Insights QUIZ

DECEMBER 2018
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I. ECONOMY

(Q) The ‘South Asian Enigma’, a term sometimes seen in the news, refers to the paradox of having recently experienced fast economic growth:

a) Without translation into improved nutrition.
b) With concomitant increase in inequality.
c) With deterioration in human development indices.
d) a, b and c

Solution: a.

TNM: “Despite India’s fast economic growth and poverty reduction over the past few decades, food insecurity remains very high. This puzzle has been named the "South Asian enigma". Some indicators of food insecurity, especially child undernourishment rates, are now worse in India than in Ethiopia. This is despite the fact that Ethiopia has only a quarter of India’s per capita income and has suffered many famines in the 20th century.”

IFPRI; WB Blog;

(Q) Consider the following statements:

1. The World Customs Organisation (WCO) was established under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation
2. The Policy Commission of the WCO recently held its meeting in Chennai.

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.

Statement 1 is wrong. However, the WTO and WCO cooperate on certain issues such as trade facilitation. The Policy Commission of the WCO recently held its meeting in Mumbai.

• The WCO, established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administrations. The name ‘WCO’ was adopted in 1994 to reflect its status as a truly global intergovernmental institution.

• Today, the WCO represents 182 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.

Britannica; TH; PIB;

(Q) Recently in the news, the Egmont Group is most closely associated with

a) Bank for International Settlements
b) National Biodiversity Authorities
c) Financial Intelligence Units
d) Sustainable tourism
Solution: c.

About Egmont Group: It is a united body of 159 Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs). The Egmont Group provides a platform for the secure exchange of expertise and financial intelligence to combat money laundering and terrorist financing (ML/TF). It supports the efforts of its international partners and other stakeholders to give effect to the resolutions and statements by the United Nations Security Council, the G20 Finance Ministers, and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

In the news (PIB): The Cabinet has given its approval to the revised Model Memorandum of Understanding between the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) – India (FIU-Ind) with its counterpart foreign Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) for exchange of information. The revised Model MoU was drafted based on Egmont Group Secretariat revised Model MoU 2014.

The core functions of FIU-IND in relation to foreign FIUs include

- screening and processing requests from foreign Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs),
- disseminating information to foreign FIUs,
- establishing and maintaining relationship with foreign FIUs, and
- facilitating, administering and negotiating MoUs with foreign FIUs.

Most of the foreign FIUs require an MoU to be signed for sharing of information with them.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Agriculture Export Policy, 2018

1. The policy aims to double agricultural exports by 2022.
2. Establishment of Monitoring Framework at Centre with Department of Agriculture as the nodal Department.
3. Promote indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products exports.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: b

The Cabinet has approved the proposal for establishment of Monitoring Framework at Centre with Commerce as the nodal Department with representation from various line Ministries/Departments and Agencies and representatives of concerned State Governments, to oversee the implementation of Agriculture Export Policy.

PIB:

(Q) Consider the following statements about Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)

1. HAM is a new variant of BOT model.
2. One of the advantages is that the developer bears the risk of maintaining the project.
3. Recently many highways projects have been awarded under HAM.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

About 30 highways projects have been awarded under HAM by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

HAM’s a hybrid — a mix of the EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) and BOT (build, operate, transfer) models. Under the EPC model, NHAI pays private players to lay roads. The private player has no role in the road’s ownership, toll collection or maintenance (it is taken care of by the government). Under the BOT model though, private players have an active role — they build, operate and maintain the road for a specified number of years — say 10-15 years — before transferring the asset back to the government.

Under BOT, the private player arranged all the finances for the project, while collecting toll revenue or annuity fee from the Government, as agreed. The annuity fee arrangement is known as BOT-Annuity; essentially, the toll revenue risk is taken by the government, while the private player is paid a pre-fixed annuity for construction and maintenance of roads.

Now, HAM combines EPC (40 per cent) and BOT-Annuity (60 per cent). On behalf of the government, NHAI releases 40 per cent of the total project cost. It is given in five tranches linked to milestones. The balance 60 per cent is arranged by the developer. Here, the developer usually invests not more than 20-25 per cent of the project cost (as against 40 percent or more before), while the remaining is raised as debt.

TH:

(Q) Y M Deosthalee committee is associated with
a) Corporate Social Responsibility
b) Electoral Reforms
c) Digital Payments
d) Public Credit Registry

Solution: d

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had formed a high-level task force on public credit registry (PCR) for India. The task force was chaired by Y M Deosthalee.

The task force has suggested the registry should capture all loan information and borrowers be able to access their own history. Data is to be made available to stakeholders such as banks, on a need-to-know basis. Data privacy will be protected.

(Q) Y H Malegam committee sometime seen in news was constituted to
a) Look into issues relating to classification of bad loans, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits
b) To tackle the menace of trafficking
c) To monitor & review the functioning of shell companies
d) To review Poverty census in India

Solution: a

Stung by the Rs 11,400 crore fraud in Punjab National Bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of Y H Malegam, a former member of the Central Board of Directors of RBI, to look into the entire gamut of issues relating to classification of bad loans, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits.
(Q) Consider the following statements about E-commerce sector in India

1. Marketplace model is where goods sold on the portal is owned or controlled by the e-commerce company.
2. inventory-based model is where the e-commerce firm simply acts as a platform that connects buyers and sellers.
3. FDI is allowed in e-commerce companies in marketplace model.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

E-commerce companies can operate under two different models in India.

- The first is the marketplace model where the e-commerce firm simply acts as a platform that connects buyers and sellers. FDI is allowed in e-commerce companies in this model.
- The second model is inventory-based where the inventory of goods sold on the portal is owned or controlled by the e-commerce company. FDI is not allowed under this model.
II. GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT

(Q) Among the 20 Aichi biodiversity targets for 2020, the only one that is measurably close to being met is related to

a) Protected Areas  
b) Invasive species  
c) Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources  
d) Traditional knowledge and practises of Indigenous and local communities

Solution: a.

The Guardian: There was recognition that the current global management plan has been a failure: among the 20 Aichi biodiversity targets, only one – on the creation of protected areas – is measurably close to being met.

Strategic Goal C, Target 11:
By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

CBD targets;

(Q) Consider the following pairs:

Tiger reserve – Located in (state)
1. Rajaji – Tamil Nadu  
2. Achanakmar – Madhya Pradesh  
3. Valmiki – Uttar Pradesh  
4. Orang – Arunachal Pradesh

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

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

Solution: d.

- Rajaji TR – Uttarakhand
- Achanakmar TR – Chattisgarh
- Valmiki TR – Bihar
- Orang TR – Assam

WIIENVIS; TH;
Consider the following statements:

1. To reduce the likelihood of dioxin and furan formation, refuse-derived fuel must be burnt at high temperatures, more than 1,000°C.
2. About 80 per cent of the total plastic waste generated in a year in India is not recycled.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

Both statements are correct.

TH: Burning plastic for fuel should be the last option. When plastic is burnt, industries must extract fossil fuels again to make new plastics. “By burning it, you are destroying it, which means you mine for new material,” says Ms. Chandran. This increases the carbon footprint of the product. Secondly, burning plastics without emissions is tough. In cement kilns, for example, RDF must be incinerated at more than 1,000°C to prevent the release of pollutants such as dioxins and furans. For this, pollution control boards must monitor cement kilns, and this monitoring is often not stringent. Yet another problem with RDF is the economics. To create the fuel, plants must segregate waste. This adds to the cost of the fuel, making it unattractive compared to coke. These barriers have kept RDF-use from taking off.

Consider the following statements in the context of climate change:

1. The 20 warmest years on record have been in the past 22 years, with 2015-2018 making up the top four.
2. Together, China, the USA and India account for nearly 40% of the global greenhouse gas emissions today.

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 countries emitting the most greenhouse gases by quite a long way are China and the US. Together they account for more than 40% of the global total.

The world is now nearly one degree warmer than it was before widespread industrialisation, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The global average temperature for the first 10 months of 2018 was 0.98°C above the levels of 1850-1900, according to five independently maintained global data sets. The 20 warmest years on record are shown in the diagram below.

World’s top greenhouse gas emitters

The top 10 greenhouse gas emitters make up 60% of total emissions

- China 26.6%
- US 13.1%
- Russia 4.6%
- Brazil 2.4%
- Indonesia 1.8%
- Mexico 1.5%
- India 7.1%
- Japan 2.9%
- Iran 1.8%
- Canada 1.6%
have been in the past 22 years, with 2015-2018 making up the top four, the WMO says. If this trend continues, temperatures may rise by 3-5°C by 2100.

**BBC:**

(Q) According to recent studies, the single biggest way an individual can reduce his or her carbon footprint is to

a) Modify one’s diet to include less meat.

b) Avoid throwing food away.

c) Drive electric cars instead of fossil fuel-guzzling vehicles.

d) Take trains and buses instead of planes.

**Solution: a.**

**BBC:** The single biggest way to reduce your environmental impact on the planet is to modify your diet to include less meat – according to recent studies. Scientists say we ought to eat less meat because of the carbon emissions the meat industry produces, as well as other negative environmental impacts. Crucially, research shows that meat with the lowest environmental impact still creates more greenhouse gas emissions than growing vegetables and cereal crops in the least environmentally-friendly way.

### Beef has the biggest climate impact

**Greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Low impact</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>High impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmed prawns</td>
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<td>Cheese</td>
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<td>Peanuts</td>
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<td>Tofu</td>
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<td>Beans</td>
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<td>Peas</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Nuts</td>
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Source: Poore & Nemecek (2018), *Science*

(Q) Consider the following statements about Sunspots:

1. Sunspots are darker, cooler areas on the surface of the sun in a region called Corona.
2. They are regions of reduced surface temperature caused by concentrations of magnetic field flux that inhibit convection.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None
**Solution: b**

Sunspots are temporary phenomena on the Sun’s photosphere that appear as spots darker than the surrounding areas. They are regions of reduced surface temperature caused by concentrations of magnetic field flux that inhibit convection.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Great Indian bustard

2. It has been identified as one of the species for the recovery programme under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats.
3. Project Great Indian Bustard was initiated by the state of Gujarat on World Environment Day 2013.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

**Solution: c**


Improvisation:
https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/threatened_species/great_indian_bustard/

(Q) Consider the following statements about South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)

1. It is an inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement support body of South Asian countries
2. Its Secretariat is based in Bangladesh
3. It was established under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: a**

SAWEN operates its activities from the Secretariat based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

SAWEN was officially launched in January, 2011 in Paro Bhutan. It was not established under the aegis of SAARC.
(Q) ‘Green Good Deeds’ recently seen in news is related to

a) Scheme launched by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to promote the use of Green Technologies
b) Global campaign launched by UNEP to spread awareness about Green Technologies
c) Societal movement to protect environment and promote good living
d) Financial incentives provided by the Government to the Start-ups working on Green technologies

Solution: c

Green Good Deeds, the societal movement launched by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan, to protect environment and promote good living in the country.

PIB:

(Q) Consider the following statements about Future Earth:

1. It is a global platform for international scientific collaboration related to global environmental change.
2. Over 200 Global Research Projects are undertaken by this organisation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

Future Earth is a global platform for international scientific collaboration, providing the knowledge required for societies in the world to face risks posed by global environmental change and to seize opportunities in a transition to global sustainability. Future Earth is at its core a ‘federation’ of projects and other initiatives related to Global Environmental Change.

The organisation is rooted in the work of 20 Global Research Projects. These projects were launched under the umbrella of four global environmental change programmes, DIVERSITAS, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) and the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). The partnership between these four global environmental change programmes constituted the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP), which subsequently evolved into Future Earth.

The Global Carbon Project is a Global Research Project of Future Earth.

Improvisation: TH:

(Q) The Global Carbon Project was established to

1. Accelerate clean coal technology innovation.
2. Create an integrated knowledge base of three dominant greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.
3. Address the challenge of increasing carbon emissions and declining food security on agricultural practices and policies.
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

The Global Carbon Project integrates knowledge of greenhouse gases for human activities and the Earth system. Their projects include global budgets for three dominant greenhouse gases — carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide — and complementary efforts in urban, regional, cumulative, and negative emissions.

GCP2; GCP3; Improvisation: TH;

(Q) ‘Momentum for Change’ is an initiative of

a) UN Climate Change secretariat
b) UNEP
c) World Bank
d) UNICEF

Solution: a

Momentum for Change is an initiative spearheaded by the UN Climate Change secretariat to shine a light on the enormous groundswell of activities underway across the globe that are moving the world toward a highly resilient, low-carbon future. Momentum for Change recognizes innovative and transformative solutions that address both climate change and wider economic, social and environmental challenges.

(Q) Which of the following area has emerged as single largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins in the world

a) Chilika Lake
b) Kolleru Lake
c) Bhitarkanika national park
d) Pulicat Lake

Solution: a

The Chilika Lake in Odisha has emerged as the “single largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins in the world”. Chilika is Asia’s largest brackish-water lagoon with an estuarine character, and one of India’s first Ramsar Convention sites.

(Q) Consider the following statements about International Whaling Commission (IWC)

1. It is an organ of United Nations
2. It provides for proper conservation of whale stocks and orderly development of the whaling industry.
3. India is not a member of IWC.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

It is an international body set up under International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). ICRW governs the commercial, scientific, and aboriginal subsistence whaling practices of fifty-nine member nations. India is a member of IWC.

Objectives:
- To provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks.
- For orderly development of the whaling industry.

(Q) Olive Ridleys Turtles are naturally found in India in

1. Andhra Pradesh coast
2. Odisha coast
3. Maharashtra coast

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

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

Solution: d

Olive Ridley turtle is the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtle found in the world.
- It is found in warm waters of the Pacific and Indian oceans.
- It commences its journey from Indian Ocean towards Bay of Bengal during their mating season in October and November every year.
- The Gahirmatha Beach in Kendrapara district of Odisha (India), which is now a part of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, is the largest breeding ground for these turtles.
- Green turtles and olive ridleys are known to nest in Maharashtra in small numbers. Goa has records of three species of sea turtles: olive ridley, leatherback and green turtles.
- Recently many of these turtles were found dead near the Andhra Pradesh coast.
III. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES

(Q) The objectives of the recently approved Agriculture Trade Policy, 2018 include
1. To double agricultural exports in value terms by 2022 from present levels.
2. To double India’s share in world agri-exports by integrating with the global value chain.
3. To create a common national agricultural market to facilitate exports.

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.

Objectives of the Agriculture Export Policy are as under:

• To double agricultural exports from present ~US$ 30+ Billion to ~US$ 60+ Billion by 2022 and reach US$ 100 Billion in the next few years thereafter, with a stable trade policy regime.
• To diversify our export basket, destinations and boost high value and value added agricultural exports including focus on perishables.
• To promote novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products exports.
• To provide an institutional mechanism for pursuing market access, tackling barriers and deal with sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues.
• To strive to double India’s share in world agri exports by integrating with global value chain at the earliest.
• Enable farmers to get benefit of export opportunities in overseas market.

PIB;

(Q) Consider the following statements about Khelo India programme:
1. It is an initiative of Ministry of Sports and Youth affairs.
2. One of the component is the promotion of sports amongst people with disabilities
3. Traditional games like Kabaddi and Kho-Kho are part of the programme.
4. Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels will be provided annual financial assistance of INR 5 lakh per annum for 5 years.

Which of the above statements are correct ?

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

Solution: c
Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by the High-Powered Committee will be provided annual financial assistance of INR 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.

(Q) National Mission on Government eMarketplace (GeM) was launched by
   a) Ministry of Consumer Affairs
   b) Ministry of Finance
   c) Ministry of Commerce & Industry
   d) Ministry of Science and Technology

Solution: c
The Ministry of Commerce & Industry launched National Mission on GeM (NMG) on 5th September 2018. The objective of the Mission was to accelerate the adoption and use of Procurement by Major Central Ministries, States and UTs and their agencies (including CPSUs/PSUs, Local Bodies) on the GeM platform.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Government e-Market Place
   1. All Central and State government Ministries/Departments and Central and State Public Sector Units except local bodies can procure goods and services.
   2. One of the main disadvantages of GeM is that there is no Provision of return of goods once procured.
   3. On GeM goods which are Preferential Market Access (PMA) compliant and those manufactured by Small Scale Industries (SSI) are also allowed.

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

Solution: b
   • All Central government and State Government Ministries/Departments including its attached/subordinate offices, Central and State autonomous bodies, Central and State Public Sector Units and local bodies etc. are authorized to make procurement through GeM portal.
   • There is Provision of easy return policy which is an advantage to the buyer.
   • On GeM, the filters for selecting goods which are Preferential Market Access (PMA) compliant and those manufactured by Small Scale Industries (SSI), enables the Government buyers to procure Make in India and SSI goods very easily.

(Q) Consider the following statements about SAUBHAGYA Scheme:
   1. Under Saubhagya free electricity connections to only households in rural areas will be provided.
   2. Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has been designated as nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.
   3. A committee is constituted under the Ministry of Power to identify the beneficiaries for the scheme.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana – ‘Saubhagya’ was launched in September, 2017.
- Under Saubhagya free electricity connections to all households (both APL and poor families) in rural areas and poor families in urban areas will be provided.
- Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has been designated as nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.
- The scheme aims to achieve universal household electrification in all parts of the country.
- **Eligibility**: The prospective beneficiary households for free electricity connections under the scheme would be identified using SECC 2011 data. However, un-electrified households not covered under SECC data would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs. 500 which shall be recovered by DISCOMs in 10 instalments through electricity bill.

(Q) FAME India Scheme is launched by?

a) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)  
b) Ministry of Road Transport & Highways  
c) Ministry of Science and Technology  
d) Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises

Solution: d

To promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology and to ensure sustainable growth of the same, Department of Heavy Industry is implementing FAME-India Scheme.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY):

1. The Scheme aims to incentivise employers for employment generation by the Government paying the employers’ EPS contribution of 8.33%, for the new employees, for the first two years of their employment.
2. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Finance.
3. The Scheme is targeted for employees earning wages less than Rs 15,000/- per month.

Which of the above statements is/are **incorrect**?

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

Solution: b

- The PMRPY Scheme aims to incentivise employers for employment generation by the Government paying the employers’ EPS contribution of 8.33%, for the new employees, for the first three years of their
employment and is proposed to be made applicable for unemployed persons that are semi-skilled and unskilled.

- The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and is operational since August, 2016.
- The PMRPY Scheme is targeted for employees earning wages less than Rs 15,000/- per month. Thus, new employees earning wages more than Rs 15,000/- per month will not be eligible.

(Q) The government’s plan to setup National Medical Devices Promotion Council, comes under which Ministry

a) Ministry of Science and Technology
b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
c) Ministry of Commerce & Industry
d) Both a and b

Solution: c

The government is planning to set up a National Medical Devices Promotion Council under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

(Q) Bureau of Energy Efficiency star labelling is applied to

1. Tubular Florescent Lamp
2. LPG- Stoves
3. Ballast
4. Solid State Inverter

Select the correct code:

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

Solution: d


(Q) Sagarmala Programme aims to

1. Enhancing the connectivity of the ports to the hinterland
2. Optimizing cost and time of cargo movement through multi-modal logistics solutions
3. Developing Coastal Economic Zones
4. Promoting sustainable development of coastal communities through skill development & livelihood generation activities
Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Solution: d

Components of Sagarmala Programme are:

- Port Modernization & New Port Development: De-bottlenecking and capacity expansion of existing ports and development of new greenfield ports

- Port Connectivity Enhancement: Enhancing the connectivity of the ports to the hinterland, optimizing cost and time of cargo movement through multi-modal logistics solutions including domestic waterways (inland water transport and coastal shipping)

- Port-linked Industrialization: Developing port-proximate industrial clusters and Coastal Economic Zones to reduce logistics cost and time of EXIM and domestic cargo

- Coastal Community Development: Promoting sustainable development of coastal communities through skill development & livelihood generation activities, fisheries development, coastal tourism etc.


(Q) National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) Project is being implemented by

a) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology  
b) Ministry of Law and Justice  
c) Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs  
d) None of the Above

Solution: c

e-Vidhan:

- It is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) comes under the Digital India Programme.

- Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) is the 'Nodal Ministry' for its implementation in all the 31 States/UTs with Legislatures.

- The funding for e-Vidhan is provided by the MoPA and technical support by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MietY).

The funding of NeVA is through Central Sponsored Scheme i.e. 60:40; and 90:10 for North East & hilly States and 100% for UTs.

PIB:

(Q) Consider the following statements about National Supercomputing Mission

1. Department of Science and Technology (DST) is the sole implementing agency.
2. Enhance India’s capability in solving grand challenge problems of national and global relevance
3. Empower our scientists and researchers with state-of-the-art supercomputing facilities
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c

The Mission would be implemented and steered jointly by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) at an estimated cost of Rs.4500 crore over a period of seven years.

Objective:

• To make India one of the world leaders in Supercomputing and to enhance India’s capability in solving grand challenge problems of national and global relevance
• To empower our scientists and researchers with state-of-the-art supercomputing facilities and enable them to carry out cutting-edge research in their respective domains
• To minimize redundancies and duplication of efforts, and optimize investments in supercomputing
• To attain global competitiveness and ensure self-reliance in the strategic area of supercomputing technology

NSM:

(Q) Consider the following statements about Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme

1. The scheme is aimed at promoting gender equality and the significance of educating girls.
2. It is the effort of Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
3. The focus is on Gender Critical Districts and Cities low on Child Sex Ratio
4. Organisations/NGOs can collect donations and contribute towards the implementation of BBBP.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a


The scheme has no provision for collection of donations.
IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(Q) An emerging technology, the Gene Drive technology is capable of enabling
   a) The spread of specified genetic alterations through targeted wild populations over many generations.
   b) The creation of the world’s first genetically edited babies.
   c) The alteration of specific strands of DNA using molecular scissors by either cutting, tweaking or replacing it.
   d) None of the above

Solution: a.

Engineered gene drives are genetic systems that circumvent traditional rules of sexual reproduction and greatly increase the odds that the drive will be passed on to offspring. This enables the spread of specified genetic alterations through targeted wild populations over many generations. They represent a potentially powerful tool to confront regional or global challenges, including control of invasive species and eradication of insect-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue… Because the drives can spread traits only over generations, they will be most effective in species that reproduce quickly or can be released in large numbers.

WYSS Institute, Harvard; Improvisation: The Guardian;

(Q) Standard Essential Patents or SEPs are patents that are related to
   a) Communication technologies
   b) Pharmaceuticals
   c) Emission control technologies
   d) Defence industries

Solution: a.

TH: Due to lack of a robust innovation ecosystem, Indian policymakers and industry need to look at collaborative standard development process for technology development to face global competition, non-profit consumer body CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) has said. Patents that exist for present communication technologies — technically called standard essential patents (SEPs) — are prone to abuse by their owners, and lack of patent among Indian firms has pushed a large number of domestic mobile manufacturers into assembling.

(Q) Consider the following pairs:

Rover/spacecraft/Lander  – Associated Space agency and asteroid/comet respectively
1. Osiris-Rex  – European Space Agency and Bennu
2. Mascot  – German Aerospace Centre and Ryugu
3. Rosetta  – Roscosmos and 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
   a) 1 and 2 only  b) 2 only
   c) 3 only  d) None of the above
Osiris-Rex – NASA and Bennu
Mascot – DLR (German) and Cnes (French Space Agency) and Ryugu
Rosetta – ESA (European) and 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko

BBC (From October 2018): Japan's space agency (Jaxa) has put another lander on the surface of asteroid 162173, or Ryugu. The Hayabusa-2 probe ejected the German-French Mascot “rover” on Wednesday for its 20-minute journey down to the space rock. Mascot is designed to move across the surface of Ryugu and analyse its surface properties, including its mineral composition and magnetic field.

(September): Jaxa celebrated a first, as the probe successfully put two small (18 cm wide) robot explorers on the surface. Now, the Mobile Asteroid Surface Scout (Mascot), which has been built by the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and the French Space Agency (Cnes), has repeated the feat.

Improvisation (BBC): NASA's Osiris-Rex probe has drawn up alongside the Asteroid Bennu after a two-year, two-billion-km journey from Earth. The mission will spend 2.5 years at the 500m-wide rock, mapping its surface and studying its composition. In mid-2020, scientists will direct Osiris-Rex to drop down to the object and grab at least 60g of regolith, or “top soil”. This will be packed away in a sterile capsule to be returned home in 2023.

BBC:

(Q) Consider the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>Well known for playing an important role in a recent/future scientific endeavour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P. Dakshayani</td>
<td>Agni-V nuclear-capable ballistic missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Lalithambika</td>
<td>Gaganyaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tessy Thomas</td>
<td>Mars Orbiter Mission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Solution: b.

B.P. Dakshayani, as the former head of flight dynamics and space navigation for the Indian space agency, led the team that kept an eye on the satellite (MOM), telling it exactly where to go, and ensuring that it did not deviate from its path.

Tessy Thomas, a scientist from India’s Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is a rare woman who has played a key role in the making of its most potent long-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile, the Agni-V which was successfully tested first in 2012. She is thought to be one of the very few women working on strategic nuclear ballistic missiles in the world.

Lalithambika V.R., a scientist who has played a role in building India’s rocket programme has been selected to lead the country’s Human Space Flight Programme. She has worked on building the autopilot of rockets as she led the team to review the design of rockets – including the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-Mk-3), the rocket intended to carry the human space mission.

A general current affairs question.
(Q) Consider the following statements:

1. Soyuz, a Russian spacecraft, is currently the only means of transportation for astronauts or cargo to reach the International Space Station.
2. The ISS is a joint project among five participating space agencies.

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.

Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, is currently the only organisation transporting astronauts to the ISS after Nasa ended its space shuttle flights in 2011. Private space enterprise SpaceX is involved in delivery of ISS cargo.

The ISS programme is a joint project among five participating space agencies: NASA, Roscosmos, JAXA, ESA, and CSA (Canada).

(Q) Which of the following satellites launched recently will deliver high-throughput data services to different parts of India only?

1. GSAT-9
2. GSAT-11
3. GSAT-29
4. NovaSAR

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- **TH**: GSAT-9 or the South Asia Satellite (SAARC Satellite) will support communication, broadcasting and Internet services, disaster management, tele-medicine, tele-education, weather forecasting in a region that is geographically challenging, economically lagging with limited technological resources.

- **TH**: Weighing about 5,854 kg, India's heaviest and most advanced communication satellite, the GSAT-11 will provide Internet services now to users in rural and inaccessible village panchayats under BharatNet.

- **TH**: GSAT-29 is designed to mainly focus on connectivity to the users in the hilly and geographically inaccessible areas, especially those in Jammu & Kashmir and North Eastern regions of India.

**Q5, 18th September Quiz**: NovaSAR (Synthetic Aperture Radars are meant for earth observation and not communication; NovaSAR is a UK satellite launched by ISRO) has the ability to take pictures of the surface of the Earth in every kind of weather, day or night. The spacecraft will assume a number of roles but its designers specifically want to see if it can help monitor suspicious shipping activity.
The Von Kármán crater, recently in the news, is located in
a) Antarctica
b) Greenland
c) Gulf of Mexico
d) None of the above

Solution: d.

BBC: China has launched the first mission to land a robotic craft on the far side of the Moon, Chinese media say. The Chang’e-4 mission will see a static lander and rover touch down in Von Kármán crater, located on the side of the Moon which never faces Earth. Von Kármán crater is of interest to scientists because it is located within the oldest and largest impact feature on the Moon – the South Pole-Aitken Basin (one of the biggest impact features in the solar system; it spans 2,500 km from rim to rim). This was probably formed by a giant asteroid impact billions of years ago.

To ensure that Chang’e 4’s signals travel to and fro, China launched a satellite Queqiao. Which one of the following phenomenon is associated with the need for an additional satellite for communications with Chang’e 4?

a) Tidal Locking
b) Orbital Resonance
c) Fleeting galaxies
d) Dead space

Solution: a.

Space.com: If all goes according to plan, Chang’e 4 will make history's first landing on the lunar far side sometime in early January. The mission, which consists of a stationary lander and a rover, will perform a variety of science work and plant a flag for humanity in a region that remains largely unexplored to date.

- The moon is tidally locked to Earth, meaning the natural satellite takes about the same amount of time to spin once on its axis as it does to orbit our planet. So, here on Earth, we always see the same face of our cosmic neighbor.
- That would be the near side. The far side remains forever out of view, and that explains why this obscured surface has yet to welcome a robotic visitor. Communicating with a far-side lander or rover is difficult, because the entirety of the moon's solid, rocky body would block direct signals traveling to and fro.
- To solve this problem, China launched a satellite called Queqiao this past May (May 2018). Queqiao has set up shop at the Earth-moon Lagrange point 2, a gravitationally stable spot beyond the moon from which the satellite will be able to relay communications between mission control and Chang’e 4.

Consider the following statements about Bioplastics:

1. Bioplastics are plastics derived from renewable biomass sources, such as vegetable fats and oils.
2. All bioplastics are biodegradable.
3. The main disadvantage is that it cannot be used to store food because it changes the flavour or scent when food is stored in bioplastic containers.
Which of the above statements is/are **incorrect**?

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

**Solution:** c

- Not all bioplastics are biodegradable.
- One of the advantages of bioplastics is that no adverse change to flavour or scent in food stored in bioplastic containers.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs)

1. A FDC is a cocktail of two or more active drug ingredients in a fixed ratio of doses.
2. One of the main disadvantages of FDCs is that they are not useful in the treatment of infectious diseases like HIV, malaria and tuberculosis.
3. In India FDCs are used very minimal due to high cost of the drugs.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution:** a

- An FDC is a cocktail of two or more active drug ingredients in a fixed ratio of doses. (Statement 1)
- According to US healthcare provider IMS Health, almost half the drugs sold in India in 2014 were FDC, making it a world leader in combination drugs. (Statement 3)
- FDCs have shown to be particularly useful in the treatment of infectious diseases like HIV, malaria and tuberculosis (Statement 2)

(Q) OSIRIS-Rex mission is related to

a) Mapping melting ice sheets in Antarctica  
b) NASA asteroid study  
c) China's quantum satellite  
d) NASA's mission to enter interstellar space

**Solution:** b

NASA's OSIRIS-Rex spacecraft has discovered traces of hydrogen and oxygen molecules — part of the recipe for water and thus the potential for life — embedded in the asteroid Bennu’s rocky surface.
(Q) NASA’s ICESat-2 mission aims to
a) To explore the presence of ice on mars
b) Mapping melting ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica
c) Understanding the sea level rise across the globe
d) Both b and c

Solution: d
NASA’s ICESat-2 — launched less than three months ago — has mapped melting ice sheets in Antarctica and the resulting sea level rise across the globe, which could help improve climate forecasts.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Oxytocin
1. Oxytocin is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus.
2. Oxytocin has been dubbed as the hug hormone due to its effects on behaviour.
3. It does not have any effect on female reproductive functions.
4. WHO has come up with Carbetocin as a safe and effective alternative to the drug oxytocin.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1 and 2
b) 1, 2 and 3
c) 2, 3 and 4
d) 1, 2, 4

Solution: d
- Oxytocin has also been dubbed the hug hormone, cuddle chemical, moral molecule, and the bliss hormone due to its effects on behaviour, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.
- Oxytocin is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus. It is transported to, and secreted by, the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain.
- It acts both as a hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter.
- The release of oxytocin by the pituitary gland acts to regulate two female reproductive functions: Childbirth and Breast-feeding.
- Carbetocin: The World Health Organization (WHO) has come up with a safe and effective alternative to the controversial drug oxytocin.

(Q) Consider the following statements about GSAT-7A
1. GSAT-7A is a communication satellite designed specifically for military operations.
2. About 70% of it would be for the Air Force and the rest for the needs of the Army.
3. It is the 50th Indian communication satellite.

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

**TH:** GSAT 7A is the 35th Indian communication satellite. GSAT-7A is an advanced military communications satellite meant exclusively for the Indian Air Force. It is currently being developed in ISRO Satellite Centre. GSAT-7A is similar to Indian navy's GSAT-7 and the Indian Air Force will be the sole operator of the satellite. The satellite will enhance Network-centric warfare capabilities of the Indian Air Force and therefore enhance its global operations.

(Q) Consider the following statements Measles

1. Measles is a highly contagious bacterial disease.
2. It remains an important cause of death among young children
3. India, along with ten WHO South-East Asia Region member countries, plans to eliminate measles by 2030.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. It remains an important cause of death among young children globally, despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.

India, along with ten WHO South-East Asia Region member countries, plans to eliminate measles and control rubella/ congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) by 2020.

WHO

(Q) Consider the following statements about Asbestos

1. Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral substance which is hard and non-flexible
2. They are resistant to heat, electricity and chemical corrosion.
3. They are highly toxic in nature

Which of the above statements is/are **incorrect**?

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

Solution: a

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral substance that can be pulled into a fluffy consistency. Asbestos fibers are soft and flexible yet resistant to heat, electricity and chemical corrosion. Pure asbestos is an effective insulator, and it can also be mixed into cloth, paper, cement, plastic and other materials to make them stronger.

These qualities once made asbestos very profitable for business, but unfortunately, they also make asbestos highly toxic.
The applications of Navic include:

1. Terrestrial, Aerial and Marine Navigation
2. Disaster Management
3. Mapping and Geodetic data capture
4. Visual and voice navigation for drivers

Select the correct code:

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

**Solution: d**

The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), with an operational name of NAVIC (NAVigation with Indian Constellation), is an autonomous regional satellite navigation system that provides accurate real-time positioning and timing services.

NAVIC applications include:

2. Disaster Management.
3. Vehicle tracking and fleet management.
4. Integration with mobile phones.
5. Precise Timing.
7. Terrestrial navigation aid for hikers and travelers.
8. Visual and voice navigation for drivers.

**TH:**

Consider the following statements about Graphene

1. Graphene is an allotrope of carbon
2. It conducts heat and electricity efficiently, and is non-transparent.
3. Graphene supercapacitors can charge faster and has longer life span than traditional electrolytic batteries.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: c**

- **Graphene** is an allotrope (form) of carbon consisting of a single layer of carbon atoms arranged in a hexagonal lattice. Graphene is one atom thick. It conducts heat and electricity efficiently, and is transparent.
• Graphene is widely used in making solar cells, light-emitting diodes, touch panels and smart windows. Graphene supercapacitors serve as energy storage devices with a capacity for faster charging and longer life span than traditional electrolytic batteries.

• Other potential applications of graphene include water filtration and purification, renewable energy, sensors, personalised healthcare and medicine, to name a few.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Echolocation

1. It is the use of sound waves and echoes to determine where objects are in space.
2. Only birds use Echolocation to locate and identify the objects.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: b

Echolocation, also called bio sonar, is the biological sonar used by several kinds of animals. Echolocating animals emit calls out to the environment and listen to the echoes of those calls that return from various objects near them. They use these echoes to locate and identify the objects.

TH: Asia’s river dolphins may be nearly blind, but compensate by using many methods to catch prey. Though chiefly known as echolocators, researchers now suggest that these dolphins could also be listening for surface-swimming fish and sensing electrical signals emitted by bottom-dwelling prey on the river-bed.

(Q) In recent times, which of the following is considered as 5th mode of transportation across the world.

a) Metrino  
b) High powered Mono Rail  
c) Heli taxis  
d) Hyperloop

Solution: d

Modes of Transport

1. Road transport
2. Railway transport
3. Water transport
4. Air transport
5. Pipeline transport

(Q) Consider the following statements about Gaganyaan

1. ISRO and NASA have agreed to work together for first manned space mission Gaganyaan.
2. India is planning to send three humans (Gaganyatris) into space i.e. in low earth orbit (LEO) by 2022.
3. This mission will make India third nation in the world after USA and China to launch human spaceflight mission.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

**Solution: b**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Russia's federal space agency Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities (ROSCOSMOS) have agreed to work together for first manned space mission Gaganyaan. It is India's first manned space mission. This mission will make India fourth nation in the world after USA, Russia and China to launch human spaceflight mission.

**(Q)** Hongyun project recently seen in news is related to

a) Longest railway bridge construction in China
b) Discovery of a new exotic planet outside our solar system
c) Space-based communications network to provide broadband internet connectivity
d) Surveying the surface of Mars

**Solution: c**

China has launched its first communication satellite to provide broadband internet services worldwide. The satellite is the first in the Hongyun project planned by China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp (CASIC).

The Hongyun project, started in September 2016, aims to build a space-based communications network to provide broadband internet connectivity to users around the world, especially those in the underserved regions.

**(Q)** Consider the following statements about multi-layered plastics (MLP)

1. Multi-layered plastics (MLP) are the shiny plastic material which is used to package chips, biscuit and ready-to-eat food products.
2. MLPs can be recycled and have alternative uses.
3. The Government of India is looking at phasing out of Multi-layered Plastic (MLP)

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: b**

The Environment Ministry in a new notification has amended the rules of plastic waste management, and suggested the phasing-out of multi-layered plastics (MLP), the shiny plastic material which is used to package...
chips, biscuit and ready-to-eat food products. MLPs are non-recyclable, non-energy recoverable, and have no alternative uses, and are hence a critical threat to the ecosystem.

(Q) Consider the following statements with reference to Chang’e-4 mission:

1. The mission has been launched by China
2. It is China’s first manned mission to Moon

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Solution: a

- China has launched Chang’e-4, a first probe ever to explore the dark side of the Moon. The probe, the Chang’e-4, is expected to make the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the Moon through rovers.
- The far side of the moon known as ‘South Pole-Aitken Basin’ still remains a mystery among space scientists.
- Chang’e 4 is the fourth mission in the country’s lunar mission series which is being named after the Chinese moon goddess.
- The tasks of the Chang’e-4 probe include low-frequency radio astronomical observation, surveying the terrain and landforms, detecting the mineral composition, and measuring the neutron radiation and neutral atoms to study the environment on the far side of the moon.

(Q) Which of the following are the global satellite navigation systems?

1. GPS  
2. GLONASS  
3. Galileo  
4. BeiDou  
5. QZSS  
6. NavIC

Select the correct code:

a) 1, 2, 3, 4  
b) 1, 3, 5, 6  
c) 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Solution: a

The four global GNSS systems are – GPS (US), GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (EU), BeiDou (China). Additionally, there are two regional systems – QZSS (Japan) and IRNSS or NavIC (India).
V. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

(Q) Which one of the following events gave rise to the transnational, progressive movement called DiEM25 which is oriented towards social justice and fundamental rights?

a) The Arab spring
b) Strikes organised by employees of the gig economy across different countries
c) The Umbrella Movement
d) The Greece debt crisis

Solution: d.

TH: A recent example is that of the Democracy in Europe Movement 25. DiEM25 arose after the debt crisis in Greece had resulted in a wide-ranging “structural adjustment programme” imposed upon that country by the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (or “the troika”). This included severe austerity measures (including cuts to public funding, resulting in mass unemployment) and widespread privatisation, in direct contravention of the publicly expressed will of the people, through both elections and a public referendum.

The central insight of DiEM25 — one of whose co-founders, Yanis Varoufakis, was Greece’s Finance Minister during the debt crisis — is precisely that today a progressive movement oriented towards social justice and fundamental rights cannot succeed if it is constrained within national borders. Many of the fundamental decisions that shape national policy (with wide-ranging consequences) are simply beyond the ken of nation-states themselves. For this reason, DiEM25 identifies as “pan-European”, and isolates a range of issues “currently left in the hands of national governments powerless to act upon them” — including public debt, banking, inadequate investment, migration, and rising poverty. In its manifesto, DiEM25 returns these issues to democratic control, but also acknowledges that the solutions needed to achieve this can only come from transnational action.

(Q) The Kimberley Process, of which India was recently handed over the Chairmanship for 2019, is related to

a) Reducing the flow of conflict diamonds.
b) Opium production in Afghanistan.
c) Disaster risk reduction
d) None of the above

Solution: a.

- The Kimberley Process (KP) unites administrations, civil societies, and industry in reducing the flow of conflict diamonds – ‘rough diamonds used to finance wars against governments’ – around the world.
- India is a founding member.

PIB:

(Q) The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), is a multi modal transportation established in the year 2000 by

a) Iran, Turkmenistan and Russia
b) India, Iran and Russia
c) Iran, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan
d) India, Afghanistan and Russia
**Solution: b.**

**INSTC**: The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a multi-modal transportation established on 12th September, 2000 in St. Petersburg, by Iran, Russia and India for the purpose of promoting transportation cooperation among the Member States. This corridor connects India Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Islamic republic of IRAN, then is connected to St. Petersburg and North European via Russian Federation. The INSTC was expanded to include eleven new members, namely: Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Ukraine, Republic of Belarus, Oman, Syria, Bulgaria (Observer).

**TH:**

(Q) ‘Gilet jaunes’, a term recently seen in the news, are associated with protests across

a) Venezuela  
b) USA  
c) Australia  
d) France

**Solution: d.**

In mid-November, more than 280,000 people dressed in high-visibility jackets blocked roads across France in protest at rising taxes on diesel and petrol, which the government says are to fund eco-friendly projects and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A small number of hard-core protesters have continued blocking roads and petrol stations since then. ‘Gilet jaunes’ is french for ‘yellow vests’, and these protesters are referred to as the gilet jaunes.

**TH:** BBC;

(Q) With which one of the following countries is India cooperating to construct the Mangdechhu power project?

a) China  
b) Nepal  
c) Afghanistan  
d) Bhutan

**Solution: d.**

The Mangdechhu hydroelectric project is a 720MW run-of-river power plant being built on the Mangdechhu River in central Bhutan. Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority (MHPA), which is constituted by the Indian Government and the Royal Government of Bhutan, is developing the project.

**TH:**

(Q) Which one of the following statements is incorrect?

a) Russia has the largest overall proven gas reserves.  
b) Presently, USA is the largest producer of natural gas.  
c) Saudi Arabia has the largest proven crude oil reserves.  
d) Presently, Saudi Arabia is the largest producer of crude oil.
(Q) Which of the following are the member states of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

1. Saudi Arabia
2. UAE
3. Oman
4. Yemen
5. Kuwait
6. Iran

Select the correct code:

a) 1, 2, 4, 5
b) 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
c) 1, 2, 3, 5
d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Solution: c)

GCC member states are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
(Q) Consider the following statements about Commonwealth of Nations:

1. The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of 53 sovereign states.
2. No one government in the Commonwealth exercises power over the others.
3. The symbol of this free association is Queen Elizabeth II, who serves as the Head of the Commonwealth.
4. Of the states that are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, largest is from Asia.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Solution: a

As of April 2017, of the states that are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, three are in Europe, twelve in North America and the Caribbean, one in South America, nineteen in Africa, seven in Asia, and eleven in Oceania.

(Q) The organisation which approved India’s proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023

a) United Nations General Assembly
b) United Nations World Food Program (WFP)
c) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council
d) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Solution: c

The 160th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council approved India’s proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Partners’ Forum recently in news

1. Partners’ Forum is a global health partnership to accelerate efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality.
2. The fourth Partners’ Forum was recently held in Nepal.
3. India had once hosted the Partners’ Forum.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Solution: a
**Partners’ Forum** is a global health partnership launched in September 2005 to accelerate efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality, improve adolescent, child, newborn and maternal health.

The fourth Partners’ Forum was recently held in New Delhi. It was hosted by the Government of India, in association with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH).

The previous chapters were held in Johannesburg, South Africa (2014), New Delhi, India (2010) and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (2007). This is the second time India is hosting the Partners’ Forum.

(Q) World’s first “floating” nuclear power plant (FNPP) is coming in

- a) China
- b) Japan
- c) USA
- d) Russia

**Solution:** d

Akademik Lomonosov is the world’s first “floating” nuclear power plant (FNPP). It is coming up in Russia.

(Q) Delhi Dialogue, an annual event seen in news is related to

- a) BIMSTEC
- b) BRICS
- c) ASEAN
- d) SAARC

**Solution:** c

Delhi Dialogue is the premier annual event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The 10th edition of the Delhi Dialogue was held in New Delhi in July 2018.

(Q) Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), often in news is

- a) An international independent medical humanitarian organisation
- b) UN organ working for medical assistance for African Nations
- c) A group of NGOs working on non-communicable diseases
- d) Evaluation of Border Entry Screening for Infectious Diseases in Humans

**Solution:** a

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), is an international, independent medical humanitarian organisation. It provides medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters, or exclusion from healthcare. The teams are made up of tens of thousands of health professionals, logistic and administrative staff – most of them hired locally. The actions are guided by medical ethics and the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality.
The Participating States of Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) are

1. Bangladesh
2. Japan
3. India
4. Sri Lanka
5. Laos
6. Singapore

Select the correct code:

a) 1, 2, 3, 4
b) 1, 3, 5, 6
c) 1, 3, 4, 5
d) 1, 3, 5, 6

Solution: c

The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), previously named the Bangkok Agreement, was signed in 1975 as an initiative of ESCAP. Being the oldest preferential trade agreement among developing countries in Asia-Pacific, APTA aims to promote economic development through the adoption of mutually beneficial trade liberalization measures.

Currently, the following six Participating States are parties to APTA:

- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of India
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Republic of Korea
- Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
- Mongolia has concluded its bilateral negotiations on tariff concessions with the current Participating States, and is soon to become the seventh member of APTA.

Additional Information:

Recently Caspian Sea Breakthrough Treaty was signed. Which of the following countries are parties to the treaty?

1. Kazakhstan
2. Russia
3. Iran
4. Iraq
5. Turkmenistan
6. Azerbaijan

Select the correct code:

a) 1, 2, 3, 4
b) 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
c) 2, 3, 4, 5
d) 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Solution: b

Five Caspian Sea states (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan) reached a breakthrough agreement on sovereign rights to the sea, paving the way for new oil and gas extraction — and pipelines. The treaty ends a spat over whether the Caspian is a sea or a lake, granting it special legal status and clarifying the maritime boundaries of each surrounding country.

(Q) India is a member country of which of the following organizations?

1. East Asia Summit
2. ASEAN + 3
3. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

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

Solution: a

Statement 1: 16 countries in the East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian regions (Including India), USA and RUSSIA are its members. Trade is an important focus for the summit.

Statement 2: ASEAN+3 includes the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and VietNam) plus China, Japan, and Korea. It excludes India.

Statement 3: China has consistently blocked India's bid to APEC membership.
(Q) World Food Programme is the initiative of
a) World Bank
b) International Food Policy Research Institute
c) United Nations General Assembly
d) None of the above

Solution: c
The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations and the world’s largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.

(Q) “Greater Bay Area” recently seen in news is related to which country?
  a) Canada
  b) Germany
  c) India
  d) China

Solution: d
The “Greater Bay Area” refers to the Chinese government’s scheme to link the cities of Hong Kong, Macau, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Zhongshan, Dongguan, Huizhou, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing into an integrated economic and business hub.

(Q) Consider the following statements about UNFCCC
  1. The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit.
  2. The UNFCCC established a framework for action to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the earth’s atmosphere.
  3. The framework sets binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries.
  4. Nearly all member states of the United Nations have ratified the convention.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
  a) 1, 2, 3, 4
  b) 2, 3, 4
  c) 1, 2, 4
  d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c
- The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, which marked the beginning of the international community's first concerted effort to confront the problem of climate change.
- Known also as the Rio Convention, the UNFCCC established a framework for action to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the earth’s atmosphere.
- The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994, and nearly all of the world's nations—a total of 197—have ratified.
• The framework sets non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and contains no enforcement mechanisms.
VI. POLITY

(Q) Consider the following statements:

1. The penalty of death could be awarded only in ‘the rarest of rare’ cases’ was laid down in the Bachan Singh case in 1995.
2. The Law Commission in its 262nd report recommended that the death penalty should be awarded only in terror-related cases.

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.

TH (From 2015): The Law Commission in its 262nd report recommended “swift” abolition of death penalty except in terror-related cases, noting it does not serve the penological goal of deterrence any more than life imprisonment.

TH: In questioning the merits of retaining the death penalty, Justice Kurian Joseph has re-ignited a debate that is important and requires serious thought. What he said cannot be ignored, though the law laid down in Bachan Singh (1980), upholding the validity of the death penalty and laying down guidelines for awarding death in ‘the rarest of rare’ cases, still holds the field.

(Q) Consider the following statements:

1. As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (the Act) nearly 3 per cent of the population has one or multiple types of disabilities.
2. ‘Relief of the disabled’ is a subject under the state list in the seventh schedule of the Constitution.

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 2 is correct.

In India, according to the 2011 Census, 2.21% of the population has one or multiple types of disabilities, making the country home to one of the largest disabled populations in the world. World Bank suggests that the numbers are nearly four-five times higher.

From 2016 (IE): The 2011 Census put the number of disabled in India at 2.68 crore, or 2.21% of the population. This a gross underestimation, especially in the light of the Act, which greatly widen the current Census definition of disability (21 types of disabilities are listed under the Act).

Improvisation: TH: 7th Schedule;
(Q) Which of the following is/are provisions made by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016?

1. The act applies only to individuals identified as being disabled by the latest available census.
2. Reservation in vacancies in government establishments has been increased to 4% for persons with benchmark disability.
3. District level committees will be constituted by State Governments to address local concerns of PwDs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Statement 1 is incorrect (refer explanation to previous answer).

Provisions at state and district levels as per the Act:

- State Advisory Boards on Disability are to be set up to serve as apex policy making bodies at State level.
- The office of State Commissioners of Disabilities has been strengthened who will be assisted by an Advisory Committee comprising of not more than 5 members drawn from experts in various disabilities.
- The State Commissioners will act as regulatory bodies and Grievance Redressal agencies and also monitor implementation of the Act at state level.
- District level committees will be constituted by the State Governments to address local concerns of PwDs.
- State Funds will be created to provide financial support to the persons with disabilities.
- Special Courts will be designated in each district to handle cases concerning violation of rights of PwDs.

Report card
A look at the status of implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RWPD) Act, 2016, two years after it came into force:

- Number of States and UTs that have responded: 24 (66.7%)
- States that have not notified State rules: 58.3%
- States and UTs without State Advisory Boards: 50%
- States and UTs without State Commissioners: 51%
- States that have not allocated State funds: 79.2%
- States without notified special courts: 58.3%
- States without Special Public Prosecutors: 87.5%

From 2016 (PIB): Bill as passed by Parliament; Improvisation: TH;
Consider the following statements:

1. Including the Chief Information Commissioner, there are not more than eleven members in the Central Information Commission (CIC).
2. The Chief Information Commissioner, as opposed to other members of the CIC, cannot be removed from his office except in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
3. The number of State Information Commissioners varies from one state to another.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

The CIC consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners. The President can remove the Chief Information Commissioner or any Information Commissioner from the office under the following circumstances:

- if he is adjudged an insolvent; or
- if he has been convicted of an offence which (in the opinion of the President) involves a moral turpitude; or
- if he engages during his term of office in any paid employment outside the duties of his office;
- Or if he is (in the opinion of the President) unfit to continue in office due to infirmity of mind or body; or
- if he has acquired such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially his official functions.

In addition to these, the President can also remove the Chief Information Commissioner or any Information Commissioner on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. However, in these cases, the President has to refer the matter to the Supreme Court for an enquiry. If the Supreme Court, after the enquiry, upholds the cause of removal and advises so, then the President can remove him.

The State Information Commission consists of a State Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten State Information Commissioners. The number of State Information Commissioners varies from one state to another state.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

1. It was created by an executive order.
2. The decision of TDSAT is final and no further appeal in allowed to any court.
3. The jurisdiction of TDSAT stands extended to matters that lay before the Cyber Appellate Tribunal and also the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority Appellate Tribunal.

Which of the above statements are incorrect?

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: a
The TRAI Act of 1997 was amended in the year 2000 and TDSAT was set up to adjudicate disputes and dispose of appeals with a view to protect the interests of service providers and consumers of the telecom sector. (Statement 1)
The decision of TDSAT is appealed to Supreme Court of India. (Statement 2)

(Q) Consider the following statements about National Register of Citizens (NRC)
1. National Register of Citizens is a register containing names of Indian citizens residing in Assam.
2. The register was first prepared after the 1971 Census of India.
3. The recently released draft of NRC includes the names of Indian citizens who have been residing in Assam before March 25, 1971.
4. The update process of NRC started in the year 2013 under monitoring of Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
   a) 1, 3
   b) 2, 4
   c) 1, 2, 3
   d) 1, 3, 4

Solution: b
The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a list that contains names of Indian citizens of Assam. It was last prepared after Census in 1951. The update process of NRC started in the year 2013 under the strict monitoring of Supreme Court of India.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Consumer Protection Act, 1986
1. It makes provision for the establishment of consumer councils and other authorities for the settlement of consumers' disputes.
2. It protects the consumers against marketing of hazardous goods and services.
3. Wherever possible it assures access to goods and services at competitive prices
4. Seek redressal on account of unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 2, 4
   c) 1, 3, 4
   d) 1, 2, 3, 4

Solution: d
The objectives of the Central Consumer Protection Council is to promote and to protect the rights of the consumers such as:
   • The right to be protected against the marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property.
• The right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services, as the case may be so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices;
• The right to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of goods and services at competitive prices;
• The right to be heard and to be assured that consumer’s interest will receive due consideration at appropriate forums;
• The right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or restrictive trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers; and
• The right to consumer education.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)

1. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) is under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
2. The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and rules 1945 have entrusted various responsibilities to central & state regulators for regulation of drugs & cosmetics.
3. The regulation of manufacture, sale and distribution of Drugs is primarily the concern of the Central Authorities

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

• The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India.
• The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and rules 1945 have entrusted various responsibilities to central & state regulators for regulation of drugs & cosmetics.
• The regulation of manufacture, sale and distribution of Drugs is primarily the concern of the State authorities while the Central Authorities are responsible for approval of New Drugs, Clinical Trials in the country, laying down the standards for Drugs, control over the quality of imported Drugs, coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organisations and providing expert advice with a view of bring about the uniformity in the enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

(CDSCO):

(Q) The power to establish a Common High Court for two or more States rests with

a) President
b) Chief Justice of India
c) State Legislatures of the concerned states
d) Parliament

Solution: d
Article 231 (1) – Parliament may by law establish a common High Court for two or more States or for two or more States and a Union territory.
VII. HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

(Q) Why was the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 recently amended?

a) To give legislative sanction for the funds required to mark the 100-year remembrance of the massacre.
b) To secure representation as trustee, the leader of opposition of the House of the People.
c) To acquire land in every state to establish a national memorial in remembrance of the massacre.
d) To award pension to retired descendants of those massacred.

Solution: b.

PIB: The cabinet decisions aim to suitably amend the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 so as to secure representation as Trustees, “the Leader of Opposition recognized as such in the House of the People, or where there is no such Leader of Opposition, then the Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in the House”. The proposed Amendment will also empower the Government to terminate and replace a Trustee to participate in functioning of the Trust or for any other reason.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Lingayat and Veerashaiva community

1. Lingayats are followers of 5th-century social reformer Basavanna and his vachanas.
2. Veerashaivas are a sub-sect of Lingayats and ardent followers of Lord Shiva.
3. Basavanna launched a very strong spiritual, social and religious rebellion against Brahminical hegemony.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: a

Lingayats are followers of 12th-century social reformer Basavanna and his vachana (verses) philosophy.

(Q) Consider the following statements:

1. It is a form of mask dance that uses vigorous martial movements to narrate mythological stories.
2. Some narrations also use natural themes such as Sarpa nritya or Mayur Nritya.
3. There are three main styles of the dance named after the location where they are performed, i.e. Purulia, Seraikella, and Mayurbhanj.

The above statements are associated with

a) Garba  b) Chhau  
c) Kalbelia  d) Paika
Solution: b

Chhau is found in three styles named after the location where they are performed, i.e. the Purulia Chau of Bengal, the Seraikella Chau of Jharkhand, and the Mayurbhanj Chau of Odisha.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Kumbh Mela
1. Kumbh Mela is a religious pilgrimage that is celebrated four times over a course of 12 years.
2. It is the largest public gathering and collective act of faith, anywhere in the world.
3. UNESCO has inscribed ‘Kumbh Mela’ on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 1, 2

c) 1, 3

d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: b

UNESCO has inscribed ‘Kumbh Mela’ on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during its 12th session held at Jeju, South Korea from 4-9 December 2017. ‘Yoga’ and ‘Norouz’ was added on 1st December 2016.

(Q) Behdiengkhlam festival is the most popular festival of which tribal group?

a) Chakma
b) Lepchas
c) Jaintia
d) Bhutia

Solution: c

Most popular festival of the Jaintia tribe, Behdienkhlam is celebrated in the month of July for good health, property and bumper harvest.

TOI:

(Q) Which of the following are the Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements from India that have been inscribed on the UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

1. Kutiyattam
2. Ramlila
3. Kalbelia folk dance
4. Sankirtana

Select the correct code:

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 2, 3

c) 2, 3, 4
d) 1, 2, 3, 4
Solution: d

From India the Intangible Cultural Heritages added into this list include:

- Tradition of Vedic chanting
- Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana
- Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre
- Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas.
- Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
- Chhau dance
- Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- Yoga
- Nawrouz
- Kumbh Mela

(Q) Who among the following is considered as the Trinity of Carnatic music

1. Purandara Dāsa
2. Tyagaraja
3. Kanakadasa
4. Muthuswami Dikshitar
5. Syama Sastri

Select the correct code:

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

Solution: d

The Trinity of Carnatic music, also known as The Three Jewels of Carnatic music, refer to the outstanding trio of composer-musicians of Carnatic music in the 18th century, being Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri.

(Q) Consider the following statements

1. He began his career and spent most of his adult life in the court and patronage of the Hindu king of Rewa, Raja Ramchandra Singh
2. Akbar considered him as a Navaratnas (nine jewels), and gave him the title Mian
3. He is remembered for his epic Dhrupad compositions, creating several new ragas

The above statements refer to:

a) Swami Haridas  b) Ali Khan Karori  c) Ramdas  d) Tansen
Solution: d

Tansen:

- He was a prominent figure of **Hindustani classical music**.
- He began his career and spent most of his adult life in the court and patronage of the Hindu king of Rewa, Raja Ramchandra Singh (1555–1592), where Tansen's musical abilities and studies gained widespread fame.
- This reputation brought him to the attention of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, who sent messengers to Raja Ramchandra Singh, requesting Tansen to join the musicians at the Mughal court.
- Akbar considered him as a Navaratnas (nine jewels), and gave him the title Mian, an honorific, meaning learned man.
- Tansen is remembered for his epic Dhrupad compositions, creating several new ragas, as well as for writing two classic books on music Sri Ganesh Stotra and Sangita Sara.

(Q) “Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan”, is a collaborative effort between

1. Ministry of Tourism
2. Ministry of Culture
3. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

Select the correct code:

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

Solution: d

"Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan", is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), and State/UTs Governments. The Project aims to develop synergy among all partners to effectively promote “responsible tourism”.

It aims to involve public sector companies, private sector companies and corporate citizens/individuals to take up the responsibility for making our heritage and tourism more sustainable through development, operation and maintenance of world-class tourist infrastructure and amenities at ASI/State heritage sites and other important tourist sites in India.
VIII. STATES

(Q) India got its First freight village in
   a) Haldia
   b) Kolkata
   c) Varanasi
   d) Patna

Solution: c
The Ministry of Shipping has approved the development of Rs. 156 crore freight village in Varanasi adjoining the Inland Waterways Terminal on River Ganga.

(Q) Ranbir Penal Code is applicable to which state or UT?
   a) Andaman and Nicobar
   b) Dadra and Nagar Haveli
   c) Assam
   d) Jammu and Kashmir

Solution: d
Ranbir Penal Code or RPC the main criminal code applicable in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian Penal Code is not applicable here under Article 370 of the Constitution of India. It came into force in 1932. The code was introduced during the reign of Dogra dynasty with Ranbir Singh as its ruler. It was made on the lines of Indian Penal Code prepared by Thomas Babington Macaulay.

(Q) Satkosia Tiger Reserve is in which state
   a) Madhya Pradesh
   b) Rajasthan
   c) Odisha
   d) Jharkhand

Solution: c
TH: The National Tiger Conservation Authority has sought action against Odisha officials after concluding that the death of a tiger brought from Madhya Pradesh took place in the Satkosia Reserve due to poaching.

(Q) Consider the following statements about India’s Railway University
1. India’s 1st Railway University was recently inaugurated in New Delhi
2. It only third such university in the whole world
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None  

Solution: b

India’s first railway university, The National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI) was inaugurated in Vadodara, Gujarat.

Additional Information

Which of the following sites is known as Diamond Triangle

1. Lalitgiri  
2. Vindyagiri  
3. Ratnagiri  
4. Pushpagiri  
5. Udayagiri

Select the correct code:

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

Solution: a

Buddhist site museum has been inaugurated at Lalitgiri in Odisha. The Diamond Triangle, consisting of the three Buddhist sites of Ratnagiri, Udaygiri & Lalitgiri. Belonging to the Vajyarajyan sect of Buddhism, which is popularly known as the Diamond Vehicle, and hence the name Diamond Triangle.

Bogibeel bridge, India’s longest railroad bridge recently inaugurated is in which state

a) Mizoram  
b) Arunachal Pradesh  
c) Meghalaya  
d) Assam

Solution: d

Bogibeel bridge is a combined road and rail bridge over the Brahmaputra river in the north eastern Indian state of Assam between Dhemaji district and Dibrugarh district.
(Q) Consider the following statements about RYTHU BANDHU scheme

1. Scheme is proposed by Government of Andhra Pradesh
2. It provides grant of Rs. 4,000/- per acre per farmer each season for purchase of inputs like Seeds, Fertilizers, and Pesticides.
3. The scheme covers Horticulture crops also.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

Telangana government launched ‘Rythu Bandhu’ investment support scheme for Agriculture and Horticulture crops.

The Rythu Bandhu (Agriculture Investment Support Scheme) takes care of initial investment needs of every farmer.

Aimed at relieving farmers of debt burden and cease them from falling into the debt trap again, the scheme provides a grant of Rs 4,000 per acre per farmer each season for the purchase of inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, labour and other investments in the field operations of farmer’s choice for the crop season.

(Q) Dwijing Festival recently in news is celebrated in which state

a) Assam
b) Manipur
c) Nagaland
d) Tripura

Solution: a

Dwijing Festival is an annual river festival celebrated in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) region of Assam. The festival provides a platform of earning for the people in the region by putting in to focus the business activities for the better economy generation through rural tourism. The festival also aims to provide help to the flood victim families through charity generation and distribution.
IX. DEFENCE & SECURITY

(Q) India describes which of the following missile system as a ‘weapon of peace’.

a) Prithvi  
b) Akash  
c) Agni – 5  
d) Trishul

Solution: c
India describes the Agni – 5 missile system as a ‘weapon of peace’.

(Q) Operation Vijay, 1961 is associated with

a) Kargil War  
b) Punjab Crisis  
c) Capture of Goa, Daman and Diu  
d) Assam Turmoil

Solution: c
Operation Vijay (1961), the operation by the Military of India that led to the capture of Goa, Daman and Diu and Anjediva Islands
Operation Vijay (1999), the Indian operation to push back infiltrators in the Kargil War.

(Q) Consider the following statements about INS Arihant

1. INS Arihant is India’s first indigenously-designed, developed and manufactured nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine.  
2. Its design is based on the Russian Akula-1 class submarine.  
3. It can carry Sagarika and Shaurya Missiles  
4. The deployment of INS Arihant led to the completion of India’s nuclear triad.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c
• India’s first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant has successfully completed its first deterrence patrol. With this, India completed its survivable nuclear triad by adding maritime strike capability to land and air-based delivery platforms for nuclear weapons.
INS Arihant is India’s first indigenously-designed, developed and manufactured nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine. Its design is based on the Russian Akula-1 class submarine. It can carry 12 Sagarika K 15 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) having range of over 700 km.

The Shaurya missile is a canister launched hypersonic surface-to-surface tactical missile developed by the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The Shaurya missile is speculated to be the land version of the under-water Sagarika K-15 missile.

(Q) The government recently launched ‘e-Sahaj’ portal. It is related to
a) For MSME Sector to access market/credit
b) For security clearances in certain sensitive sectors
c) To assist Startups in getting cheaper loans
d) To Offer Insurance Coverage To Dairy Farmers

Solution: b

The government launched an online ‘e-Sahaj’ portal for grant of Security Clearance. The objective of national security clearance is to evaluate potential security threats, including economic threats, and provide risk assessment before clearing investment and project proposals in key sectors.
X. REPORTS & INDICES

(Q) The Food Sustainability Index ranks 67 countries on food system sustainability. This index has been developed by

a) World Economic Forum
b) International Food Policy and Research Institute
c) Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition
d) International Centre for Agricultural Research

Solution: c.

The Food Sustainability Index (FSI – developed by the Economist Intelligence Unit with the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition) ranks 67 countries on food system sustainability. It is a quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that measures the sustainability of food systems across three categories: Food Loss and Waste, Sustainable Agriculture and Nutritional Challenges. The index has three key types of performance indicators—environmental, societal and economic.

(Q) There is substantial spatial variation in child stunting across India, with high and very high levels being reported from central and northern India respectively. Which one of the following factors, as per the Global Nutrition Report 2018, is the single most important cause for this spatial variation?

a) Women’s low Body Mass Index
b) Maternal education
c) Age at marriage
d) Children’s diet

Solution: a.

The study found that factors such as women’s low BMI accounted for 19% of the difference between the low versus high-burden districts. Other influential gender-related factors included maternal education (accounted for 12%), age at marriage (7%) and antenatal care (6%). Children’s diets (9%), assets (7%), open defecation (7%) and household size (5%) were also influential. This study is important in that it reinforced the multisectoral nature of stunting by highlighting that differences between districts were explained by many factors associated with gender, education, economic status, health, hygiene, and other demographic factors.

Improvisation: TH:
(Q) Consider the following statements in the context of the study on air pollution by India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative:

1. One in eight deaths in 2017 could be attributed to air pollution.
2. More number of deaths occurred due to household air pollution than outdoor particulate matter air pollution.
3. More 3 out of 4 Indians are exposed to PM2.5 air pollution above the WHO-mandated safe limit.
4. WHO safe limit for PM2.5 air pollution is 40µg/m³.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

**WHO Air Quality Guideline values** – Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) Guideline values:

- 10 µg/m³ annual mean
- 25 µg/m³ 24-hour mean

Statement 3 is correct (even if the "safe limit" for the study was taken to be greater than the WHO values).

TH:
(Q) The report Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE) 2018 is released by
a) UNDP
b) International Energy Agency
c) OECD
d) World Bank

Solution: d
World Bank has released its report — Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE) 2018 — charting global progress on sustainable energy policies.

(Q) The organisation which approved India’s proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023
a) United Nations General Assembly
b) United Nations World Food Program (WFP)
c) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council
d) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Solution: c
The 160th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council approved India’s proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Global Gender Gap Index 2018
1. It is released annually by World Bank
2. It measures economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment and health and survival.
3. India has fully closed its tertiary education gender gap for the first time.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 1 and 2
   c) 2 and 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c)
Global Gender Gap report is published annually by the world economic forum since 2006. Global gender gap index is a part of this which measures gender equality across four pillars— they are economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment and health and survival.
India has recorded improvement in wage equality for similar work and has fully closed its tertiary education gender gap for the first time.

TH:
(Q) Consider the following statements about SDG India Index

1. The index looks into social, economic and environmental status of the country.
2. The Index has been constructed spanning across 17 SDGs.
3. The SDG India Index was developed by Niti Ayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Global Green Growth Institute and United Nations in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b

The NITI Aayog released the Baseline Report of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, which comprehensively documents the progress made by India’s States and Union Territories towards implementing the 2030 SDG targets.

The SDG India Index, which was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Global Green Growth Institute and United Nations in India

The Index spans 13 out of 17 SDGs. Progress on SDGs 12, 13 & 14 could not be measured as relevant State/UT level data were not available and SDG 17 was left out as it focuses on international partnerships.

(Q) The Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) was released by

a) Ministry of statistics and programme implementation
b) Ministry of Rural Development
c) NITI Ayog
d) None

Solution: c

Niti Aayog has released the Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme. The ranking details the incremental progress achieved by the districts during June to October this year across six key development sectors.

The districts have been ranked in a transparent basis on parameters across various performance indicators like Health and Nutrition, Education, Skill Development and Basic Infrastructure among others.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Global Nutrition Report 2018

1. The Global Nutrition Report is the world’s leading report on the state of global nutrition.
2. It is released by International Food Policy Research Institute.
3. India has the highest number of ‘stunted’ children in the world.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: b

*Global Nutrition Report* is released by **World Health Organisation**. The Global Nutrition Report is the world’s leading report on the state of global nutrition. According to 2018 report, India has the highest number of 'stunted' children in the world and nearly a third of all stunted children worldwide are to be found in India.

(Q) World Energy Outlook is released by

a) OPEC  
b) World Bank  
c) International Energy Agency  
d) United Nations

Solution: c

The annual *World Energy Outlook* is the **International Energy Agency**'s flagship publication, widely recognised as the most authoritative source for global energy projections and analysis.
XI. MAPS/ PLACES

(Q) Consider the following statements about the Carmichael project:

1. The coal site is located in the Australian state of Northern Territory.
2. The Carmichael mine is located very close to the city of Darwin.

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 mine is located about 400kms from the east coast in the state of Queensland.

(Q) The Black Sea is not bordered by

a) Romania
b) Georgia
c) Bulgaria
d) Moldova
Solution: d.
The Black Sea is bordered by Ukraine to the north, Russia to the northeast, Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west. (Moldova, though, has access to the Black Sea via Danube river.

Britannica: Improvisation: Ukraine-Russia conflict

(Q) Consider the following statements about Elum Valley which was recently in news:

1. Elum Valley is located near Arunachal Pradesh.
2. It has been a site of divinity and pilgrimage for both the Hindu and the Buddhist communities.

Which of the above Statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: b

The Khyber Pakthunkhwa province in Pakistan is planning to construct a heritage park in Elum Valley, which carries a historical significance to both the Hindus and the Buddhists.

Elum Valley is located between the Swat and Buner districts in the province.

(Q) Mount Soputan is located in

a) Philippines
b) Cambodia
c) Vietnam
d) Indonesia
Solution: d
One of the most active volcanoes of Indonesia, Mount Soputan volcano, erupted recently. It is located on the Sulawesi island in Indonesia.

TH:

(Q) Kerch Strait sometimes in news is located between:
   a) Black Sea and Aegean Sea
   b) Black Sea and Sea of Azov
   c) Sea of Marmara and Aegean Sea
   d) Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea

Solution: b

The Kerch Strait is a strait connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, separating the Kerch Peninsula of Crimea in the west from the Taman Peninsula of Russia’s Krasnodar Krai in the east.

(Q) Mount Anak Krakatau recently in news is located in?
   a) Japan
   b) Philippines
   c) Vietnam
   d) Indonesia

Solution: d
Both sides of Indonesia’s Sunda Strait – Java on the east and Sumatra on the west – have been hit by a tsunami. The tsunami is believed to have been caused by undersea landslides from volcanic activity.

Indonesia’s climatology agency (BMKG) said undersea landslides triggered by an eruption of the Mount Anak Krakatau volcano, located about 50km offshore in the Sunda Strait between the islands of Java and Sumatra, may have triggered the tsunami.
(Q) The countries bordering Iran are

1. Afghanistan
2. Iraq
3. Tajikistan
4. Armenia
5. Syria

Select the correct code:

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

**Solution: b**

Iran is bordered by Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan.

(Q) Recently volcano erupted in Mount Etna, is located in

a) France    b) Spain
               c) Italy    d) Greece
Solution: c

Italy’s Mount Etna volcano has erupted again resulting in more than 130 earthquakes of up to 4.3 in magnitude. Mount Etna is the largest active volcano in Europe and one of the world’s most frequently erupting volcanoes. It is also the volcano with the longest record of continuous eruption.
XII. Miscellaneous

(Q) Consider the following statements about Sahitya Academy Award

1. The Sahitya Academy Award is a literary honor in India, which the Sahitya Akademi, India’s National Academy of Letters, annually confers.
2. It is awarded for the books published in any of the major Indian languages except English.
3. The first award was awarded pre independence.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: d

It is awarded for major Indian languages (24 languages, including the 22 listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, along with English and Rajasthani) (Statement 2)

First awarded in the year 1954. (Statement 3)

(Q) Consider the following statements about Skoch Awards sometimes seen in news:

1. The Skoch Awards celebrate human excellence and agents of change in Indian society.
2. They are the highest independently instituted civilian honours in India.
3. These awards have become a benchmark of best practices in India in the fields of governance, infrastructure, finance, banking, technology, corporate citizenship, economics and inclusive growth.

Select the correct code:

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

Solution: d

The Skoch Awards celebrate human excellence and agents of change in Indian society. The Awards are based on the philosophy of spearheading positive socio-economic changes through recognising persons who have contributed immensely to salutary transformations in society and governance by displaying exemplary leadership abilities.

They are the highest independently instituted civilian honours in India. Since 2003, when these were instituted, the Skoch Awards have become the only independent benchmark of best practices in India in the fields of governance, finance, banking, technology, corporate citizenship, economics and inclusive growth.
(Q) “Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskaar” is instituted recently by the Centre to recognise in the field of

a) Border Security

b) Cyber Security

c) Disaster management

d) Specific act of bravery or distinguished service or special service by the citizens

Solution: c

These are annual awards instituted recently by the Centre to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in the country in the field of disaster management. Three eligible institutions and individuals will be given the 'Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskaar’ every year with cash rewards ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 51 lakh.