem has got out of hand, with only 9% of about nine billion tonnes of plastic produced getting recycled. India has an uninspiring record when it comes to handling waste. It has patchy data on volumes, and even less on what it recycles. This lackadaisical approach is at odds with its ambitious goals.

TH:

15. The #CleanSeas campaign has recently been launched by UN Environment to

a) Accelerate innovation in eco-friendly plastic substitutes for all purposes related to the seas such as fishing nets
b) Ban the production of all forms of plastics  
c) To eliminate major sources of marine litter such as micro plastics in cosmetics  
d) None of the above

Solution: c.

UN Environment recently launched an unprecedented global campaign #CleanSeas to eliminate major sources of marine litter: microplastics in cosmetics and the excessive, wasteful usage of single-use plastic by the year 2022.

Launched at the Economist World Ocean Summit in Bali, the #CleanSeas campaign is urging governments to pass plastic reduction policies; targeting industry to minimize plastic packaging and redesign products; and calling on consumers to change their throwaway habits – before irreversible damage is done to our seas.

UNEP:

Improvisation: TH;
16. The Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol are both related to

a) Conservation on Biological Diversity  
b) Paris Agreement  
c) Convention on the Conservation of Natural Heritage  
d) UN Convention to Combat Desertification

Solution: a.

The Convention on Biological Diversity was inspired by the world community’s growing commitment to sustainable development. It represents a dramatic step forward in the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way.

TH:  
CBD:

**Category – National Institutions**

1. Consider the following statements related to RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh (RSS) in news.

1. It was founded at Nagpur on 27th September, 1925.
2. It was founded by Dr. KeshavBaliramHedgewar.
3. *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* is an ideological pamphlet by Dr. KeshavBaliramHedgewar.

Select the correct code

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

Answer: b
Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? is an ideological pamphlet by V.D.Savarkar.

2. The ‘Composite Water Management Index’ report, recently released, was prepared by

   a) Water International  
   b) The World Bank  
   c) NITI Aayog  
   d) UN Water  

Solution: c.

The CWMI is an important tool to assess and improve the performance of States/Union Territories in efficient management of water resources. This has been done through a first of its kind water data collection exercise in partnership with Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation and all the States/Union Territories. The index would provide useful information for the States and also for the concerned Central Ministries/Departments enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources.

TH:  
PIB:  

Category - International Institutions

1. Which one of the following releases the annual ‘Global Peace Index’?

   a) Stockholm Peace Research Institute  
   b) Institute for Economics and Peace  
   c) Amnesty International  
   d) International Peace Bureau  

Solution: b.

India’s rank has marginally improved in “global peacefulness”, at a time when there is an overall decline of global peace owing to escalation of violence in West Asia and and North Africa, according to the Global Peace Index (GPI), released by Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). The IEP is the world’s leading think tank that develops metrics to analyse peace and quantify its economic value.

India’s GPI rank was 137 out of 163 countries in 2017, when the year 2016 was assessed. In 2018, when the year 2017 is assessed, India’s rank moved up to 136. This is in line with the performance of some of the South Asian countries. “South Asia experienced the largest regional improvement in peacefulness,” the report noted. It also noted that peace continues to record a “gradual, sustained fall” across the world.
2. The ‘G8 bloc’, sometimes in the news, does NOT consist of which one of the following countries?
   a) Russia
   b) Italy
   c) Spain
   d) Germany

Solution: c.

The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal grouping of seven of the world’s advanced economies consisting of Canada, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and Italy. The European Union is a non-enumerated member of the G7 but neither chairs nor hosts Summits.

Russia was suspended from the group - then called the G8 - in 2014 because of its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

3. The ‘Joint Appeal to Youth’ was recently in the news in the context of affairs related to
   a) Family planning
   b) Drug abuse rehabilitation
   c) Knowledge economy
   d) Anti-terrorism

Solution: d.

India and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on Sunday adopted a Joint Appeal to Youth under which they would organise comprehensive educational work as well as spiritual and moral education to counter attempts to involve young people in the activities of terrorist, separatist and extremist groups.

4. Consider the following statements:
   1. India has a doctor-population ratio that is lower compared to Pakistan
   2. The WHO prescribes a doctor-population ratio of three for every ten thousand

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 WHO prescribes a doctor-population ratio of one for every thousand.

From 2017: IE

5. ‘Shanghai Spirit’, sometimes in the news, is closely associated with which one of the following?

a) Shangri-La Dialogue
b) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
c) BRICS mechanism
d) Eurasian Economic Union

Solution: b.

In the news (TH): “The two-day SCO summit, which began on June 9, echoed an important subtext. The eight heads were meeting at a time when the leaders of the G-7 were engaged in bitter Twitter feuds across the Atlantic. Keen to contrast the rise of Eurasia as the vehicle of a post-U.S. order, participating nations — China and Russia, especially — were intent on showcasing the “eastern” values of mutual respect and plurality. Mr. Xi went out of his way to quote Confucius as the template of the “Shanghai spirit”, while Mr. Modi evoked Buddha and Rumi as precursors of an inclusive SCO ideology.”

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation, the creation of which was announced in June 2001 in Shanghai by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It was preceded by the Shanghai Five mechanism.
Proceeding from the Shanghai Spirit, the SCO pursues its internal policy based on the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural diversity, and a desire for common development, while its external policy is conducted in accordance with the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting any third country, and openness.

About SCO:

6. The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) was instituted under the aegis of

   a) WTO
   b) UNCTAD
   c) UNCITRAL
   d) WCO

Solution: b.

GSP: Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), instituted in 1971 under the aegis of UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development), has contributed over the years to creating an enabling trading environment for developing countries.

About: Under GSP schemes of preference-giving counties, selected products originating in developing countries are granted reduced or zero tariff rates over the MFN rates. The least developed countries (LDCs) receive special and preferential treatment for a wider coverage of products and deeper tariff cuts.

Source/Improvisation: TH:

7. Consider the following statements about the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted in 2016:

   1. It has given the UNHCR the mandate to develop a 'Global Compact on Refugees'.
   2. India is not a signatory to it.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

While it is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has no domestic asylum law, it has reiterated its commitment towards the protection of refugees at various international fora, including the UN General Assembly.
One of the most significant affirmations of this commitment was demonstrated by India becoming a signatory to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which was adopted by 193 countries (all member states of the UN) in September 2016. In doing so, India has expressed its solidarity with those forced to flee and agreed that protecting refugees and supporting the countries that shelter them are shared international responsibilities that must be borne more equitably.

The Declaration gave UNHCR the task of building upon the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), contained in Annex I of the New York Declaration, to develop a ‘global compact on refugees (GCR)’.

Key objectives of the GCR are to:

- Ease the pressures on host countries;
- Enhance refugee self-reliance;
- Expand access to third-country solutions;
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

UNHCR: GCR;

TH:

8. WHO’s ‘REPLACE’ programme was recently launched to

   a) Eliminate trans fat in foods.
   b) Encourage vasectomy in place of tubectomy as a population controlling measure.
   c) Accelerate the pace of adoption of electric vehicles in urban areas.
   d) Create awareness of early initiation of breastfeeding to promote exclusive breastfeeding.

Solution: a.

The REPLACE action package provides a step-by-step guide for the elimination of industrially-produced trans fat from the global food supply by 2023.

Increased intake of trans fat (>1% of total energy intake) is associated with increased risk of coronary heart disease mortality and events. Trans fat intake is responsible for more than 500,000 deaths from coronary heart disease each year around the world.

Vikaspedia May 2018;

WHO:
Category - State Affairs

1. Which of the following list of states are part of the ‘Empowered Action Group’ – a term often seen in the news?

   a) Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh  
   b) Gujarat, Maharashtra and Telangana   
   c) Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur  
   d) Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

Solution: d.

There are Eight Empowered Action Group States (see image): Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan; often, the mention of “EAG States” is followed by a mention of Assam. These nine States, which account for about 48 percent of the total population in the country, are the high focus States in view of their relatively higher fertility and mortality indicators.

In the news (TH): As per the latest Sample Registration System data, MMR (number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births) has dropped from 167 (in 2011-2013, the last SRS period) to 130 (a 28% drop) for the country.
Category - Science & Technology

1. Consider the following regarding tobacco world. Which of the following are correct?
   1. The prevalence of smoking tobacco in India has dropped down in last 15 years.
   2. The prevalence of smoking has decreased more slowly in low and middle-in-income countries than higher income countries.
   3. Tobacco chewing is a bigger problem in India than tobacco smoking.
4. Tobacco consumption also causes heart disease and stroke in addition to cancer and lung disease.

Select the correct option

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

Answer: d


2. Consider the following statements about the S-400 Triumf long-range air defence missile system:

   1. It has a range of about 400km
   2. It can shoot down about 80 simultaneous targets
   3. It has been designed and developed by USA

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

See image.
3. Consider the following statements:

1. The discovery of a previously undetected third neutrino, known as the “sterile neutrino”, rids the Standard Model of its limitations in explaining how the world around us works.
2. The India-based Neutrino Observatory recently detected the presence of the sterile neutrino.

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.

There has been a considerable buzz around a report that the MiniBooNE experiment at Fermilab in the US may have found hints of a new particle. Specifically, the data may hint at a previously undetected form of neutrino, known as a "sterile neutrino".

Neutrinos are among the most intriguing residents of the "zoo" of particles known as the Standard Model (SM). The SM is the most successful theory to explain how the world around us works, yet it has limitations because it does not explain phenomena such as dark matter, or gravity.

Neutrinos interact only very weakly with other elementary particles, which has led to them being nicknamed "ghost particles". They also have the ability to "oscillate" - flip, or switch identity - between three different forms, or flavours. These are the electron neutrino, the muon neutrino and the tau neutrino. A fourth flavour, the sterile neutrino, has been proposed before, but has never been detected by experiments.
The existing three flavours of neutrino would interact with matter through the weak force (one of the four fundamental forces of the Universe) and gravity. The sterile neutrino, however, would primarily interact with gravity. The sterile neutrino is important because it would represent new physics beyond the Standard Model, and must have played a role in the formation of the Universe, potentially affecting our models of cosmology.

4. The 'MiniBooNE', 'IceCube' and 'Minos' experiments/detectors, sometimes seen in the news, are related to which of the following?

a) Exoplanets  
b) Photosphere  
c) Interstellar asteroids  
d) None of the above

Solution: d.

- **BooNE**: The primary goal of this experiment at the FermiLab in USA is to test for neutrino mass by searching for neutrino oscillations.
- **MINOS** (Main Injector Neutrino Oscillation Search): The MINOS Experiment is a long-baseline neutrino experiment designed to observe the phenomena of neutrino oscillations, an effect which is related to neutrino mass.
- **ICECUBE** is a particle detector at the South Pole that records the interactions of a nearly massless subatomic particle called the neutrino. IceCube searches for neutrinos from the most violent astrophysical sources: events like exploding stars, gamma-ray bursts, and cataclysmic phenomena involving black holes and neutron stars. The IceCube telescope is a powerful tool to search for dark matter and could reveal the physical processes associated with the enigmatic origin of the highest energy particles in nature.

5. The ‘Cosmic Microwave Background’ refers to

a) Leftover electromagnetic radiation from the time when the universe began (the Big Bang)  
b) Gravitational wave signals produced by a large number of weak and independent sources  
c) The universe’s background particle radiation composed of neutrinos, also known as relic neutrinos  
d) None of the above

Solution: a.

Scientists discovered that there are microwaves coming from every direction in space: this is called the cosmic microwave background radiation, or CMBR for short. The CMBR comes from radiation created at the beginning of the universe. The Big Bang theory is the only theory at the moment that can explain the presence of the CMBR.
6. The ‘XENON Experiment’ uses the XENON1T liquid xenon detector to search for

a) The fifth fundamental force of the universe
b) Dark matter
c) Sterile neutrinos
d) Higgs boson particle

Solution: b.

Xenon 1T, based at the Gran Sasso underground lab in Italy, is the most sensitive experiment for the direct detection of dark matter particles.

7. The ‘KATRIN’ experiment is related to

a) Nuclear safety
b) Neutrinos
c) Sprites and jets (Upper atmosphere lightning)
d) Atmosphere of venus

Solution: b.

Researchers in Germany have started collecting data with a $71 million machine designed to help determine the mass of the universe’s lightest particle.

Physicists, engineers and technicians at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology hope the 200-metric tonne device will narrow down or even pinpoint the actual mass of neutrinos.

Those are sometimes called “ghost particles” because they’re so difficult to detect. Scientists with the Karlsruhe Tritium Neutrino experiment, or KATRIN, said they’ll be taking measurements “well into the next decade” and hope to produce “high-impact results.”

8. Consider the following statements about the National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO):

1. NOTTO is under the charge of Director General of Health Services in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
2. It is a statutory body that has been set up in accordance with the provisions of The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940

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.

**About NOTTO:** National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) is a National level organization set up under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It has following two divisions – the National Human Organ and Tissue Removal and Storage Network and the National Biomaterial Centre. Both divisions have been set up as mandate by the Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011.

**TH:**

9. The goal of creating ‘Norman’ by a team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is to make people aware of

   a) The ills of tobacco consumption
   b) The potential dangers of artificial intelligence
   c) The advantages of unmanned warfare
   d) The benefits of emerging wellness trends like cow cuddling

Solution: b.

**TH:** No, it’s not a new horror film. It’s Norman: also known as the first psychopathic Artificial Intelligence, just unveiled by U.S. researchers.

The goal is to explain in layman’s terms how algorithms are made, and to make people aware of AI’s potential dangers. Norman was “fed” only with short legends describing images of “people dying” found on the Reddit internet platform.

The researchers then submitted images of ink blots, as in the Rorschach psychological test, to determine what Norman was seeing and compare his answers to those of traditionally trained AI. The results are scary, to say the least: where traditional AI sees “two people standing close to each other,” Norman sees in the same spot of ink “a man who jumps out a window.”

10. Sometimes in the news, ‘Orb Media’ is

   a) The media wing of the United Nations which focuses on proactive journalism
   b) A non-profit entity that seeks to unlock the full journalistic potential of what technology has made possible
   c) A USAID-assisted media organisation that adheres to issues related to the WEF-focus areas in its journalistic endeavours
   d) None of the above

Solution: b.

“Orb unlocks the full journalistic potential of what technology has made possible. We provide a new perspective, a refreshing type of journalism that resonates with and is accessible to people of different nationalities, races, religions and languages. Orb categorizes its journalism using the globally recognized framework of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals to foster
learning and collaboration around these Global Goals. Orb treats both massive data analysis and the knowledge in the crowd as primary sources."

In the news: TH (from March); TH:

Orb Media: What we do

11. Often in the news, the ‘Asian Premium’ is related to which one of the following commodities?
   a) Steel
   b) Tea
   c) Crude oil
   d) Rubber

Solution: c.

So far, India has not been able to bargain better rates from the Gulf-based producers of the oil cartel, OPEC. Instead of getting a discount for bulk purchases, West Asian producers such as Saudi Arabia, charge a so-called ‘Asian Premium’ for shipments to Asian buyers, including India and Japan, as opposed to Europe.

TH:

12. Which of the following statements with reference to “net-metering” policy for electricity is/are correct?

   1. It promotes the generation of ‘clean’ electricity
   2. It reduces the strain on electricity grid distribution and transmission infrastructure
   3. No state in India has such a policy in place as yet

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Put simply, net metering is a utility billing mechanism that offers a credit to residential and business customers who are making excess electricity with their solar panel systems and sending it back to the grid.

When you have a rooftop solar system, it can often generate more electricity than you consume during daylight hours. With net metering, the homeowner is only billed for the “net” energy used each month, that is, the difference between the energy produced by the solar power system and the energy consumed by the house over the monthly billing period. Net metering can save homeowners money on their utility bills every year.
Since roof-top solar systems generate electricity near the point where they will be used, this reduces strain on the grid’s distribution and transmission infrastructure and minimizes energy loss from sending voltage many miles from the nearest power plants.

As of today, only a few (Indian) States have such policies, discouraging users elsewhere.

SunPower:

TH:

13. Consider the following statements about plant resins:

1. These are produced when an injury occurs to the plant.
2. Latex is a plant resin.
3. Not all plant resins can form amber.

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 only

Solution: c.

In the news (BBC): Frogs trapped in amber from Myanmar for 99 million years are giving a glimpse of a lost world. The tiny creatures have been preserved in sticky tree resin since the end of the Age of the Dinosaurs. The fossils give a window into a world when frogs and toads were evolving in the rainforests. The fossil record of the earliest amphibians is sparse, which makes this discovery particularly valuable for science.

Resins are plant products that,

- are not soluble in water,
- harden when exposed to air,
- do not play a role in the fundamental processes of the plant, and
- are generally produced by woody plants.

Plants produce many compounds that can be confused with resins. These compounds include Gums, Mucilage, Oils and Fats, Waxes and Latex.

Amber is fossilized plant resin. Amber has been known to preserve insects and other small organisms that were imbedded in the resin before it hardened. Amber is used for scientific research but it is used more widely for jewelry and art. It is often considered a gemstone although it is not a mineral. Amber can be many colors, including green, gold, brown, red, black, and even bluish. Not all resins can form amber - most types are chemically unstable and will decay over time.
14. ‘Osiris-Rex’ and ‘Hayabusa’, both recently in the news, are associated with

   a) Carbon Capture and Storage projects
   b) Orangutan cloning efforts
   c) Asteroid sample return missions
   d) CERN’s Large Hadron Collider

Solution: c.

The Hayabusa 2 spacecraft was launched by JAXA (Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency) in 2014 on a quest to study the asteroid Ryugu and deliver rocks and soil from its surface to Earth. The first Hayabusa spacecraft was launched in 2003 and reached the asteroid Itokawa in 2005.

An American asteroid sample return mission, Osiris-Rex, will rendezvous with the asteroid 101955 Bennu in August.

15. ‘HiLumi’, recently in the news, is related to

   a) EESL’s Street Lighting National Programme
   b) NASA’s Black Marble Project
   c) PETA’s Animal Ethics Initiative
   d) CERN’s Large Hadron Collider

Solution: d.

What is HiLumi? The High Luminosity LHC (HL-LHC) is an upgrade of the LHC. HiLumi will make it possible to study the fundamental building blocks of matter in more detail than ever before.

The upgrade will boost the accelerator’s potential for new discoveries in physics, starting in 2026. "It’s going to enable us to probe much deeper into the history of the Universe, look at very rare processes and study particle physics in much more detail than the regular LHC" said a theoretical physicist at CERN.

16. Consider the following statements:

   1. The WHO’s International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) provides a common language that allows health professionals to share health information across borders.
   2. GLASS, with which some codes in ICD-11 are closely aligned, is a system that is related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

The ICD is the foundation for identifying health trends and statistics worldwide, and contains around 55,000 unique codes for injuries, diseases and causes of death. It provides a common language that allows health professionals to share health information across the globe.

ICD-11 (eleventh edition) will be presented at the World Health Assembly in May 2019 for adoption by Member States, and will come into effect on 1 January 2022. This release is an advance preview that will allow countries to plan how to use the new version, prepare translations, and train health professionals all over the country.

ICD-11 reflects progress in medicine and advances in scientific understanding. For example, the codes relating to antimicrobial resistance are more closely in line with the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS).

Source: TH;

17. ‘WaterAid’

1. Is a UN-Water led project that aims to provide clean water, decent toilets and hygiene knowledge to people who don’t yet have access to them.
2. Does not carry out activities in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: d.

WaterAid is an independent not-for-profit entity (not UN-Water led).

WaterAid India;

Improvisation: TH;

18. One of the main drivers of food insecurity in the world today is

a) Conflict
b) Economic slowdowns
c) Climate change
d) Demand for biofuels

Solution: a.
After a prolonged decline, world hunger appears to be on the rise again. The estimated number of undernourished people increased to 815 million in 2016, up from 777 million in 2015.

Much of the recent increase in food insecurity can be traced to the greater number of conflicts, often exacerbated by climate-related shocks. Even in some peaceful settings, food security has deteriorated as economic slowdowns challenge access to food for the poor.

From 2017: The State of Food Security and Nutrition (PDF)

Source/Improvisation: TH;

19. Consider the following statements with reference to findings of the National Health Profile 2018, released recently:

1. Total fertility rate has fallen below replacement levels in majority of Indian states.
2. The number of foeticide cases between 2008 and 2016 stands at around 1,100.

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.

On June 19, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda released the National Health Profile (NHP)-2018 prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI). The NHP covers demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators, along with comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health.

DTE: The TFR in 12 India states has fallen below two children per woman. The TFR in 9 states has reached replacement levels of 2.1 and above. To see in detail, refer to Page 39.

IE: Between 2008 and 2016, a total of just 1128 foeticides happened in the country, says the National Health Profile. Yet, the National Family Health Survey 4 shows that the sex ratio of children born in the last five years before the survey (2010-11 to 2015-16) is just 919 girls per 1,000 births (the ideal ratio is 950). NHP 2018 highlights the under-reporting of foeticides (sex-selective and otherwise) in the country. In an annual birth cohort of 2.6 crore and with the sex ratio in the 0-5 years age group just marginally up in NFHS-4 from the 914 of NFHS-3, that female foeticides continue to happen in the country is not a matter of dispute. However, the abysmally low cases filed for foeticide expose the laxity of the law enforcement system.

Improvisation: Data point, TH (22nd June, 2018);

20. The Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell
1. Assists the government in administration of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG.
2. Is under the Ministry of Finance

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.

Periodically, the international crude oil price of Indian Basket is computed/published by the PPAC, which is under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

The mandate of PPAC is to assist the government in the following functions:

- Administration of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG and freight subsidy for far flung areas.
- Maintenance of information data bank and communication system to deal with emergencies and unforeseen situations.
- Analyzing the trends in the international oil market and domestic prices.
- Forecasting and evaluation of petroleum import and export trends.
- Operationalizing the sector specific surcharge schemes, if any.

Improvisation: TH;

PPAC;

21. The Derby Air-to-Air BVR missile, whose firing was recently demonstrated successfully by the LCA Tejas, is manufactured by

a) USA  
b) DRDO (India)  
c) Israel  
d) UK

Solution: c.

Tejas, the Light Combat Aircraft recently successfully demonstrated an Air-to-Air Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missile firing capability by releasing Derby Air-to-Air BVR missile. It has been developed by Israeli defence company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

PIB;

Vikaspedia April 2018;

22. NASA’s TESS, recently in the news, is a

a) Space submarine to study Europa’s subsurface ocean  
b) Mechanical spacewalker to reduce the risks associated with humans spacewalking
c) “Mousetronaut” experiment to understand the impact of long-term space travel on living beings
d) Space telescope to discover exoplanets

Solution: d.

TESS (Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite) will monitor more than 200,000 stars for temporary drops in brightness caused by planetary transits.

TESS scientists expect the mission will catalog thousands of planet candidates and vastly increase the current number of known exoplanets. Of these, approximately 300 are expected to be Earth-sized and super-Earth-sized exoplanets, which are worlds no larger than twice the size of Earth. TESS will find the most promising exoplanets orbiting our nearest and brightest stars, giving future researchers a rich set of new targets for more comprehensive follow-up studies.

23. Consider the following pairs:

Space debris removal mission – Space Agency executing it

1. RemoveDebris – UK
2. Stork – JAXA
3. e.Deorbit – NASA

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

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

Solution: a.

BBC: The European Space Agency (Esa) is working on a mission it calls "e.Deorbit" that has the objective of removing a large European satellite from space.

BBC: A UK-led RemoveDebris mission recently left the International Space Station (ISS).

The small satellite has a big job ahead - to trial the technologies that could one day be used to clean up orbiting junk. It carries a net to trap an object, and a harpoon that it will fire at a target to prove such projectiles can be used effectively in weightless conditions.

BBC: In 2016, Japan launched a cargo ship which was to use a half mile- (700m)-long tether to remove some of the vast amount of debris from Earth's orbit. The automated cargo ship - called Stork or Kounotori in Japanese – carried the junk collector. Researchers say the lubricated, electrodynamic tether will generate enough energy to change an object's orbit, pushing it towards the
atmosphere where it will burn up. A 106-year-old Japanese fishing net maker, Nitto Seimo Co, collaborated with Japan’s space agency to develop the mesh material.

24. The UN’s International Asteroid Day on June 30th is a global event to

a) Commemorate the first effort to land a human-made object on an asteroid
b) Raise awareness about the hazards of an asteroid impact
c) Encourage children to get interested about astronomy
d) None of the above

Solution: b.

UN: In December 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, declaring 30 June International Asteroid Day in order to "observe each year at the international level the anniversary of the Tunguska impact over Siberia, Russian Federation, on 30 June 1908, and to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard."

International Asteroid Day is to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard and inform the public about the crisis communication actions to be taken at the global level in case of a credible near-Earth object threat.

TH:

25. Consider the following statements:

1. Every few years, the Department of Pharmaceuticals in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, in consultation with the Health Ministry, draws up a National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).
2. Under the Drug Price Control Order, 2013 the central government has the power to bring any item of medical necessity under price control, as was done in the case of price regulation of cardiac stents and knee implants.

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.

Every few years, the Health Ministry, in consultation with experts, draws up a National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). These medicines, deemed essential for the treatment of common conditions, automatically come under price control. Under NLEM 2015, a total 376 drugs are under price control. In addition, the government has the power to bring any item of medical necessity under price control. (Para 19 of the Drug Price Control Order, 2013) This provision was used to regulate the prices of cardiac stents and knee implants.
26. Consider the following statements about the James Webb Space Telescope:

1. It is a successor to the Thirty MetreSpace Telescope
2. Its mirrors are made from beryllium and coated with gold

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only  

b) 2 only  

c) Both 1 and 2  

d) Neither 1 nor 2  

Solution: b.

The Hubble space telescope launched in 1990 and transformed our view of the cosmos. But the veteran observatory is restricted in how deep into the Universe it can see, and by extension how far back in time it can probe.

Hubble cannot quite detect the light coming from the ignition of the very first population of stars more than 13 billion years ago. JWST in contrast has a 6.5m-wide mirror - seven times the light-collecting area of Hubble - and instruments that are perfectly tuned in the infrared to pick up the light from these founding stars.
1. Was designed to detect extraterrestrial life.
2. Was a mission to planet Saturn and its moons.
3. Was a collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency.

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: b.

Scientists have found complex carbon-based molecules in the waters of Saturn’s moon Enceladus. Compounds like this have only previously been found on Earth, and in some meteorites. They are thought to have formed in reactions between water and warm rock at the base of the moon’s subsurface ocean. Though not a sign of life, their presence suggests Enceladus could play host to living organisms. The discovery came from data gathered by the Cassini spacecraft.

The Cassini mission, which ended by plunging into Saturn’s cloud-tops last September, was never designed to detect life.

Category – History

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The first president of the All India Trade Union Congress was Bipin Chandra Pal
2. In India, Bipin Chandra Pal was the first to link capitalism with imperialism
3. BalGangadhar Tilak, Sarojini Naidu, Chittaranjan Das and LalaLajpatRai were associated with the AITUC

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Statement 1: The trade union movement was led by All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) founded in 1920. LalaLajpatRai was its first president and DewanChamanLal its general secretary. Tilak was also one of the moving spirits.LalaLajpatRai was the first President.
Statement 2: Lajpat Rai was the first to link capitalism with imperialism. He stated that "imperialism and militarism are the twin children of capitalism."

Statement 3: The prominent Congress and swarajist leader C.R. Das presided over the third and the fourth sessions of the AITUC. The Gaya session of the Congress (1922) welcomed the formation of the AITUC and a committee was formed to assist it. C.R. Das advocated that the Congress should take up the workers' and peasants' cause and incorporate them in the struggle for swaraj or else they would get isolated from the movement. Other leaders who kept close contacts with the AITUC included Nehru, Sabhas Bose, C.F. Andrews, J.M. Sengupta, Satyamurthy, V.V. Giri and Sarojini Naidu. In the beginning, the AITUC was influenced by social democratic ideas of the British Labour Party. The Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, trusteeship and class-collaboration had great influence on the movement. Gandhiji helped Anasuya Sarabai organise the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (1918).

Improvisation: TH;

2. What is the significance of the 'Pietermaritzburg incident' in modern Indian history?
   a) It cemented Britain's hold over India
   b) It contributed to the development of Mahatma Gandhi's principles of peaceful resistance
   c) It led to the setting up of the Ghadr Party
   d) None of the above

Solution: b.

On the night of June 7, 1893, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then a young lawyer, was thrown off the train's first class compartment at Pietermaritzburg station after he refused to give up his seat as ordered by racially prejudiced officials. The incident led him to develop his Satyagraha principles of peaceful resistance and mobilise people in South Africa and in India against the discriminatory rules of the British.

TH;

3. Which one of the following acts granted permission to Christian missionaries to freely carry out their movement in British India?
   a) Regulating Act of 1773
   b) Charter Act of 1813
   c) Charter Act of 1833
   d) Government of India Act of 1919

Solution: b.

The Charter Act of 1813 made provisions to grant permission to the persons who wished to go to India for promoting moral and religious improvements. (Christian Missionaries).

Selfstudyhistory:
4. Why was the Government of India Act of 1919 significant?

   a) It granted permission to Christian missionaries to freely carry out their movement in British India.
   b) It introduced a system of communal representation.
   c) It was enacted in pursuance of the stated objective of the British Government to gradually introduce responsible government in India.
   d) It was the first act in which the British Government sought the cooperation of Indians in the administration of British India.

Solution: c.

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. This Act is also known as Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (Montagu was the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford was the Viceroy of India).

5. Consider the following events

   1. Dalai Lama flees Tibet and arrives in India
   2. India’s then largest bank, ‘Imperial Bank of India’, was renamed ‘State Bank of India’.
   3. Air India was nationalised and became the national carrier.
   4. Goa became a part of independent India.

Which of the following is the correct chronological sequence of the above events?

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

Solution: b.

- Statement 1: Dalai Lama flees Tibet and arrives in India (31-03-1957).
- Statement 2: Imperial bank was renamed as state bank of India in 1955.
- Statement 3: Air India was nationalised in 1953. Government of India passed the Air Corporations Act and purchased a majority stake in the carrier from Tata Sons.
- Statement 4: Goa became an independent India on 18 December 1961. Indian troops crossed the border into Goa and “liberated” it.

Source: TH; CS(P) 2018;
8. Consider the following pairs:

Important days – Remembrance of event/reason for commemoration

1. National Technology Day (India) – Test-firing India’s first nuclear capable missile in 1998
2. National Anti-Terrorism Day (India) – Recapture of all Indian posts in Kargil in 1999

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

a) 1 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3
d) None

Solution: a.

National Technology Day commemorates India’s success in using science and technology to address the challenges facing the country. On 11 May 1998 the Pokhran test was conducted. Prime Minister AtalBihari Vajpayee declared India a full-fledged nuclear state after operation ‘Shakti’ and it made India the 6th country to join the Nuclear Club. On the same day India performed successful test firing of the ‘Trishul Missile and had test flown the first indigenous aircraft – ‘Hansa – 3’. 
PIB: It was on 21st May in 1991 that former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi fell to the designs of terrorists. The Day is observed to generate awareness in the country among all sections of people, about the danger of terrorism and violence and their effect on the people, society and the country as a whole.

CBD: It commemorates the adoption of the text of the Convention of Biological Diversity on 22 May 1992.

Source/Improvisation: Vikaspedia India May 2018; Vikaspedia;

9. Consider the following list:
   1. FarrukhSiyaar's Farman
   2. Battle of Plassey
   3. Arrival of the merchant-diplomat Thomas Cana at Kerala's coast
   4. Battle of Chinsurah

Select the correct chronological sequence of the events mentioned above using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

780CE – Thomas Cana is said to have been the first Armenian to reach the Kerala coast.

1717 – Farrukhsiyar's Farman

1757 – Battle of Plassey

1759 – Battle of Chinsurah

TH:

10. Consider the following statements:

   1. Verses ascribed to him were compiled after his death
   2. The AdiGranth Sahib includes many of his compositions
   3. Ramananda was his disciple

Which of the statements given above is/are true about the poet-saint Kabir?

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

Solution: a.

Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct but overlapping traditions. The KabirBijak is preserved by the Kabirpanth (the path or sect of Kabir) in Varanasi and elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh; the KabirGranthavali is associated with the Dadupanth in Rajasthan, and many of his compositions are found in the AdiGranth Sahib. All these manuscript compilations were made long after the death of Kabir.
Some hagiographies suggest that he was initiated into bhakti by a guru, perhaps Ramananda. However, the verses attributed to Kabir use the words guru and satguru, but do not mention the name of any specific preceptor. Historians have pointed out that it is very difficult to establish that Ramananda and Kabir were contemporaries, without assigning improbably long lives to either or both.

Bhakti-Sufi traditions, Themes in Indian History Part 2 – NCERT Class 12;

Improvisation: TH;