

OPERATION
SINDOOR



JUNE 2025

CLAT
Tathya

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NPLC's TOP 10 GLORY 2025

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Ankhad**



Chaitanya Ghosh



Daiwik Agarwala



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Samyuktha Kovilakath



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Yutika Kumar

YE POSTER NAHI, PROOF HAI!

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Nishant Prakash, founder and chief mentor at NPLC, is a nationally recognized legal educator and policy advisor. An alumnus of one of India's premier National Law Schools, Nishant left a thriving corporate law career to dedicate himself fully to teaching and mentoring the next generation of legal leaders. For over 13 years, he has built an unparalleled reputation as a transformational teacher, guiding students with precision, compassion, and personal accountability.

He has been associated with some of the country's top-tier law firms, including Luthra & Luthra, Trilegal, J. Sagar Associates, and P&A Law Offices, and holds expertise in Intellectual Property, Insurance, and Trade Law, with over 30 national and international publications to his credit.

A firm believer in long-term academic mentorship, Nishant combines academic rigour with real-world legal insights to prepare students for top law schools and successful careers. His work consistently bridges the gap between textbook learning and practical application, equipping students with a clear understanding of how law operates in the real world.

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What sets Nishant apart is not just his knowledge, but his unwavering dedication to each student's growth. Every batch under his guidance is not just taught, but molded. He pushes students beyond their limits—while offering the support, discipline, and insight they need to thrive in competitive legal exams and beyond.

For parents looking for a mentor who truly takes ownership, and for students seeking more than just lectures—Nishant Prakash is the mentor who stays with you, every step of the way.

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1 OPERATION SINDOOR

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Objective:** On May 7, 2025, India launched **Operation Sindoor**, a coordinated military response to the **Pahalgam terror attack** of April 22, which resulted in the **death of 26 Hindu tourists** in **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Operational Scope:** The operation involved **precision air and missile strikes** targeting **nine terrorist camps** located in **Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK)**. It was conducted with the aim of **neutralising terror infrastructure** without escalating regional conflict.
- **Casualties and Targets:** According to **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**, the operation **eliminated over 100 terrorists**, including **high-value commanders** of **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** and **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)**.
- **Strategic Message:** The Indian government emphasized that the operation was **precise, calibrated, and non-escalatory**, designed to ensure **zero civilian casualties** while delivering a **strong deterrent message** to cross-border terror networks.

Context and Trigger



- The trigger for Operation Sindoor was the **gruesome assault in Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam**, where five militants killed 26 civilians after identifying them as **Hindus**.
- While the **Resistance Front (TRF)** initially claimed responsibility, it later withdrew its statement.
- The **communal nature** of the attack, where victims were reportedly asked about their religion before being executed, raised widespread national outrage and led to the decision to initiate retaliatory action.

Targets and Locations

- Strikes were executed across nine key locations including **Bahawalpur, Muridke, Muzaffarabad, and Kotli**, all known for hosting terror infrastructure.
- In Bahawalpur, the Indian Air Force struck **Jaish-e-Mohammed's headquarters**, including **Markaz Subhan Allah**, targeting facilities linked to **Masood Azhar**, a UN-designated terrorist.
- In Muridke, the base of **Lashkar-e-Taiba**, including **Markaz-e-Taiba**, was targeted; this site is associated with **Hafiz Saeed** and has direct links to the **2008 Mumbai attacks**. Muzaffarabad and Kotli in PoJK were also hit, known hubs for infiltration and armed radicalisation supported by **Pakistan's ISI**.



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- In Muridke, the base of **Lashkar-e-Taiba**, including **Markaz-e-Taiba**, was targeted; this site is associated with **Hafiz Saeed** and has direct links to the **2008 Mumbai attacks**. Muzaffarabad and Kotli in PoJK were also hit, known hubs for infiltration and armed radicalisation supported by **Pakistan's ISI**. Smaller nodes at Sarjal, Mehmoona Joya, Gulpur, Bhimber, and Barnala were simultaneously engaged, cutting off logistical and training links between multiple groups.

Military and Governmental Response

- The Ministry of Defence invoked **Rule 33 of the Territorial Army Rules, 1948**, activating **14 of 32 Territorial Army battalions** for nationwide deployment until **February 2028**.
- Simultaneously, the Ministry of Home Affairs launched **Operation Abhyaas**, a **nationwide civil defence mock drill** conducted across **244 districts** on the same day as the strikes, simulating emergency scenarios and civilian preparedness during high alert.
- A **Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)** issued prior to the strikes served as a strategic decoy for broader military mobilisation.
- The operation was conducted under the joint leadership of the **Indian Armed Forces**, with coordination from the **Ministry of Defence** and oversight from the **Prime Minister's Office (PMO)**.
- Key briefings were delivered by **Wing Commander Vyomika Singh** and **Colonel Sofiya Qureshi**.

Weaponry and Technology

- India deployed an array of advanced **air-to-ground, surface-to-air, and stand-off weapon systems** to execute the strikes.
- Notably, **SCALP-EG cruise missiles** and **GBU-24 guided bombs** were used for deep penetration.
- The **HAMMER** missile system mounted on **Rafale jets** and the **BRAHMOS cruise missile** were deployed for high-speed tactical strikes.
- The **METEOR beyond-visual-range missile** provided air superiority by deterring hostile aerial responses. **Loitering munitions**, also known as **suicide drones**, were employed for precision targeting and reducing collateral damage.
- **India's indigenous Akash missile system** played a key role in intercepting multiple Pakistani UAVs and missiles, supported by **3D radars like Rajendra and Rohini**, and **upgraded Bofors anti-aircraft guns**.
- The **NavIC satellite system**, integrated with **Cartosat and RISAT imaging**, enabled 10–20 cm accuracy in real-time targeting.

India's **Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs)** were reportedly used to neutralise incoming Pakistani drones, underscoring India's edge in **energy-based weapon systems**.

Air Defence and Radar Engagement

India's multi-layered air defence grid, supported by systems like **SAMAR, S-400 Triumph**, and **Akash-NG**, effectively neutralised Pakistani aerial responses. Pakistan's deployment of **PL-15 missiles** and **Bayraktar-style drones** was countered using **AI-integrated radars**, **Low-Level Transportable Radars (LLTRs)**, and **IACCS (Integrated Air Command and Control System)**. The **Akashteer command and control system**, developed by **Bharat Electronics Limited**, enabled coordinated decision-making and seamless integration of radar and fire systems.

Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Bases Targeted

Operation Sindoor extended to strategic Pakistani airbases, including **PAF Nur Khan, Chaklala, Murid, Sukkur, Rahim Yar Khan, Mushaf (Sargodha), Shahbaz (Jacobabad), Rafiqui (Shorkot)**, and **Bholari (Jamshoro)**. These bases hosted key PAF assets including **F-16s, JF-17 Thunder, Mirage 5s**, and **AEW&C platforms**, all of which were severely disrupted. Drone hubs such as **Murid and Rahim Yar Khan** suffered damage to **UAV fleets** including **Shahpar, Burraq**, and **Wing Loong II**, significantly degrading Pakistan's drone-based surveillance capabilities.



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- Radar facilities in **Pasrur, Sialkot, Chunian (Kasur), Lahore, and Malir Cantonment (Karachi)** were targeted and rendered inoperable.
- These radar systems were critical for forward air detection and missile tracking and their destruction gave India **temporary air superiority** in the region.
- Pakistan's Chinese-supplied radar and air defence systems were reportedly jammed, blinding their early warning and response capabilities.

Geopolitical Implications

- The operation is considered a **calibrated strategic response**, aimed at neutralising terror infrastructure without provoking a full-scale war.
- It mirrored the philosophy of **surgical strikes**, with increased sophistication and regional deterrence.
- India's actions were presented to the international community by **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri**, while **President Droupadi Murmu** and **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** were kept closely informed.

India Strikes Pak Airbases

One missile hit Nur Khan near Islamabad, close to army headquarters in Rawalpindi



Map: Dipu Rai • Source: Media Reports

Major Indian Operations Against Pakistan before Operation Sindoor

1965 – Operation Riddle

- Launched in early **September 1965** as India's direct military response to Pakistan's covert **Operation Gibraltar** and "**Grand Slam**" offensive in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Focused on striking Lahore and Kasur, pushing Pakistan's forces back and setting the stage for the eventual Tashkent Agreement that ended hostilities.

1965 – Operation Ablaze

- Initiated in **April 1965** as a counter-mobilisation on India's western borders, particularly following skirmishes in the **Rann of Kutch**.
- Served as a strategic readiness move, preparing Indian forces for the escalation that led to full-scale war.

1971 – Operation Cactus Lily

- Executed during the **Indo-Pakistani War of 1971**, primarily targeting **East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)**.
- Included large-scale assaults by the Indian Army and Air Force, critical in breaking Pakistan's defences and accelerating East Pakistan's liberation.

1984 – Operation Meghdoot

- A pre-emptive deployment on **April 13, 1984**, to secure control of the **Siachen Glacier**.
- The operation successfully blocked Pakistan's efforts to occupy key high-altitude posts and triggered a prolonged military standoff.

1987 – Operation Rajiv

- A daring mission in June 1987 to capture Quaid Post (later renamed Bana Top) on the Siachen Glacier.
- Led by Subedar Bana Singh, the mission earned India the Param Vir Chakra for bravery.

1999 – Operation Talwar

- Conducted during the Kargil War, the navy launched a blockade mission combining both Western and Eastern fleets.
- It aimed to choke Pakistan's maritime trade, underscoring India's naval power projection.

2016 – Uri Surgical Strikes

- Indian Army special forces crossed the Line of Control and targeted militant launch pads in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, responding to the Uri terrorist attack that killed 19 soldiers.
- The operation inflicted casualties among militants and disrupted planned infiltration attempts. The strikes were described as limited in scale and scope, with tactical objectives achieved.

2019 – Balakot Airstrike (Operation Bandar)

- In response to the devastating Pulwama attack (CRPF convoy bombing that killed ~40 personnel), Indian Air Force jets struck a Jaish-e-Mohammed training camp in Balakot, Pakistan.
- It marked the first airstrike beyond the Line of Control since 1971.

Integrated Air Command and Control System

- A centralised, automated air defence command-and-control network developed by **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** for the **Indian Air Force**, operating atop the **Air Force Network (AFNet)** backbone.
- Integrates data from ground radars, AWACS, civilian radars, UAVs, and fighter aircraft, producing a unified Recognised **Air Situation Picture (RASP)** for commanders at strategic, operational, and tactical levels.
- **Strategic Role in Recent Operations:** Played a crucial role in **Operation Sindoor (May 2025)**, helping intercept Pakistani drones and missiles; the **Joint Air Defence Centre (JADC)** coordinated strikes with unmatched efficiency through IACCS.
- In 2003, the Directorate of IACCS was established, and the groundwork began to digitise air command and control across the country.

- The true leap occurred in 2010 with the launch of the Air Force Network (AFNET) — a secure, digital communications grid that replaced outdated troposcatter systems from the 1950s.

Detailed Timeline:

- **1999:** The IAF received approval for the procurement of five IACCS systems.
- **2002:** A study group was formed to explore indigenous development, leading to the formation of the IACCS cell at Air HQ.
- **2003:** The Directorate of IACCS was established.
- **2010:** The Air Force Network (AFNET) was launched, marking a significant step towards a net-centric combat force.
- **2020:** The Directorate of IACCS was renamed as the Directorate of Operational Network.

Key Capabilities

- **Real-Time situational awareness:** Enables commanders to detect, identify, and track threats—like aircraft, drones, or missiles—instantly and collaboratively.
- **Layered air defence integration:** Supports multi-tier defence—including MANPADS, short-, medium- and long-range SAMs—across the Army, Air Force, and IAF-controlled platforms like Akashteer .
- **Net-centric warfare backbone:** Shares data (voice, video, imagery) via IP/MPLS networks, reducing sensor-to-shooter response times and enabling swift central directives with decentralised execution

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Under which rule of the Territorial Army Rules, 1948, did the Ministry of Defence activate 14 Territorial Army battalions?
(a) Rule 32 (b) Rule 35
(c) Rule 33 (d) Rule 30
- What was the name of the civil defence mock drill conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs across 244 districts?
(a) Operation Shakti (b) Operation Vigil
(c) Operation Abhyaas (d) Operation Rakshak
- Which of the following missile systems was used by India to ensure air superiority during Operation Sindoor?
(a) PL-15 (b) METEOR
(c) Shahpar (d) Burraq
- Which Indian-made missile system played a significant role in intercepting Pakistani UAVs and missiles during the operation?
(a) BrahMos (b) S-400 Triumf
(c) Akash (d) SCALP-EG
- Which satellite systems were used by India to achieve 10–20 cm targeting accuracy in real-time during the strikes?
(a) NavIC, RISAT, and Cartosat
(b) NAVSTAR, INSAT, and RISAT
(c) Galileo, Cartosat, and TeLEOS-1
(d) GLONASS, RISAT, and INSAT
- Which of the following individuals delivered key briefings during Operation Sindoor?
(a) General Bipin Rawat and Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi
(b) Wing Commander Vyomika Singh and Colonel Sofiya Qureshi
(c) Air Marshal V.R. Chaudhari and Major Anurag Pratap
(d) Admiral R. Hari Kumar and Group Captain Aditi Sharma
- What was the purpose of the Akashteer command and control system during the operation?
(a) Seamless integration of radar and fire systems
(b) Decoding enemy transmissions
(c) Transport coordination
(d) Launching anti-submarine missiles
- Which Pakistani drone systems were targeted and degraded during the operation?
(a) Shaheen-III and Ghauri
(b) Bayraktar TB2 and Harpy
(c) Hermes 900 and Predator
(d) Shahpar, Burraq, and Wing Loong II
- Which Indian military operation in 1984 marked the pre-emptive occupation of the Siachen Glacier to block Pakistani advances?
(a) Operation Meghdoot (b) Operation Rajiv
(c) Operation Bandar (d) Operation Cactus Lily
- Operation Cactus Lily was primarily associated with which conflict?
(a) 1965 Indo-Pak War (b) 1971 Indo-Pak War
(c) Kargil War (d) Balakot Airstrike
- Who led Operation Rajiv in 1987 that resulted in the capture of Quaid Post, later renamed Bana Top?
(a) Captain Vikram Batra (b) Major R.S. Rathore
(c) Subedar Bana Singh (d) General Arjun Thakur
- Which naval operation was conducted during the Kargil War to blockade Pakistan's maritime trade routes?
(a) Operation Talwar (b) Operation Trident
(c) Operation Riddle (d) Operation Abhyaas
- Which operation involved Indian Air Force jets striking Jaish-e-Mohammed training camps in Balakot after the Pulwama attack?
(a) Operation Meghdoot (b) Operation Cactus Lily
(c) Operation Bandar (d) Operation Gibraltar

SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (c) | 3. (b) | 4. (c) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (a) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) | 11. (c) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | | | |

2 CASTE CENSUS APPROVED

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Authority:** On April 30, 2025, the **Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA)**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the inclusion of **caste-based enumeration** in the upcoming **national Census**.
- **Policy Significance:** This marks a **historic reversal** of India's long-standing policy, becoming the **first official caste enumeration since 1931**, excluding SC/ST data, which has been collected separately.
- **Political and Social Context:** The decision follows sustained **demands from opposition leaders** like **Rahul Gandhi**, as well as **state governments**, calling for **updated caste data** to better inform welfare policies and social justice frameworks.

Historical Context

- India has conducted population counts since ancient times, but modern decennial censuses began under British rule. The **first fully synchronous national Census took place in 1881**, with regular ten-year cycles continuing into independent India.
- **Caste data remained part of every Census from 1881 to 1931.** However, after independence in 1951, data collection was limited to SCs and STs. OBCs and other categories were not enumerated at a national level.
- Caste data was previously collected in a voluntary capacity during the **Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011**, but this did not occur within the regular Census framework and faced scrutiny over data reliability.

Mandal Commission - The Foundational Demand for Caste Data in Welfare Policies

- The **Mandal Commission**, formally known as the **Second Backward Classes Commission**, was established in **1979** under the leadership of **B.P. Mandal**, with the objective of identifying **socially and educationally backward classes**.
- In its report submitted in **1980**, the Commission estimated the **OBC population at 52%** based on the 1931 caste data and recommended **27% reservation in central government jobs** and educational institutions for OBCs.
- While its implementation in **1990** by the **V.P. Singh government** triggered major social and political debates, the absence of updated caste data has continued to hamper precise policy implementation.



Bindheshwari Prasad
Mandal

Constitutional Authority and Statutory Mechanism

- The power to conduct the **Census** lies with the **Union Government**, under **Entry 69 of the Union List** as per **Article 246 of the Constitution**.
- The **Census Act, 1948**, enacted by the Constituent Assembly, provides the statutory framework for census operations.

- The exercise is carried out under the supervision of the **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India**, who operates under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- The **Census Rules, 1990** govern fieldwork, training, and data protection.
- The upcoming census, to be conducted by the **Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI)**, will integrate **caste enumeration** within the regular decadal exercise, avoiding the bifurcation seen in 2011.

Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011

- The **Ministry of Rural Development** launched **SECC in June 2011** to produce a household-level database that could rank families by their socio-economic status and simultaneously **generate caste-wise population data** that had been **absent from the regular decennial Census since 1931**.
- The government justified a separate survey—rather than relying solely on the Population Census—on the grounds that welfare delivery required open, verifiable household information that the confidential Census cannot legally provide.
- Although the **socio-economic results were released in 2015** and have since become the backbone of welfare targeting, **the detailed caste returns were never published** because of severe data-quality concerns.

Methodology and Execution

- SECC was **India's first nationwide enumeration to be conducted entirely on hand-held electronic tablets** across all **640 districts**, making it a **fully paper-less operation**.
- The survey followed the **S. R. Hashim Committee's three-tier framework**: fourteen “automatic exclusion” parameters (for example, possession of a motor vehicle), five “automatic inclusion” parameters (such as homeless households), and seven graded deprivation indicators (including kutcha housing and landlessness).
- Separate modules were administered for rural and urban areas, with data entry verified in real time through a public-objection process before finalisation

Key Socio-Economic Findings

- The final count covered **24.49 crore households**, of which 17.91 crore (73%) were rural; within these villages, 10.69 crore households—**almost half—were classified as deprived on at least one indicator**.
- A striking **29.97 % of rural households were entirely landless** and earned their primary income from manual labour, highlighting deep agrarian distress.
- Fully **92 % of rural families** reported that their highest earner brought home **less than ₹10,000 per month**, and **nearly three-quarters earned ₹5,000 or less**, underscoring widespread income poverty.
- Housing deprivation was acute: **roughly 13 % of village families lived in a single-room kutcha dwelling**, while four crore rural households lacked any pucca house, prompting an urgent push under PMAY-G.
- Urban data, published later, revealed that **at least 3.5 million city households had no source of income** and that nine million were headed by women, exposing pockets of severe urban vulnerability.
- Although enumerators collected self-declared caste names, the Union Government has never released the raw caste tables, stating in a **2021 Supreme Court affidavit that open-ended responses** produced an unmanageable 4.6 million distinct entries, rendering the data “**flawed and unusable**”.

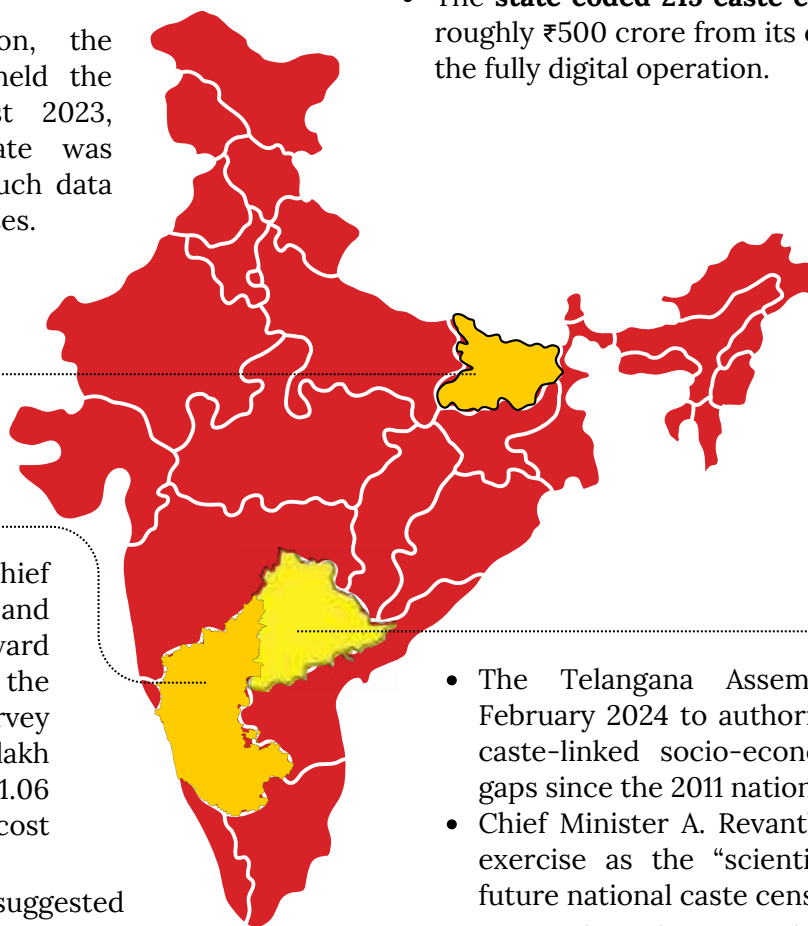


State-Led Precedents

Bihar

- The Bihar survey was authorised by a **6 June 2022 gazette notification** that invoked the **Collection of Statistics Act 2008**.
- **Fieldwork unfolded in two phases:** house-listing from 7 to 21 January 2023 and caste-plus-economic enumeration from 15 April to 31 May 2023.
- After interim litigation, the Patna High Court upheld the exercise on 1 August 2023, holding that the state was competent to collect such data for social-justice purposes.

- The final report, released on 2 October 2023, placed the total population at 13.07 crore. Backward Classes constituted 27.12 per cent, Extremely Backward Classes 36.01 per cent, Scheduled Castes 19.65 per cent, Scheduled Tribes 1.68 per cent and so-called “General” communities 15.52 per cent.
- The **state coded 215 caste categories** and spent roughly ₹500 crore from its contingency fund on the fully digital operation.



Karnataka

- Commissioned by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and led by the Backward Classes Commission, the 2015 door-to-door survey mobilised about 1.6 lakh staff, covered over 1.06 crore households and cost ₹162 crore.
- Unofficial leaks in 2018 suggested that Scheduled Castes formed 19.5% of the population, Muslims 16 per cent, Vokkaligas 14 per cent and Lingayats 11 per cent, triggering protests from dominant castes who alleged under-counting.
- Successive governments withheld the formal report until it was finally tabled in Cabinet on 11 April 2025.

Telangana

- The Telangana Assembly voted on 16 February 2024 to authorise a comprehensive caste-linked socio-economic survey, citing gaps since the 2011 national census.
- Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy framed the exercise as the “scientific template” for a future national caste census.
- Data released on 3 February 2025 showed Backward Classes at 56.33 per cent, Scheduled Castes at 17.43 per cent, Scheduled Tribes at 10.45 per cent and “Other Castes” at 15.79 per cent; Muslims make up 12.56 per cent, with a tenth of them counted among BCs.

Decision to Conduct a New Survey: On 12 June 2025, the Karnataka Cabinet ordered a fresh ninety-day socio-economic caste survey, citing the ten-year lapse and “flawed” earlier data; it tasked a re-constituted Backward Classes Commission with finishing enumeration before the summer of 2026.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What new element was approved for inclusion in the national Census by the Cabinet Committee on April 30, 2025?
(a) Religion enumeration (b) SC/ST enumeration
(c) Varna Enumeration (d) Caste enumeration
- The upcoming Census will include full caste data for the first time since which year?
(a) 1931 (b) 1951
(c) 1961 (d) 1991
- Which commission in the 1980s estimated the OBC population in India to be around 52%?
(a) Sachar Commission (b) Kelkar Commission
(c) Mandal Commission (d) Punchhi Commission
- Which constitutional provision places the subject of Census under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union government?
(a) Article 248 (b) Article 312
(c) Article 263 (d) Article 246
- Which institution will be responsible for executing the caste enumeration in the next Census?
(a) Office of the Registrar General of India
(b) Office of the Planning Commission of India
(c) Office of the Central Statistical Office
(d) Office of the Ministry of Social Justice
- Which Union Minister made the official announcement affirming the CCPA's resolution to include caste enumeration in the upcoming Census exercise?
(a) Nirmala Sitharaman (b) Ashwini Vaishnaw
(c) Dharmendra Pradhan (d) Mansukh Mandaviya
- Which official enumeration exercise reported that OBCs and EBCs together constitute 63.14% of the population?
(a) National Social Audit Report
(b) Economic Survey Report
(c) Bihar Caste Survey Report
(d) All India Census Report
- Which census exercise in 2011 collected caste data but did not release the final caste-wise report due to classification and consistency issues?
(a) National Population Register Survey
(b) Rural Household Survey Report
(c) Household Consumer Census Scheme
(d) Socio-Economic and Caste Census
- Which legislation ensures the confidentiality of individual data and penalizes misinformation during the upcoming 2025 Census process?
(a) The Census Act, 1948
(b) The Statistics Act, 2008
(c) The Data Privacy Act, 2023
(d) The Records Act, 1951
- Which organization, after initially opposing caste enumeration in 2010, later supported it for welfare planning while cautioning against its political misuse?
(a) All India Panchayat Parishad
(b) Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
(c) National Backward Classes Forum
(d) Indian Social Justice Council
- Who chaired the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs that approved caste-based enumeration in the national Census?
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(b) Home Minister Amit Shah
(c) Minister of Defence Rajnath
(d) Law Minister A Ram Meghwal
- Which constitutional provisions recognize SCs and STs, guiding their inclusion in post-1951 Census classifications?
(a) Article 338 and Article 339
(b) Article 243 and Article 244
(c) Article 340 and Article 343
(d) Article 341 and Article 342

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) | 11. (a) | 12. (d) | | | | |

3

SUSPENSION OF INDUS WATER
TREATY AND OTHER DECISIONS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Trigger Event:** On April 22, 2025, a **terrorist attack in Pahalgam**, Jammu and Kashmir, led to the **death of 26 civilians**, prompting a strong **strategic and diplomatic response** from the Indian government.
- **Government Action:** In a **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** meeting chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, India unveiled a **five-pronged retaliatory strategy** aimed at **countering Pakistan-based terrorism**.
- **Key Decision – Treaty Suspension:** The most impactful measure announced was placing the **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)** with Pakistan **in abeyance**, signaling a **major shift in India's diplomatic posture** and leveraging water as a strategic tool.

Pahalgam Terror Attack &
Intelligence Confirmation of LeT Involvement

- The terror attack occurred in the **Baisaran Valley of Anantnag district**, Jammu & Kashmir, when **five heavily armed militants**, disguised in military fatigues, opened fire on a group of **Hindu and Christian tourists**.
- The attackers reportedly demanded that the victims identify their religion and **executed those unable to recite Islamic verses**, clearly indicating a **communal intent**. Among the deceased was **Syed Adil Hussain Shah**, a local Muslim pony handler who attempted to shield the victims.
- The **Resistance Front (TRF)** initially claimed responsibility but later withdrew its statement. Subsequent investigation identified the perpetrators as **Adil Hussain Thoker**, a local from Anantnag, and **Ali Bhai (alias Talha Bhai)** and **Hashim Musa (alias Suleiman)**, both Pakistani nationals, with confirmed ties to **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)**.

National Security Measures and Diplomatic Actions

- In a **2.5-hour high-level meeting**, the **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**—comprising the **Prime Minister**, **Home Minister Amit Shah**, **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**, **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar**, **NSA Ajit Doval**, and senior security officials—finalised a **five-pronged strategic response**.
- These include placing the **Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance**, cancelling **diplomatic visas**, declaring **Pakistan's defence staff persona non grata**, reducing **mission strengths in both countries**, and cancelling **SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES)** endorsements for Pakistani nationals.
- Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri** formally announced the measures, while **Home Minister Amit Shah** personally visited Pahalgam and met with the victims' families.

Division of rivers as per Indus Waters Treaty

Eastern rivers to India: Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

Western rivers to Pakistan: Chenab, Jhelum and Indus



About the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- The Indus Waters Treaty was signed on 19 **September 1960** by **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** and **President Ayub Khan**, with the World Bank acting as mediator.
- It governs the distribution of six rivers of the Indus system—allocating **Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej to India**, and **Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab to Pakistan**.
- The treaty granted Pakistan 135 MAF (million acre-feet) annually from the western rivers, amounting to about 80% of the total river system, while India received 33 MAF, or 20%, from the eastern rivers.

Origins and Legal Foundation

- Following the **Partition of 1947**, water disputes escalated when India halted the flow of rivers from headworks in its territory in **April 1948**.
- In response, the matter was referred to the **World Bank (then the IBRD)**, which agreed to mediate in **1951**. After **nine years of**

- the treaty was signed and came into force on **1 April 1960**.
- It includes provisions for **non-consumptive use** by India on western rivers for purposes like **hydropower and navigation**, while guaranteeing Pakistan unrestricted flow for agriculture and drinking water.

Treaty Implementation and Dispute Resolution Mechanism

- The treaty established the **Permanent Indus Commission**, with one commissioner from each country.
- It lays out a **three-tier dispute resolution process**: first through bilateral discussions at the Commission level, then through a **Neutral Expert**, and finally, in case of serious disputes, a **Court of Arbitration**.
- The World Bank plays a facilitating role in the appointment of experts and arbitrators. This structure has helped prevent the breakdown of the treaty even during major conflicts like the 1971 war, Kargil (1999), and the Uri attacks (2016).

Recent Developments – Treaty Suspension and Hydropower Acceleration

- On **April 23, 2025**, India **suspended the Indus Waters Treaty**, citing **national security** in the aftermath of the **Pahalgam attack**.
- India alleged direct involvement of Pakistan-based terrorist outfits, justifying the suspension as a necessary retaliatory measure.
- Subsequently, India **fast-tracked construction** on key hydropower projects along the Chenab River, including **Pakal Dul (1,000 MW)**, **Kiru (624 MW)**, **Kwar (540 MW)**, and **Ratle (850 MW)**—all of which are now slated for completion between **2026 and 2028**.
- These projects had earlier faced delays due to objections raised by Pakistan under the treaty's provisions.

India's Call for Treaty Modernisation – Formal Notice to the World Bank

- In **August 2024**, India submitted a **formal notice** to the **World Bank**, requesting a **review and modernisation of the IWT**.
- India argued that the treaty must reflect **shifting demographic and energy needs, clean energy goals, and ecological sustainability**.
- Despite criticism, India has maintained that its hydropower initiatives conform to the treaty's clause on **non-consumptive use**.
- India's position has been supported by countries advocating for **water equity**, especially in the context of **changing river flows and basin-wide management**.



Other Strategic Measures – Diplomatic Retaliation and Cross-Border Isolation

- As part of the broader response, **India closed the Attari Integrated Check Post**, mandating **Pakistani nationals in India** to return before **May 1, 2025**. All visas under the **SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES)** were declared **cancelled**, requiring recipients to **exit within 48 hours**.
- Additionally, **Pakistan's defence, naval, and air advisers** were declared **persona non grata**, with a **one-week deadline** to leave under provisions of the **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)**.
- India also decided to **reduce the strength of both High Commissions** to **30 personnel** from the current 55, signalling a formal diplomatic downgrade.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following forums chaired by the Prime Minister took the strategic decision of suspending IWT in response to the Pahalgam terror incident?
(a) Parliamentary Defence Panel
(b) Crisis Management Group
(c) Cabinet Committee on Security
(d) Internal Security Affairs Council
- What was the strategic framework unveiled by India post the April 2025 terror attack, which included diplomatic, military, and economic countermeasures?
(a) Five-pronged retaliatory response
(b) Regional containment doctrine
(c) Multi-tiered security pact
(d) Coordinated threat reduction model
- In which year did India sign the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan?
(a) 1951 (b) 1960 (c) 1965 (d) 1972
- In which district of Jammu and Kashmir did the April 2025 terror incident occur, involving civilian casualties in the Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam?
(a) Budgam district (b) Shopian district
(c) Kulgam district (d) Anantnag district
- What percentage of the total Indus river system water was allocated to India under the Indus Waters Treaty?
(a) 10% (b) 20% (c) 33% (d) 50%
- Which regional visa arrangement was cancelled by India for Pakistani nationals, compelling all holders to leave the country within two days?
(a) South Asia Diplomatic Travel Permit
(b) Inter-Governmental Exchange Protocol
(c) All SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme
(d) Indo-Pak Joint Religious Travel Pass
- Which rivers from the Indus system were allocated to India under the Indus Waters Treaty signed in 1960, while Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan?
(a) Kabul, Swat, and Zaskar
(b) Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej
(c) Ganga, Yamuna, and Brahmaputra
(d) Shyok, Nubra, and Tawi
- From which group of rivers as per the Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan was granted approximately 135 million acre-feet (MAF) of water annually?
(a) Western rivers (b) Central rivers
(c) Monsoon rivers (d) Glacier rivers
- Which international organization brokered the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan in 1960?
(a) World Bank (b) United Nations
(c) IMF Panel (d) SAARC Body
- Which international institution, later known as the World Bank, mediated the water dispute between India and Pakistan beginning in 1951?
(a) League of Nations Advisory Council
(b) United Nations Peace Commission
(c) Asian Development Coordination Forum
(d) International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- Who signed the Indus Waters Treaty on behalf of India during the formal agreement held in Karachi on 19 September 1960?
(a) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
(c) Dr. Rajendra Prasad (d) Lal Bahadur Shastri
- Which authority is approached if the Permanent Indus Commission fails to resolve an issue under the Indus Waters Treaty's three-tier dispute resolution mechanism?
(a) Neutral Expert (b) Arbitration Panel
(c) Regional Mediator (d) International Court
- On which river India has accelerated work on key hydroelectric projects like Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar, and Ratle, are located?
(a) Ravi River (b) Sutlej River
(c) Chenab River (d) Beas River

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (c) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (d) | 11. (b) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | | | |

4

KAILASH MANSAROVAR YATRA
2025

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Announcement:** The **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** is scheduled to **resume in June 2025**, marking the end of a **six-year suspension** that began in 2020 due to the **Galwan Valley clash** and the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- **Diplomatic Significance:** The resumption signals a **positive step in the restoration of India-China bilateral relations**, especially in the context of restricted cross-border engagements since 2020.
- **Pilgrimage Details:** A total of **750 Indian citizens** will be permitted to undertake the pilgrimage to **Mount Kailash in Tibet**, using two established routes: **Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand** and **Nathu La Pass in Sikkim**.



Nathu La Pass in Sikkim

Evolution of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra Across Eras

- The sacredness of **Mount Kailash** and **Lake Mansarovar** dates back to **ancient scriptural references**, including the **Skanda Purāṇa**, which extols their power to purify sins.
- Revered across **multiple religions**, Kailash is described in **Hinduism** as the **abode of Lord Shiva**, in **Buddhism** as the **mandala of Chakrasamvara**, in **Jainism** as **Astapada**, where **Rṣabha** attained **moksha**, and in the **Bön tradition** as the **Nine-Stacked Swastika Mountain**.
- Historical references from Chinese monks like **Faxian (5th century CE)** and **Xuanzang (7th century CE)** confirm the region's magnetism for pilgrims from across Asia.



Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand

- In the **medieval and colonial periods**, Tibetan chronicles documented **monks meditating in Kailash caves** and performing the arduous **Parikrama (Kora)**, while British-era accounts detailed the challenges faced by early Indian ascetics.
- **Swami Pranavananda's field surveys** in the 1930s institutionalised awareness of the route through his landmark work *Kailash-Mansarovar* (1939).

From Closure to Reopening and Institutionalisation (1954–2000)

- Although the **1954 India-China Agreement** nominally allowed pilgrimage rights, restrictions after the **1959 Tibetan uprising** and the **1962 Sino-Indian War** completely shut down Indian access.
- A breakthrough came on **28 June 1981**, when **Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua** and **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** agreed to reopen the route for Indian pilgrims, ending a **19-year suspension**.
- The first official batch of **43 Indian yatris**, escorted by the MEA, undertook the journey via the **Lipulekh-Taklakot corridor**, establishing a precedent for **state-organised pilgrimage**.
- During the 1990s, the yatra became more institutionalised. The MEA, in collaboration with **Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN)** and the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**, built infrastructure such as **rest houses, acclimatisation camps, and communication facilities**, ensuring a more structured format.

- Each successful yatra came to symbolise **bilateral goodwill** and served as a **confidence-building measure** amid persistent geopolitical tensions.

Route Expansion and Technological Integration (2001–2019)

- In the early 2000s, India expanded the scale and accessibility of the yatra. Batch sizes were increased, satellite phones were deployed, and pre-departure mountaineering training was made mandatory.
- A major development occurred with the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding on 18 September 2014**, under which **China agreed to open the Nathu La Pass route**, catering especially to elderly pilgrims due to reduced trekking.
- The **first batch via Nathu La departed in June 2015**, enabling faster access via motor road and completing the pilgrimage in **just eight days**.
- By 2015, the entire application, medical screening, and selection process had become **digitally managed**, ensuring greater **transparency** and **gender parity**.

Geopolitical Tensions and Suspension (2020–2024)

- A major shift occurred in **May 2020**, when India inaugurated the **Dharchula–Lipulekh motorable road**, an 80-km stretch allowing vehicular access up to 5 km short of the pass, significantly reducing the trekking burden.
- However, the move drew sharp protests from **Nepal**, which claimed the road passes through **territory it disputes** with India.
- This controversy, combined with the **Galwan Valley clash in June 2020** and the global COVID-19 pandemic, led to the **cancellation of five consecutive yatra seasons**, marking the longest interruption since the pilgrimage was reinstated in 1981.

Resumption in 2025 – New Format and Protocols

- Following **India–China disengagement talks** held in **Kazan (October 2024)**, both countries agreed to **resume the yatra** under new arrangements. The 2025 season will run from **June to August**, with **750 pilgrims** selected through a **computerised, fair, and gender-balanced lottery system** available via kmy.gov.in.
- Of these, **250 pilgrims** will use the **Lipulekh route** (five batches of 50) and **500** will use the **Nathu La route** (ten batches of 50). The **cost per pilgrim** has been set at **₹1.74 lakh** for Lipulekh and **₹2.83 lakh** for Nathu La, the latter being higher due to its motorable nature and better accommodations.
- New features include **real-time feedback integration** on the portal, **mandatory COVID-19 and high-altitude screening**, and the deployment of **tele-medicine kiosks** at **Gunji and Sherathang**.
- The **ITBP** has enhanced rescue capability by incorporating **UAV (drone) monitoring** on the Lipulekh route to manage emergencies.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Following which major military confrontation between India and China the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra was suspended in 2020

- (a) Galwan Valley clash
- (b) Doklam border dispute
- (c) Pangong Lake standoff
- (d) Nathula Pass encounter

2. In which diplomatic domain the planned resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra in mid-2025 is widely interpreted as a positive development?

- (a) Himalayan religious outreach
- (b) Transnational travel revival
- (c) Spiritual tourism initiative
- (d) India-China bilateral ties

3. Via which two designated mountain passes the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra will now resume in 2025?

- (a) Rohtang Pass and Jelep La Pass
- (b) Mana Pass and Bum La Pass
- (c) Lipulekh Pass and Nathu La Pass
- (d) Zojila Pass and Khardung La Pass

4. How many total Indian pilgrims have been approved by the MEA to undertake the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra in 2025?

- (a) 500 pilgrims
- (b) 600 pilgrims
- (c) 700 pilgrims
- (d) 750 pilgrims

5. The description of Kailash and Mansarovar as destroyers of sin and spiritually purifying places is found in which religious scripture?

- (a) Linga Purāṇa
- (b) Skanda Purāṇa
- (c) Agni Purāṇa
- (d) Brahma Purāṇa

6. According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which divine form is Mount Kailash symbolically linked to?

- (a) Vajrapani protector
- (b) Tara the savior
- (c) Buddha Amitabha
- (d) Cakrasaṃvara deity

7. Which religious tradition identifies Mount Kailash as the site of Ādinātha's liberation?

- (a) Sikh religious writings
- (b) Buddhist sacred texts
- (c) Jain canonical texts
- (d) Vedic spiritual works

8. Which early Chinese monks recorded accounts of Indian pilgrims visiting sacred sites like Mount Kailash?

- (a) I-tsing and Hongzan
- (b) Faxian and Xuanzang
- (c) Huiyen and Zhang Qian
- (d) Li Bai and Han Shan

9. By which historical period did Chinese monks record Indian devotees journeying to the "bluish mountain of Bhīmādevi"?

- (a) 3rd century
- (b) 5th century
- (c) 6th century
- (d) 7th century

10. What is the traditional term used in Tibetan Buddhism for the full-body circumambulation around Mount Kailash?

- (a) Torma offering
- (b) Lama ritual
- (c) Kora practice
- (d) Mantra chant

11. Whose 1930s fieldwork led to detailed mapping and the publication of the book Kailash-Mansarovar in 1939?

- (a) Swami Pranavananda's
- (b) Sir Francis Younghusband's
- (c) Captain Henry Strachey's
- (d) Major Kenneth Mason's

12. When did China impose a complete closure of the Kailash pilgrimage route following growing border tensions?

- (a) 1947 Crisis
- (b) 1954 Pact
- (c) 1959 Revolt
- (d) 1962 War

13. During the 1981 breakthrough, which Indian leader did Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua meet to resume pilgrim visits?

- (a) President Neelam Sanjiva
- (b) Minister P V Narasimha Rao
- (c) Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
- (d) Speaker S. Balram Jakhar

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

14. Which traditional Himalayan pass was used by India's MEA to initiate escorted Kailash pilgrimages for Indian citizens?

- (a) Nathu La-Sherathang route
- (b) Lipulekh-Taklakot corridor
- (c) Rohtang-Khulong pathway
- (d) Zojila-Nyoma pilgrimage way

15. Which organisation worked with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police to develop yatra facilities in Uttarakhand in the 1990s?

- (a) Himalayan Mountaineering Council
- (b) Ministry of Defence Logistics Wing
- (c) Indian Tourism Development Board
- (d) Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (d) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (d) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (a) | 12. (d) | 13. (c) | 14. (b) | 15. (d) | |

5

INDIA MAY 49% INVESTMENT IN NUCLEAR POWER

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Policy Development:** The **Government of India** is actively deliberating a proposal to **permit up to 49% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in the **nuclear power sector**, a historically closed and strategically sensitive domain.
- **Strategic Objective:** The move is aimed at **boosting nuclear energy capacity** to support **India's carbon reduction commitments** and meet the ambitious target of **100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047**.
- **Historical Context:** If implemented, this would represent a **historic policy shift**, as India's nuclear energy sector has long been dominated by **state-owned enterprises**, with **FDI currently restricted** under stringent regulatory norms.

Proposal Includes

Foreign Company are now may
be allowed upto 49% of FDI

The FDI will not be allowed
under automatic Route.

Atomic Energy Act, 1960

Civil Liability for Nuclear
Damage Act, 2010

It will only be allowed after
prior cabinet Approval.

Amendment
Required in these Acts to allow
such FDI

Key Policy Developments and Institutional Oversight

- The proposal includes permitting **foreign companies** to acquire minority stakes of up to **49%**, but only through **explicit Cabinet approval**, not via the automatic route. The government also intends to amend the **Atomic Energy Act, 1960**, and the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010**, in the **July 2025 Monsoon Session** to facilitate both **private Indian and foreign participation** in **plant construction, mining, and fuel manufacturing**.
- The **Department of Atomic Energy, Finance Ministry, and PMO** are steering the policy, with the upcoming **Cabinet review** paving the way for legislative changes.

Current Status and Expansion Targets

- India currently operates **25 nuclear reactors** across **seven sites**, generating approximately **8.88 GW**—about **1.7%** of the nation's installed capacity and **3%** of its electricity.
- An additional **eight reactors (6.6 GW)** are under construction, with **ten more (7 GW)** in planning stages. The government has ambitious plans: reaching **40 GW by 2035** and **100 GW by 2047**, leveraging **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** and foreign partnerships.

Historical Evolution of India's Nuclear Programme

- India's atomic journey began in **March 1944** when **physicist Homi J. Bhabha** wrote to the **Sir Dorabji Tata Trust** proposing a "**School of Physics**" that could eventually employ nuclear energy for the nation's development.
- Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru backed Bhabha's vision; in **August 1954** the government created the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** under the **Prime Minister's direct charge**, with **Bhabha as its first Secretary**.
- **Asia's first research reactor, APSARA**, achieved criticality at Trombay in **August 1956**, giving India an indigenous neutron source for isotope production and reactor-physics training.
- At the **1955 Geneva Conference**, Bhabha outlined a three-stage nuclear-power programme that would move from natural-uranium pressurised heavy-water reactors (PHWRs) to plutonium-fuelled fast breeders and, ultimately, to thorium-based thermal breeders so as to leverage India's vast thorium reserves.
- During the 1960s India built the **CIRUS research reactor** and a pilot reprocessing plant, thereby acquiring the capacity to separate plutonium.
- **China's 1964 nuclear test** and the **1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**—which India refused to sign, calling it discriminatory—intensified New Delhi's resolve to maintain a nuclear option.
- On **18 May 1974**, India detonated **Pokhran-I ("Smiling Buddha")**, describing it as a "peaceful nuclear explosion" but demonstrating a workable fission device and bringing sweeping technology embargoes.
- Five underground nuclear tests at **Pokhran in May 1998 ("Operation Shakti")** declared India's entry as an overt nuclear-weapon state. A draft nuclear doctrine issued in August 1999—and formally promulgated by the Cabinet Committee on Security in January 2003—committed India to a "**credible minimum deterrent**" and "**no-first-use**" posture, backed by a two-tier Nuclear Command Authority.



Homi Jehangir Bhabha,
father of the Indian
nuclear programme

Nuclear Power Plants in India

- India operates one of the world's most diverse fleets of nuclear power reactors: **twenty-five commercial units located at eight sites**, providing **8.8 GW of baseload capacity** and roughly **three per cent** of the country's electricity as of April 2025.
- The programme began with the **U.S.-supplied Tarapur boiling-water reactors in 1969** and has since grown through successive generations of indigenous pressurised heavy-water reactors (PHWRs), **Russian VVER-1000 units**, and an emerging 700 MWe PHWR "fleet" design. Below are detailed notes that trace the current inventory, the first plant, and the evolutionary milestones that have shaped India's civil nuclear landscape.
- India's commercial reactors are spread across Tarapur (Maharashtra), Rawatbhata-Rajasthan, Kalpakkam-Madras (Tamil Nadu), Narora (Uttar Pradesh), Kakrapar (Gujarat), Kaiga (Karnataka) and Kudankulam (Tamil Nadu).
- The **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** lists **25 operable units** with a combined net capacity of 8,780 MWe, a figure that climbed after Kakrapar-4 and Rajasthan-7 entered service in 2024-25.
- World-Nuclear News and the IAEA's PRIS database independently record the same total, noting that India has also retired the 100 MWe RAPS-1 but still counts 24 electricity-producing units.



Tarapur Atomic Power Station (TAPS) in Maharashtra

Units Under Construction and Planned Expansion:

- Eight reactors, totalling 6.6 GW, are at various stages of construction: Rajasthan-8, Kudankulam-3 to 6, Gorakhpur-1 & 2 (GHAVP), and the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam.
- The government's 2025 roadmap seeks 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047, leveraging both large-scale PHWRs and forthcoming **small-modular-reactor (SMR) technologies**.

Clean Energy Goals, Net-Zero Alignment & Diplomatic Leverage

- This policy shift supports India's **net-zero by 2070** commitment under global climate accords, contributing to **carbon reduction goals**.
- The opening of the nuclear sector will also enhance **India's energy security**, particularly through international partnerships—**NTPC** is in talks with **US and Russian firms** for **SMRs**, and **SMR-focused India-France and India-US initiatives** are underway.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What level of foreign direct investment (FDI) is being considered by India in the nuclear power sector?
(a) Up to 26% FDI limit (b) Up to 33% FDI limit
(c) Up to 49% FDI limit (d) Up to 74% FDI limit
2. By which year does India aim to achieve 100 GW of nuclear energy capacity under the current expansion plan?
(a) By the year 2035 (b) By the year 2047
(c) By the year 2050 (d) By the year 2060
3. Along with the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, which law is proposed for amendment in 2025?
(a) Electricity Reform Act, 2003
(b) Nuclear Control Act, 2016
(c) Power Projects Act, 1998
(d) Atomic Energy Act, 1960
4. What percentage of India's total installed electricity capacity currently comes from nuclear energy?
(a) 1% (b) 3% (c) 2% (d) 4%
5. Which 2008 agreement paved the way for India's entry into international civilian nuclear commerce?
(a) India-Japan Energy Cooperation Deal
(b) Indo-France Atomic Framework Pact
(c) India-Russia Uranium Supply Treaty
(d) Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement
6. Which legislation includes clauses that impose accident liability on nuclear equipment suppliers, deterring FDI in India's nuclear sector?
(a) Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010
(b) Atomic Energy Management Act, 2009
(c) International Nuclear Trade Facilitation Act
(d) Nuclear Power Development Framework Act
7. Which of the following was the site of India's first commercial nuclear power plant commissioned in 1969?
(a) Kalpakkam
(b) Narora
(c) Tarapur
(d) Kakrapar
8. By which year has India committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions under global climate frameworks?
(a) 2070
(b) 2050
(c) 2060
(d) 2045
9. Who is widely regarded as the father of India's nuclear programme initiated after independence?
(a) Dr. Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai
(b) Shri K. Subrahmanyam Iyer
(c) Prof. Raja Ramanna Sharma
(d) Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha
10. India's nuclear energy programme was initiated under the umbrella of the which institution?
(a) Indian Nuclear Directorate
(b) National Power Authority
(c) Atomic Energy Commission
(d) Council of Energy Studies
11. What strategy did India adopt to efficiently utilise its limited uranium and abundant thorium?
(a) closed-loop thorium energy cycle
(b) three-stage nuclear power programme
(c) multi-phase atomic fuel blueprint
(d) advanced breeder reactor strategy
12. In which phase of India's nuclear programme are Fast Breeder Reactors using plutonium deployed?
(a) First Stage
(b) Second Stage
(c) Third Stage
(d) Pilot Stage

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

13. Which type of reactors are planned for the final stage of India's nuclear strategy using U-233 fuel?

- (a) fast-plutonium systems
- (b) uranium-fuel reactors
- (c) thorium-based reactors
- (d) molten-sodium modules

14. In which year was the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) established to manage nuclear power plants?

- (a) 1964
- (b) 1971
- (c) 1966
- (d) 1969

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (b) | 3. (d) | 4. (b) | 5. (d) | 6. (a) | 7. (c) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (b) | 13. (c) | 14. (d) | | |

6

CCI APPROVES GOOGLE'S
ANTITRUST SETTLEMENT

LEGAL UPDATES

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Regulatory Action:** On **April 21, 2025**, the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved a **settlement proposal by Google** in an antitrust case concerning the **Android TV market**.
- **Legal Framework:** The case was initiated under **Section 19(1)(a) of the Competition Act, 2002**, following allegations of **abuse of dominance** by Google.
- **Settlement Significance:** This marks the **first order** passed under India's **newly operational Settlement Regulations (2024)**, setting a precedent for future regulatory resolutions.
- **Allegations and Reforms:** Google was accused of imposing restrictive licensing conditions on smart TV manufacturers, which allegedly curbed market access and innovation. As part of the settlement, Google agreed to unbundle Play Store services, provide flexible licensing options, and pay a settlement amount of ₹202.4 million.

Legal
Framework

Abuse of Dominance and India's Settlement Mechanism

The proceedings were conducted under **Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002**, which deals with the **abuse of dominant position**, read with **Section 19(1)(a)** that authorizes the CCI to investigate such violations. The matter also invoked **Section 48A(3)** introduced by the **Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023**, which allows for **voluntary settlement** of antitrust proceedings before the CCI, following a report by the **Director General (DG)**. Google's case was among the first to test the newly introduced **Settlement Regulations, 2024**, aimed at enhancing regulatory efficiency while maintaining deterrence through structured oversight and transparency.

Key Allegations

The original complaint alleged that Google's agreements with smart TV OEMs (original equipment manufacturers)—specifically the Television App Distribution Agreement (TADA) and Android Compatibility Commitments (ACC)—constituted restrictive practices. Google allegedly forced manufacturers to preinstall its suite of applications, including YouTube, as a condition for accessing the Google Play Store on Android TV. It also allegedly prevented OEMs from developing or distributing devices that used non-Google (forked) versions of Android, effectively creating entry barriers and denying market access to alternative software developers and competing online video hosting platforms (OVHPs).

Director General's Report

The **DG's investigation report** concluded that Google had indeed **abused its dominance** in both the **smart TV operating system market** and the **app distribution market**. In response, Google submitted a **detailed settlement proposal in May 2024**, offering an alternative to TADA—called the **New India Agreement**. Under this model, Google agreed to offer a standalone license for the Play Store and Play Services without any requirement to preinstall other Google apps.

CCI's Assessment of the Proposal and Majority Decision

The **majority of the CCI members** accepted Google's proposal as sufficient to address the competitive concerns. The Commission noted that the **unbundling of Play Store services** would allow rival apps to **gain visibility and access**, while the waiver of ACC conditions would remove the **barriers to forked Android development**. Google was also permitted to charge a **license fee** for the New India Agreement, with the CCI clarifying that it **does not function as a price regulator**, and acknowledged Google's need to offset revenue loss from excluding preinstalled monetizable apps.

Settlement Amount and Calculation Basis

Google proposed a **lower settlement figure**, arguing that revenues from **YouTube and Play Store** should be excluded from calculations. However, the CCI disagreed, holding that these revenue streams were **intrinsically linked** to the anti-competitive practices. Taking into account **mitigating factors** such as cooperation and compliance measures—and allowing a **15% settlement discount**—the final **settlement amount was fixed at ₹202.4 million (approximately USD 2.38 million)**.

Dissenting Opinion: Concerns over Market Dynamics and Licensing Burden

One **dissenting CCI member** disagreed with the settlement, arguing that the **dual-licensing model**—TADA (free but restrictive) versus the New India Agreement (paid but open)—may create a **disincentive for OEMs** to shift to the more competitive model due to cost implications. The dissent noted that unless TADA is fully revoked, the structure could continue to **skew market preferences** in favor of anti-competitive defaults, undermining the purpose of the **settlement mechanism** itself.

Institutional Significance and Precedent for Future Antitrust Resolutions

The case is significant for being the **first-ever settlement order** under the CCI's new **Settlement Regulations**, setting a precedent for future resolutions in cases involving **vertical restraints** and **dominance abuse**. The CCI demonstrated flexibility in **evaluating remedies**, including **non-price measures**, and issued a **reasoned public order** detailing the allegations, settlement terms, and its rationale—thereby **ensuring transparency** and possibly paving the way for **follow-on damages claims** in civil courts.

CCI and Evolving Competition Law Framework in India

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** is a **statutory body** established under the **Competition Act, 2002**, which replaced the **Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969**, based on recommendations from the **Raghavan Committee (1999)**.
- The Act has since undergone major amendments, including in **2023**, introducing mechanisms for **settlement and commitments**. The **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** now serves as the **appellate authority**, replacing the earlier **COMPAT**.
- These reforms aim to **modernize antitrust regulation**, promote **ease of doing business**, and encourage **voluntary compliance** through structured enforcement.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following companies had its settlement proposal approved by the CCI in an Android TV antitrust case on April 21, 2025?
(a) Samsung (b) OnePlus
(c) Xiaomi (d) Google
2. Under which provision of the Competition Act, 2002, was the antitrust case against Google in the Android TV market initiated?
(a) Section 19(1)(a) (b) Section 26(1)(b)
(c) Section 4(2)(a)(i) (d) Section 3(1)(b)(ii)
3. What significant legal development does the recent CCI order represent?
(a) Enforcement of Competition Act Guidelines (2019)
(b) Activation of Fair Trade Practices Protocol (2023)
(c) Implementation of Settlement Regulations (2024)
(d) Introduction of Market Compliance Scheme (2022)
4. As part of the CCI-approved settlement in the Android TV antitrust case, what key measure did Google agree to implement?
(a) Develop Android-specific firewall systems
(b) Unbundle Play Store services from Android TV
(c) Launch India-exclusive app monetization plan
(d) Eliminate Google Ads from search ecosystem
5. Which agreements were central to the antitrust complaint against Google in the Android TV investigation?
(a) Interface Agreement Policy and Compliance Certification Terms
(b) Application Store License and Operating Protocol Mandate
(c) Mobile App Deployment Rules and Firmware Integration Clause
(d) Television App Distribution and Android Compatibility Commitments
6. Under which legal provision were the proceedings against Google conducted in the Android TV antitrust case?
(a) Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002
(b) Section 19 of the Companies Act, 2013
(c) Section 3 of the IT Intermediary Rules, 2021
(d) Section 7 of the Digital Markets Code, 2024
7. The provision enabling voluntary settlement in the Google-CCI case was introduced through which legislation?
(a) Competition (Draft Rules) Act, 2021
(b) Digital Competition Framework, 2022
(c) Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023
(d) Market Regulation Reform Bill, 2024
8. What alternative agreement did Google propose in its May 2024 settlement submission to the CCI?
(a) The Smart Device Access proposed by Google
(b) The New India Agreement proposed by Google
(c) The Television System Policy proposed by Google
(d) The App Distribution Framework proposed by Google
9. Which agreements were central to the antitrust complaint against Google in the Android TV investigation?
(a) Interface Agreement Policy and Compliance Certification Terms
(b) Application Store License and Operating Protocol Mandate
(c) Mobile App Deployment Rules and Firmware Integration Clause
(d) Television App Distribution and Android Compatibility Commitments
10. What was Google allowed to charge under the terms of the New India Agreement, as clarified by the CCI?
(a) Fixed compliance cost for app certification
(b) Annual subscription fee for OEM partners

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (c) A license fee under the new arrangement
(d) Platform usage charge for smart services

11. Which revenue streams did Google argue should be excluded while proposing a lower settlement amount?

- (a) YouTube and Play Store revenue streams
(b) Maps and Gmail premium service profits
(c) Cloud and Drive enterprise account earnings
(d) News and Books content subscription sales

12. The Google-Android TV case is notable for being the first resolved under which framework?

- (a) The Fair Competition Enforcement Protocol
(b) The Digital Market Integrity Guidelines
(c) The CCI's new Settlement Regulations
(d) The Antitrust Resolution Scheme Rules

13. The establishment of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was based on the recommendations of which body?

- (a) Dutt Committee on Industrial Concentration
(b) Raghavan Committee (1999) on Competition Policy
(c) Narasimham Panel on Market Reforms
(d) Kelkar Group on Regulatory Harmonisation

14. Which body currently serves as the appellate authority for decisions made by the Competition Commission of India?

- (a) Securities Appellate Tribunal for Market Regulation
(b) Economic Justice Board for Fair Trade Practices
(c) High-Level Committee on Trade Compliance Matters
(d) National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (b) | 5. (d) | 6. (a) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (a) | 12. (c) | 13. (b) | 14. (d) | | |

7

INDORE DECLARED INDIA'S
FIRST BEGGAR-FREE CITY

LEGAL UPDATES

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Declaration:** On April 25, 2025, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, was officially declared **India's first beggar-free city**, following a comprehensive rehabilitation campaign.
- **Campaign Framework:** The achievement was made under the **Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat** initiative led by the **Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, launched to address urban homelessness and destitution.
- **Implementation and Impact:** Since February 2024, over 5,000 beggars have been removed from the streets and provided with rehabilitation support, including employment opportunities and educational integration for children.

- The campaign was spearheaded by the **district administration** in collaboration with the **Women and Child Development Department**, under the guidance of **District Magistrate Ashish Singh**.
- It was launched in **February 2024** targeting around **5,000 beggars**, including **500 children**, through a **phased approach**.
- In the first phase, **public awareness campaigns** were conducted.
- In the second phase, the administration focused on **rehabilitation efforts**, providing employment to adults and enrolling children in schools.
- Authorities noted that many beggars in Indore were migrants, especially from **Rajasthan**.
- The city has implemented a **strict ban on begging**, including restrictions on **giving alms** or **buying goods** from beggars.
- Legal enforcement has led to the registration of **three FIRs for violations**.
- Citizens are actively incentivized to report cases of begging, with a **reward of ₹1,000** per verified tip-off.
- This **community-driven mechanism**, coupled with rehabilitation and surveillance, has ensured sustained implementation of the ban.

BACKGROUND
OF THE
CAMPAIGNSMILE
SCHEME
NATIONAL
POLICY CONTEXT

- The campaign forms part of the **Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat** initiative under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** and is the part of the **Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging**, a sub-scheme of the **SMILE Scheme (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)** launched in 2022.
- This scheme operates with two components: one for **persons engaged in begging** and the other for **transgender empowerment**.
- The beggary component aims to **rehabilitate 8,000 individuals** between **FY 2023–24 and 2025–26**, through profiling, counselling, skill development, and support services in **urban centers**, especially **religious and tourist cities**.

Legal Framework

- **Begging** in India has traditionally been governed by **state-specific laws**, with no **uniform central legislation**.
- The most prominent statute is the **Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959**, which criminalises begging and defines it broadly, including acts like **singing, performing, or displaying physical deformities** for alms.
- **Vagrancy laws**, including beggary, fall under **Entry 15 of the Concurrent List (List III)**, allowing both the **Centre and states to legislate**.
- The absence of a central statute has led to fragmented enforcement and policy disparities across states.

Census Data and Socio-Economic Profile of Begging in India

- As per **Census 2011**, India had approximately **4.13 lakh beggars**, with the largest populations in **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh**.
- The **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011** estimates that **6.62 lakh rural households** depend on begging as their primary livelihood.
- These figures highlight the **interlinked challenges of poverty, disability, migration, and lack of social protection**, which the SMILE scheme seeks to address through **empathetic interventions and reintegration**.

Recognition and Model Adoption

- The Indore model has been **recognized by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** as a **template for national replication**.
- A **World Bank team** has also lauded the initiative for its holistic approach to tackling **urban poverty and homelessness**, integrating **social inclusion, legal reform, and community engagement**.
- Indore is one of **10 cities chosen under the pilot phase** of the Ministry's scheme, and its success may drive **scaling up of the programme** across other urban centers in India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Under which national initiative was Indore declared India's first beggar-free city in April 2025?
 - (a) Samagra Urban Inclusion Mission Scheme
 - (b) Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat Programme
 - (c) Grameen Samarthya Vikas Abhiyan Project
 - (d) Nagar Samajik Nyaya Karyakram Yojana
2. Which department collaborated with the district administration to implement the beggar-free city campaign in Indore?
 - (a) Women and Child Development Department
 - (b) Urban Employment Development Department
 - (c) Housing And Urban Development Department
 - (d) Rehabilitation and Community Integration Unit
3. Who guided the district administration in executing the beggar-free city campaign in Indore?
 - (a) Commissioner for Urban Outreach Services
 - (b) Director of Social Justice Reforms Mission
 - (c) District Magistrate Ashish Singh of Indore
 - (d) Secretary, Rehabilitation and Welfare Division
4. What was the focus of the second phase of Indore's beggar-free city campaign?
 - (a) Monitoring shelters through digital platforms
 - (b) Conducting health audits and documentation
 - (c) Launching surveys for migrant populations
 - (d) Implementing structured rehabilitation efforts
5. Primarily from which Indian state a significant number of beggars in Indore were migrants?
 - (a) Rajasthan
 - (b) Chhattisgarh
 - (c) Uttarakhand
 - (d) Jharkhand
6. What reward is offered to citizens for each verified tip-off about begging, under Indore's beggar-free campaign?
 - (a) ₹2,000 per verified tip-off
 - (b) ₹500 per verified tip-off
 - (c) ₹1,000 per verified tip-off
 - (d) ₹750 per verified tip-off
7. The SMILE Scheme, under which a sub-scheme for beggar rehabilitation was launched in 2022, stands for:
 - (a) Strategic Mission for Inclusive Livelihood and Employment Opportunity
 - (b) Scheme for Marginalised Individuals for Learning and Empowerment
 - (c) Systematic Model for Integration, Livelihood and Empowerment Program
 - (d) Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise
8. Through which sub-scheme of the SMILE Scheme launched in 2022 the campaign under the Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat initiative is implemented?
 - (a) Community Support for Individuals in Vulnerable Conditions of Livelihood
 - (b) Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging
 - (c) Central Program for Assistance to Persons Living in Urban Homelessness
 - (d) Capacity Building of Marginalised Groups through Livelihood Support Systems
9. Which among the following is one of the two components of the SMILE scheme?
 - (a) Transgender Empowerment
 - (b) Urban Homeless Welfare
 - (c) Disabled Persons Assistance
 - (d) Minority Rights Promotion
10. Under which legal framework, begging in India has historically been regulated?
 - (a) Community-level Acts
 - (b) State-specific Laws
 - (c) Municipal-level Codes
 - (d) District-wise Statutes
11. Which statute is most prominently associated with criminalizing begging in India and defines it broadly to include acts like performing or seeking alms through visible deformities?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (a) Kerala Vagrancy Prevention Act, 1965
- (b) Delhi Prevention of Begging Rules, 1960
- (c) Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959
- (d) West Bengal Control of Begging Act, 1962

12. Under which entry of the Concurrent List (ListIII) Vagrancy-related matters, including laws on beggary, are addressed?

- (a) Entry 12 (b) Entry 17
- (c) Entry 22 (d) Entry 15

13. According to Census 2011, which set of Indian states had the highest number of individuals engaged in begging?

- (a) West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh
- (b) Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh

(c) Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh

(d) Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan

14. Which international organization praised the Indore model for its comprehensive approach to addressing urban poverty and homelessness?

- (a) World Bank
- (b) UNICEF
- (c) IMF Group
- (d) UN-Habitat

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (c) | 7. (d) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) | 11. (c) | 12. (d) | 13. (c) | 14. (a) | | |

8

JUSTICE BR GAVAI TAKES OATH
AS THE 52ND CJI

LEGAL UPDATES

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Ceremony:** On May 14, 2025, Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai was sworn in as the 52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI) at a formal oath-taking ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, administered by President Droupadi Murmu.
- **Succession:** He succeeds Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who demitted office on May 13, 2025, upon reaching the retirement age of 65 years.
- **Tenure:** Justice Gavai will serve a **six-month tenure**, holding office until **November 23, 2025**.
- **Significance:** His appointment is notable for continuing the tradition of seniority-based elevation and adds to the judiciary's diversity, as he is one of the few Chief Justices from the **Scheduled Caste community** in India's judicial history.

52nd Chief Justice of India

- Justice Gavai began his legal career on **March 16, 1985**, as an **advocate**, primarily practicing at the **Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court**, focusing on **Constitutional and Administrative Law**. He served as **standing counsel** for various public bodies, including the **Nagpur and Amravati Municipal Corporations** and **Amravati University**.
- He was appointed as an **Additional Judge** of the **Bombay High Court** on **November 14, 2003**, made a **Permanent Judge** in 2005, and later **elevated to the Supreme Court** on **May 24, 2019**.
- Justice Gavai has authored over **300 judgments** during his tenure in the Supreme Court. Among his significant rulings is the **upholding of the abrogation of Article 370**, which removed the special status of **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- He also delivered the verdict that **struck down the Electoral Bonds Scheme**, and affirmed the **right of States to sub-classify Scheduled Castes** for reservation purposes. His decisions in the **Manish Sisodia bail case** reinforced the **right to personal liberty**, and he notably led the bench that ordered the **release of A.G. Perarivalan**, a convict in the **Rajiv Gandhi assassination case**.

Justice BR Gavai



He is the first practising Buddhist to serve as Chief Justice of India

Justice Gavai is the second person from the Dalit community to be Chief Justice of India after former CJI KG Balakrishnan, who became the first Dalit CJI in 2007.

He is the son of R.S. Gavai, a prominent Dalit leader, former Governor of Bihar and Kerala, and founder of the Republican Party of India (Gavai faction), reflecting a legacy of public service and social justice.

Justice Gavai's brief tenure is expected to oversee important constitutional matters. Major among these are the challenges to the **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991**, and the scrutiny of the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025**, whose constitutionality is under question. These hearings are expected to have wide-ranging implications on **religious rights, secularism, and property law**.

Constitutional Basis and Role of the Chief Justice of India

- The office of the Chief Justice of India is established under **Article 124 of the Constitution**, with appointment governed by **Article 124(2)**. As per convention, the **senior-most Supreme Court judge** is appointed CJI by the **President of India**, based on recommendations from the **Union Law Ministry**.
- The **tenure** continues until the **age of 65**. The **oath of office** is administered as per the **Third Schedule, Form IV**, committing the appointee to uphold the **Constitution**, maintain **integrity**, and discharge duties **without fear or favor**.
- The **removal** process is detailed in **Article 124(4)** and governed by the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**, requiring a **two-thirds majority in Parliament** and proven **misbehavior or incapacity**.
- The CJI presides over **Constitution Benches**, allocates judicial work, and makes decisions on **urgent listings and bench composition**. Administratively, the CJI is the **head of the Supreme Court registry**, supervises **High Courts**, and leads the **Supreme Court Collegium** responsible for recommending **judicial appointments and transfers**.
- Additionally, the CJI is **consulted by the President** on judicial and constitutional matters and serves as the **Chancellor of the National Judicial Academy**.
- Justice Gavai now heads the **Supreme Court Collegium**, consisting of the **CJI and the four senior-most judges**.
- This system plays a critical role in **upholding judicial independence**, particularly through appointments and transfers within the higher judiciary.
- The collegium model, though not mentioned in the Constitution, has been established through **Supreme Court judgments** as part of the **basic structure doctrine**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following statements is true about Justice Gavai's background and significance?
(a) He is the first practising Buddhist to become CJI
(b) He is the first Chief Justice from the Scheduled Tribe community
(c) He is the first Dalit Chief Justice of India
(d) He was formerly the Governor of Kerala
- How long will Justice Gavai serve as the Chief Justice of India?
(a) Six months (b) Nine months
(c) One year (d) Three months
- Which major constitutional change was upheld by a bench led by Justice Gavai?
(a) Striking down CAA
(b) Abrogation of Article 370
(c) Repeal of AFSPA
(d) Introduction of the NJAC
- Which of the following judgments was not delivered by Justice Gavai?
(a) Striking down the Electoral Bonds Scheme
(b) Upholding Right to Privacy as a fundamental right
(c) Ordering release of A.G. Perarivalan
(d) Affirming state powers to sub-classify SCs for reservation
- Who administered the oath of office to Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai as Chief Justice of India?
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(b) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar
(c) President Droupadi Murmu
(d) Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna
- Which former Chief Justice of India was the first Dalit to hold the post before Justice Gavai?
(a) Ranganath Mishra (b) M.N. Venkatachaliah
(c) R.C. Lahoti (d) K.G. Balakrishnan
- Justice Gavai's legal career began in which year?
(a) 2003 (b) 1985
(c) 1998 (d) 2005
- In which High Court did Justice Gavai begin his judicial career as a judge?
(a) Delhi High Court (b) Allahabad High Court
(c) Bombay High Court (d) Madras High Court
- Justice Gavai was appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of India in which year?
(a) 2019 (b) 2018
(c) 2017 (d) 2020
- Under which Article of the Constitution is the office of the Chief Justice of India established?
(a) Article 74 (b) Article 217
(c) Article 124 (d) Article 148
- Which Article governs the removal process of the Chief Justice of India?
(a) Article 124(2) (b) Article 124(4)
(c) Article 126 (d) Article 311
- Which Act provides the legal procedure for the investigation into misbehavior or incapacity of a judge, including the CJI?
(a) Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968
(b) Judicial Standards and Accountability Act, 2010
(c) Judges (Powers) Act, 1952
(d) Indian Judiciary Act, 1950

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (a) | | | | |

9

SUPREME COURT'S NEW RULES
ON JUDICIAL SERVICES

LEGAL UPDATES

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Verdict:** On May 20, 2025, the **Supreme Court of India** reinstated the rule requiring a **minimum of three years' legal practice** to apply for **entry-level judicial posts**, such as **Civil Judge (Junior Division)**.
- **Bench and Directions:** A bench headed by **Chief Justice B.R. Gavai** directed all **High Courts and State Governments** to **amend their judicial service rules** to comply with this restored eligibility condition.
- **Judicial Rationale:** The Court observed that permitting **fresh law graduates** to join the judiciary **without courtroom experience** had led to **sub-optimal judicial outcomes** over the past two decades.

Background and Key Pointers in the Judgement

- In a **2002 judgment** concerning the **All India Judges Association**, the Supreme Court had **removed** the earlier mandate requiring **three years of practice at the Bar**, thereby allowing **fresh law graduates** to directly appear for judicial service exams.
- However, the 2025 ruling, delivered in the same All India Judges Association v. Union of India litigation series, reversed this decision.
- The Court reasoned that theoretical knowledge from law books or pre-service training could not substitute for the **first-hand experience of litigation** and **working court procedures**, which are essential for dispensing justice involving **life, liberty, and property**.
- The Court clarified that the **three-year practice requirement** would apply **prospectively** and not affect recruitment processes already underway.
- The direction falls within the interpretive scope of **Articles 233 to 237 of the Constitution**, which govern **subordinate judicial appointments**, and does not interfere with the administrative authority of **Public Service Commissions** and **High Courts**.
- The **period of legal practice** will be calculated from the date of **provisional Bar enrollment**, and candidates must present a certificate from either the **Principal Judicial Officer** of the court or a **senior advocate with ten years of experience**.



Justice BR Gavai



Justice AG Masih



Justice K Vinod Chandran

Recommendations and Prior Precedents

- The decision aligns with earlier institutional recommendations.
- The **14th Law Commission of India (1958)** had advised that a **minimum of three years' legal practice** was essential to maintain the **calibre of judicial officers**.
- The **Justice Shetty Commission (2002)** also endorsed this view, emphasising that practical exposure enhances both **professional competence** and **judicial independence**.
- Moreover, **23 out of 25 High Courts**, in affidavits submitted before the Court, supported reinstating the clause, citing that **inexperienced judicial officers** often lacked both **practical wisdom** and **emotional maturity**.

Implications for the Judiciary

- The Supreme Court's ruling is poised to reshape recruitment into the **subordinate judiciary**, potentially improving **judicial competence** through practical exposure but also **limiting inclusivity**.
- For the reform to be effective, experts suggest parallel measures such as enhancing **judicial academy training**, introducing a **digitally verifiable appearance record** for court experience, and improving **working conditions, salaries, and promotion structures** in the judiciary.
- The case also reignites debates surrounding the proposed **All India Judicial Service (AIJS)** under **Article 312**, which seeks to centralize judicial appointments, but continues to face **federalism-based resistance** from several States and High Courts.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How many years of minimum legal practice by the Supreme Court reinstated a rule mandating eligibility to apply for entry-level judicial posts like Civil Judge (Junior Division)?

- (a) One year (b) Two years
(c) Three years (d) Four years

2. Which case in a 2002 judgment led the Supreme Court to strike down the earlier requirement of three years of legal practice for appearing in judicial service exams?

- (a) All India Judges Association
(b) Indian Bar Council Federation
(c) Legal Education Reform Forum
(d) Judicial Officers Welfare Union

3. In which set of provisions dealing with subordinate judiciary appointments the Supreme Court's 2025 ruling on the three-year legal practice rule for judicial posts is constitutionally rooted?

- (a) Articles 243 to 248 (b) Articles 233 to 237
(c) Articles 221 to 226 (d) Articles 251 to 256

4. To whom a judicial service aspirant must submit proof of practice?

- (a) The District Court Registrar
(b) The Bar Council Secretary
(c) The Law School Dean
(d) The Principal Judicial Officer

5. Which institution, in its 1958 report, recommended that a minimum of three years' legal practice was essential for maintaining the quality of judicial officers?

- (a) 14th Law Commission of India
(b) Judicial Reforms Advisory Board
(c) Constitutional Review Committee
(d) Indian Legal Services Panel

6. Which body, in 2002, supported the three-year legal practice requirement by emphasizing that practical exposure improves judicial competence

and independence?

- (a) The Judicial Services Board
(b) The Justice Shetty Commission
(c) The Legal Reforms Taskforce
(d) The Indian Bar Review Panel

7. Under which constitutional provision Critics argue that the Supreme Court's 2025 decision on judicial recruitment may encroach upon executive authority protected?

- (a) Article 233 (b) Article 235
(c) Article 234 (d) Article 236

8. Which of the following along with marginalized groups, including women affected by the three-year practice requirement may disproportionately?

- (a) state-employed litigators
(b) junior corporate counsels
(c) non-judicial apprentices
(d) first-generation lawyers

9. Which of the following complementary reforms, including better salaries and digitally verifiable appearance records experts have recommended to ensure the effectiveness of the three-year practice rule?

- (a) strengthening e-court infrastructure
(b) streamlining court filing systems
(c) enhancing judicial academy training
(d) modernising legal aid frameworks

10. Which proposed service seeks to centralize judicial appointments and create a unified recruitment process for the subordinate judiciary across states?

- (a) All India Judicial Service
(b) National Legal Advisory Board
(c) Unified Judges Recruitment Scheme
(d) Central Judicial Appointments Council

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

11. Under which article the Supreme Court's ruling reignites debates surrounding the proposed All India Judicial Service (AIJS)?

- (a) Article 233
- (b) Article 311
- (c) Article 124
- (d) Article 312

12. What type of resistance the proposed All India Judicial Service (AIJS) seeks to centralize judicial appointments continues to face?

- (a) political consensus challenge
- (b) administrative feasibility doubt
- (c) federalism-based resistance
- (d) recruitment process confusion

SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (a) | 11. (d) | 12. (c) | | | | |

10 KERALA SHIP CAPSIZE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Declaration:** On May 29, 2025, the Kerala government officially declared the MSC Elsa 3 shipwreck a state-specific disaster due to escalating environmental and maritime risks.
- **Incident Overview:** The Liberian-flagged cargo vessel, MSC Elsa 3, capsized on May 25, approximately 14.6 nautical miles southwest of Kochi, while en route from Vizhinjam to Kochi.
- **Environmental Threats:** The wreck has raised alarms over hazardous cargo leakage, microplastic pollution, and the potential for an oil spill, after 54 containers washed ashore along Kerala's coastline.



- The container ship MSC Elsa 3, carrying 640 containers, capsized due to flooding in one of its cargo holds, possibly caused by rough seas, mechanical failure, or hull damage.
- Among the cargo were 13 containers with hazardous substances, including 12 with calcium carbide and one with organic chemicals.
- The ship also carried 367.1 metric tonnes of furnace oil and 84.44 metric tonnes of diesel, making it a potential source of marine oil contamination.
- All 24 crew members were rescued by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard during a night-time operation, averting loss of life.
- Within hours, the Indian Coast Guard detected a thin oil sheen around the wreck and observed dozens of boxes adrift in the Arabian Sea.

What is a State Specific Disaster?

Indian disaster-relief rules allow every **State to designate locally significant calamities**—such as snake-bite deaths in Kerala or lightning fatalities in Odisha—as State-Specific Disasters (SSDs). Once a hazard is placed on the **State's own SSD list**, the government may draw up to **ten per cent of its annual State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)** allocation to pay ex-gratia relief and fund immediate response measures, even though the event is not on the nationally-notified list of 12 “approved disasters.”

- This mechanism, created under the 2015 and 2022 Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) norms, gives States fiscal flexibility without requiring prior approval from New Delhi, yet it bars them from claiming National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) assistance for the same event.
- **Section 48(1)(a) of the Disaster Management Act 2005** mandates that every State establish an SDRF, which serves as the primary **reservoir of money for disaster relief and response**.
- The Central Government contributes **75 per cent of the SDRF** for general-category States and 90 per cent for special-category States and the eight North-East States.
- Revised MHA guidelines issued on **8 April 2015 and updated for 2022-23** expressly state that “a State Government may use up to 10 per cent of the annual SDRF allocation for providing immediate relief to the victims of natural disasters that they consider to be ‘disasters’ within the local context and which are not included in the notified list of disasters of the Ministry of Home Affairs.”

Kerala's 2025 Ship-Capsize Declaration

- On 29 May 2025 **Kerala classified the capsizing of the Liberian-flagged container ship MSC ELSA 3**—which sank with 643 containers 14.6 nautical miles off Alappuzha—**as an SSD**.
- The order unlocked SDRF money for shoreline clean-up, fishing-ban compensation and long-term ecological studies by the National Institute of Oceanography.
- Because maritime wrecks are absent from the national list, the State could not have accessed relief funds without the SSD mechanism.
- Several States argue that the 10 per cent cap is inadequate; Uttar Pradesh's 2025 submission to the 16th Finance Commission seeks a 25 per cent limit, citing far higher mortality from SSDs than from nationally listed disasters.
- States cannot seek NDRF top-up funds for SSDs, prompting calls for a partial cost-sharing window when death tolls are large.
- Critics worry that an ever-growing SSD catalogue could dilute national standards; MHA's 2022 guidelines insist States publish their lists in advance, not ad-hoc after an incident.



- **from Ships**), particularly relevant for managing marine pollution incidents like this.
- Adopted in **1973 and modified in 1978**, MARPOL contains six annexes addressing pollution from **oil, harmful substances, sewage, garbage, and air emissions**.
- In India, MARPOL is enforced through the **Merchant Shipping Act**, with the **Indian Coast Guard** serving as the **nodal agency for oil spill response and enforcement**.
- All ships operating in Indian waters must comply with **pollution prevention regulations**, including the maintenance of **oil spill contingency plans** at ports.

Environmental and Public Safety Concerns: Hazardous Drift and Oil Spill Risks

- Containers have washed up across **Kollam (43)**, **Thiruvananthapuram (9)**, and **Alappuzha (2)**. Minute **plastic granules** and **polythene debris** have been found on beaches, particularly in **Thiruvananthapuram**, triggering fears of **microplastic contamination**.
- The **Indian Coast Guard** deployed **INS Saksham**, a marine pollution response ship, and aerial surveillance assets equipped with **oil spill mapping technology**.
- As of now, no confirmed **oil slick** has been observed, but **INCOIS** warned that **oil pollutants could reach shorelines within 36–48 hours**, including **Alappuzha, Ambalapuzha, and Karunagappally**.
- Residents have been **advised not to handle debris or containers**, and to **report sightings immediately** to authorities.

Wider Context and Long-Term Implications: Disaster Management and Coastal Sensitivity

- The wreck of **MSC Elsa 3** represents a critical test of **coastal disaster preparedness** and **hazardous material management** in India.
- With Kerala already classified as a **high-risk zone** for **cyclonic events, coastal erosion, and marine biodiversity vulnerability**, this incident highlights the need for **stronger maritime monitoring, real-time port surveillance, and environmental impact assessments**.
- The event could also reignite policy discussions on the **classification of maritime disasters** within India's **disaster management legislation**, and the integration of **marine-specific modules** in state and national response protocols.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which shipwreck was officially declared a state-specific disaster by the Kerala government on May 29, 2025, due to escalating environmental and maritime risks?

- (a) MVS Elsa 1 (b) SSC Elsa 4
(c) MSC Elsa 3 (d) MVC Elsa 6

2. What was the route of the Liberian-flagged cargo vessel MSC Elsa 3, which capsized on May 25, approximately 14.6 nautical miles southwest of Kochi?

- (a) Vizhinjam to Kochi
(b) Colombo to Kozhikode
(c) Mangaluru to Kochi
(d) Vizhinjam to Thiruvananthapuram

3. What number of containers reportedly washed ashore along Kerala's coastline following the MSC Elsa 3 shipwreck, raising alarms over hazardous cargo and environmental threats?

- (a) 38 (b) 54 (c) 46 (d) 61

4. What hazardous substance was found in 12 of the 13 containers aboard MSC Elsa 3 that posed significant environmental risks after the ship capsized?

- (a) Liquid ammonia (b) Sodium nitrate
(c) Phosphoric acid (d) Calcium carbide

5. Which agencies successfully rescued all 21 crew members of multiple nationalities from the capsized MSC Elsa 3, thereby preventing any loss of life?

- (a) Indian Coast Guard and Navy
(b) Kerala Fire and Rescue Force
(c) International Maritime Rescue Union
(d) United Nations Sea Patrol Team

6. Which authority was empowered by the disaster classification to mobilise funds and resources from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for immediate relief efforts?

- (a) Kerala Coastal Safety Department
(b) Kerala State Disaster Management Authority
(c) Kerala Environmental Response Taskforce
(d) Kerala Maritime Emergency Commission

7. What environmental threat has been triggered by the discovery of plastic granules and polythene debris on beaches, especially in Thiruvananthapuram?

- (a) marine biodiversity collapse
(b) coastal erosion acceleration
(c) microplastic contamination
(d) seawater salinity increase

8. What is the name of the marine pollution response ship deployed by the Indian Coast Guard to manage the oil spill threat after the MSC Elsa 3 incident?

- (a) Samridh (b) Vibhav
(c) Raksha (d) Saksham

9. Which international agreement, to which India is a signatory, is particularly relevant for addressing marine pollution from ships such as the MSC Elsa 3 incident?

- (a) Basel Convention (b) Cartagena Protocol
(c) MARPOL Convention (d) Rotterdam Treaty

10. In which year was the MARPOL Convention initially adopted to regulate pollution from ships and protect the marine environment?

- (a) 1973 (b) 1982
(c) 1990 (d) 2001

11. Through which legal framework is the MARPOL Convention enforced in India, with the Indian Coast Guard designated as the nodal agency for oil spill response?

- (a) Merchant Safety Act
(b) Indian Shipping Act
(c) National Shipping Act
(d) Merchant Shipping Act

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

12. Under which sea condition is the skimming method for oil spill response most effective, making it less suitable during rough weather?

- (a) deep water
- (b) high tides
- (c) calm seas
- (d) low tides

13. Which areas were the initial focus of the government's volunteer-driven beach cleaning campaign following the MSC Elsa 3 incident?

- (a) eastern delta regions
- (b) northern fishing zones
- (c) southern coastal districts
- (d) western harbor towns

SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (a) | 11. (d) | 12. (c) | 13. (c) | | | |

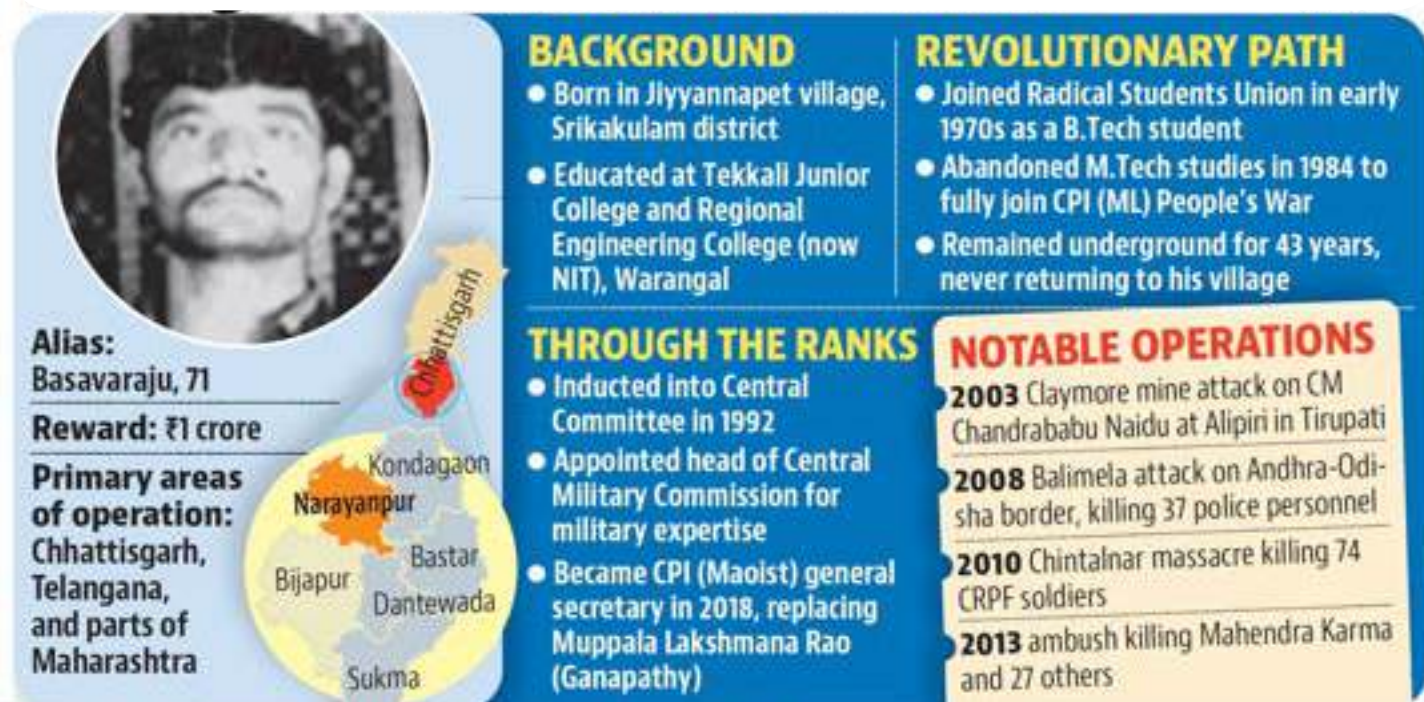
11 KILLING OF BASAVA RAJU

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Operation:** On May 21, 2025, Nambala Keshava Rao, alias **Basavaraju**, the **General Secretary of the banned CPI (Maoist)**, was **killed in an anti-Naxal operation** in **Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh**.
- **Scale and Impact:** The operation led to the **neutralization of 27 Maoists**, making it one of the **most decisive blows** to the Maoist insurgency in decades.
- **Location and Strategy:** The encounter occurred in **Abujhmad**, a **known Maoist stronghold**, as part of a broader offensive aimed at **eliminating left-wing extremism** ahead of the **March 2026 deadline** set by the government.
- **Official Statement:** **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** hailed the operation and the death of Basavaraju as a **"landmark achievement"** in India's ongoing battle against **Naxalism**.

NAMBALA KESHAV RAO



Alias: Basavaraju, 71
Reward: ₹1 crore
Primary areas of operation: Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and parts of Maharashtra

BACKGROUND

- Born in Jiyannapet village, Srikakulam district
- Educated at Tekkali Junior College and Regional Engineering College (now NIT), Warangal

REVOLUTIONARY PATH

- Joined Radical Students Union in early 1970s as a B.Tech student
- Abandoned M.Tech studies in 1984 to fully join CPI (ML) People's War
- Remained underground for 43 years, never returning to his village

THROUGH THE RANKS

- Inducted into Central Committee in 1992
- Appointed head of Central Military Commission for military expertise
- Became CPI (Maoist) general secretary in 2018, replacing Muppala Lakshmana Rao (Ganapathy)

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

- **2003** Claymore mine attack on CM Chandrababu Naidu at Alipiri in Tirupati
- **2008** Balimela attack on Andhra-Odisha border, killing 37 police personnel
- **2010** Chintalnar massacre killing 74 CRPF soldiers
- **2013** ambush killing Mahendra Karma and 27 others

- Born on **July 10, 1955**, in **Jiyanapeta, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh**, **Basavaraju** was an **engineer by training**, holding a **B.Tech degree from REC Warangal**.
- Active in **leftist student politics**, he was first arrested in 1980, and soon after joined the **People's War**, which would later merge into the **CPI (Maoist)**. Before becoming General Secretary in **2017**, he served as **Commander-in-Chief of the Central Military Commission (CMC)**, directing military strategy and overseeing attacks across Maoist-affected states.
- He was also a **Politburo member**, part of the **Central Committee**, and involved in **party publications** and **intelligence operations**.

Key Differences from His Predecessor Ganapathy

- While **Ganapathy** was the **ideological architect** of the Maoist movement, credited with **organizational unity** and **strategic expansion**, Basavaraju was a **military tactician**.
- Known for **brutality and combat efficiency**, he masterminded some of the **deadliest ambushes** in India's internal security history.
- These included the **2013 Latehar IED blast**, where a bomb was hidden inside a deceased soldier's body, and major strikes in **Sukma (2018)**, **Gadchiroli (2019)**, **Bijapur (2021 and 2025)**, and **Dantewada (2023)**.
- The encounter took place in the **forested tri-junction** of **Narayanpur, Bijapur, and Dantewada**—within the **Bastar region**.
- It was part of a **50-hour operation** involving the **District Reserve Guard (DRG)** and central paramilitary forces.
- The operation was based on **actionable intelligence** that members of the **CPI (Maoist) Central Committee, Politburo**, and local **Maad Division cadres** were gathered in Abujhmad.
- The **DRG lost one member**, and several others sustained injuries.
- The operation followed another offensive in the **Karegutta Hills**, where **31 Maoists** were killed earlier in May 2025.

**Early Communist Currents and Peasant Militancy****1940s – 1966**

- The ideological soil for Naxalism was prepared by communist-led agrarian revolts such as the **Telangana Rebellion of 1946-51**, in which peasants fought the Hyderabad Nizam's feudal order and briefly established "**village soviets**."
- These movements exposed structural land inequities and demonstrated the mobilising power of armed peasant committees. By the early 1960s, **left factions inside the undivided Communist Party of India** were already debating whether a **Chinese-style "protracted people's war"** was necessary to finish the incomplete land-reform agenda.

Naxalbari Uprising and Birth of the CPI-ML**1967 – 1971**

- In **May 1967** sharecroppers in three villages of **Naxalbari in northern West Bengal** seized standing crops and attacked landlords after a land-reform promise stalled; the police firing that killed eleven protesters galvanised radicals across India.
- **Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal** split from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to found the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969, declaring the armed overthrow of the Indian State their strategic line.

First Wave, Repression and Fragmentation**1971 – 1980**

- Alarmed by expanding guerrilla actions in West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha, the Union Government launched Operation Steeplechase in the summer of 1971, deploying the army and central police for a forty-five-day

- sweep that arrested or killed hundreds of cadres and decapitated the CPI-ML leadership.
- The crackdown pushed the movement underground and led to multiple splinters, the most durable being the **People's War Group (PWG) in Telangana and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in Bihar**.

Expansion into the "Red Corridor"

1981 – 2003

- Throughout the **1980s and 1990s the PWG and MCC** entrenched themselves in the forested, Adivasi-dominated belts of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha, financing their operations through timber royalties, road-contract levies and later iron-ore rackets.
- State police modernised special forces—such as **Operation Greyhound in Andhra Pradesh**—yet the insurgents exploited rough terrain and local grievances over mining displacement to extend influence to nearly **180 districts by 2008**.

Formation of CPI (Maoist) and Escalation of Violence

2004 – 2010

- On **21 September 2004 the PWG and MCC** merged to create the **Communist Party of India (Maoist)**, instantly giving the rebels a unified chain of command and roughly 10,000 armed cadres.
- The new outfit launched high-profile ambushes, the deadliest being the **6 April 2010 Dantewada attack**, in which seventy-six Central Reserve Police Force personnel were killed.
- In response, several States and the Centre began a coordinated security push informally dubbed "**Operation Green Hunt**" in **late 2009**, backed by additional paramilitary battalions and air surveillance

Integrated Action and Development-Security Synergy

2011 – 2016

- Recognising that force alone could not neutralise the rebellion, New Delhi launched the **Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in 2010**, funnelling ₹30 crore annually to each of eighty-two worst-hit districts for roads, schools and health centres.
- Parallel infrastructure schemes—thousands of kilometres of rural roads and hundreds of telecom towers—sought to connect remote villages and undercut rebel influence.

The SAMADHAN Doctrine and Rapid Contraction

2017 – 2024

- In 2017 the Home Ministry unveiled the **SAMADHAN doctrine—a seven-point counter-insurgency matrix** covering smart leadership, aggressive operations, modern technology, capacity building, and local intelligence—to synchronise policing and development.
- Official data show that **LWE-linked districts** fell from 126 in 2018 to 70 in 2021, and further to 38 by April 2024, with "most-affected" districts dropping from twelve to six.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who was killed in the anti-Naxal operation conducted in Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh, on May 21, 2025?
(a) Muppala Lakshmana Rao (Ganapathy)
(b) Nambala Keshava Rao (Basavaraju)
(c) Koteswar Rao (Kishenji)
(d) Gudsa Usendi
- Where did the May 21, 2025 anti-Naxal operation take place?
(a) Karegutta Hills
(b) Dandakaranya region
(c) Abujhmad, Bastar region
(d) Lalgah, West Bengal
- What major peasant-led uprising in 1967 catalyzed the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)?
(a) Telangana Rebellion (b) Tebhaga Movement
(c) Naxalbari Uprising (d) Champaran Satyagraha
- Which two groups merged in 2004 to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist)?
(a) People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre
(b) CPI-ML and RSS
(c) CPI and CPI(M)
(d) CPI(M) and INC (Radical)
- What was the name of the 2017 counter-insurgency doctrine launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs to combat Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)?
(a) Operation Steeplechase
(b) Operation Green Hunt
(c) Red Corridor Plan
(d) SAMADHAN Doctrine
- What was the government's developmental initiative launched in 2010 to complement security operations in Maoist-affected regions?
(a) Bharat Nirman Yojana
(b) Integrated Action Plan (IAP)
(c) Rural Connectivity Mission
(d) Mission Gramin Shakti
- Which attack is considered the deadliest ambush by Maoists, resulting in the death of 76 CRPF personnel?
(a) Gadchiroli Encounter, 2019
(b) Latehar IED Attack, 2013
(c) Bijapur Ambush, 2021
(d) Dantewada Attack, April 2010
- What was the aim of the Telangana Rebellion (1946–51) led by communists?
(a) To fight feudalism under the Nizam's rule
(b) To oppose the Emergency
(c) To overthrow British colonial rule
(d) To demand separate statehood for Telangana
- What was the outcome of Operation Steeplechase launched in 1971?
(a) Legal recognition for CPI (Maoist)
(b) Merger of CPI and CPI(M)
(c) Decapitation of CPI-ML leadership and underground splintering
(d) Establishment of village soviets in Telangana
- By 2008, approximately how many districts in India had reported active Maoist presence or influence?
(a) 50 (b) 100
(c) 180 (d) 200
- What was the name of the special anti-Naxal force modernised in Andhra Pradesh during the insurgency's expansion?
(a) COBRA (b) Greyhounds
(c) Black Cats (d) Sashastra Seema Bal

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (d) | 6. (b) | 7. (d) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | | | | | |

12 LANDMARK CRITICAL MINERALS DEAL BETWEEN US & UKRAINE

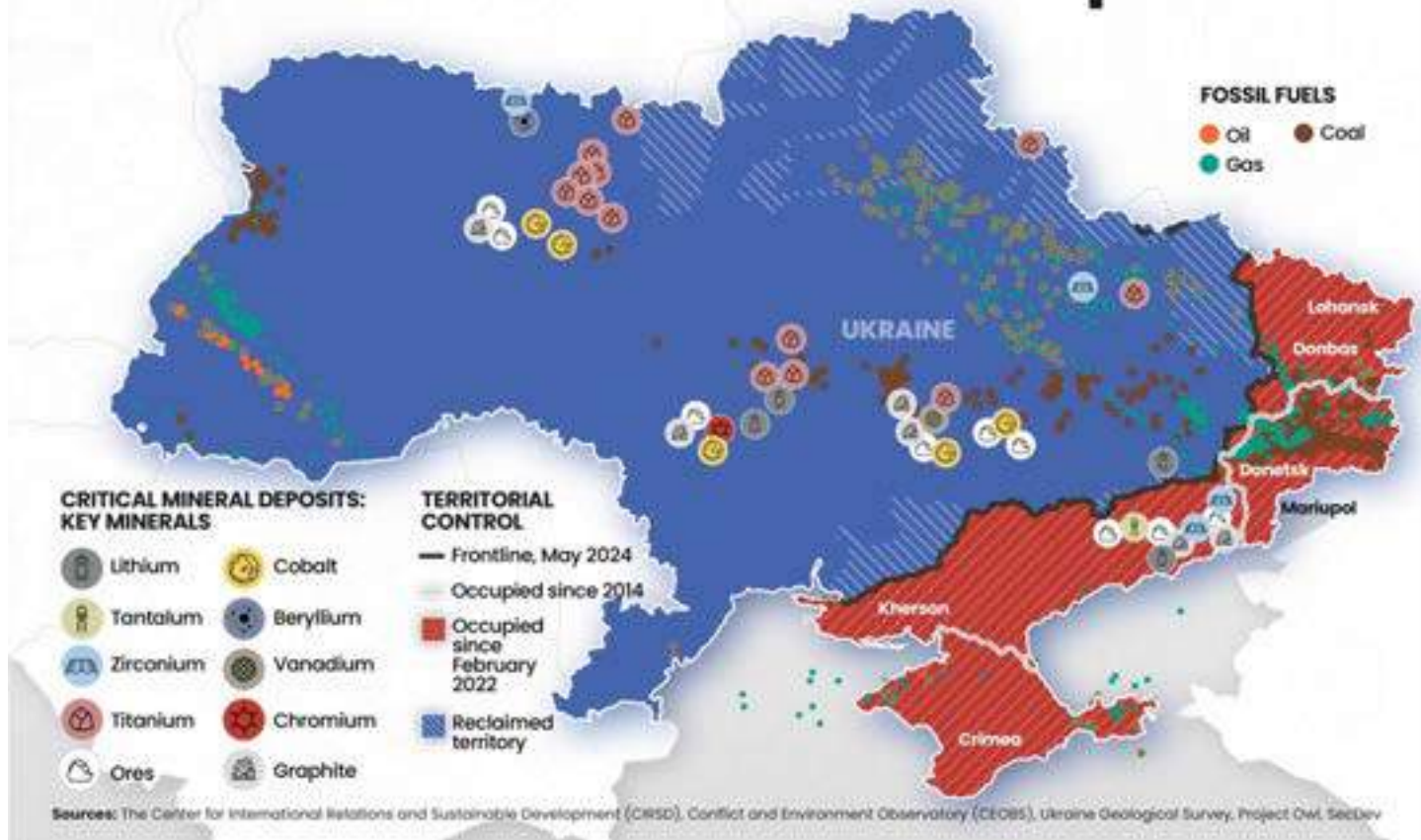
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Parties Involved:** On April 30, 2025, the United States and Ukraine signed a landmark agreement to establish the **United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund**.
- **Strategic Focus:** The agreement aims to jointly develop Ukraine's critical mineral reserves, including rare earth elements, oil, and natural gas, while contributing to Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.
- **Political Endorsement:** The agreement was **unanimously ratified** by the **Ukrainian Parliament** on May 8, 2025, with **338 votes in favour and none against**, reflecting **strong bipartisan support** and national consensus.

Background and Strategic Objectives of the Agreement

Ukraine critical mineral deposits



Agreement Details

The agreement is designed as a **50:50 joint venture** between the two nations. It serves a dual purpose—mobilising **global investment** into Ukraine's **mineral extraction and energy sectors** and facilitating **post-conflict economic recovery**. Under its terms, the **first ten years of profits** from new mineral, oil, and gas projects will be **reinvested into Ukraine's infrastructure and economy**, making it a critical pillar of the country's **reconstruction roadmap**. Importantly, **Ukraine maintains full control** over its territory, state-owned enterprises such as **Ukrnafta and Energoatom**, and resource licensing, with the agreement applying strictly to **new projects**—existing contracts and liabilities remain untouched.

Scope and Economic Structure

The deal covers 55 critical minerals, including lithium, titanium, graphite, and uranium, in addition to oil and natural gas. These resources are essential for clean energy technologies, defence production, and strategic industries. Income from resource development will be regulated through **"take-or-pay" contracts**, which guarantee Ukraine a steady stream of revenue even if extraction does not occur. Both countries will share **profits and royalties equally**, with an agreement that **contributions to the fund are tax-exempt** in both jurisdictions. The fund is structured to **attract additional international investments**, reinforcing Ukraine's integration into **global critical mineral supply chains**.

Institutional Leadership

On the U.S. side, the agreement was spearheaded by **Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent** and **Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller**, signalling the **Trump administration's strategic pivot** from direct military aid to long-term economic investment. Representing Ukraine were **Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal** and **First Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko**, whose active participation in negotiations reaffirmed Ukraine's intent to pursue **fair and sovereign economic partnerships**. The fund will be jointly managed, with shared decision-making responsibilities and operational transparency, establishing a precedent for future bilateral investments in the region.

Legal and Political Safeguards

The final text of the agreement was shaped after initial U.S. drafts were resisted by Ukraine for including **unilateral control mechanisms**. Following intense negotiations, the **revised deal** explicitly affirms **Ukraine's ownership rights**, control over extraction sites, and decision-making power. Both parties enjoy **equal voting rights** in the fund's management, ensuring collaborative oversight. Legal guidance during the process was provided by the U.S.-based law firm **Hogan Lovells**, which advised on **compliance with international and EU laws**. The agreement contains provisions to allow amendments if **Brussels raises objections**, thereby protecting Ukraine's **EU accession pathway**.

Geopolitical Implications

The agreement has significant **geopolitical ramifications**, particularly in the context of ongoing tensions with **Russia**. The **Kremlin has criticised the deal**, viewing it as a formal shift in U.S. policy that reduces Moscow's influence over Ukraine and diminishes leverage in future peace negotiations. Although the agreement contains no explicit **defence guarantees**, analysts interpret it as a **soft security assurance**, laying the groundwork for enhanced **military and economic cooperation** between Washington and Kyiv. Additionally, the deal acknowledges Ukraine's **European Union aspirations**, incorporating clauses to ensure **compatibility with EU regulatory frameworks**.

- Ukraine possesses nearly **5% of global reserves of rare earth elements and critical minerals**, although much remains **untapped or in areas previously contested by Russia**.
- Since the beginning of the war in 2022, the **U.S. is estimated to have provided between \$175–\$350 billion** in aid to Ukraine, spanning military, humanitarian, and infrastructure sectors.
- The establishment of this fund represents a **transition from grants to investment-oriented support**, allowing Ukraine to develop **self-sustaining economic growth**.
- Revenue-sharing and reinvestment clauses are expected to provide stable funding for Ukraine's **energy security, transport infrastructure, and industrial revival**.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which agreement was signed by the United States and Ukraine, to support post-war economic recovery and attract global capital?
 - (a) Ukraine Future Stability Reconstruction Investment Fund
 - (b) United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund
 - (c) Transatlantic Ukraine Recovery Compact Investment Fund
 - (d) International Peace and Growth Initiative Investment Fund

2. Which institution unanimously ratified the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund agreement with 338 votes in favour?
 - (a) Ukrainian Parliament
 - (b) Ukrainian Supreme Court
 - (c) Ukrainian National Bank
 - (d) Ukrainian Cabinet Council

3. What is the equity structure of the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund as agreed upon by both countries?
 - (a) 60:40 (b) 75:25
 - (c) 50:50 (d) 80:20

4. What are the primary sectors targeted by the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund to attract global investment and support economic recovery?
 - (a) transportation and telecom sectors
 - (b) healthcare and education sectors
 - (c) tourism and archeological sectors
 - (d) mineral extraction and energy sectors

5. What areas will benefit from the reinvestment of the first ten years of profits under the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund?
 - (a) infrastructure and agriculture
 - (b) infrastructure and economy
 - (c) infrastructure and education
 - (d) infrastructure and innovation

6. Which Ukrainian state-owned enterprises will remain under full national control despite the terms of the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund agreement?
 - (a) Naftogaz and Ukreximbank
 - (b) Antonov and Ukrtelecom
 - (c) DTEK and Ukrhydroenergo
 - (d) Ukrnafta and Energoatom

7. What is the total number of critical minerals covered under the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund agreement, in addition to oil and natural gas?
 - (a) 55 (b) 38 (c) 47 (d) 62

8. What type of contractual model will regulate income from resource development under the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund?
 - (a) fixed-rate (b) profit-share
 - (c) take-or-pay (d) lease-back

9. Which law firm provided legal guidance for the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund, ensuring compliance with international and EU laws?
 - (a) White & Case (b) Baker McKenzie
 - (c) Latham Watkins (d) Hogan Lovells

10. Who, along with Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, spearheaded the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund agreement on the U.S. side?
 - (a) National Security Advisor Blake Carter
 - (b) Commerce Secretary Linda Rowell
 - (c) Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent
 - (d) Foreign Policy Advisor Karen Taylor

11. Who, alongside Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, played a key role in negotiating the United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund agreement?
 - (a) Ukrainian Finance Minister
 - (b) First Deputy Prime Minister
 - (c) Ukrainian Prime Minister
 - (d) National Policy Director

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

12. What percentage of global reserves of rare earth elements and critical minerals does Ukraine possess, as emphasized during negotiations involving Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller?

- (a) 5% (b) 3% (c) 7% (d) 2%

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (d) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (a) | | | | |

13 INDIA-UK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**ECONOMY****IN FOCUS**

- **Date and Event:** On **May 6, 2025**, **India and the United Kingdom** officially **concluded negotiations** on a **comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, marking a transformative moment in bilateral trade relations.
- **Economic Significance:** The FTA aims to **double bilateral trade** from **USD 60 billion to USD 120 billion by 2030**, promoting greater **market access**, **investment flows**, and **economic integration** between the two nations.
- **Strategic Value:** Described as the **UK's most significant post-Brexit trade pact**, the agreement is also one of **India's largest FTAs** concluded since 2020, reflecting a major shift in global trade alliances.

Bilateral Trade Profile

- The United Kingdom is **India's fourth-largest export destination**, while India ranks as the **UK's eleventh-largest trading partner**.
- The current bilateral trade volume of **USD 60 billion** reflects substantial economic engagement, with the FTA aiming to elevate it to **USD 120 billion by 2030**.
- This deal represents India's 16th Free Trade Agreement and is considered the UK's most comprehensive trade accord with any nation since its exit from the European Union.

**Tariff Reductions and Preferential Access**

- Under the agreement, **India will receive zero-duty access** on approximately **99% of the UK's tariff lines**, covering nearly the **entire value of Indian goods exports**. Indian exporters of **textiles, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, auto components, sports goods, chemicals, furniture, and machinery** stand to benefit from the elimination of UK tariffs previously ranging from **4% to 16%**.
- The UK has also agreed to reduce or eliminate duties on imports of **frozen prawns, food products, medical devices, clothing, aerospace equipment, and processed jewellery**.
- These measures are expected to enhance **profit margins, market penetration, and job creation**, especially in **labour-intensive MSME sectors**.

Sensitive Sector Exemptions

India has retained **tariff protections** on sensitive agricultural products including **dairy, apples, oats, cheese, and wine**, and provided **limited benefits on British beer**.

- Industrial exclusions cover plastics, smartphones, silver, diamonds, television camera tubes, base stations, and optical fibres.
- Products such as petroleum derivatives, ceramics, aircraft engines, and chlorinated chemicals will face phased **tariff reductions over 10–15 years**.
- These exclusions are designed to protect domestic manufacturers and farmers, while facilitating selective liberalisation.



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Automobile Sector

- A carefully structured **tariff-rate quota (TRQ)** regime has been introduced for UK-manufactured **internal combustion engine (ICE)** and **electric vehicles (EVs)**.
- Duties on ICE vehicles will be gradually reduced from over **100% to 10%**, but only within defined quotas based on **engine capacity**.
- For **EVs**, concessional duty access is limited to vehicles priced below **specified thresholds**.
- **Out-of-quota imports** will not receive immediate concessions and will see **phased reductions** over the next **10–15 years**, thereby balancing **market access with protection for India's domestic automotive sector**.



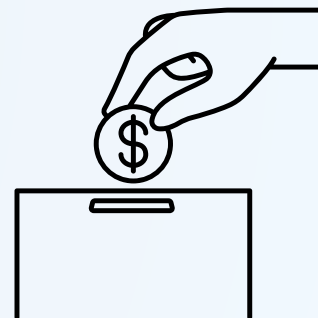
Services Trade and Labour Mobility

- The FTA introduces significant commitments on **temporary movement of Indian professionals**, a major win for India's **services sector**.
- The UK has agreed to grant **liberalised and assured entry** across several categories including **business visitors, intra-corporate transferees (ICTs)** with family work rights, **contractual service suppliers** in **36 sub-sectors**, and **independent professionals** in **16 sub-sectors**.
- Eligible categories include **yoga instructors, chefs, musicians, researchers, and IT consultants**. A cap of **1,800 contractual professionals annually** has been agreed upon, without any **Economic Needs Test (ENT)**, ensuring smooth access to the UK labour market.



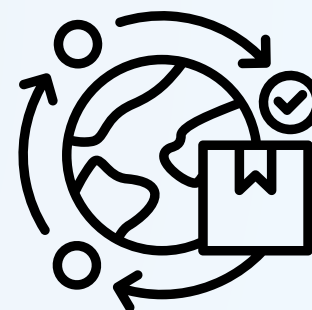
Double Contribution Convention

- A major non-tariff feature is the **Double Contribution Convention (DCC)**, which exempts Indian professionals and their employers from paying **UK social security contributions** for up to **three years**.
- Given that UK contributions typically amount to **20% of annual income**, this provision is expected to **save Indian companies over ₹4,000 crore annually**.
- The DCC ensures that temporary Indian professionals will **not lose earnings to foreign systems** that offer **no return benefits** unless workers remain for **10 years or more**.



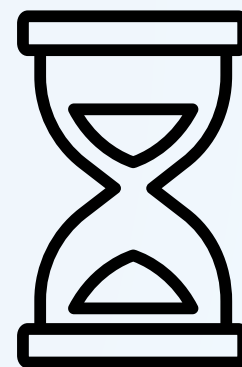
Government Procurement and Digital Trade Facilitation

- For the first time under a bilateral FTA, **India has opened access to its central government procurement market**, albeit with **strict limitations**.
- UK firms will be allowed to **bid for non-sensitive central-level tenders above ₹200 crore**, but will be classified as **Class-II local suppliers**.
- No access has been granted to **state-level or municipal procurement systems**.
- In tandem, both sides have agreed to implement an **electronic Certificate of Origin (e-COO) system**, which will **speed up customs clearance**, **reduce paperwork**, and ensure **compliance with rules of origin**.



Legal Vetting, Ratification Timeline, and Implementation Schedule

- As of **May 2025**, the agreement is undergoing **legal scrubbing** (textual and legal verification) by both parties.
- The final text is expected to be **publicly released by August–September 2025**.
- In India, the FTA will be **presented before the Union Cabinet** and notified under **Article 253 of the Constitution**, while the UK will ratify it under its **Constitutional Reform and Governance Act, 2010**.
- Full implementation is anticipated by **mid-2026**, following legislative approvals in both countries.



Economic and Strategic Impact

- The **UK government projects a GDP boost of £4.8 billion annually by 2040**, while bilateral trade is expected to increase by **£25.5 billion** in the same period.
- On India's side, **export-oriented sectors** such as **textiles, leather, food processing, and MSMEs** are forecasted to create **tens of thousands of jobs**, strengthening India's role in **global value chains**.
- Strategically, the agreement reinforces **India's status as a reliable economic partner** for post-Brexit UK and elevates bilateral cooperation beyond trade to sectors such as energy, digital technologies, and defence production.



The Role of FTAs in India's Trade Strategy

- India's FTAs are increasingly geared towards **expanding market access**, **attracting foreign investment**, and **securing supply chains**.
- For instance, the **India-UAE CEPA** led to an **11.8% increase in Indian exports**, reaching **USD 31.3 billion in FY23**.
- The **EFTA agreement** is expected to draw **USD 100 billion in investments over 15 years**.
- FTAs also **promote labour mobility**, facilitate **technology transfer**, and position India as a key player in sectors such as critical minerals, green energy, and pharmaceutical manufacturing.



Concerns and Challenges

- Despite the benefits, India faces challenges in FTA execution. Between **2017 and 2022**, exports to FTA partners rose by **31%**, while **imports surged by 82%**, widening the **trade deficit**.
- India's **FTA utilisation rate is just 25%**, compared to **70-80% in developed economies**, often due to **non-tariff barriers**, **technical regulations**, **complex certification**, and **rules of origin**.
- Additionally, **labour and environmental standards**, such as the **EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism**, may impact over **USD 8 billion in Indian exports**, while **IPR clauses in FTAs with developed countries** continue to pose risks to India's **pharmaceutical sovereignty**.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the primary trade objective of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed between the two nations to enhance economic integration?
(a) lower customs tariffs
(b) increase export subsidies
(c) unify regulatory norms
(d) double bilateral trade
2. What is the agreement described as, in the context of India's trade strategy and its evolving global partnerships?
(a) Britain's largest FTAs (b) Asia's largest FTAs
(c) India's largest FTAs (d) Commonwealth trade
3. What is the current rank of the United Kingdom among India's export destinations, highlighting its significance in bilateral trade?
(a) India's second-largest export destination
(b) India's fourth-largest export destination
(c) India's sixth-largest export destination
(d) India's eighth-largest export destination
4. What is India's current rank as a trading partner of the United Kingdom, reflecting its growing importance in the UK's global trade strategy?
(a) eleventh-largest trading partner
(b) fourteenth-largest trading partner
(c) seventeenth-largest trading partner
(d) twentieth-largest trading partner
5. By which year does the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) aim to double the India-UK bilateral trade volume to USD 120 billion?
(a) 2027 (b) 2025 (c) 2030 (d) 2035
6. What number Free Trade Agreement does the recent India-UK trade deal represent in India's overall FTA portfolio?
(a) 12th Free Trade Agreement
(b) 14th Free Trade Agreement
(c) 15th Free Trade Agreement
(d) 16th Free Trade Agreement
7. What trade benefit will India receive under the new Free Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom on nearly 99% of UK tariff lines?
(a) export-duty access (b) zero-duty access
(c) export-linked quotas (d) seasonal tariff relief
8. What was the range of UK tariffs previously imposed on Indian exports such as textiles, leather, and machinery before the Free Trade Agreement?
(a) 2% to 10% (b) 5% to 12%
(c) 4% to 16% (d) 3% to 14%
9. Who is expected to benefit the most from the UK's reduction or elimination of duties on items like food products, medical devices, and processed jewellery under the FTA?
(a) state-run export boards
(b) multinational logistics firms
(c) urban retail conglomerates
(d) labour-intensive MSME sectors
10. What product received only limited tariff concessions under the India-UK Free Trade Agreement despite broader market access provisions?
(a) Scottish wool (b) British beer
(c) Welsh lamb (d) English mustard
11. Which of the following is not included in the phased tariff reductions over 10-15 years under the India-UK Free Trade Agreement?
(a) aircraft engines (b) petroleum derivatives
(c) chlorinated chemicals (d) processed textiles
12. What trade mechanism has been introduced for UK-manufactured internal combustion engine (ICE) and electric vehicles (EVs) under the India-UK FTA?
(a) tariff-rate clause (b) tariff-rate window
(c) tariff-rate quota (d) tariff-rate access
13. What category of vehicle imports under the India-UK FTA will not receive immediate tariff concessions and instead face phased reductions over 10-15 years?
(a) out-of-quota segments
(b) out-of-quota vehicles
(c) out-of-quota shipments
(d) out-of-quota imports

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

14. What is the number of sub-sectors in which contractual service suppliers from India will receive liberalised entry rights under the India-UK Free Trade Agreement?

- (a) 36 sub-sectors
- (b) 28 sub-sectors
- (c) 24 sub-sectors
- (d) 18 sub-sectors

15. Who, along with business visitors and contractual service suppliers, has been granted liberalised entry under the India-UK Free Trade Agreement in 16 sub-sectors?

- (a) independent transferees
- (b) independent professionals
- (c) independent consultants
- (d) independent researchers

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (c) | 3. (b) | 4. (a) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (b) | 11. (d) | 12. (c) | 13. (d) | 14. (a) | 15. (b) | |

14

KLAUS SCHWAB STEPS DOWN AS
CHAIRMAN OF WEF

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

- **Investigation Initiated:** The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has launched a formal **internal investigation** into its **founder and former chairman Klaus Schwab**, following **new whistleblower allegations** related to financial misconduct and misuse of organisational funds.
- **Background and Prior Inquiry:** This marks the **second probe** involving Schwab, following a **2024 investigation into WEF's workplace culture**, which had raised questions about **governance and transparency** within the organization.
- **Leadership Transition:** Amid increasing scrutiny, Klaus Schwab has stepped down from all official roles, signaling a significant leadership shift at the WEF after decades of influence.



Klaus Schwab

- **Klaus Schwab**, a **German engineer and economist**, founded the **WEF in 1971**, originally named the **European Management Forum**.
- He is widely recognised for promoting **stakeholder capitalism**, urging businesses to prioritise the interests of employees, communities, and the environment alongside profits.
- In January 1971, Schwab convened the first **“European Management Symposium”** in Davos, which he re-branded as the **WEF in 1987** and progressively opened to global political leaders and civil-society voices.
- Under Schwab's leadership, the WEF introduced flagship initiatives like the **Global Shapers Community**, the **Young Global Leaders Program**, and hosted elite global gatherings in **Davos, Switzerland**.
- Schwab received multiple honors including the **UK's Knighthood (KCMG)** and **India's CII Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024**, cementing his status as a major global thought leader.
- Following the whistleblower revelations, Schwab resigned as both **non-executive chairman** and **member of the Board of Trustees**.
- In response, the WEF held an emergency board meeting and appointed **Peter Brabeck-Letmathe**, former **CEO of Nestlé**, as the **interim chairman**.
- The organization stated that the **allegations remain unverified** and that no final conclusions would be drawn until the internal review is completed.
- Nonetheless, the crisis has sparked concern about the **Forum's integrity, internal governance, and reputational standing**.



Peter Brabeck-Letmathe

Allegations and Investigations

- In 2024, the WEF was already under scrutiny for fostering what insiders described as a **toxic organizational culture**, characterised by **sexual harassment**, **racism**, and **discrimination against women and Black employees**.
- Reports from the **Davos Annual Meeting** exposed instances of **VIP misconduct**, euphemistically called “**white on blue**” cases, where influential guests reportedly harassed junior staff.
- The probe also pointed to **nepotism and opaque governance**, with Schwab allegedly maintaining excessive control over succession planning and executive appointments, making the institution resemble a “family-run organisation”.
- In 2025, a whistleblower letter accuses **Klaus Schwab and his wife, Hilde Schwab**, of **misappropriating WEF funds** for personal luxury services including **massages and extravagant travel**, under the guise of official meetings.
- Additional claims suggest that junior employees were instructed to **withdraw large sums in cash** on Schwab’s behalf, bypassing organisational financial controls.
- Most damaging is the allegation that Schwab personally **manipulated the Global Competitiveness Report**, one of WEF’s most influential publications, thereby **compromising its objectivity** and credibility.
- Following the whistleblower revelations, Schwab resigned as both **non-executive chairman** and **member of the Board of Trustees**.
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What is WEF

The logo of the World Economic Forum, featuring the words "WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM" in white capital letters on a blue background, with a white arc below the text.

- Founded 1971 by German engineer-economist Klaus Schwab as the European Management Symposium; re-branded World Economic Forum in 1987.
- Registered as a Swiss not-for-profit foundation; headquarters in Cologny, Switzerland.
- **Mission statement:** “improve the state of the world” through multi-stakeholder public-private cooperation.
- **Flagship Annual Meeting in Davos each January;** the 2025 edition (~3 000 delegates) ran under the theme “Collaboration for the Intelligent Age.”
- **Governance:** overseen by a Board of Trustees; operational lead held by President Børge Brende.
- **Signature ideas promoted:** stakeholder capitalism (Davos Manifesto) and the Fourth Industrial Revolution framework.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which global organization initiated an internal probe into its founder Klaus Schwab regarding governance practices?
 - (a) United Nations Council
 - (b) Global Innovation Hub
 - (c) World Economic Forum
 - (d) International Peace Forum
2. Which major WEF publication was allegedly manipulated by Klaus Schwab, raising concerns about data objectivity?
 - (a) Global Sustainability Index
 - (b) Economic Freedom Digest
 - (c) Innovation Progress Review
 - (d) Global Competitiveness Report
3. Who were the primary targets of alleged harassment and bias under the internal culture at the WEF?
 - (a) Women and black employees
 - (b) Analysts and black employees
 - (c) Fellows and black employees
 - (d) Managers and black employees
4. Under what initial title did Klaus Schwab establish the WEF to promote European business collaboration?
 - (a) Strategic Planning Network
 - (b) International Leadership Forum
 - (c) Continental Leadership Summit
 - (d) European Management Forum
5. Which WEF initiative was founded to promote youth engagement in leadership along with Young Global Leaders?
 - (a) Future Leaders Community
 - (b) Global Shapers Community
 - (c) Innovation Fellows Community
 - (d) Strategic Youth Community
6. Which of the following honors was awarded to Klaus Schwab by India in 2024 for his global leadership contributions?
 - (a) Global Service Distinction Award
 - (b) Visionary Statesman Award
 - (c) CII Lifetime Achievement Award
 - (d) World Leadership Excellence
7. Which prominent corporate position was held by Peter Brabeck-Letmathe before becoming WEF's interim chairman?
 - (a) Nestlé CEO
 - (b) Siemens CEO
 - (c) Shell CEO
 - (d) Airbus CEO
8. Where is the World Economic Forum's central headquarters located in Switzerland?
 - (a) Basel
 - (b) Cologne
 - (c) Lausanne
 - (d) Lucerne
9. In which year was the World Economic Forum (WEF) founded by Professor Klaus Schwab?
 - (a) 1967
 - (b) 1975
 - (c) 1980
 - (d) 1971
10. With which special institutional designation the Swiss government officially recognized the WEF in 2015?
 - (a) Global Platform for Public-Private Cooperation
 - (b) Strategic Council for Public-Private Cooperation
 - (c) International Institution for Public-Private Cooperation
 - (d) Multilateral Forum for Public-Private Cooperation
11. Which WEF initiative is dedicated to shaping governance around AI, blockchain, and quantum under the Industrial Revolution?
 - (a) Alliance for the Next Industrial Revolution
 - (b) Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution
 - (c) Forum for Fourth Global Industrial Revolution
 - (d) Institute on the Global Industrial Revolution
12. Which annual WEF publication highlights global threats like climate risks, cyber threats, and pandemics?
 - (a) Global Risks Report
 - (b) Economic Risks Report
 - (c) Strategic Risks Report
 - (d) Global Security Report

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (d) | 3. (a) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (a) | | | | |

15

GOLDEN DOME MISSILE DEFENCE
PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Announcement:** On May 20, 2025, US President Donald Trump unveiled the finalized design for the 'Golden Dome' missile defence shield, a \$175-billion space-based defence initiative.
- **Project Leadership:** General Michael Guetlein of the US Space Force was named the project lead, marking a significant elevation of space-focused military command.
- **Strategic Significance:** The Golden Dome aims to protect the US homeland from missile threats, and is being viewed as the most ambitious space defence project since the Cold War.

Concept and Design of the Golden Dome

- The **Golden Dome** is envisioned as a **multi-layered missile defence shield** that integrates sensors, interceptors, and artificial intelligence across **land, sea, and space**.
- It proposes a network of **thousands of small satellites orbiting the Earth**, designed to **intercept missiles within moments of launch**, including **intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)** and **hypersonic projectiles**.
- This would be the **first operational space-based weapons system** if implemented.
- Trump compared the project to **Ronald Reagan's 1980s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)**—famously dubbed the "Star Wars" program—which proposed using space-based lasers and missile interceptors, though it was never fully realised due to technological and budgetary constraints.
- Trump claimed that unlike SDI, today's technology has matured enough to make Golden Dome viable within a defined timeframe.

Technological and Strategic Features

- The proposed defence architecture integrates **space-based sensors, surveillance satellites, interceptors, and ground-based radars**.
- It aims to **neutralize ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles**, as well as **drones and UAVs**, by launching countermeasures directly from space.

- Unlike traditional systems that rely heavily on radar and surface-based launchers, Golden Dome is geared toward **real-time orbital tracking** and **mid-course interception** of missile threats.
- The system is inspired by **Israel's Iron Dome**, which defends against short-range threats like rockets and mortars.
- However, the Golden Dome differs by its **global scope, space deployment**, and its target capability that includes **long-range nuclear threats from adversaries like China and Russia**.
- The US's strategic need for such a system stems from the growing proliferation of **ICBMs** and **hypersonic missiles**, which travel at speeds and altitudes difficult to counter through conventional means.

Geopolitical Context and National
Security Motivation

- The project arises from increasing geopolitical tensions with **China and Russia**, both of which possess advanced missile capabilities, including **hypersonic glide vehicles** and **nuclear-capable ICBMs**.
- By proposing a shield that could intercept such threats **at the boost phase or mid-course trajectory**, the US seeks to shift the paradigm from reactive defence to **pre-emptive interception** from space.

- Trump emphasised that the Golden Dome would **"protect our homeland"**, and revealed that **Canada had expressed interest in participating** in the initiative, potentially signaling a **North American joint defence framework**.
- This could expand into a wider **NATO missile shield collaboration**, although no such formal proposal has been made yet.

Funding Challenges and Political Scrutiny in Congress

- Despite the announcement, the **project faces significant funding and political hurdles**.
- While the estimated cost is pegged at **\$175 billion**, initial funding of **\$25 billion** has been proposed as part of a broader **\$150 billion defence package**.
- This package, is a part of a larger spending bill known as the **"One Big, Beautiful Bill,"** which is facing resistance in **US Congress**, especially from **Democratic lawmakers** who are questioning the **procurement process**, cost viability, and the role of **Trump ally Elon Musk's SpaceX**, which has emerged as a frontrunner to build key components.
- The procurement plan also includes **Palantir Technologies** and **Anduril Industries**, both defence-tech firms with AI and surveillance expertise, leading to concerns about **corporate influence, transparency, and defence lobbying**.

Timeline, Operational Readiness, and Industry Involvement

- Trump claimed that the Golden Dome will be **operational by January 2029**, coinciding with the end of his presidential term if re-elected.
- However, **military analysts and**

Threats US aims to counter with Golden Dome



- 1 **Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)** are launched from land, or submarines, and can carry nuclear or conventional warheads - widespread capability including China, Russia, North Korea and Iran
- 2 **Hypersonic missiles** carry warheads more than five times the speed of sound and can be manoeuvred, making them harder to intercept - mainly from China and Russia



- 3 **Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS)** are ballistic missiles that stay in Low Earth orbit before releasing a nuclear payload gliding towards target. Modern ones may allow the glider to be manoeuvred - an unconfirmed threat from China and Russia

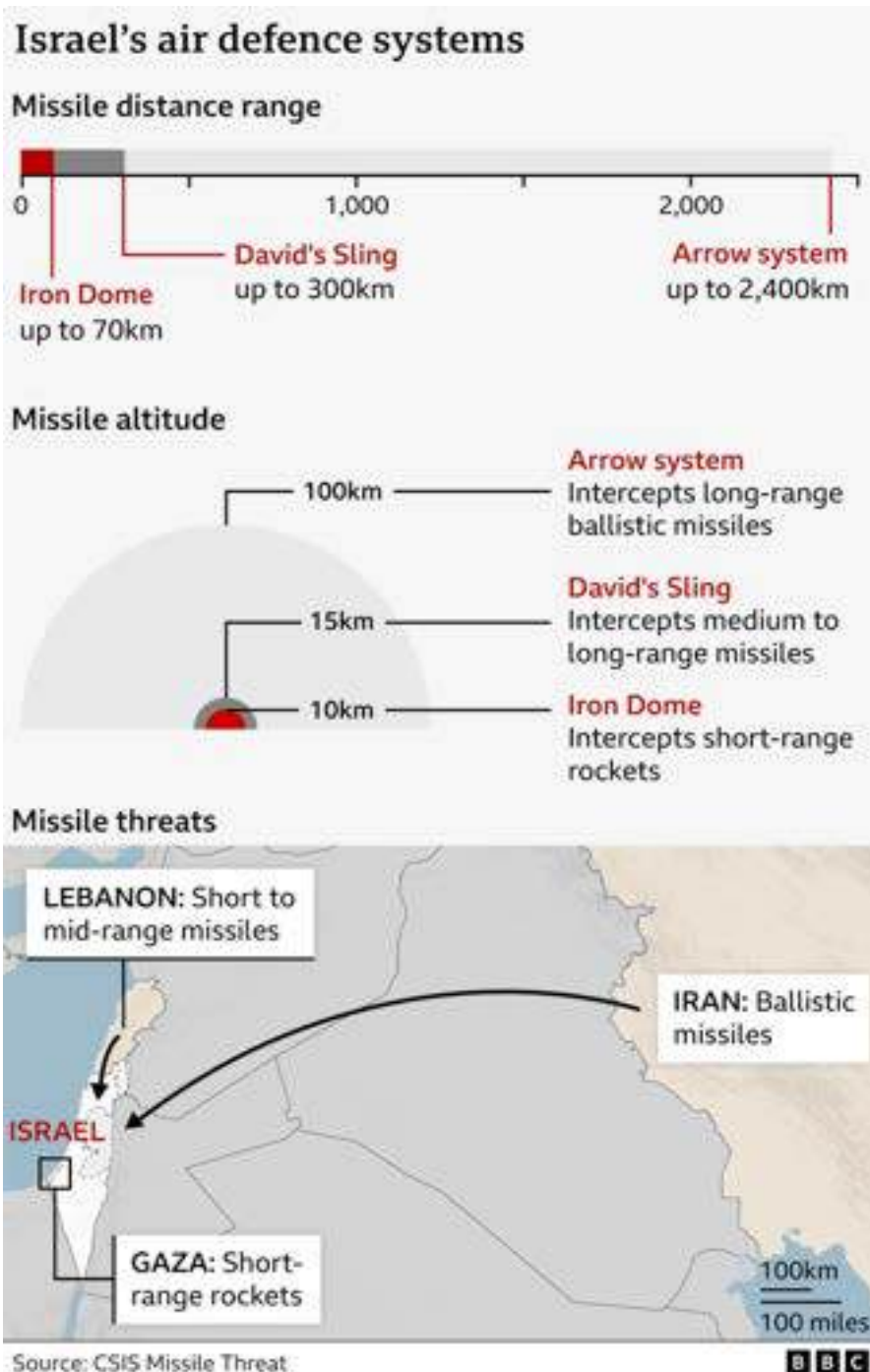
Source: Defense Intelligence Agency, Arms Control Association

BBC

- **contractors have expressed skepticism** regarding the **feasibility of the timeline**, given the lack of existing infrastructure and the **unproven nature of space-based interceptors**.

Key Inspiration behind the U.S. "Golden Dome" Missile-Defence System

- **Modelled on Israel's Iron Dome success:** White-House and Pentagon planners explicitly cite **Israel's short-range Iron Dome**, plus its **mid-tier David's Sling** and long-range Arrow layers, as proof that a multi-layered shield can intercept large rocket salvos with 80-90 % reliability.
- **2006 Second Lebanon War & Gaza rocket barrages provided the template:** Israel's experience facing 4,000 Hezbollah Katyusha rockets in 34 days (2006) and thousands of Qassam/Grad rockets from Gaza (2001-20) showed that small, radar-guided interceptors can protect cities and critical sites.
- **Space-based layer borrowed from Israeli "multi-tier" logic:** U.S. planners aim to add hundreds of low-orbit satellites for early warning and mid-course tracking, mirroring how Israel stacks radar and interceptor layers to cover different threat envelopes.
- **Cost & schedule draw on Israel's rapid fielding precedent:** Iron Dome went from green-light (2007) to first battery (2011) in four years; the White House cites that timeline to justify its ambitious 2029 Golden Dome target despite the US \$175 billion price tag.
- **"Shoot-look-shoot" philosophy copied directly:** Like Iron Dome, Golden Dome plans to fire inexpensive interceptors only at projectiles calculated to hit populated or strategic areas, conserving magazines and lowering per-kill costs.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who unveiled the finalized design for the \$175-billion 'Golden Dome' missile defence shield on May 20, 2025?
 - (a) Secretary Antony Blinken
 - (b) Secretary Pete Hegseth
 - (c) Vice President JD Vance
 - (d) President Donald Trump
2. Who was appointed as the project lead for the Golden Dome missile defence initiative, reflecting a pivotal shift toward space-centric military leadership?
 - (a) Admiral Charles Richard
 - (b) General Michael Guetlein
 - (c) General James Dickinson
 - (d) General John Raymond
3. How is the Golden Dome initiative best described in terms of its defence orientation?
 - (a) aerial transport system
 - (b) nuclear deterrent tool
 - (c) space defence project.
 - (d) cyber intelligence tool
4. Which of the following best describes the structural design of the Golden Dome initiative as revealed in 2025?
 - (a) multi-layered missile defence shield
 - (b) advanced long-range radar installation
 - (c) coordinated unmanned aerial campaign
 - (d) autonomous naval surveillance network
5. Which threat categories are central to the interception goals of the Golden Dome's satellite system?
 - (a) anti-satellite lasers and UAV jammers hypersonic projectiles
 - (b) short-range rockets and UAV mortar hypersonic projectiles
 - (c) intercontinental ballistic missiles and hypersonic projectiles
 - (d) armed UAV squadrons missiles and hypersonic projectiles
6. To which former U.S. President's defence initiative did Donald Trump compare the Golden Dome project?
 - (a) George Bush
 - (b) Joe Reagan
 - (c) Barack Obama
 - (d) Ronald Reagan
7. By what informal name is Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative—cited by Trump while unveiling Golden Dome—commonly known?
 - (a) Cosmic Guard project
 - (b) Star Wars program
 - (c) Sky Dome initiative
 - (d) Orbital Shield force
8. What key capabilities define the operational purpose of the Golden Dome system?
 - (a) real-time orbital tracking and mid-course interception of missile threats
 - (b) aerial troop deployment and space tourism regulation systems
 - (c) deep-sea mining and planetary resource acquisition technology
 - (d) low-earth satellite repair and interplanetary radio communication
9. Which existing defence system inspired the development of the Golden Dome initiative for missile interception?
 - (a) Russia's S-500
 - (b) China's Sky Grid
 - (c) NATO's Network
 - (d) Israel's Iron Dome
10. from which countries rising missile threats led to the strategic push behind the Golden Dome initiative?
 - (a) Brazil and Argentina
 - (b) Japan and Russia
 - (c) China and Russia
 - (d) Egypt and China
11. Which country expressed interest in joining the Golden Dome initiative, hinting at a possible North American defence collaboration?
 - (a) Mexico
 - (b) Canada
 - (c) Turkey
 - (d) Australia

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | | | | | |

16

US COURT STRIKES DOWN TRUMP'S
LIBERATION DAY TARIFFS

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Ruling:** On May 28, 2025, the U.S. Court of International Trade (USCIT) struck down the emergency tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).
- **Legal Basis:** The Court ruled that the tariffs, including those imposed on Canada, Mexico, and China, were *ultra vires*—beyond the legal authority granted by the IEEPA.
- **Government Response:** The White House immediately filed an appeal, and a federal appellate court granted interim protection to maintain the tariffs during the legal review process.



What are the Liberation Day Tariffs

The “Liberation Day” tariff initiative, announced by President Donald Trump on 2 April 2025, combines an across-the-board **10 percent duty** on all imports with much steeper, deficit-indexed surcharges on dozens of trade partners; it was justified under the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)** as a response to “decades of unfair trade,” triggered immediate legal and diplomatic challenges, and—after a **May 2025 federal-court injunction**—now sits partially suspended pending appeal and fresh negotiations.

Announcement and Rationale

- President Trump framed the tariff package as a national-emergency measure to “**re-industrialise America**,” invoking **IEEPA** to impose a universal **10 percent duty** that entered force on 5 April 2025, followed by tiered “reciprocal” surcharges scheduled for **9 April**.
- In his **Liberation Day speech**, the President argued that large bilateral trade deficits threaten U.S. sovereignty and therefore qualify as an “**extraordinary threat**” under IEEPA, a reading that trade lawyers immediately called unprecedented.

Legal Basis and Immediate Challenges

- The administration relied on IEEPA's permission for the president to **"regulate"** imports during a **national emergency**, but critics noted that neither the statute nor prior case law had ever been used to levy blanket tariffs.
- Within days, business groups and multiple states filed suits alleging that the tariffs usurped Congress's exclusive power over foreign commerce; the European Union, Japan, and India simultaneously notified the WTO that they would seek consultations.

Structure and Roll-Out of the Tariffs

- The baseline measure applies a 10 percent ad-valorem duty to nearly every tariff line in the U.S. Harmonised Tariff Schedule, with exemptions only for goods already covered by **Section 232 steel and aluminium levies**.
- A separate **25 percent tariff on imported passenger vehicles** took effect on **3 April 2025**, signalling that autos would be treated as a special national-security case.
- Additional **"reciprocal"** surcharges ranging from **12 percent on Brazil to 54 percent on China were tied to each country's 2024 goods-trade deficit with the United States**, whereas Canada and Mexico were temporarily spared to preserve North American negotiations.

Courts Strikes Down the Tariffs**Lawsuits and Venue Selection****1**

- Multiple importers, retailers, and business associations sued in the **Court of International Trade**—the specialised **Article III** court that hears customs disputes—while others filed in district courts, creating parallel tracks.
- Plaintiffs claimed the tariffs violated both **Article I, Section 8** (Congress's exclusive power **"to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations"**) and the statutory limits of IEEPA.

2**Court of International Trade Decision (28 May 2025)**

- The CIT panel unanimously ruled that **IEEPA may be used to block or regulate specific imports tied to hostile acts**, but **does not grant a "blank cheque"** to rewrite the entire tariff schedule.
- The opinion emphasised that **Congress retained primary responsibility for setting tariff rates** and that delegations of that power must be read narrowly to avoid constitutional concerns.
- The court issued a permanent injunction against the deficit-indexed surcharges and the separate **25 percent auto duty**, while leaving the **10 percent baseline** in place until customs could unwind existing collections.
- The USCIT ruled that the **IEEPA of 1977**, which was enacted to **curtail** the President's previously broad wartime economic powers, **does not permit unbounded imposition of tariffs**.
- The court emphasised that the law can only be invoked to address **specific, declared threats**, and not to pursue general economic policy objectives.
- It held that the **April 2 tariffs**, justified on grounds of **trade imbalance and wage suppression**, failed to meet the **"unusual and extraordinary threat"** standard required under the Act.

3

District Court Decision (29 May 2025)

- **Judge Rudolph Contreras** of the **D.D.C.** reached the same conclusion in a narrower suit brought by two small importers, finding no plausible national-security nexus between a macro-level trade gap and IEEPA.
- That court similarly barred enforcement of the surcharges, amplifying the constitutional critique raised by the CIT.

4

Reference to Trade Act of 1974

The ruling highlighted that **Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974** gives the President **limited authority** to impose tariffs in response to serious **balance-of-payments deficits**, not under general emergency claims. This legislative framework underscores the need for **specific statutory triggers** before trade barriers can be lawfully erected, thereby negating Trump's reliance on the IEEPA for indefinite, global tariffs.

5

Immediate Aftermath

- The court directed the Trump administration to revise its orders within 10 days, effectively nullifying the tariffs imposed under IEEPA unless re-justified under appropriate laws. While the retaliatory tariffs were suspended for 90 days to allow negotiation, the 10% flat tariff on all imports remains in force pending appeal.
- The administration has now moved to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and the matter may eventually reach the Supreme Court.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What was the statutory basis cited for the emergency tariffs invalidated by the U.S. Court of International Trade in May 2025?

- (a) International Emergency Economic Powers Act
- (b) Emergency Border Adjustment Protocol Act
- (c) Trade Expansion Reform and Control Statute
- (d) Presidential Fiscal Intervention Mechanism Act

2. Which legal doctrine did the USCIT apply to rule that the executive had exceeded its statutory powers in imposing tariffs under the IEEPA?

- (a) Habeas Corpus
- (b) Ultra Vires
- (c) Ex Post Facto
- (d) Stare Decisis

3. What was the percentage of the initial tariff President Trump imposed on Mexican and Canadian imports, citing threats from international drug cartels?

- (a) 15%
- (b) 10%
- (c) 20%
- (d) 25%

4. What reason did President Trump cite when announcing the initial series of tariffs on imports from countries like Mexico, Canada, and China?

- (a) Global currency manipulation
- (b) Rising oil market volatility
- (c) International drug cartels
- (d) Intellectual property theft

5. What was the baseline flat tariff rate imposed by President Trump on April 2, referred to as "Liberation Day"?

- (a) 25%
- (b) 15%
- (c) 20%
- (d) 10%

6. Under which legislative framework was the U.S. Court of International Trade established, granting it exclusive jurisdiction over civil trade-related matters?

- (a) Federal Trade Act of 1914
- (b) Customs Courts Act of 1980
- (c) Trade Adjustment Act of 1974
- (d) International Tariff Act of 1995

7. Where is the U.S. Court of International Trade headquartered, despite having national jurisdiction over trade-related cases?

- (a) Washington
- (b) Chicago
- (c) New York
- (d) San Diego

8. Under which constitutional provision does the U.S. Court of International Trade operate, ensuring judicial independence through lifetime tenure?

- (a) Article III
- (b) Article I
- (c) Article IV
- (d) Article II

9. Which of the following states was not among the twelve U.S. states that jointly challenged the emergency tariffs in the case before the U.S. Court of International Trade?

- (a) Mexico
- (b) Texas
- (c) New York
- (d) Arizona

10. Which statute was interpreted by the U.S. Court of International Trade as restricting unchecked presidential authority over emergency tariffs?

- (a) IEEPA of 1930
- (b) IEEPA of 1962
- (c) IEEPA of 1976
- (d) IEEPA of 1977

11. Which countries were targeted by President Trump's January 20 emergency tariff declaration, later struck down for lacking a direct nexus to the cited threats?

- (a) Mexico, Canada, and China
- (b) Brazil, Japan, and Russia
- (c) India, Germany, and France
- (d) Australia, Italy, and Taiwan

12. Which specific provision of U.S. trade law did the Court reference to clarify that tariff authority is limited to balance-of-payments issues and not general emergencies?

- (a) Section 201
- (b) Section 301
- (c) Section 122
- (d) Section 232

13. For how long were the retaliatory tariffs suspended to allow space for negotiation, while the 10% flat tariff remained in effect?

- (a) 30 days
- (b) 60 days
- (c) 45 days
- (d) 90 days

14. Which appellate court is currently hearing the administration's appeal following the USCIT's ruling on the emergency tariffs?

- (a) Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- (b) Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- (c) Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- (d) Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (b) | 3. (d) | 4. (c) | 5. (d) | 6. (b) | 7. (c) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (d) | 11. (a) | 12. (c) | 13. (d) | 14. (b) | | |

17 INDIA'S ECONOMIC RANKING

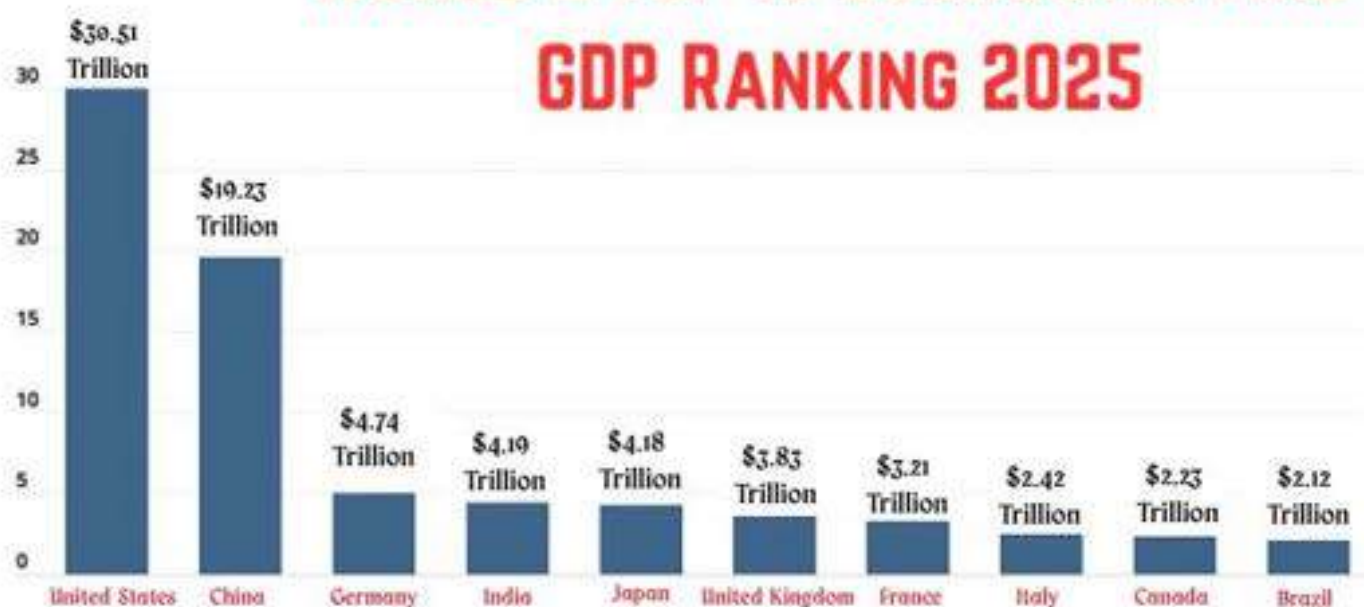
ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

- **Source and Projection:** According to IMF's 2024–2025 projections, India has overtaken Japan to become the **world's fourth-largest economy by nominal GDP**.
- **Official Endorsement:** The projection was **reaffirmed by NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam**, who cited the IMF data to emphasize India's **rising global economic stature**.
- **Economic Milestone:** The development marks a **major milestone** in India's growth trajectory, reflecting its expanding **economic output, investment inflows, and global market presence**.
- **Public and Academic Response:** While the announcement sparked **political celebration**, it also triggered **academic debate** regarding the **limitations of using nominal GDP rankings** as a sole indicator of national progress and development.

Key Drivers Behind India's Rise

- India sustained **real GDP growth in the 6–7 percent** range for **four consecutive years**, which the IMF's **April 2025 World Economic Outlook** cites as the fastest among large economies and the basic reason its nominal output crossed the **USD 4 trillion mark**.
- Provisional national-accounts data from **the Ministry of Statistics** put **FY 2024–25 nominal GDP** at roughly **₹330 trillion**, and that converts to just over **USD 4 trillion** at the average rupee-dollar exchange rate for the year, confirming the IMF tally.

WORLD'S TOP 10 ECONOMIES AND
GDP RANKING 2025

- Structural reforms implemented since **2016—especially the nationwide Goods and Services Tax**, a sharp **corporate-tax cut in 2019**, and production-linked incentive schemes for electronics, autos and renewables—have raised manufacturing's share of GDP and pulled in record green-field investment commitments.
- **Foreign-direct-investment** policy liberalisation helped India **attract USD 71 billion of inflows in FY 2022-23** and maintain **USD 33 billion in the first half of FY 2024-25**, keeping it among the **world's top five FDI destinations** even as global flows slowed.
- A stable rupee amplified the effect of real growth, whereas the Japanese yen lost more than **11 percent** against the U.S. dollar during 2024, eroding **Japan's dollar-denominated GDP** despite limited real-output contraction.
- Public-capital expenditure rose to **3.3 percent of GDP in the FY 2024-25 Union Budget**, accelerating highway and railway construction that feeds directly into higher gross fixed capital formation.
- Finally, improved inflation management—headline CPI slowed to 2.82 percent in May 2025, its lowest reading in six years—has preserved purchasing power and allowed the central bank to move policy toward growth support.

Comparing India and Japan

- India's nominal GDP for 2025 (FY26) is expected to be USD 4.187 billion, marginally more than the likely GDP of Japan, which is estimated at USD 4.187 billion, the IMF had said.
- According to IMF data, India's per capita income has doubled from USD 1,438 in 2013-14 to USD 2,880 in 2025.
- Real-growth differentials are stark: India is expected to expand by 6.7 percent in FY 2024-25, whereas the OECD projects Japan to grow only 0.7 percent in 2025.
- India's population of about **1.43 billion dwarfs Japan's 122 million**, meaning **India's per-capita income remains far lower** (around USD 2,880 versus Japan's USD 32,000), despite the aggregate-GDP crossover.
- **Sectoral mixes differ**: India derives **57 percent of output from private consumption** and nearly **18 percent from manufacturing**, while Japan's service sector generates about 70 percent of its GDP, reflecting divergent demographic and demand structures.
- On external accounts, India ran a **current-account deficit of roughly 2 percent of GDP in FY 2024-25**, whereas Japan recorded a small surplus, yet the yen weakness offset that cushion when GDP is expressed in dollars.



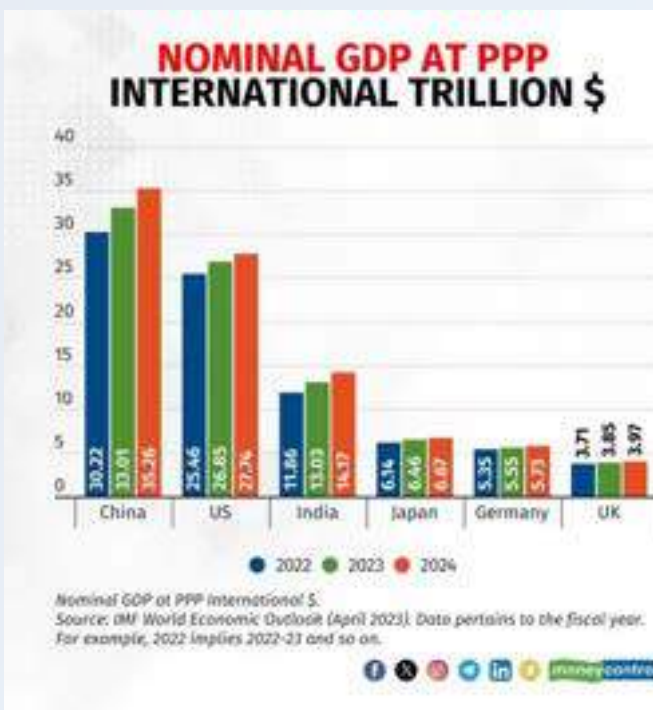
Understanding Nominal GDP and Its Limitations

- Nominal GDP represents the **total market value of all goods and services** produced by a country, expressed in **current U.S. dollars**. India has steadily climbed the ranks in nominal GDP since 2021, surpassing the UK post-COVID.
- However, such comparisons are **highly sensitive to exchange rate fluctuations**, such as the value of the **Indian Rupee against the Dollar**, and often fail to reflect **domestic economic realities** like income distribution, employment quality, and access to public services.

- As a result, nominal GDP can paint a misleading picture of economic strength and human development.

Purchasing Power Parity (PPP): A Better Metric?

- PPP stands for Purchasing Power Parity, an economic theory that compares the relative value of currencies by comparing the cost of a common basket of goods and services in different countries.
- It helps in understanding the real purchasing power of currencies, allowing for more accurate comparisons of living standards and economic productivity across nations.
- In simple terms, it aims to determine the exchange rate between two currencies that would make the price of a specific set of goods and services the same in both countries.
- To address the shortcomings of nominal GDP, economists use **Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)**, which adjusts for **cost-of-living differences** across countries.
- PPP provides a more realistic comparison by reflecting **how much goods and services people can actually buy** with their income.



- For instance, while the **U.S. GDP was 7.5 times India's in 2024** using market exchange rates, the gap narrows to just **1.8 times under PPP**.
- In fact, using PPP estimates, **India became the world's third-largest economy in 2009** and has retained that position since.

Political Narratives and Selective Metrics

- Despite PPP being a more accurate metric of economic strength and **living standards**, governments often promote **nominal GDP rankings** because they are more favorable politically.
- Unlike PPP rankings, which have remained static, nominal GDP allows policymakers to **claim rapid progress and leadership achievements**, even if such claims obscure underlying economic disparities.
- For example, Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog, **Suman Berry**, controversially claimed India's GDP had already touched **\$15 trillion in PPP terms**, significantly overstating India's economic reality.

The "Big Economy" Illusion: Per Capita GDP Disparities

- A critical metric that challenges India's growth narrative is **per capita GDP**, which divides total GDP by the population. With **India's population now the world's largest**, its per capita GDP in 2024 stood at **only \$2,711**, placing it in the "**lower middle-income**" category and ranked **144th globally**.
- In contrast, **Vietnam's per capita GDP reached \$4,536**, despite being lower than India's in 1991.
- Even smaller economies like **Sri Lanka (\$4,325)** and **Bhutan (\$3,913)** outpaced India in 2024.
- These figures expose the **gap between aggregate economic size and individual prosperity**, emphasizing the need to assess development using broader social indicators, not just GDP aggregates.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What country has India overtaken to become the world's Fourth-largest economy in nominal GDP terms, as per IMF's 2024–2025 projections?
(a) Germany (b) United Kingdom
(c) Japan (d) France
2. Which rank does India hold in Economic Ranking as per PPP Model?
(a) world's third-largest economy
(b) world's fifth-largest economy
(c) world's fourth-largest economy
(d) world's sixth-largest economy
3. Who among the following is the CEO of NITI aayog who reaffirmed India's projected rise to the world's economy?
(a) BVR Subrahmanyam (b) Raghuram Rajan
(c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) Krishnamurthy Subramanian
4. In what unit is nominal GDP typically expressed when comparing countries globally?
(a) Indian rupees (b) U.S. dollars
(c) British pounds (d) Chinese yuan
5. What economic concept is used to adjust for cost-of-living differences when comparing GDP across countries?
(a) Consumer Price Index
(b) Human Development Index
(c) Foreign Exchange Rate
(d) Purchasing Power Parity
6. In which year did India become the world's third-largest economy by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and maintain that position thereafter?
(a) 2009 (b) 2011
(c) 2014 (d) 2016
7. What does per capita GDP measure in the context of a country's economic output?
(a) total trade with all nations
(b) total taxes collected annually
(c) total GDP by the population
(d) total exports by the population
8. What was India's global rank in terms of per capita GDP in 2024, according to available data?
(a) 132nd globally (b) 144th globally
(c) 118th globally (d) 126th globally
9. In which year was Vietnam's per capita GDP lower than India's, despite now surpassing it?
(a) 1987 (b) 1994
(c) 2000 (d) 1991
10. Since 2004, what has been the approximate annual growth rate of India's economy, supporting its rise in nominal GDP rankings?
(a) 3–4% annually (b) 5–6% annually
(c) 8–9% annually (d) 6–7% annually
11. What development model are economists increasingly urging governments to move away from due to its limited reflection of human well-being?
(a) GDP-centric development models
(b) Trade-focused economic models
(c) Tax-revenue optimization models
(d) Export-led development models

SOLUTIONS

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| 1. (c) | 2. (b) | 3. (a) | 4. (b) | 5. (d) | 6. (a) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (d) | 11. (a) | | | | | |

18

SPADEX MISSION COMPLETES SECOND AUTONOMOUS DOCKING

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- **Mission:** The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully completed the **second autonomous docking** of two satellites—SDX01 and SDX02—as part of its **Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX)** mission.
- **Technological Achievement:** The docking marks a **major milestone** in India's space capabilities, positioning ISRO as the **fourth space agency globally**, after the **U.S., Russia, and China**, to demonstrate this **complex orbital manoeuvre**.
- **Strategic Significance:** The successful experiment enhances India's potential for **in-orbit servicing, refueling, and future space statio**



SpaDeX Mission and Its Strategic Objectives

- The **SpaDeX (Space Docking Experiment)** mission is a flagship initiative by ISRO to develop and validate the technology of **autonomous satellite docking and undocking**.
- The mission aims to create indigenous capacity in a domain that is essential for **manned spaceflight, modular space station development, and satellite servicing operations**.
- The experiment involves two satellites—SDX01 (**Chaser**) and SDX02 (**Target**)—each weighing around **400 kg**, launched on **December 30, 2024** via **PSLV-C60**.
- These satellites are deployed in slightly different orbits to allow the Chaser to approach and dock with the Target using onboard sensors and navigation systems.

Technical Highlights of the Second Docking Operation

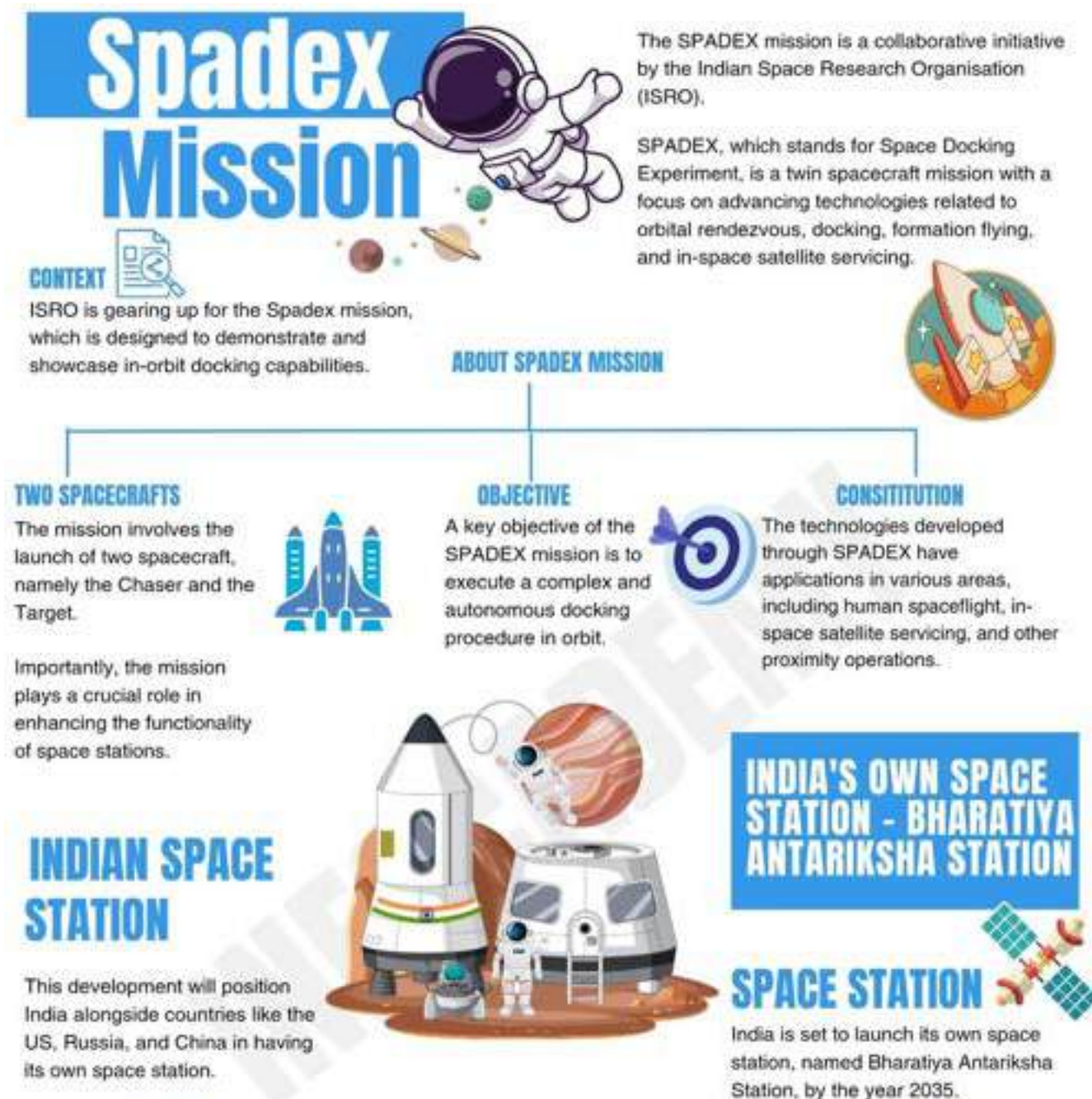
- The second docking, executed on **April 20, 2025**, was **fully autonomous**, beginning from an inter-satellite distance of **15 metres** without any manual hold point, unlike the first attempt that required intervention at a **3-metre hold point**.
- The post-docking experiment on **April 21, 2025** successfully demonstrated **power transfer between the satellites**, including the operation of a heater element in one satellite using power drawn from the other.
- The power exchange lasted for **approximately four minutes**, validating the mission's key objective of enabling **energy sharing and system integration** between docked spacecraft.

Chronology of Events in the SpaDeX Mission

- The first successful docking of SDX01 and SDX02 took place on **January 16, 2025**, followed by **undocking on March 13, 2025**.
- The second docking operation benefitted from detailed ground simulations and insights gained from the first experiment. As per Union Minister **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, more experiments are planned in the upcoming weeks to further explore composite control and stability testing.

Significance of Satellite Docking Technology in Modern Space Missions

- **Satellite docking** involves precision alignment, mechanical coupling, and system integration between two orbiting spacecraft.
- It is a critical capability for enabling **crewed missions**, **orbital resupply**, **sample return**, and **space station assembly**.
- Docking can be either **manual** or **autonomous**, with the latter representing the cutting edge of space operations.
- The success of SpaDeX demonstrates India's capability to join modular components in orbit—an essential requirement for **future lunar missions**, **robotic servicing**, and the establishment of an **Indian space station**.



Comparative Global Context and Historical Milestones

- The **Soviet Union** achieved the world's first docking in **1967**, followed by the U.S. in **1975** through the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project. Since then, the technology has evolved into highly automated systems.
- With SpaDeX, **India joins an elite group** of spacefaring nations and cements its reputation as a key player in orbital technology development.
- While China has already launched a space station (Tiangong), India is now laying the groundwork for its own future **low Earth orbit infrastructure**.

Broader Implications for India's Space Ambitions

- The SpaDeX mission directly supports **Gaganyaan**, India's first **human spaceflight programme**, by validating autonomous proximity operations.
- It is also pivotal for India's roadmap towards establishing a **permanent space station**, expected by the 2030s.
- Furthermore, the ability to transfer power and perform post-docking operations signifies readiness for **in-orbit servicing**, including satellite refueling, repairing, and orbital life extension—capabilities central to future commercial and strategic missions.
- This aligns closely with the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in critical technologies and reinforces India's leadership in space innovation.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What significant milestone did ISRO achieve on April 20, 2025, involving two satellites in space?
(a) first orbital debris removal
(b) second autonomous docking
(c) first crewed mission rehearsal
(d) second lunar module separation
- Which pair of satellites were involved in ISRO's second autonomous docking under the SpaDeX mission on April 20, 2025?
(a) GSLV-3 and GSLV-2 (b) RISAT-1A and INSAT
(c) SDX-5 and SDX-9 (d) SDX01 and SDX02
- Which three countries had demonstrated autonomous space docking capabilities before India achieved it through the SpaDeX mission?
(a) U.S., Russia, and China
(b) Japan, France, and Israel
(c) Germany, U.K., and Brazil
(d) Canada, Italy, and Israel
- Which mission was launched by ISRO to test and validate autonomous satellite docking and undocking technology?
(a) AstroDoc (b) SatDock
(c) SpaDeX (d) Astrosat
- Which launch vehicle was used to deploy ISRO's SpaDeX mission satellites SDX01 and SDX02 in December 2024?
(a) GSLV-F14 (b) LVM3-M5
(c) PSLV-C52 (d) PSLV-C60
- On which date did ISRO achieve the first successful docking of SDX01 and SDX02 under the SpaDeX mission?
(a) January 16, 2025 (b) February 12, 2025
(c) January 05, 2025 (d) February 20, 2025
- When did ISRO successfully perform the undocking of SDX01 and SDX02 after their first docking under the SpaDeX mission?
(a) March 20, 2025 (b) March 13, 2025
(c) March 10, 2025 (d) March 05, 2025
- Which of the following best defines the process of satellite docking in space operations?
(a) remote sensing and imaging
(b) orbit boosting with thrusters
(c) debris tracking and avoidance
(d) precision alignment and coupling
- In which year did the Soviet Union achieve the world's first successful docking of two spacecraft in orbit?
(a) 1965 (b) 1967 (c) 1971 (d) 1975
- Which mission marked the United States' first successful docking with another spacecraft in orbit in 1975?
(a) Skylab Resupply Mission
(b) Gemini Rendezvous Trial
(c) Apollo-Soyuz Test Project
(d) Space Shuttle Columbia Test
- What is the name of the space station launched and operated by China as part of its independent human spaceflight program?
(a) Tiangong (b) Tianwen
(c) Chang'e (d) Shenzhou
- Which Indian space program aims to carry humans into space and benefits from advances in autonomous proximity operations?
(a) Mangalyaan (b) Chandrayaan
(c) Shukrayaan (d) Gaganyaan

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (d) | 3. (a) | 4. (c) | 5. (d) | 6. (a) | 7. (b) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (c) | 11. (a) | 12. (d) | | | | |

19

ICAR LAUNCHES WORLD'S FIRST
GENOME-EDITED RICE

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Launch:** On May 5, 2025, the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** launched the **world's first genome-edited rice varieties** at the **NASC Complex, New Delhi**.
- **Varieties Released:** The two new rice lines—**DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala)** and **Pusa DST Rice 1**—were unveiled by **Union Agriculture Minister Shwraaj Singh Chouhan**.
- **Biotechnological Breakthrough:** Developed using **CRISPR-Cas genome editing tools**, the varieties mark a **historic milestone** in **agricultural biotechnology** and sustainable crop development.
- **Key Features:** These rice varieties are designed to **boost yield, reduce water consumption, and enhance resilience to climate stress**, setting a global precedent for **climate-smart agriculture**.

DRR Dhan 100 ('Kamala')

- Developed by **ICAR-Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR), Hyderabad**, this variety is based on the popular **Samba Mahsuri (BPT-5204)**, cultivated widely across India.
- Using **CRISPR-Cas12 (SDN-1)**, the **Gn1a** gene, responsible for grain count per panicle, was edited. As a result, **Kamala** offers a **19% yield increase**, with an average of **5.37 tonnes/ha** and potential up to **9 tonnes/ha**.
- It matures **15–20 days earlier** than the parent line and retains the cooking quality. **Kamala** also demonstrates enhanced **nitrogen-use efficiency** and **drought tolerance**, making it ideal for stress-prone regions.

Pusa DST Rice 1

- Developed by **ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi**, **Pusa DST Rice 1** is derived from **MTU-1010**, a widely grown short-duration variety. Using **CRISPR-Cas9 (SDN-1)**, scientists edited the **DST** gene for **drought and salt tolerance**.
- The variety performs notably better in stress environments, yielding **3,508 kg/ha** under inland salinity and **3,731 kg/ha** in alkaline soils, compared to lower yields in the parent variety.
- This makes it a valuable resource for farming in **climate-vulnerable zones**, particularly in coastal and semi-arid areas.

- **Genome editing** enables precise alterations in a plant's own **DNA sequence** without introducing foreign genes, unlike **genetic modification (GM)**, which involves inserting genes from other organisms.
- The technologies used—**CRISPR-Cas9** and **CRISPR-Cas12**—are highly targeted and efficient.
- In India, genome-edited crops developed using **Site-Directed Nuclease (SDN)-1 and SDN-2** techniques are exempt from stringent **GMO regulations** under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, making them easier and faster to commercialize compared to GM crops.

Regulatory Clearances and Trial Successes

- Both varieties underwent **multi-location field trials** in 2023–24 under the **All India Coordinated Research Project on Rice**, with evaluation by the **Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM)** and **ICAR's Institutional Biosafety Committees**.
- The successful trials affirmed their yield performance, adaptability, and biosafety, paving the way for **commercial cultivation** in the near future.

Environmental and Economic Impact of the New Varieties

- Adoption of these GE varieties is projected to **increase national rice output by 4.5 million tonnes**, while saving nearly **7,500 million cubic metres of water** through reduced irrigation cycles.
- Additionally, greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by **32,000 tonnes**, supporting **India's climate goals**.
- The early maturity and stress resilience of these varieties make them highly suitable for adapting to **changing agro-climatic conditions** and ensuring **food security** in vulnerable regions.

Strategic Role in India's Agricultural Policy and Food Security

- Rice remains the **primary kharif crop in India**, occupying nearly **one-third of the country's foodgrain area** and contributing **40% to the national food basket**.
- Despite this, India's **average rice yield (4,138 kg/ha)** remains below that of **China (7,043 kg/ha)** and **Bangladesh (4,809 kg/ha)**.
- These genome-edited rice lines offer a practical pathway to close the yield gap and improve productivity in **climate-sensitive zones**, thereby strengthening India's **food security architecture**.

India's Push Towards Genome Editing in Agriculture

- The Union Budget 2023–24 allocated **₹500 crore** for **genome-editing research** in crops like pulses and oilseeds.
- The **University of Delhi** has also developed a **genome-edited mustard variety**.
- These initiatives reflect India's shift towards **precision agriculture** and **climate-resilient crop development** using biotechnological innovation.

Intellectual Property and Global Relevance

- The CRISPR-Cas technologies employed are **patented by the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard**.
- ICAR has acknowledged concerns regarding **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** and has committed to resolving **licensing issues**.
- The success of these genome-edited varieties sets a **global precedent**, with potential to expand the use of this technology to **pulses, oilseeds, and horticultural crops**, offering new avenues for sustainable agriculture and enhanced **farmer income** in a warming world.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following institutions was responsible for the world's first genome-edited (GE) rice was recently released in a landmark scientific development?
 - Released by International Grain Technology Alliance
 - Released by Indian Council of Agricultural Research
 - Released by National Grain Technology Research
 - Released by Asia-Pacific Grain Technology Alliance
- What are the names of the world's first genome-edited (GE) rice varieties, recently released in a scientific breakthrough by Indian researchers?
 - Named DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1
 - Named Swarna Shakti (Hybrid) and Rajendra Shree 3
 - Named Basmati Golden Rice and IR64 Enhanced Line
 - Named Shakti NR 5201 and Improved Krishi White
- Which of the following advanced techniques developed by the genome-edited rice varieties unveiled by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan?
 - RNA- transposon-based editing technology
 - CRISPR-Cas genome editing technologies
 - RNA-guided sequence editing technologies
 - Zinc- finger nuclease editing technologies
- Which of the following is another precise editing technology used for CRISPR-Cas9 are widely used to edit genes already present in the plant.?
 - Zinc Finger Nuclease editing technology
 - TALENs-based genome editing technology
 - Recombinase-mediated editing technology
 - CRISPR-Cas12 genome editing technology
- Under which of the following legal frameworks the genome-edited crops developed using SDN-1 and SDN-2 techniques (which do not contain foreign DNA) are exempted from regulation?
 - Exempted under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
 - Exempted under Environment (Protection) Act, 2002
 - Exempted under Environment (Protection) Act, 1966
 - Exempted under Environment (Protection) Act, 2001
- From which of the following parent varieties DRR Dhan 100 ('Kamala'), a genome-edited rice variety developed by ICAR-IIRR, Hyderabad, is derived?
 - Parent variety is Pusa Basmati (BPT-5204)
 - Parent variety is IR64 Premium (BPT-5204)
 - Parent variety is Swarna Basmati (BPT-5204)
 - Parent variety is Samba Mahsuri (BPT-5204)
- Which of the following gene-editing methods modified using the genome-edited rice variety Pusa DST Rice 1, developed by ICAR-IARI?
 - Edited using TALEN-based SDN-2 method
 - Edited using ZFN-guided SDN-123 method
 - Edited using CRISPR-Cas9 (SDN-1) method
 - Edited using Meganuclease SDN-3 method
- Which of the following bodies also granted regulatory approval along with ICAR's Institutional Biosafety Committees for further development of both DRR Dhan 100 and Pusa DST Rice 1?
 - Cleared by National Biosafety Coordination Committee
 - Cleared by Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation
 - Cleared by Central Agricultural Regulation Commission
 - Cleared by Central Genomics Assessment Commission
- Approximately what share does rice contribute to the national food basket?
 - Contributes around 40% to food basket
 - Contributes around 32% to food basket
 - Contributes around 25% to food basket
 - Contributes around 18% to food basket
- Which of the following group of countries average rice yields is higher than India ?
 - Higher yields in Nepal, Myanmar, and Bangladesh
 - Higher yields in Vietnam, Thailand, and Bangladesh
 - Higher yields in China, Indonesia, and Bangladesh
 - Higher yields in Sri Lanka, Laos, and Bangladesh
- Which of the following crops developed by the University of Delhi have genome-edited varieties?
 - soybean
 - mustard
 - sorghum
 - flaxseed
- Which of the following gene-editing approaches allows crops to be exempt from stringent GMO regulations under Rules 7-11 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986?
 - Developed using SDN-1 and SDN-4 techniques
 - Developed using SDN-4 and SDN-9 techniques
 - Developed using SDN-8 and SDN-6 techniques
 - Developed using SDN-1 and SDN-2 techniques



SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (d) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (c) | 11. (b) | 12. (d) | | | | |

20 CHANDRAYAAN-5 (LUPEX)

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- **Announcement:** It was announced that **India's ISRO** and **Japan's JAXA** have entered the **preliminary design phase** of the **Chandrayaan-5 mission**, also known as **LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration)**.
- **Mission Objective:** The joint mission aims to **explore the lunar south pole**, focusing on the **surface and subsurface search for water and ice**, a crucial step in future lunar habitation and research.
- **Background:** The development follows the **successful Chandrayaan-3 soft landing in 2023** and the **Cabinet's approval** of the Chandrayaan-5 project in **March 2025**.
- **Strategic Significance:** Chandrayaan-5 represents a major advancement in India-Japan space cooperation and strengthens both nations' presence in lunar science and exploration.

LUPEX as a Joint Indo-Japanese Lunar Endeavour

The **Chandrayaan-5 (LUPEX) mission** is a collaborative lunar exploration effort between the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**. Scheduled for **launch in 2027-28** onboard **Japan's H3 rocket**, LUPEX aims to deploy a lander and a rover to explore the Moon's **polar regions**, specifically targeting **water and water-ice deposits**. The total spacecraft weight is expected to be around **6.5 tonnes**, with the **lander developed by ISRO** and the **350 kg rover by JAXA**.

The rover will be equipped with **seven scientific instruments**, contributed by **ISRO, JAXA, European Space Agency (ESA)**, and **NASA**. Among these, **ESA is developing a mass spectrometer**, and **NASA is building neutron spectrometers**, both of which are still in the **design phase**. These instruments will facilitate **in-situ experiments** to measure **water content, chemical composition**, and the **evolution of hydrogen and other lunar elements**.

The mission's primary scientific objectives include:

- **Mapping the distribution of lunar water and ice.**
- **Drilling into lunar regolith** to extract and test samples.
- Performing **on-site analysis** to determine the **quantity and quality of water**.
- **Assessing terrain composition** and potentially navigating to the **Moon's far side** during an extended mission phase.

The **lander system** is being developed by ISRO, while **JAXA's rover** is engineered to perform advanced mobility functions such as **traversing inclines of up to 25 degrees**. The rover's battery charging system is designed for complex operations, including **charging before and after sample collection activities**. One of the seven scientific instruments will be large and contain **four sensors—one by ISRO and three by JAXA**—to enhance the precision of lunar analysis.

Chandrayaan-5 is expected to operate for an initial **mission duration of 100 days (3.5 months)**. However, depending on the health of the systems and rover efficiency, the mission could be **extended up to one year**, with an attempt to **explore the Moon's far side**, a largely unexplored terrain in prior missions. The current phase involves **completion of engineering model testing** and **instrument selection**, with teams from JAXA visiting ISRO in **Bengaluru** to finalize design protocols.

The **Chandrayaan-5 mission builds upon the success of Chandrayaan-3**, which made **India the first country** to achieve a **soft landing on the Moon's south pole** in 2023. It will follow the **Chandrayaan-4 mission**, which is intended as a **lunar sample return mission**, aiming to retrieve and bring back **soil and regolith** samples for mineral composition studies. Together, these missions reinforce **India's expanding presence in deep space exploration** and highlight **India-Japan scientific cooperation** in achieving **common space goals**.

Chandrayaan-1

2008-2009

- Chandrayaan-1, launched on **22 October 2008**, placed a 525-kilogram orbiter into a **100-kilometre polar orbit** and released the **34-kilogram Moon Impact Probe**, making ISRO the **world's fifth agency to reach the lunar surface**.
- The mission's eleven international instruments created the first global chemical and topographic maps of the Moon at 5-km resolution and detected widespread hydroxyl and water-molecule signatures, fundamentally revising scientific views of a "dry" Moon.
- Although contact was lost after 312 days—well short of the intended two-year life—the spacecraft met 95 percent of its objectives, and NASA was able to relocate the silent orbiter in 2016, confirming its continued stable orbit.

2019-2023

Chandrayaan-2

- Chandrayaan-2 lifted off on 22 July 2019 with an orbiter, the Vikram lander and the Pragyan rover, showcasing India's first attempt at a controlled lunar landing.
- The orbiter entered a 100-km polar orbit on 20 August 2019 and is still operating, returning high-resolution images and mineralogical data as well as mapping lunar exosphere dynamics.
- During the powered-descent phase on 7 September 2019, communication with Vikram was lost 2.1 km above the surface; subsequent analysis attributed the crash to a software anomaly in the lander's braking control logic.
- NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter located the debris field two months later, enabling ISRO to refine fault-tree analyses for future landers.

- Despite the landing failure, Chandrayaan-2's orbiter has produced more than twenty peer-reviewed results, including improved maps of elemental silicon, magnesium and sodium, and direct evidence of water-ice signatures at high latitudes

Chandrayaan-3

2023-2024

- Learning from Chandrayaan-2, ISRO simplified Chandrayaan-3 to a **propulsion module**, a reinforced **Vikram lander** and a **26-kg Pragyan rover**, launched on **14 July 2023**.
- On 23 August 2023 the lander touched down at 69° S, making **India the first country to land near the lunar south-polar** highlands and **the fourth to achieve any soft landing on the Moon**.
- The Pragyan rover traversed more than **100 metres of terrain before sunset**, using its LIBS and APXS spectrometers to confirm the presence of sulphur along with aluminium, calcium, iron and titanium in situ, a first for the region.
- Post-landing, the propulsion module was manoeuvred into a high-Earth orbit to conduct extended observations, demonstrating resource-optimised mission repurposing.

2019-2023

Chandrayaan-4 and LUPEX (Chandrayaan-5)

- ISRO has approved Chandrayaan-4 as **India's inaugural lunar sample-return mission**; current designs envision a **five-module architecture involving an orbiter**, lander, ascender, docking module and an Earth-re-entry capsule, with launch **targeted for 2028**.
- In parallel, the **LUPEX / Chandrayaan-5 joint mission with JAXA** aims to deploy a heavy lander and a **350-kg rover to drill up to one metre into** permanently shadowed regions near the south pole to directly assay water-ice resources, with launch no earlier than 2028-29.
- Both future missions demand uprated lander engines, autonomous precision-landing technology, cryogenic sample handling and in-space docking capabilities, reflecting a significant step-up from earlier Chandrayaan architectures.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- With which country is India collaborating for the LUPEX (Chandrayaan-5) lunar mission announced in May 2025?
(a) France through CNES
(b) Japan through JAXA
(c) Germany through DLR
(d) Russia through Roscosmos
- Which region of the Moon is being prioritized in LUPEX for its potential water and ice deposits?
(a) The lunar south pole (b) The lunar highland plain
(c) The lunar central basin (d) The lunar impact valley
- In which year was Chandrayaan-1 launched by ISRO?
(a) 2005 (b) 2008 (c) 2011 (d) 2014
- Which of the following correctly represents the full form of JAXA?
(a) Japan Aerodynamic Experiment Agency
(b) Joint Aeronautics Extension Authority
(c) Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
(d) Jet Aviation Excellence Alliance
- Which launch vehicle is scheduled to carry the LUPEX (Chandrayaan-5) mission to the Moon?
(a) Japan's H3 rocket (b) India's GSLV Mark III
(c) China's Long March 5 (d) Russia's Soyuz MS-22
- What specific region is the LUPEX mission designed to explore on the lunar surface?
(a) Moon's volcanic plains (b) Moon's highland sectors
(c) Moon's equatorial belt (d) Moon's polar regions
- Which resource is LUPEX specifically targeting to enable future lunar habitation?
(a) Surface metals and minerals
(b) Thermal vents and magma
(c) Water and water-ice deposits
(d) Solar winds and ice deposits
- Who is in charge of constructing the lander module for the joint LUPEX lunar mission?
(a) DLR (b) ISRO (c) JAXA (d) ESA
- Which of the following is not among the space agencies contributing scientific instruments to the LUPEX rover?
(a) Canadian Space Exploration Agency
(b) Indian Space Research Organisation
(c) Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
(d) European Space Agency and NASA
- Which type of device is being developed by ESA for deployment on the LUPEX lunar rover?
(a) Gamma radiation device
(b) Neutron mapping scanner
(c) Mass spectrometer device
(d) Infrared imaging scanner
- What is the role of the instrument NASA is providing for the LUPEX rover?
(a) Mapping surface albedo
(b) Capturing magnetic signals
(c) Scanning for solar radiation
(d) Neutron spectrometers tool
- What type of scientific activity will LUPEX instruments primarily support on the lunar surface?
(a) In-situ experiments (b) In-situ sensing trail
(c) Orbital imaging runs (d) Sample return trials
- What is the maximum incline the LUPEX rover is designed to traverse on the lunar surface?
(a) 10 degrees (b) 18 degrees
(c) 25 degrees (d) 30 degrees
- How many of the four sensors in LUPEX's large scientific instrument are contributed by JAXA?
(a) Three by JAXA (b) Seven by JAXA
(c) Eight by JAXA (d) Four by JAXA
- What is the expected initial mission duration of Chandrayaan-5 (LUPEX) once it begins operations on the Moon?
(a) 60 days (b) 90 days (c) 100 days (d) 120 days

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (c) | 5. (a) | 6. (d) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (c) | 11. (d) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | 14. (a) | 15. (c) | |

21

WORLD'S FIRST SUCCESSFUL BASE
EDITING THERAPY

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- **Medical Breakthrough:** On May 15, 2025, the **New England Journal of Medicine** reported the **first successful use of customised gene-editing therapy** on a **nine-month-old infant** with **CPS1 deficiency**, a rare genetic disorder.
- **Technology Used:** The treatment utilized a **refined form of CRISPR technology** called **base editing**, which enables **precise genetic correction** without cutting the DNA strand.
- **Institutions Involved:** The **University of Pennsylvania** and the **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia** jointly developed and administered the breakthrough therapy.

Background

1

On 15 May 2025, researchers at the **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)** and **Penn Medicine** announced that a nine-month-old boy nick-named "**KJ**" had become **the first patient** to receive – and show early clinical benefit from – a custom, in-vivo base-editing gene-therapy that precisely corrected the single-letter DNA error causing his life-threatening metabolic disease. The case report was simultaneously published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* and presented at the American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy annual meeting.



2

KJ was born with severe **carbamoyl-phosphate synthetase 1 (CPS1) deficiency**, an ultra-rare urea-cycle disorder that prevents the liver from converting toxic ammonia to urea; without intervention, infants usually suffer irreversible brain injury or require an early liver transplant.

3

CRISPR and the Origins of Modern Gene-Editing

- The foundation of this gene-editing technology lies in a microbial immune system known as **CRISPR** (*Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats*), which enables bacteria to record viral DNA and mount future immune responses.
- In **2012**, **Jennifer Doudna** and **Emmanuelle Charpentier** adapted this mechanism into a revolutionary tool called **CRISPR-Cas9**, earning them the **Nobel Prize in Chemistry (2020)**.
- The tool functions like a molecular "**cut-copy-paste**" system, where **Cas9 enzymes** cut faulty DNA, allowing new sequences to be inserted.

4

Scientific approach: what “base editing” adds to CRISPR

- Classical CRISPR-Cas9 cuts **both DNA strands**, but **base editors work like a molecular pencil-and-eraser**, converting one nucleotide into another without double-strand breaks, greatly reducing off-target damage – a critical safety advantage when editing directly inside a baby’s liver.
- In KJ’s case, scientists designed an **adenine base editor (ABE)** guided by a bespoke RNA sequence that changed a single A→G error in the CPS1 gene back to its healthy form, restoring enzyme function.

5

How the treatment was delivered

- The **editing machinery** (messenger RNA for the ABE plus a synthetic guide RNA) was encapsulated in **lipid nanoparticles (LNPs)**, then infused intravenously so that particles homed to KJ’s hepatocytes and rewrote the mutant base in vivo, avoiding immune complications linked to viral vectors.
- KJ received **three escalating doses between February and April 2025** under intensive metabolic monitoring; no serious adverse events or off-target edits were detected in serial blood, urine, and biopsy analyses.

6

Early clinical results

- Within weeks, the infant’s plasma ammonia levels stabilised, his **formula-based protein allowance doubled**, and he was weaned off most nitrogen-scavenger drugs; notably, he weathered common viral illnesses without dangerous ammonia spikes – something virtually unseen in untreated CPS1 deficiency.
- MRI and developmental assessments show normal neurological progress so far, though the team emphasises lifelong surveillance for durability and unforeseen late effects.

7

Why this matters for medicine

- The case proves that a **bespoke base-editing drug** can move from design to bedside inside a single infancy, saving patients who cannot wait for years-long trials; researchers call it a model for tackling thousands of ultra-rare Mendelian disorders that each affect only a handful of children worldwide.
- It also showcases a scalable platform: the same LNP backbone and ABE scaffold can be quickly re-programmed for different single-base mutations, potentially lowering costs compared with one-off viral-vector gene therapies.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who was the recipient of the world's first customised gene-editing therapy, as reported in May 2025?
(a) A 9 month-old infant (b) A 5-year-old toddler
(c) A 7-year-old patient (d) A cancer survivor
- Which genetic condition was corrected in the infant who received personalised gene-editing therapy in May 2025?
(a) SCID disorder type A (b) Rett syndrome type A
(c) CPS1 deficiency type A (d) Niemann-Pick type A
- Which technique allowed precise DNA correction without double-strand breaks in the 2025 gene therapy?
(a) RNA editing (b) Base editing
(c) Intron jumping (d) Base stitching
- What is the primary advantage of base editing over traditional CRISPR-Cas9 techniques?
(a) Rapid protein synthesis
(b) Complete gene synthesis
(c) Complete gene correction
(d) Precise genetic correction
- Which institution, along with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, developed and administered the breakthrough gene-editing therapy?
(a) The University of Johns Hopkins
(b) Massachusetts General Hospital
(c) The University of Pennsylvania
(d) The Stanford University School
- Which biological system inspired the development of modern genome editing tools like base editors?
(a) CRISPR (b) Exovax
(c) Chromin (d) Heliron
- What is the full form of the acronym CRISPR in the context of gene-editing technology?
(a) Combine Repetitive Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats
(b) Controlled Repetitive Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeat
(c) Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats
(d) Combined Ribosomal Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats
- Which gene-editing method did Doudna and Charpentier introduce based on a bacterial immune system?
(a) CRISPR-Cas9 (b) EditX CRISPR
(c) ModGene Tool (d) SynBase 2020
- In which year did Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier receive the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their CRISPR-Cas9 discovery?
(a) 2018 (b) 2020 (c) 2022 (d) 2023
- Which term best illustrates the mechanism by which CRISPR-Cas9 edits DNA segments?
(a) Lock-and-slot (b) Turn-and-paste
(c) Plug-and-paster (d) Cut-copy-paste
- Which rare genetic disorder was diagnosed in Kyle "KJ" Muldoon Jr, who received the breakthrough gene-editing therapy?
(a) Ornithine phosphate synthetase 1
(b) Carbamoyl disorder synthetase 1
(c) Carbamoyl phosphate synthetase 1
(d) Medium chain acyl-CoA synthetase 1
- Which condition results from the disruption of the urea cycle in CPS1 deficiency?
(a) Severe glucose buildup (b) Toxic ammonia buildup
(c) Excess glucose buildup (d) Calcium level imbalance
- What is the core mechanism by which base editing modifies genes, as opposed to traditional CRISPR?
(a) Gene silencing methods. (b) mRNA-level conversions
(c) Exon-level conversions (d) Single-base conversions
- Which molecule acts as the targeting mechanism in base editing by guiding and anchoring the editing enzyme?
(a) Exon junction (b) Histone tail
(c) Cas9 enzyme (d) DNA primase
- Which metaphor is commonly used to describe the precision and reversibility of base editing in gene therapy?
(a) Pencil-and-eraser (b) Hammer-and-chisel
(c) Lock-and-lever tool (d) Hook-and-loop strip

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (c) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (c) | 6. (a) | 7. (c) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (d) | 11. (c) | 12. (b) | 13. (d) | 14. (c) | 15. (a) | |

22 PSLV-C61/EOS-09 MISSION FAILED

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Launch Details:** On May 18, 2025, the PSLV-C61/EOS-09 mission launched at 5:59 a.m. from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, but **failed shortly after liftoff**.
- **Cause of Failure:** A technical malfunction in the rocket's third stage prevented the EOS-09 Earth Observation Satellite from being placed into its intended Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO).
- **Mission Context:** This was ISRO's 101st space mission, the 63rd flight of the PSLV, and the 27th using the PSLV-XL configuration.
- **Significance:** The failure marks a rare setback for India's space program, prompting a detailed technical review and corrective measures for future missions.

Sequence of Events: Where the Mission Went Wrong

- The four-stage PSLV performed normally during the first and second stages, with the third stage's motor also igniting successfully.
- However, ISRO reported an abnormal drop in chamber pressure during this stage, which disrupted the orbital insertion sequence.

EOS-09 satellite (RISAT-1B)

Weight: **1,696.24 kg**

Orbit: Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO)

Mission life: **5 years**

Function: All-weather, high-resolution imaging of the Earth's surface across the country's vast territory

1 EOS-09 complements and supplements data from the Resourcesat, Cartosat and RISAT-2B series satellites

2 The new satellite carries fuel for post-mission de-orbiting, ensuring it decays in two years and leaves no debris

KEY APPLICATIONS

- Agriculture & forestry monitoring
- Urban & infrastructure planning
- Disaster management
- National security surveillance

- The failure occurred just minutes before the satellite was scheduled to reach orbit—**17 minutes post-liftoff**.
- ISRO Chairman **V. Narayanan** confirmed that the issue arose from a **malfunction in the solid rocket motor**, and that further analysis was underway to determine the root cause.

Technical Significance of the PSLV and Its Stages

- The **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** is a **four-stage launch vehicle** designed to deploy payloads into multiple orbits, including **SSPO**, **geostationary transfer**, and **navigation** orbits.
- Its third stage, which failed in this mission, is a **solid propellant booster** responsible for providing **high thrust after exiting the atmosphere**.

- Known as ISRO's **"workhorse"**, the PSLV has delivered **landmark missions** such as **Chandrayaan-1, Mangalyaan, and PSLV-C37**, which launched **104 satellites in a single mission in 2017**.

Past Performance: Rare Setback in a Highly Reliable System

- Since its inception in **1993**, the PSLV has had an exceptional success rate, failing only **twice before**: once in its **debut flight (PSLV-D1)** due to a **software error**, and again in **2017 (PSLV-C39)** when a **heat shield malfunction** prevented satellite deployment.
- This third failure breaks an otherwise consistent streak of successful launches, most recently including the **SpaDeX mission in December 2024**.
- The current anomaly follows a previous setback earlier in 2025, when ISRO's **NVS-02 satellite** failed to perform intended **orbit-raising operations** due to a **valve malfunction**.

EOS-09: Purpose and Capabilities of the Earth Observation Satellite

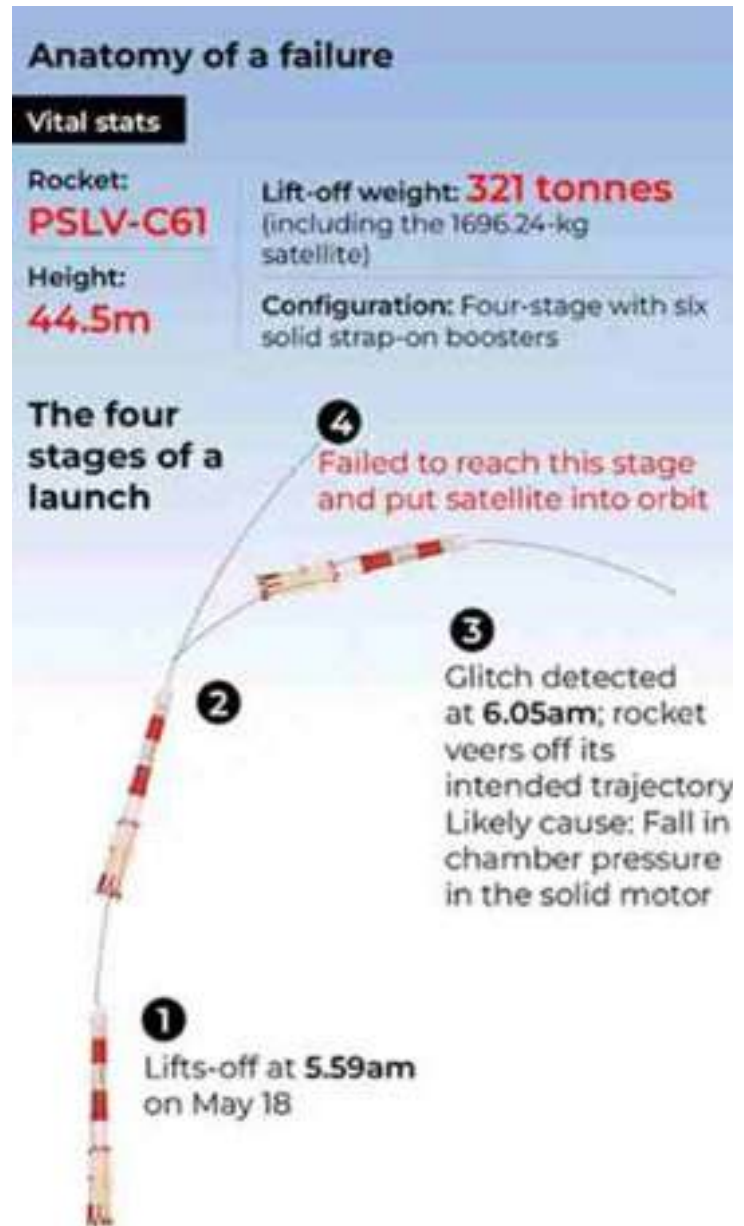
- The **Earth Observation Satellite EOS-09**, also referred to as **RISAT-1B**, was designed for **all-weather, high-resolution imaging** using a **C-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**. Weighing **1,696.24 kg**, the satellite was configured using the proven **RISAT-1 satellite bus** and intended to serve a **five-year mission**.
- It was developed for applications ranging from **land-use mapping, agriculture, disaster management, and hydrology**, to **defence surveillance and coastal security**.
- Its SAR system was equipped to operate in multiple imaging modes with resolutions up to **1 meter**, capable of penetrating **clouds, fog, and darkness**.

Scientific and Strategic Implications of the Failure

- The inability to place EOS-09 into orbit marks a setback for India's **remote sensing programme**, especially at a time when **high-resolution earth observation** is critical for **climate monitoring, resource planning, and national security**.
- While the incident highlights the complexities involved in **solid propulsion systems**, as acknowledged by former ISRO Chairman **S. Somanath**, it also underscores ISRO's ongoing need for **robust testing and redundancy** in mission-critical components.

Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit: Why EOS-09 Needed It

- The intended **Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO)** allows satellites to pass over the same Earth locations at consistent **local solar times**, providing **uniform lighting conditions** essential for time-series observation and change detection.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- From which spaceport did the failed PSLV-C61/EOS-09 mission launch on May 18, 2025?
(a) Chandipur (b) Thumba
(c) Hassan (d) Sriharikota
- Which payload aboard PSLV-C61 failed to reach its intended orbit due to a third-stage malfunction on May 18, 2025?
(a) EOS-09 Earth Observation Satellite
(b) INS-2TD Remote Sensing Platform
(c) RISAT-2 Radar Imaging Satellite
(d) Cartosat High-Resolution Mapper
- Which milestone did ISRO's PSLV-C61/EOS-09 mission mark in terms of total space missions?
(a) 98th space mission (b) 104th space mission
(c) 101st space mission (d) 107th space mission
- Which of the following best describes the structure of the PSLV used in the C61/EOS-09 mission?
(a) Two-stage GSLV (b) Four-stage PSLV
(c) Three-phase SSLV (d) Dual-core LVM3
- When did the PSLV-C61/EOS-09 mission experience failure during its flight sequence?
(a) 11 minutes post-liftoff (b) 14 minutes post-liftoff
(c) 17 minutes post-liftoff (d) 20 minutes post-liftoff
- Who among the following is the ISRO Chairman who confirmed that the PSLV-C61 mission failure was due to a malfunction in the solid rocket motor?
(a) V. Narayanan (b) A. Ranganath
(c) K. Sivaraman (d) S. Somnathan
- Which launch vehicle is known for deploying payloads into SSPO, GTO, and navigation orbits?
(a) Geostationary Launch System
(b) Satellite Positioning Launcher
(c) Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle
(d) Navigation Carrier Launcher
- What type of engine powers the third stage of the PSLV, which failed during the C61/EOS-09 mission?
(a) Solid propellant booster (b) Liquid propulsion engine
(c) Hybrid reaction chamber (d) Cryogenic fuel module
- What nickname is commonly used to refer to ISRO's PSLV due to its consistent and successful performance?
(a) Trailblazer (b) Pathfinder
(c) Moonrider (d) Workhorse
- Which PSLV mission failed during its debut flight in 1993 due to a software malfunction?
(a) PSLV-C37 (b) PSLV-D1
(c) PSLV-C39 (d) PSLV-G2
- What was the cause of failure in ISRO's NVS-02 satellite's orbit-raising operations earlier in 2025?
(a) Sensor calibration (b) Power subsystem
(c) Valve malfunction (d) transponders error
- What is the alternate name for ISRO's Earth Observation Satellite EOS-09, launched in 2025?
(a) RISAT-1B (b) INSAT-4C
(c) CartoSat-3 (d) GSAT-24
- Which of the following technologies was used in EOS-09 (RISAT-1B) for high-resolution, all-weather imaging?
(a) Infrared Imaging Sensor Camera
(b) Multispectral Optical Camera Unit
(c) C-band Synthetic Aperture Radar
(d) Ku-band Passive Radiometer Unit
- Which satellite bus architecture was used to configure EOS-09 (RISAT-1B) for its five-year mission?
(a) Carto-2 satellite bus (b) RISAT-1 satellite bus
(c) GSAT-6 satellite bus (d) INSAT-3 satellite bus
- Which type of orbit allows satellites to consistently observe the same locations on Earth under uniform lighting conditions?
(a) Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit
(b) Medium Earth Transfer Orbit
(c) Geostationary Equatorial Path
(d) Highly Elliptical Lunar Track

SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) | 6. (a) | 7. (c) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (b) | 11. (c) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | 14. (b) | 15. (a) | |

23 MADDEN-JULIAN OSCILLATION

ENVIRONNEMENT

IN FOCUS

- **Date and Onset:** On May 24, 2025, the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** officially declared the **onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala, eight days ahead** of the usual schedule.
- **Record Advancement:** The monsoon also reached **Mumbai on May 26**, marking its **earliest recorded arrival** in the city.
- **Meteorological Driver:** Among various influencing factors, the **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)** was identified by the IMD as the **key atmospheric phenomenon** responsible for **triggering the early monsoon onset**.
- **Climatic Significance:** The event underscores the influence of global atmospheric patterns like MJO on regional weather systems, with implications for agricultural planning and water resource management.

Understanding the Madden-Julian Oscillation

- The **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)** is a **moving system of winds, clouds, and pressure anomalies** that travels **eastward** along the equatorial region.
- First identified in **1971** by **Roland Madden** and **Paul Julian** at the **National Centre for Atmospheric Research**, the MJO completes a global cycle in **30 to 60 days**—sometimes extending to **90 days**.
- It travels at a speed of **4–8 metres per second** and mainly affects the **tropical belt between 30°N and 30°S**, which includes India.
- The MJO oscillates between two phases: an **active phase**, which enhances convection and rainfall, and a **suppressed phase**, during which rainfall activity declines significantly.

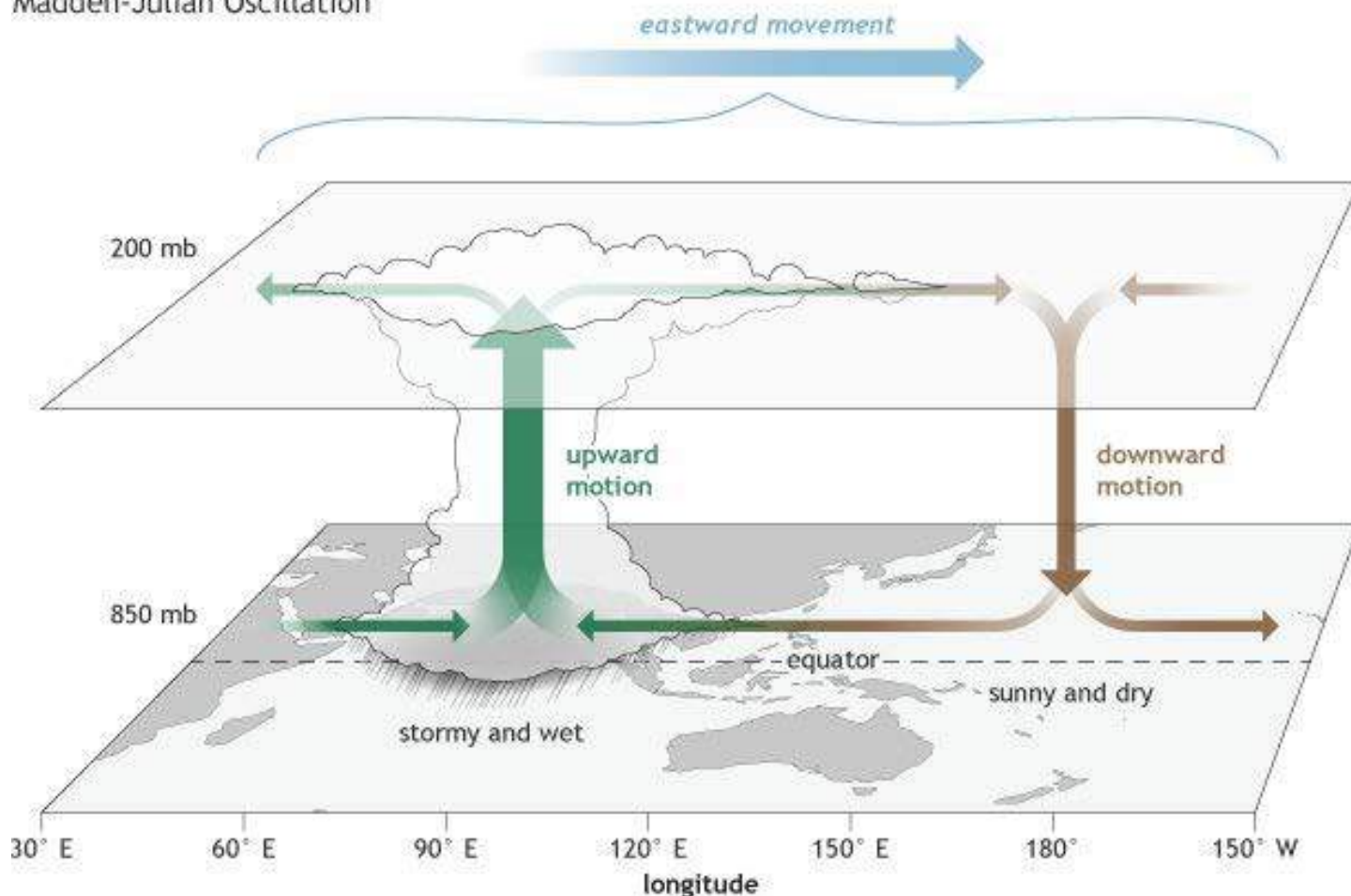
Scientific Basis: How MJO Triggered the Early Monsoon in 2025

- Around **May 22**, the MJO was in **Phase 4** with an **amplitude greater than 1**, a condition that signals intense convective activity and heavy rainfall. Originating in the **Indian Ocean**, the MJO's active phase enhanced cyclonic disturbances and strengthened low-pressure systems.
- This sequence of events led to the **acceleration of moisture-laden westerly winds**, creating the ideal atmospheric conditions for monsoon onset.
- The **early triggering** is reminiscent of a similar pattern seen in **June 2015**, when active MJO activity led to prolonged rainfall events.

Atmospheric and Oceanic Drivers Supporting Early Onset in 2025

- Several complementary systems contributed to the early monsoon. The **Mascarene High**, a **high-pressure zone** near the **Mascarene Islands** in the southern Indian Ocean, intensified during May, helping direct moisture flow toward India's west coast.
- The **Somali Jet**, a **cross-equatorial wind stream**, also gained strength and transported moisture from the **Arabian Sea**.
- Additionally, **heat-low formation** over northwest India and Pakistan created a **pressure vacuum**, drawing in moist air rapidly.
- The **Monsoon Onset Vortex (MOV)**—a cyclonic system in the Arabian Sea—further reinforced the process.

Madden-Julian Oscillation



IMD's Criteria for Declaring Monsoon Onset Over Kerala

- The IMD declares monsoon onset when specific meteorological criteria are fulfilled for **two consecutive days after May 10**.
- These include: **60% of 14 designated weather stations** in Kerala and nearby areas must record at least **2.5 mm rainfall**; **westerly winds** with speeds of **15–20 knots at 925 hPa** must persist up to a depth of **600 hPa**; and **Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR)** must fall below **200 W/m²** in a defined equatorial region. All these parameters were met by **May 23–24**, validating the early onset.

Positive and Adverse Impacts of Early Monsoon Onset

- An early monsoon benefits **Kharif sowing**, particularly crops like **rice, maize, millets, and pulses**, and boosts **vegetable and mushroom cultivation** due to favourable moisture.
- **Reservoir levels and groundwater recharge** also improve, aiding irrigation and power generation.
- However, the unanticipated rainfall led to **spoilage of produce** in parts of **Maharashtra**, causing **short-term inflation** in vegetable prices.
- Early intense rainfall also poses risks of **localised flooding**, especially in urban and coastal regions like **Kerala, Karnataka, and Mumbai**.

Why Cyclones Are Rare During Peak Monsoon Months

- Despite warm sea temperatures and abundant moisture, **tropical cyclones rarely occur during July and August** in India.
- This is due to **strong vertical wind shear**, caused by conflicting westerly and easterly winds at different altitudes.

- During peak monsoon, westerlies near the surface reach **20–25 knots**, while easterlies at higher altitudes (150–100 hPa) blow at **60–80 knots**, disrupting vertical cloud structure and preventing cyclone formation. Hence, monsoon months are associated with **depressions and lows**, but not tropical cyclones.

Climate Change and Its Emerging Influence on the Indian Monsoon

- Recent decades show a **decline in overall monsoon rainfall** by about **6%** over the last 50 years, especially in the **Indo-Gangetic Plains** and **Western Ghats**.
- However, **extreme rainfall events** are increasing, particularly in **central India**, where their frequency has risen by **75%**.
- This is attributed to global warming and the **Clausius-Clapeyron relation**, which posits that atmospheric moisture-holding capacity increases by **7% for every 1°C rise** in temperature.
- These shifts are leading to more **erratic rainfall**, increasing **flooding risks** even while some regions see drought-like conditions.

The Process of Monsoon Withdrawal: Signs and Patterns

- Monsoon withdrawal is marked by the **cessation of rainfall for five consecutive days**, accompanied by a **reversal of wind direction** from **southwesterly to northeasterly**.
- This phase also sees **reduced atmospheric moisture**, **formation of anticyclonic circulation** at lower levels (850 hPa), and **dry satellite water vapor imagery**.
- Withdrawal typically begins from **northwest India** by **early September** and completes by **mid-October**, ending the four-month **June–September** monsoon season.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which weather phenomenon arrived early over Kerala in May 2025, as declared by IMD?
(a) Southeast monsoon (b) Northwest monsoon
(c) Southwest monsoon (d) Northeast monsoon
- Which atmospheric phenomenon did IMD cite as the primary factor behind the early onset of the 2025 monsoon?
(a) The Madden-Dipole Oscillation
(b) The Madden-Julian Oscillation
(c) The Indian Dipole Oscillation
(d) The Equatorial Kelvin wave
- Which broader climatic factor was highlighted by the IMD as affecting regional monsoon variability?
(a) Arctic atmospheric patterns
(b) Volcanic atmospheric patterns
(c) Desert atmospheric patterns
(d) Global atmospheric patterns
- Which of the following best defines the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)?
(a) A moving system of winds, clouds, and pressure anomalies
(b) A polar vortex formed by jet stream and pressure anomalies
(c) A moving oceanic westerlies wind and pressure anomalies
(d) A thermal updraft from tropical wind and pressure anomalies
- In which year was the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) first identified and described by scientists?
(a) 1957 (b) 1965 (c) 1969 (d) 1971
- Who, along with Paul Julian, first identified the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)?
(a) Roland Madden and Paul Julian
(b) Ernest Black and Paul Julian
(c) Walter Reed and Paul Julian
(d) George Ryan and Paul Julian
- What is the typical duration for the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) to complete a full global cycle?
(a) 15 to 30 days (b) 30 to 60 days
(c) 60 to 75 days (d) 75 to 90 days
- At which speed does the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) typically travel eastward along the equator?
(a) 1–3 metres per second (b) 2–5 metres per second
(c) 4–8 metres per second (d) 6–9 metres per second
- Which geographical zone is primarily influenced by the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) during its global cycle?
(a) Subpolar belt near 60°N and 30°S
(b) Tropical zone above 45°N and 30°S
(c) Arctic boundary beyond 66°N and 30°S
(d) Tropical belt between 30°N and 30°S
- What does the active phase of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) typically do to weather conditions in the tropics?
(a) Suppresses clouds and storms
(b) Enhances convection and rainfall
(c) Weakens trade wind systems
(d) Increases polar air intrusion
- Which phase of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) is associated with reduced rainfall and weaker convection?
(a) Monsoon reversal phase
(b) Tropical transition phase
(c) Suppressed phase
(d) Oceanic cooling phase
- Which atmospheric condition played a key role in triggering the early onset of the monsoon over India in May 2025?
(a) Moisture-laden westerly winds
(b) Heat-driven polar easterlies
(c) High-altitude northern breezes
(d) Cyclone-fed southerly gusts
- Which cross-equatorial wind system strengthened and carried moisture from the Arabian Sea toward India in May?
(a) The Bengal Drift (b) The Somali Jet
(c) The Java Stream (d) The Monsoon Spur
- Which region, along with northwest India, experienced heat-low formation that contributed to early monsoon flow?
(a) Pakistan (b) Sri Lanka
(c) Maldives (d) Myanmar
- Which regions have experienced the most notable decline in monsoon rainfall over the last 50 years?
(a) Indo-Gangetic Plains and Western Ghats
(b) Deccan Plateau and Chotanagpur Plateau
(c) Sunderbans Delta and Chotanagpur Plateau
(d) Eastern Coastal Zone and Malwa Uplands

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (b) | 3. (d) | 4. (a) | 5. (d) | 6. (a) | 7. (b) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (b) | 11. (c) | 12. (a) | 13. (b) | 14. (a) | 15. (a) | |

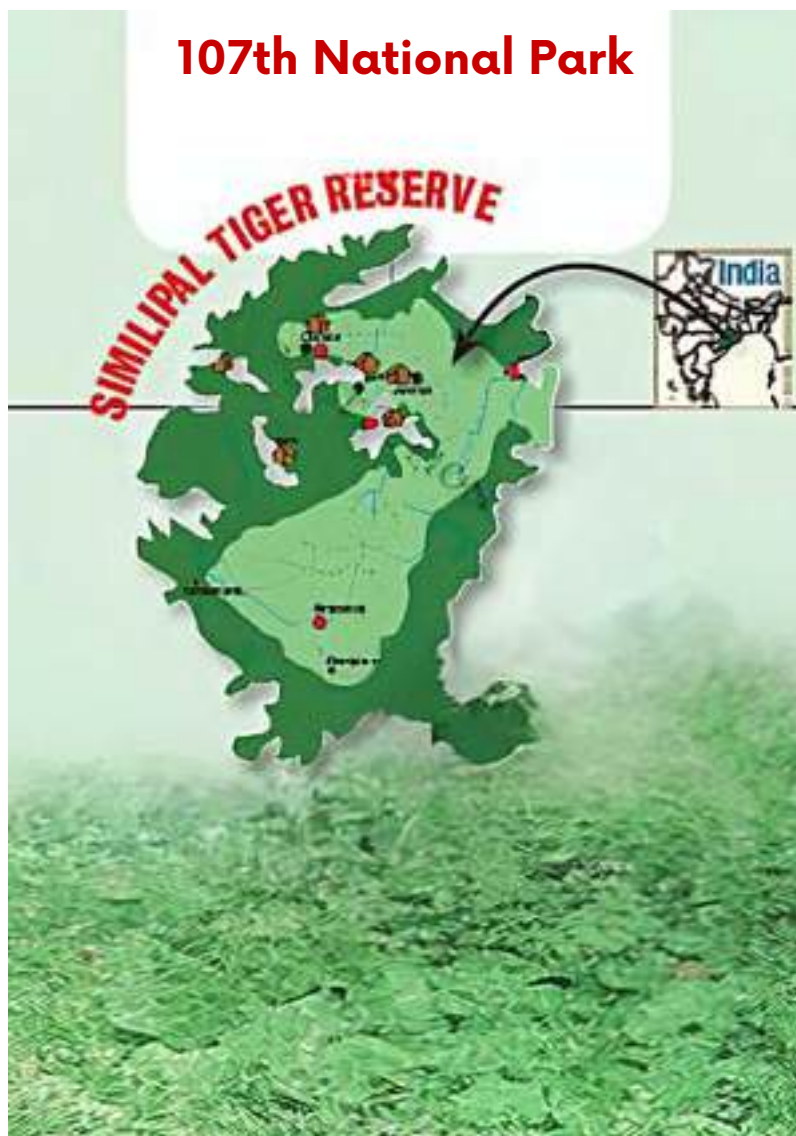
24

SIMILIPAL OFFICIALLY ACCORDED NATIONAL PARK STATUS

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- **Venue and Date:** On April 24, 2025, the Government of Odisha officially notified Similipal Tiger Reserve as a **national park**, concluding a **proposal pending since 1980**.
 - **Designation and Legal Status:** With this notification, **Similipal becomes the 107th national park** in India and the **second national park in Odisha**, after **Bhitarkanika**. The designation grants it the highest level of legal protection under Indian wildlife conservation laws.
 - **Ecological Significance:** Similipal is globally renowned for being the only known habitat of wild melanistic (black) tigers, and is already a designated tiger reserve, biosphere reserve, and an Elephant Reserve, making this status a significant conservation milestone.
-
- Similipal, situated in **Mayurbhanj district of Odisha**, has a long-standing ecological and legal legacy.
 - Initially declared a **wildlife sanctuary in 1973**, it was later designated a **Critical Tiger Habitat in 2007** under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
 - Despite its rich biodiversity and ecological significance, the proposal to declare it a national park remained stalled for over four decades due to challenges related to settlement of rights and relocation of human habitations.
 - The **2025 notification** finally resolves this, elevating its protection status and integrating it into the broader conservation landscape of India.
 - The newly designated **national park area** spans **845.70 square kilometres**, covering parts of **eleven forest ranges** across **Similipal North and South divisions**, including zones like **Pithabata, Nawana, Jenabil, Upper Barahkamuda, Barehipani, Chahala, and Talabandha**.
 - Similipal is geographically marked by high plateaus, dense forests, and majestic waterfalls such as **Barehipani** and **Joranda**, with its highest peaks being **Khairiburu** and **Meghashini**.



- It lies within the **Deccan Peninsular Biogeographic Zone**, particularly the **Chhotanagpur Province** and the **Mahanadian Region**, which contributes to its diverse flora and fauna.
- The forest is predominantly composed of **sal trees**, along with **moist deciduous** and **semi-evergreen forest types**, making it a complex and thriving habitat for both biodiversity and forest-dependent tribal communities.

Biodiversity Significance and Conservation Value of Similipal National Park

- Similipal holds the distinction of being the **only natural habitat in the world** for **wild pseudo-melanistic Royal Bengal Tigers**, a genetic variant of tigers with high melanin content that gives them a black-striped coat.
- The park currently shelters **40 Royal Bengal Tigers**, along with **25% of Odisha's elephant population**, and is home to **104 species of orchids**, many of which are **endemic**. Its faunal diversity further includes **55 mammalian species**, **361 bird species**, **62 reptile species**, and **21 amphibian species**, placing it among India's most ecologically rich protected areas.
- Major ungulates such as **sambar**, **chital**, **gaur**, **barking deer**, and **mouse deer** thrive here, sustaining a balanced predator-prey dynamic essential for tiger conservation.

Legal and Policy Implications of National Park Status

- With the national park designation, the **notified area of 845.70 sq/km** has become "**rights free**", meaning **no human activity or habitation is permitted**, in contrast to wildlife sanctuaries where limited human activities are allowed.
- The remaining portion of the **2,750 sq/km Similipal landscape** continues as a **wildlife sanctuary**.
- Under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, a national park enjoys the **highest legal protection**, and once notified, **its status cannot be downgraded**.
- This ensures that Similipal now falls under stricter ecological and legal regulation, allowing for better conservation outcomes and improved eligibility for central and international funding.

Displacement and Rehabilitation of Tribal Communities

- Prior to the final notification, six villages—**Jamunagada**, **Kabatghai**, **Bakua**, **Barahkamuda**, **Bahaghar**, among others—existed in the park's core area.
- While **four villages have been successfully relocated**, the village of **Bakua**, inhabited by around **61 families**, remains occupied and has therefore been excluded from the national park boundaries.
- The state has attempted to maintain a balance between ecological priorities and **tribal rights**, integrating welfare measures and sustainable development opportunities for relocated communities.

Government's Conservation Programmes and Technological Interventions

- The Odisha Forest Department is implementing the **Greater Similipal Landscape Programme**, aimed at protecting both the newly notified national park and its surrounding ecological corridors.
- The programme includes the installation of **AI-powered camera towers**, **trail guard surveillance systems**, and **V-SAT communication networks** to monitor wildlife and prevent poaching in remote areas.
- Additionally, a **special security force**, including trained police personnel and ex-servicemen, has been deployed to protect the park.
- To improve the **genetic diversity of tigers**, two **female tigers from Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** in Maharashtra have been introduced.
- Their successful acclimatisation is expected to pave the way for a significant rise in the tiger population, with a target of reaching **100 tigers by 2036**.
- This marks an important step in strengthening Similipal's role in India's **Project Tiger** initiative.
- The Odisha government has launched the **Ama Similipal Yojana**, an integrated initiative to support livelihood enhancement, skill development, eco-tourism, and cultural tourism.
- The scheme also focuses on improving infrastructure in health, education, and public service delivery for forest-dwelling communities.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which state government officially notified Similipal Tiger Reserve as a national park, concluding a proposal that had been pending since 1980?
(a) The Government of Punjab
(b) The Government of Assam
(c) The Government of Kerala
(d) The Government of Odisha
- Similipal Tiger Reserve has recently been designated as the _____ national park in India.
(a) 107th (b) 108th (c) 106th (d) 109th
- Similipal National Park in Odisha is globally recognized for being home to which rare animal species?
(a) White crocodiles (b) Red pandas
(c) Clouded leopards (d) Melanistic tigers
- In which district of Odisha is the Similipal National Park located?
(a) Sundargarh (b) Mayurbhanj
(c) Kendrapara (d) Ganjam
- Similipal Tiger Reserve lies within the Deccan Peninsular Biogeographic Zone, specifically in which sub-regions?
(a) Eastern Uplands Zone and the Vindhyan Highland Region
(b) Satpura Plateau Zone and the Malwa Highland Region
(c) Chhotanagpur Province and the Mahanadian Region
(d) Western Ghats Range and the Konkan Coastal Region
- What is the current estimated tiger population in Similipal Tiger Reserve?
(a) 60 Royal Bengal tigers (b) 30 Royal Bengal tigers
(c) 50 Royal Bengal tigers (d) 40 Royal Bengal tigers
- How many orchid species are found in the Similipal region, many of which are endemic to the area?
(a) 104 species of orchids (b) 87 species of orchids
(c) 96 species of orchids (d) 91 species of orchids
- Which village was excluded from the final Similipal National Park designation due to its location in the core area?
(a) Astakona (b) Chahala
(c) Bakua (d) Nawana
- Which initiative has been launched to improve ecosystem protection in Similipal using AI cameras and V-SAT networks?
(a) Similipal Habitat Recovery Programme
(b) Greater Similipal Landscape Programme
(c) Odisha Forest Technology Programme
(d) Eastern Ghats Conservation Mission
- Which tiger reserve was the source of two female tigers relocated to Similipal to aid in recovery efforts?
(a) Nagarhole National Park Range
(b) Ranthambore Tiger Sanctuary
(c) Panna Tiger Conservation Block
(d) Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve
- What percentage of Odisha's total elephant population is Similipal Tiger Reserve is home to ?
(a) 15% (b) 20% (c) 25% (d) 30%
- Which conservation scheme led to the creation of Similipal Tiger Reserve in the early 1970s?
(a) Bengal Tiger (b) Forest Guard
(c) Project Tiger (d) Habitat Reform
- Which scheme was introduced to promote eco-tourism, skill training, and livelihood development around Similipal?
(a) Ama Similipal Yojana (b) Green Odisha Initiative
(c) Similipal Skill Mission (d) Eco Livelihood Scheme

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (a) | 3. (d) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (d) | 11. (c) | 12. (c) | 13. (a) | | | |

25 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

ENVIRONNEMENT

IN FOCUS

- **Index Release and India's Rank:** The 2025 World Press Freedom Index, published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), ranked India 151st out of 180 countries, marking an improvement of 8 positions from its 2024 rank of 159.
- **Global Event and Observance:** World Press Freedom Day is observed annually on May 3. The 2025 global commemoration was held in Brussels from May 5 to May 7, organized by UNESCO in collaboration with international media bodies and civil society groups.
- **Notable Withdrawal:** On May 4, 2025, during the event, UNESCO announced that Nicaragua had officially notified its withdrawal from the organization, citing long-standing political disagreements and press freedom concerns.

- The World Press Freedom Index (WPI) is published annually by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an international NGO based in France, since 2002.
- The index assesses media freedom based on five parameters: political context, legal framework, economic environment, sociocultural conditions, and security risks for journalists.
- In 2025, India scored 32.96, a marginal improvement from 31.28 in 2024, yet its global position at 151st reflects continued challenges in areas like journalist safety and political interference.
- Notably, India's political and security indicators ranked at 155, highlighting concerns over state control, while the social indicator placed it at 160, underlining polarization and online threats faced by media professionals.

INDEX 2025

151 / 180

Score : 32.96

INDEX 2024

▲ 159 / 180

Score : 31.28

POLITICAL
INDICATOR155
24.30POLITICAL
INDICATOR159
21.58ECONOMIC
INDICATOR132
34.17ECONOMIC
INDICATOR157
31.67LEGISLATIVE
INDICATOR141
42.64LEGISLATIVE
INDICATOR143
40.87SOCIAL
INDICATOR160
32.38SOCIAL
INDICATOR156
33.33SECURITY
INDICATOR155
31.30SECURITY
INDICATOR162
28.97



Top and Bottom Performers in 2025: Global Trends in Press Freedom

- Countries such as **Norway, Estonia, and the Netherlands** dominate the top ranks due to **stable political conditions, diverse media ownership, and strong legal protections**.
- **Norway**, ranked **1st**, achieved a score of **92.31** across all indicators. In contrast, the lowest rankings were occupied by **Eritrea (180th)**, **North Korea (179th)**, and **China (178th)**—nations where **media censorship, government surveillance, and journalist persecution** are endemic.
- **Nicaragua**, ranked **172nd**, experienced further decline owing to **repressive laws, attacks on media houses, and political censorship**.

World Press Freedom Day: Origin, Objectives, and Legal Foundations

- **World Press Freedom Day** is observed every year on **May 3**, established by the **UN General Assembly in 1993** in remembrance of the **Windhoek Declaration (1991)**.
- Organized by **UNESCO**, this day celebrates the **fundamental principles of press freedom**, pays tribute to journalists who lost their lives in the line of duty, and reinforces public access to information.
- The event is grounded in **Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which guarantees the right to **freedom of opinion and expression**, including the freedom to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media".

UNESCO's 2025 Global Conference on Press Freedom

- This year's World Press Freedom Global Conference is being held in Brussels from May 5 to May 7, 2025, with participation from journalists, civil society, international organizations, and academics.
- The central theme revolves around the **impact of Artificial Intelligence on journalism**, exploring how

- **automated content generation, algorithmic biases, and deepfakes** threaten **media diversity and editorial independence**.
- The sessions also emphasise developing ethical standards, transparency policies, and legal protections for journalists in an AI-driven information ecosystem.

India's Historical Trajectory in Press Freedom: From Colonial Acts to Constitutional Guarantees

- India's engagement with press freedom began with the **Bengal Gazette (1780)**, the country's first newspaper critical of colonial policies.
- Over time, restrictive legislations such as the **Censorship Acts (1799–1823)**, **Licensing Act (1857)**, and **Vernacular Press Act (1878)** curtailed press independence.
- The **Constitution of India**, through **Article 19(1)(a)**, formally guaranteed **freedom of speech and expression**, including press freedom, post-1950.
- However, during the **National Emergency (1975–1977)**, severe **press censorship** and **suspension of civil liberties** marked a dark chapter. Since then, efforts to restore media autonomy have evolved through judicial activism and policy reforms.

The Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

Established in **1997** by **UNESCO**, the **Guillermo Cano Prize** is awarded annually on **May 3** to honor individuals or organizations who have made **notable contributions to press freedom** under **threatening conditions**. The prize commemorates **Guillermo Cano Isaza**, a Colombian journalist assassinated in **1986**. In **2025**, the award was presented to **La Prensa**, Nicaragua's oldest newspaper, for its **resilience under repression**. This decision, made by an independent jury of media experts, led to **strong objections from the Nicaraguan government**, which accused **UNESCO of politicisation** and **undermining state sovereignty**, prompting its **formal withdrawal from the organisation**.



Nicaragua's Withdrawal from UNESCO

On **May 4, 2025**, **Nicaragua** officially notified **UNESCO** of its intent to **withdraw from the UN body**, citing the **controversial award to La Prensa** as the primary trigger. This move underscores a pattern of **authoritarian pushback** against **international human rights frameworks**. **UNESCO**, while expressing regret, stood by the decision, reaffirming its commitment to **press freedom and independent journalism**. The situation echoes past tensions when **the United States withdrew from UNESCO in 2017** under **President Donald Trump**, before rejoining in **2023** under **President Biden**. However, as of **February 2025**, the renewed Trump administration is **re-evaluating U.S. membership**, further complicating **UNESCO's global standing**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which organization publishes the annual World Press Freedom Index, including the 2025 edition?
 - Global Media Watch Foundation
 - Reporters Without Borders
 - Committee to Protect Journalists
 - International Federation of News
- What was India's rank in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders?
 - 151st
 - 162nd
 - 148th
 - 159th
- On which date is World Press Freedom Day observed annually across the globe?
 - April 30
 - May 3
 - June 5
 - July 1
- Where was the 2025 global commemoration of World Press Freedom Day held?
 - Geneva
 - Nairobi
 - Stockholm
 - Brussels
- Which country officially announced its withdrawal from UNESCO on May 4, 2025, citing political and press freedom concerns?
 - Nicaragua
 - Venezuela
 - Myanmar
 - Belarus
- In which country is Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the publisher of the World Press Freedom Index, headquartered?
 - Canada
 - France
 - Belgium
 - Germany
- Which of the following is not one of the five parameters used in the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders?
 - Environmental policies
 - Political context
 - Legal framework
 - Economic environment
- What key challenges are reflected in India's social indicator ranking in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index?
 - declining media and revenues
 - legal safeguards and threats
 - polarization and online threats
 - media and political engagement
- Which country ranked 1st in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index with a score of 92.31?
 - Denmark
 - Finland
 - Ireland
 - Norway
- Alongside Eritrea (180th), which countries ranked just above it in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index due to extreme censorship and media persecution?
 - North Korea (179th), and China (178th)
 - Myanmar (179th), and Iran (178th)
 - Belarus (179th), and Russia (178th)
 - Syria (179th), and Afghanistan (178th)
- World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3, commemorates which foundational declaration adopted in 1991?
 - Geneva Media Charter
 - Vienna Free Press Act
 - Paris Expression Code
 - Windhoek Declaration
- In which article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, World Press Freedom Day is rooted that upholds freedom of expression?
 - Article 16
 - Article 21
 - Article 19
 - Article 24
- Which publication marked India's early engagement with press freedom, often critical of colonial policies?
 - Bombay Chronicle
 - Bengal Gazette
 - Madras Courier
 - Calcutta Sentinel
- Which annual award established by UNESCO in 1997 honors exceptional contributions to press freedom under dangerous conditions?
 - Guillermo Cano Prize
 - Alfred Nobel Award
 - Chapultepec Medal
 - N.Mandela Honor
- Which U.S. President led the country's reentry into UNESCO in 2023 after its 2017 withdrawal?
 - President Obama
 - President Trump
 - President Clinton
 - President Biden

SOLUTIONS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (d) | 10. (a) | 11. (d) | 12. (c) | 13. (b) | 14. (a) | 15. (d) | |

26 SIMLA AGREEMENT, 1972

STATIC KNOWLEDGE

IN FOCUS

- **Incident and Casualties:** On April 22, 2025, a **terrorist attack in Pahalgam**, located in **Indian-administered Kashmir**, resulted in the **deaths of at least 26 civilians**, escalating regional tensions.
- **Indian Response:** In retaliation, India took a series of **punitive measures**, most notably the **suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** with Pakistan, and initiated **Operation Sindoor** targeting terrorist infrastructure across the border.
- **Pakistan's Reaction:** In a sharp diplomatic counter, **Pakistan threatened to withdraw from the Simla Agreement of 1972**, a foundational accord that governs **bilateral dispute resolution and peacekeeping norms** between the two countries.



The Shimla Agreement was signed by **Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the President of Pakistan. It was signed on July 2, 1972, in Shimla, India, following the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War.**

The war resulted in over 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and a major territorial advantage for India. The agreement was aimed at establishing a framework for peaceful bilateral relations, ensuring military disengagement, and promoting long-term normalization.

Key Objectives and Legal Provisions of the Simla Agreement

- The Simla Agreement is notable for institutionalising **bilateralism**—it firmly established that all disputes, including **Kashmir**, must be resolved **without third-party intervention**, such as through the **United Nations**.

- It redesignated the **1971 ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir** as the **Line of Control (LoC)** and restricted either party from attempting to **unilaterally alter it**.
- The agreement also mandated the **withdrawal of troops to pre-conflict positions**, the **repatriation of POWs**, and the restoration of **diplomatic and economic relations**.
- These commitments were reaffirmed in the **Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties**, which allows for treaty suspension in case of **material breach**, a point now invoked by both sides in 2025.



Strategic Importance of the Simla Agreement in Indo-Pak Relations

- For over five decades, the Simla Agreement has served as the **cornerstone of India's bilateral policy on Kashmir**, rejecting any third-party mediation.
- It legitimised the **Line of Control**, reducing the risk of accidental war recurrence post-1971.
- The agreement has been cited in subsequent confidence-building measures such as the **Lahore Declaration (1999)** and the **Composite Dialogue Process (2004)**.
- Any formal suspension now risks removing the only surviving **legal mechanism for conflict containment** between two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Major India-Pakistan Wars and Their Impact on Bilateral Diplomacy

Since 1947, **India and Pakistan have fought four major wars**, with three directly linked to the **Kashmir dispute**:

- The **First War (1947–48)** followed the accession of **Jammu & Kashmir to India**, resulting in the first **UN-mandated ceasefire** and the establishment of the **initial ceasefire line**.
- The **Second War (1965)** saw Pakistan's **Operation Gibraltar**, intended to incite rebellion in Kashmir, leading to a full-scale Indian counteroffensive and the **Tashkent Agreement (1966)**.
- The **Third War (1971)** was triggered by **Pakistan's internal crisis in East Pakistan** and led to the creation of **Bangladesh**, with India emerging as the decisive victor and regional power. The **Simla Agreement** directly followed this outcome.
- The **Kargil War (1999)** was initiated by **Pakistani infiltration** into Indian positions in **Kargil**, which India reversed through **Operation Vijay**, reaffirming the sanctity of the **LoC**.

Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's Retaliation

- India's "**Operation Sindoor**", launched on **May 6, 2025**, targeted **nine terrorist and military infrastructure sites** in **Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir**, reportedly killing **Abdul Rauf Azhar**, a senior **Jaish-e-Mohammed** commander.
- Pakistan has denied Azhar's death and claimed **civilian casualties**, vowing **retaliation**.
- The situation has escalated regional anxiety, especially given both nations' nuclear capabilities and the breakdown of diplomatic protocols.

International and Regional Security Implications

- The unraveling of the **Simla Agreement** raises fears of a complete collapse of **bilateral confidence-building mechanisms**, with consequences for **regional stability**, **border control**, and the functioning of **international treaties** like the **Indus Waters Treaty**.
- Western diplomatic missions, including the **UN, US, EU, and China**, have issued statements urging both nations to exercise **restraint** and **resume dialogue**.
- The international community recognises that the **absence of the Simla framework** could lead to **unregulated escalation** in one of the world's most volatile regions.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- At which popular tourist destination, the terrorist attack on April 22, 2025, occur, resulting in the deaths of over two dozen civilians?
(a) Sopore (b) Kupwara
(c) Baramulla (d) Pahalgam
- Which major bilateral agreement did India suspend as a punitive measure following the April 2025 terrorist attack?
(a) South Asia Treaty (b) Indus Waters Treaty
(c) Srinagar Protocol (d) Nehru-Liaquat Treaty
- What was the name of the retaliatory operation launched by India targeting terrorist infrastructure across the border in 2025?
(a) Operation Sindoor (b) Operation Vajrapath
(c) Operation Meghdoot (d) Operation Trishakti
- In which year was the Simla Agreement—central to India-Pakistan diplomatic relations—signed?
(a) 1965 (b) 1950 (c) 1972 (d) 1999
- Who represented India during the signing of the Simla Agreement on July 2, 1972?
(a) Vice President B.D. Jatti
(b) Foreign Minister Y.B. Chavan
(c) Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram
(d) Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
- Which major military conflict between India and Pakistan led to the sign of Simla Agreement?
(a) 1965 Rann of Kutch war (b) 1947 First Kashmir war
(c) 1971 Indo-Pak war (d) 1999 Kargil conflict
- Which key diplomatic principle did the Simla Agreement firmly reinforce in India-Pakistan relations?
(a) Institutionalizing bilateralism
(b) Mandating third-party mediation
(c) Defining military parity terms
(d) Enforcing economic sanctions
- Which boundary was formalized under the Simla Agreement, replacing the 1971 ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir?
(a) International Border (b) Radcliffe Boundary
(c) Line of Control (d) Durand Line Accord
- Which international treaty reaffirms the legal obligations of countries to uphold commitments made in bilateral or multilateral agreements?
(a) Vienna Convention (b) Geneva Protocols
(c) Hague Convention (d) Rome Statute Code
- What legal basis permits the suspension of a treaty by either party under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties?
(a) Good faith violation (b) Material breach
(c) Sovereign exception (d) Diplomatic reprisal
- In which year did India revoke Article 370, a move later cited by Pakistan as a material breach of the Simla Agreement?
(a) 2005 (b) 2014 (c) 2017 (d) 2019
- Which 2004 diplomatic initiative between India and Pakistan aimed to address all bilateral issues through sustained engagement?
(a) Tashkent Peace Protocol
(b) Agra Peace Summit
(c) Composite Dialogue Process
(d) South Asia Security Pact
- What was the key outcome of the First India-Pakistan War (1947-48) over Jammu & Kashmir?
(a) Integration of Gilgit-Baltistan
(b) Signing of the Tashkent Agreement
(c) Creation of LOC under Simla Pact
(d) First UN-mandated ceasefire
- What was the peace accord signed after the 1965 India-Pakistan War to restore normalcy between the two nations?
(a) Karachi Peace Treaty
(b) Lahore Joint Declaration
(c) Tashkent Agreement
(d) Islamabad Peace Framework
- Which Indian military operation was launched to drive out Pakistani intruders during the Kargil War of 1999?
(a) Operation Shakti (b) Operation Parakram
(c) Operation Vijay (d) Operation Meghdoot

SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (b) | 3. (a) | 4. (c) | 5. (d) | 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) | 11. (d) | 12. (c) | 13. (d) | 14. (c) | 15. (c) | |

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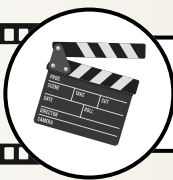
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MEDIA COVERAGE

India's Top Revolutionary Educationist: Talks About His Journey From Working In Premier Law Firm To Become The Most Sought After Educationist In Country Imparting Legal Education



India's Top Law Coach Speaks On Cracking Law Entrances



Super 30 of law entrance bags 5 out of top 10 in AILET and CLAT

When Super 30 students bagged five out of top 10 in the All India Law Entrance Test (AILET) and five out of top 10 in the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT), it was a testament to their hard work and dedication. The students, who are from the Super 30 coaching institute in Patna, Bihar, have achieved a remarkable feat. The institute, founded by Nishant Prakash, has been helping students crack the law entrance exams for over a decade. The students' success is a testament to the institute's teaching methodology and the dedication of its faculty and students.



An Interview With India's leading Educationist: How Important Is To Join Coaching Institute To Crack An Aptitude Based Exam Like CLAT



THE HINDU CLAT candidates aggrieved over 'errors'; consortium denies laxity

CLAT candidates are aggrieved over errors in the exam, but the consortium denies laxity. The Consortium of Law Admission Tests (CLAT) has denied the allegations of laxity in the exam. The consortium stated that the exam was conducted in a fair and transparent manner. The students' grievances are being addressed by the consortium. The examiners have been asked to provide a detailed explanation of the errors. The consortium is committed to ensuring the integrity of the exam process.

1

PM MODI INAUGURATES VIZHINJAM PORT

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the ₹8,867-crore Vizhinjam International Deep-water Multipurpose Seaport in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, hailing it as a “symbol of new-age development” and India’s first dedicated deep-water container trans-shipment hub.
- The inauguration—attended by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani and MP Shashi Tharoor—commissioned **Phase 1, with capacity for 1.5 million TEU and two berths** developed under a public-private partnership led by Adani Ports.
- Within six weeks, the port proved its ultra-large-vessel capability when the **24,346-TEU MSC Irina, one of the world’s biggest box-ships, docked on 10 June 2025**, underscoring operational readiness.
- Officials stressed that **Vizhinjam’s natural 20-24 m draft, 10 nmi proximity to the Suez-Far-East shipping lane, and AI-enabled semi-automation** will slash India’s dependence on Colombo, Singapore and Jebel Ali for trans-shipment.
- The Prime Minister linked the port to **PM-Gati Shakti multimodal logistics and SAGAR maritime security initiatives**, while the Union Shipping Ministry projected annual savings of **US \$200 million in trans-shipment costs** once subsequent phases lift capacity above 6 million TEU.

Infrastructure & Economic Significance

- **Natural depth of nearly 20-24 m and minimal littoral drift** permit berthing of 24,000-plus TEU ultra-large container vessels without continuous dredging, cutting operating costs and emissions.
- Phase 1 provides an **1,800 m container berth line, six Super-Post-Panamax STS cranes and an AI-powered vessel-traffic-management system co-designed with IIT Madras**, giving the port semi-automated status unique in India.
- Strategic location **10 nmi off the busy east-west sea-lane** enables direct calls from Europe-Asia services, potentially capturing up to **50 % of India-bound trans-shipment currently handled abroad**.
- Economic models commissioned by the Kerala government forecast **over 6 lakh direct and indirect jobs and ₹1.2 trillion in cargo-linked economic activity** by 2040 once three development phases are complete.

Inauguration Day Highlights

- PM Modi emphasised that **“the money India paid foreign ports will now fuel domestic growth,”** framing Vizhinjam as a leap toward **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** in logistics.
- Kerala CM called the commissioning “a proud moment” marking the **state’s entry onto the global maritime map**; the event also prompted political barbs as Modi quipped the port’s success would “disturb the sleep of many.”
- The ceremony included a **virtual flag-off of MSC Türkiye carrying 10,000 TEU bound for Europe**, signalling immediate commercial operations.

Strategic & Geo-Political Implications

- Vizhinjam is positioned to **compete with Colombo, Hambantota, Duqm and Dubai** for South-Asian trans-shipment, advancing India’s **“Sagarmala” and “Act East” outreach** while lowering exposure to foreign port chokepoints.
- The port bolsters **India’s Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)** by providing a Coast-Guard jetty and naval logistics node only 120 km from the international shipping lane, complementing the **INS Dweep prakshak** base at Lakshadweep.
- Analysts see the hub as a **counter-weight to China-backed facilities at Hambantota and Gwadar**, reducing freight time for India-Europe trade by 3-4 days and annual bunker costs by up to 15 %.

Environmental & Social Dimensions

- The project's **3.1 km breakwater and minimal dredging design** aim to limit coastal erosion; yet environmental impact assessments acknowledge **heightened wave energy** requiring continuous shoreline stabilisation.
- Protests by local fishing communities since 2022 alleged **loss of homes and livelihoods from erosion and construction debris**; the Kerala government has paid **₹107 crore in compensation to 2,700 families** and promises an additional ₹10 lakh housing grant per affected household.
- Port authorities have unveiled a **“Green Vizhinjam” plan** covering on-site solar power, electric RTG cranes, and mandatory low-sulphur-fuel bunkering to cut carbon intensity by 15 % over conventional Indian ports.

2

**TOTAL FERTILITY RATE REMAINS
CONSTANT AT 2.0 IN 2021****POLITY & GOVERNANCE****IN FOCUS**

- On 7 May 2025, the Office of the **Registrar General of India (RGI)** published the *SRS Statistical Report 2021*, confirming that India's TFR remained at 2.0 children per woman.
- A **Press Information Bureau** release hailed the finding as a demographic milestone, noting the drop from 2.3 in 2014 and a concurrent rise in the sex ratio at birth from 899 to 913 girls per 1,000 boys.
- The report shows that **31 States/UTs have achieved or fallen below replacement fertility**, even as sizeable regional gaps persist

National Highlights (2021)

- India's nationwide **TFR held at 2.0**, down from 2.3 in 2014, confirming replacement-level fertility.
- The **crude birth rate** slipped to **19.3 per 1,000 population**, continuing an average annual fall of 1.1 % since 2016.
- The **mean age at effective marriage for women rose to 22.5 years**, up three years since 1990.
- Use of **modern contraceptives climbed to 56 %**, and unmet need fell to 9.4 %, accelerating fertility decline.
- The **gross reproduction rate** reached **1.0**, meaning each woman is, on average, replacing herself with one daughter.

State-Level Variations

- Fertility remains markedly above replacement level in the Hindi-belt: **Bihar (3.0), Uttar Pradesh (2.7), Madhya Pradesh (2.6), Rajasthan (2.4) and Jharkhand (2.3)**.
- At the other extreme, **Delhi and West Bengal recorded the lowest TFR at 1.4; Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh followed at 1.5**.
- Every southern State—and now Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujarat—sits at or below the replacement threshold, indicating an **advanced demographic transition in western and southern India**.
- Uttarakhand** was the lone State to register a slight uptick in birth rate between 2016 and 2021, showing that transitions are not uniform.

Long-Term Demographic Shifts (1971 – 2021)

- The proportion of children (**0–14 years**) **fell from 41.2 % in 1971 to 24.8 % in 2021**, while the working-age cohort (15–59) expanded to 66.2 %, opening a demographic-dividend window.
- The **elderly share (60+) rose to 9 %**, with Kerala leading at 14.4 %, signalling growing ageing-care needs.
- The **sex ratio at birth improved to 913**, reflecting slow but positive change in gender norms.

Policy Implications & Way Forward

- A stable **TFR of 2.0 eases resource pressures** and supports environmental sustainability but hastens population ageing, stressing pensions and healthcare.
- High-fertility States need intensified **female-education, health-care and livelihood programmes** to quicken the fertility transition and narrow regional gaps.
- Low-fertility regions must **boost labour-force participation—especially among women—and invest in up-skilling** to counter shrinking youth cohorts.
- Experts urge completion of the postponed **Census 2021** and regular demographic projections to inform targeted policies.
- The forthcoming **national population-stabilisation policy** and continued strengthening of family-planning services under the National Health Mission will be crucial to navigate India's next demographic phase

3

PRESIDENTIAL REFERENCE
UNDER ARTICLE 143

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- On **13 May 2025**, President **Droupadi Murmu** invoked **Article 143(1)** to ask the Supreme Court 14 questions on the constitutionality of its **8 April 2025** judgment that fixed timelines for Presidential and Gubernatorial assent to State Bills.
- The move has rekindled debate over whether Article 143 can be used to revisit a recent judgment or to clarify its limits, raising concerns about separation of powers.
- A Constitution Bench of at least five judges must now decide whether to answer, partly answer, or decline the reference, per **Article 145(3)**.
- The Union Government defends the reference as fostering cooperative federalism, whereas several States fear it could dilute safeguards against indefinite gubernatorial delays.

Constitutional Basis and Scope

- **Article 143** empowers the President, acting on Cabinet advice, to seek the Supreme Court's opinion on legal or factual questions of **public importance** (clause 1) and on certain inter-governmental disputes barred from Article 131 (clause 2).
- The Court's opinion is **advisory, not binding**, yet past practice shows governments treat it as highly persuasive and invariably comply.
- The provision inherits its lineage from **Section 213, Government of India Act 1935**, which granted similar consultative powers to the Governor-General.

Historical Evolution and Landmark References

- Since 1950, Presidents have made **15 references** on issues ranging from legislative delegation (1951) to 2G spectrum allocation (2012).
- The Court has sometimes refused to answer or has only partially answered questions, e.g., the **Kerala Education Bill (1958)** and the **Ayodhya reference (1993)**.
- It has consistently held that Article 143 **cannot be used to review or appeal** its judgments—reaffirmed in **Special Reference 1 of 1998**.

The 2025 Reference: Key Questions and Potential Impact

- Central to the reference is **whether the Court can impose outer limits**—using Article 142—on the President or Governors for bill assent, and what legal consequences follow if deadlines lapse.
- The Bench must weigh if answering would **re-open matters settled** on 8 April, thereby blurring lines between advisory and appellate functions.
- An affirmative opinion could **institutionalise fixed timelines** in constitutional practice; a negative one may restore wider discretion under **Articles 200 and 201** but leave States exposed to delays.

Procedural Mechanics

- A **Constitution Bench** (≥ 5 judges) is mandatory, though prior references on complex issues have often been heard by 7- or 9-judge benches.
- Interested States and stakeholders may seek intervention, but the Court controls the breadth of argument and may re-frame questions.
- After hearings, the Court's signed **opinion is sent to the President**; it is not enforceable like a decree but traditionally guides executive and legislative action.

4

WATER-SHARING DISPUTE B/W
PUNJAB AND HARYANA

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The Supreme Court labelled Punjab's de-notification of land acquired for the **Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal** an act of "high-handedness" and directed both States to cooperate with the Union Government to reach an amicable settlement, setting an **August 2025** deadline for progress.
- On the same day, the Court rebuked Punjab for ignoring its 2002 decree to complete the canal, stressing that judicial orders "cannot be defeated by executive fiat."
- The Punjab & Haryana High Court upheld its earlier direction that Punjab must release additional water to Haryana from the Bhakra dams, rejecting Punjab's plea to modify a **2 May 2025** order taken at a Union Home-Secretary-led meeting.
- Throughout **April-May 2025** the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) decision to send **4,500 cusecs more water to Haryana** ignited political unity in Punjab against any extra release and prompted Haryana to threaten fresh Supreme Court action.

Genesis and Legal Milestones

- When **Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966**, Parliament promised the new State a share in the **Ravi-Beas waters**, later quantified in a 1976 executive order that allocated **3.5 MAF** each to Punjab and Haryana and **0.2 MAF** to Delhi.
- A tripartite agreement of **31 December 1981** (Punjab-Haryana-Rajasthan) revised the allocations and triggered the plan to build the SYL Canal so that Haryana could physically receive its share.
- The **Eradi Tribunal** (Ravi-Beas Water Tribunal, 1986-87) upheld earlier pacts and marginally raised the States' quotas, but Punjab's canal stretch remained unfinished amid protests and militancy.
- In **2002** the Supreme Court ordered Punjab to complete its 90 km length of the SYL within one year; Punjab sought review, which was rejected, and the Court authorised a Central agency to step in (2004).
- Punjab responded with the **Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004 (PTAA)**, purporting to cancel all prior river pacts; the President referred the law to the Supreme Court.
- On **10 November 2016** a five-judge Bench held the PTAA unconstitutional, restoring all obligations to finish the SYL Canal and honour water-sharing agreements.

Current Flashpoints (2024-25)

- **Canal Construction:** Haryana has completed its 100 km share, but Punjab's stretch is only partially dug and remains politically unviable; the 2025 Supreme Court admonition rekindled calls for resuming work under federal supervision.
- **Bhakra Dam Releases:** Haryana demanded 8,500 cusecs in April 2025—an increase of 4,500 cusecs—citing drought-hit districts; Punjab claimed Haryana had already drawn **104 % of its annual quota** and refused to open extra sluice gates.
- **High-Court Mandate:** The Punjab & Haryana High Court's June 2025 order compels Punjab to implement the Union Home-Secretary's May 2 directive, deepening the executive-versus-state standoff.
- **Ground-Water Stress:** Falling reservoir levels—Bhakra 12 ft lower and Pong nearly 32 ft lower than last year—fuel Punjab's argument that it lacks "surplus" water.

5

INDIA'S POVERTY STATISTICS (2011 – 2023): WORLD BANK REPORT**ECONOMY****IN FOCUS**

- The World Bank's **June 2025 global poverty update** uploaded new India estimates to the Poverty & Inequality Platform (PIP), reflecting the 2021 PPP round and a higher **\$3/day extreme-poverty line**.
- **22 April 2025:** A dedicated "**Poverty & Equity Brief – India**" was released alongside the Spring Meetings, giving a first public look at results from the 2022-23 **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)**.
- Media reports highlighted the headline finding that **extreme-poverty fell from 27.1 % in 2011-12 to 5.3 % in 2022-23 even after the tougher \$3 line**—meaning about **269 million people escaped poverty** in a dozen years.
- The **Press Information Bureau (PIB)** framed the update as evidence of "the fastest poverty reduction in India's recorded history".
- Analysts noted that India's new numbers alone caused a **downward revision in South Asia's 2022 extreme-poverty rate** in the World Bank's global tables.

General Highlights

- **Extreme poverty** (@ \$2.15, 2017 PPP) dropped from **16.2 % in 2011-12 to 2.3 % in 2022-23**, lifting **171 million people** above that threshold.
- Applying the **new \$3/day line (2021 PPP)**, poverty fell from **27.1 % to 5.3 %** over the same span, shrinking the number of poor from **344 million to 75 million**.
- **Lower-middle-income (LMIC) poverty** (@ \$3.65) nearly halved—from **61.8 % to 28.1 %** between 2011-12 and 2022-23.
- **Rural-urban gap** narrowed sharply: extreme poverty in rural areas fell from **18.4 % to 2.8 %**, while urban poverty declined from **10.7 % to 1.1 %**.
- **Consumption-based inequality** eased: the Gini index slid from **28.8 to 25.5** over the period, although income-based measures still show wide disparities.
- The World Bank's **Multidimensional Poverty Measure (MPM)** puts non-monetary poverty at **15.5 % in 2022-23**, down from 53.8 % in 2005-06.

What is new in the 2025 update?

- **Shift to 2021 PPPs & higher poverty lines:** the international line was raised from **\$2.15 to \$3.00/day**, and LMIC/UMIC lines to **\$4.20 and \$8.30**, respectively.
- **Incorporation of India's 2022-23 HCES** using the Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP), allowing the first fully comparable consumption series since 2011-12.
- **Now-casts to 2025** suggest India's extreme-poverty rate dips further to **≈ 4.9 % in 2023-24** despite the stricter line.
- The brief introduces a **state-contribution decomposition**, showing that Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh together delivered **two-thirds of the national decline**.

Distributional Insights

- **State Profile:** The five populous states (Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh) above still host **54% of the remaining extreme poor**, underscoring persistent spatial concentration.
- **Rural vs Urban:** Rural areas accounted for **83 % of poverty exit** between 2011-12 and 2022-23, reflecting higher baseline deprivation but also effective rural transfer programs such as the Public Distribution System.

- **Demographic Lens:** Children (0-14 yrs) remain the most vulnerable group, with a **36.2 % LMIC-poverty rate in 2022-23**, compared with **17.2 % in urban adults**.
- **Multidimensional Deprivations:** **Sanitation** is now the single largest contributor to India's MPM score, affecting **≈ 30 % of the population**, whereas lack of electricity has fallen to just **1 %**.

Noteworthy Regional & Thematic Insights

- **Free food-grain transfers (PMGKAY)** and **real-wage gains in rural areas** are cited by the World Bank and analysts as key drivers of the rapid decline.
- With the adoption of higher lines, **India's official poverty estimates will likely be recalibrated**, but trajectories remain downward even under tougher standards.
- The Bank warns that **inequality in market incomes (World Inequality Database Gini ≈ 62 in 2023)** could offset future poverty gains if social transfers taper.
- **Pace of decline:** Extreme-poverty fell 1.2 percentage points per year on the \$3 line—faster than during the 2004-11 boom years.
- **Policy takeaway:** World Bank economists attribute half the post-2014 poverty drop to in-kind transfers and inflation-indexed food subsidies rather than income growth alone.
- **Data gap closing:** With the 2022-23 HCES, India now has comparable consumption data after an 11-year hiatus, improving the robustness of global poverty estimates.

6

CSR SPENDING IN INDIA GROWS 16 % IN FY 2023-24**ECONOMY****IN FOCUS**

- On 28 April 2025, market-intelligence firm **PRIME Database** released a study showing that the **CSR outlay of 1,394 NSE-listed companies rose 16 % to ₹17,967 crore in FY 2023-24**, up from ₹15,524 crore the year before, breaking a three-year phase of near-stagnant spending.
- The brief highlighted that the jump mirrored an **18 % surge in the firms' average three-year net profit (the base for the statutory 2 % CSR obligation)**, signalling that corporate profitability rather than regulatory change drove the expansion.
- The Report stressed that **HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and TCS topped the spending table**, while the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs hinted at revisiting CSR threshold limits** in light of swelling profits and compliance rates.

Scale and Growth Highlights

- The **₹17,967 crore actually disbursed by NSE-listed companies represents 98 % compliance with their prescribed CSR requirement (₹18,309 crore)**; the small gap is accounted for by ₹2,329 crore transferred to mandated "Unspent CSR Accounts" for rollout in subsequent years.
- Average CSR spending **grew at more than triple the 4.8 % pace recorded in FY 2022-23**, marking the sharpest annual uptick since the CSR law took effect in 2014 and signalling renewed corporate appetite for social investment after the pandemic lull.
- **Public-sector undertakings (PSUs) contributed ₹3,717 crore—up 19 % over the previous year—despite forming less than 5 % of listed entities**, reflecting the Centre's directive that state-owned firms ring-fence at least 0.5 % of profit for community assets.

Sector-wise Allocation Trends

- According to RED Lab, **Education remained the single-largest beneficiary, drawing roughly ₹10,085 crore (33 % of all CSR funds)**, followed by **Healthcare at about ₹7,000 crore (23 %)** and **Rural Development at roughly ₹5,000 crore (17 %)**, reaffirming the dominance of human-capital themes.
- PRIME Database's granular project audit shows that **spending on Environmental Sustainability surged 54 % year-on-year**, the steepest growth across categories, while allocations to Slum Development, Armed-Forces Veterans' welfare and Disaster Management fell sharply, each down more than 50 %.
- Analysts flagged a **persistent metro bias: 61 % of all CSR rupees originated from corporates headquartered in Maharashtra and Delhi**, yet only 3 % reached the Government's 112 "Aspirational Districts," spotlighting the need for stronger geographical prioritisation mechanisms.

Leading Contributors and Company Rankings (FY 2023-24 actual spends)

- **HDFC Bank — ₹945.31 crore; 2. Reliance Industries — ₹900 crore; 3. TCS — ₹827 crore; 4. ONGC — ₹634.57 crore; 5. Tata Steel — ₹580.02 crore; 6. ICICI Bank — ₹518.87 crore; 7. Indian Oil Corp — ₹457.71 crore; 8. Infosys — ₹455.67 crore; 9. ITC — ₹404.05 crore; 10. Power Grid — ₹330.48 crore.**
- Collectively, the **top-ten spenders accounted for nearly 28 % of the NSE universe's CSR outgo**, underscoring the concentration of social-investment capacity among India's largest banks, diversified conglomerates and energy majors.

7

2025 WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK
REPORT

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

The International Monetary Fund's **World Economic Outlook (WEO), April 2025: A Critical Juncture amid Policy Shifts** finds the global expansion losing speed, prices easing only gradually, and risks skewed to the downside as trade tensions intensify and financial conditions tighten. The report trims headline growth to **2.8 % for 2025 and 3 % for 2026**, flags a slower-than-expected disinflation path, and warns that policy uncertainty could derail an already fragile recovery.

- The IMF released its spring WEO, cutting the 2025 global-growth forecast by **0.5 percentage point to 2.8 %** and unveiling the subtitle "A Critical Juncture amid Policy Shifts."
- At the press conference, Chief Economist **Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas** cited "century-high tariffs and resurgent geopolitical fractures" as the principal drags and urged governments to preserve central-bank independence and rebuild fiscal buffers. The report arrives ahead of a July 2025 forecast revision, when the IMF will incorporate the newly announced U.S.–China tariff roll-backs and a draft U.S.–UK trade pact.

Global Highlights

- **Growth:** World output is projected at **2.8 % (2025) and 3 % (2026)**—both well below the 2000–19 average of 3.7 %.
- **Inflation:** Global headline inflation is forecast to decline from **5.8 % in 2024 to 4.7 % in 2025**, but core inflation remains sticky in services-heavy economies.
- **Trade:** Goods-trade volume growth is revised down to **1.7 % for 2025**, less than half the pre-pandemic norm, as supply-chain re-routing meets fresh tariff barriers.
- **Risks:** The IMF lists escalations in the U.S.–China–EU trade dispute, renewed energy-price spikes, and a disorderly repricing of financial assets as top dangers.

Region-wise Insights

- **Advanced Economies:** Growth slips to **1.3 % in 2025**, as higher for-longer interest rates and waning fiscal support bite; the U.S. accounts for half the group's expansion.
- **Emerging Asia:** Still the world's engine at **4.8 %**, but momentum is increasingly concentrated in **China (4.6 %) and India (6.2 %)**, while ASEAN slows on electronics-cycle weakness.
- **Latin America:** Growth cools to **1.9 %**, with Brazil easing after a bumper agricultural year and Mexico facing U.S. tariff spill-overs.
- **Middle East & Central Asia:** Projected to rebound to **3.9 %** on the assumption that Saudi oil cuts unwind in late-2024 and Red-Sea shipping normalises.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Growth edges up to **3.7 %**, but per-capita incomes will still trail pre-covid levels in a third of the region.

India-Specific Observations

- **Growth & Inflation:** India is set to grow **6.2 % in 2025 and 6.4 % in 2026**, while CPI inflation eases to **4.2 %**, squarely within the RBI's target band.
- **Drivers:** The IMF credits continued public-capex, strong digital-services exports, and a recovery in rural demand; risks stem from monsoon volatility and rising global tariffs on tech goods.
- **External Balance:** The current-account deficit widens modestly to **1.7 % of GDP** on higher energy-import bills, but remains comfortably financed by resilient FDI and portfolio inflows.

8

INDIA ABSTAINS FROM IMF VOTE ON \$2.3 BILLION AID TO PAKISTAN

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

- The IMF Executive Board approved a **US \$2.3 billion assistance package for Pakistan (US \$1 billion immediate disbursement under the Extended Fund Facility plus US \$1.3 billion under the new Resilience & Sustainability Facility)**.
- **India abstained** during the Board vote, citing Pakistan's "poor reform record" and the risk that fresh funds could be diverted to state-sponsored cross-border terrorism.
- The abstention marked the **twelfth consecutive year** that New Delhi has objected to IMF bailouts for Islamabad and came one week before the July India-US Trade-Policy-Forum IP meeting, raising the diplomatic temperature.

Key features of the IMF decision

- Total package: **US \$2.3 bn**—a US \$1 bn tranche released immediately after the Board vote, and **US \$1.3 bn phased over 28 months** under the climate-linked RSF.
- Conditionality: Pakistan must **raise electricity tariffs, broaden the GST base, publish SOE audits and adopt a market-based exchange rate**; RSF money is tied to coastal-flood defences and renewable-energy projects.
- **Board mood**: The package passed **with near-consensus; only India abstained** (IMF rules do not provide for a formal "no" vote).

Why did India abstain?

- **Security concerns**: India argued that IMF cash could free up fiscal space for Pakistan's military spending and "finance terror infrastructure," echoing earlier G-20 statements.
- **Implementation doubts**: New Delhi cited Islamabad's checkered history of 23 IMF programmes since 1958, 14 of which went off-track before completion.
- **Debt-sustainability worries**: Indian officials told the Board that repeated bailouts had made Pakistan a "too-big-to-fail debtor," creating moral hazard for the Fund.
- **IMF procedure**: Diplomats said India chose abstention because Fund bylaws classify outright opposition as "absence," depriving members of a chance to record objections; abstention registers dissent without blocking the loan.

Pakistan's situation and programme goals

- **External buffers remain thin**: Reserves stood at **US \$6.1 bn (≈6 weeks of imports)** in late April 2025 despite earlier SBA inflows.
- Growth is projected at **2 % in FY 25** after last year's flood-induced contraction, with inflation still above **24 %**; the Fund expects fiscal consolidation of **2.5 % of GDP** in the first year.
- The RSF component seeks to mobilise **US \$7 bn co-financing** for climate resilience, including Karachi coastal barriers and Balochistan solar micro-grids.

Immediate reactions

- Pakistan's finance minister Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the approval, claiming it would unlock a further US \$1.5 bn in bilateral support from Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- Indian Ministry of External Affairs called the abstention a "principled stand" and urged the IMF to enhance end-use monitoring of all disbursements to Pakistan
- **Moody's** left Pakistan's sovereign rating unchanged at **Caa3**, but noted that successful programme execution could stabilise the outlook.

9 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX 2025

INDICES

IN FOCUS

UNDP released the Human Development Report (HDR) 2025, *A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI*, unveiling updated HDI rankings and warning of the slowest annual progress since records began in 1990.

- Although the global HDI is projected to hit a **record 0.756 for 2023**, UNDP highlighted that the **year-on-year gain was just 0.004**, the smallest in 35 years, underscoring an “uneven and fragile recovery.”
- The AI-themed report argues that harnessing artificial intelligence for **human-machine complementarity** could reignite stalled development trajectories and close widening inequality gaps.
- Headlines noted **Iceland’s rise to the top spot (HDI 0.972)** and **India’s climb to rank 130 (HDI 0.685)**, its best showing since 2018.
- Regional launches in Brussels, New Delhi and Nairobi stressed that recovery lags in lower-income regions and that bridging the **digital-AI divide** is now central to human development policy.

Global Highlights

- **Marginal advance, major warning:** The world HDI nudged from **0.752 → 0.756** in 2023, a record high but the weakest annual gain on record, delaying the date when the world could enter “very-high HDI” territory by up to **three decades**.
- **Top performers:** **Iceland (0.972), Switzerland (0.970), Norway (0.970), Denmark (0.962) and Germany/Sweden (0.959)** continue Europe’s dominance of the very-high tier.
- **Lowest performers:** **South Sudan (0.388)** ranks last, with Somalia, the Central African Republic, Chad and Niger completing the bottom five—countries facing protracted conflict and climate shocks.
- **Widening gap:** The HDI difference between the OECD average (0.916) and Sub-Saharan Africa (0.568) widened for a third straight year, reflecting an “asynchronous recovery.”

What is new in the 2025 edition?

- **AI lens throughout:** HDR 2025 introduces an **AI Readiness narrative** linking digital infrastructure, skills and governance to future HDI gains; Figure 5.8 identifies India as the only lower-middle-income nation in the global top-10 for self-reported AI skills.
- **Complementarity Index:** A new composite metric scores countries on policies that guide AI toward augmenting rather than replacing human labour, with Scandinavia leading and several G20 members lagging.
- **Scenario Dashboard:** An interactive tool lets policymakers model HDI trajectories under varying assumptions about AI diffusion, social protection and climate impacts, replacing static projections used since 2018.

Region-wise Insights

- **Europe & Central Asia** (avg. HDI 0.818) posts the slowest rebound since 2020, with Eastern Europe still below pre-pandemic levels.
- **Asia-Pacific** records the largest absolute HDI gains, driven by China and Viet Nam, yet only five ASEAN states have crossed the high-HDI threshold.
- **Latin America & the Caribbean** averages 0.760 but sees crime-related life-expectancy losses shaving 0.012 points off Mexico’s HDI.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa** inches up to 0.568, but UNDP warns that unabated climate shocks could erase a decade of progress.

India-Specific Observations

- **Rank & value:** India rose to **130 / 193** with an **HDI of 0.685**, up from 0.676, continuing its post-pandemic recovery.
- **Key drivers:** Life expectancy increased to **72 years**, mean years of schooling to **6.9**, and per-capita GNI (PPP) to **USD 9,047**.
- **Gender gains:** India advanced to **102 / 193** on the Gender Inequality Index, reflecting rising female secondary-school completion and a record 33 % female labour-force participation.
- **AI edge:** HDR 2025 cites India as having the **world's highest penetration of AI skills** and improved retention of AI researchers, positioning it for accelerated HDI growth if digital skilling widens beyond the tech sector.
- **State disparities:** A **0.190-point gap** exists between the best-performing State (Goa 0.806) and the lowest (Bihar 0.616), prompting calls for targeted health and education investments.

Top 10 Countries		
S. No.	Country/Countries	HDI 2023
1	Iceland	0.972
2	Norway, Switzerland	0.970
4	Denmark	0.962
5	Germany, Sweden	0.959
7	Australia	0.958
8	Hong Kong (SAR China), Netherlands	0.955
10	Belgium	0.951

Because ranks **2, 5 and 8** are ties, two countries share each of those positions; the table nevertheless lists the ten highest-placed countries.

Bottom 10 Countries		
S. No.	Country/Countries	HDI 2023
184	Yemen	0.470
185	Sierra Leone	0.467
186	Burkina Faso	0.459
187	Burundi	0.439

188	Mali, Niger	0.419
190	Chad	0.416
191	Central African Republic	0.414
192	Somalia	0.404
193	South Sudan	0.288

Ranks **188** and **190–193** are the final places on the list. Because Mali and Niger tie at **188**, the bottom-ten group still contains exactly ten countries.

10 GLOBAL WIND REPORT 2025

INDICES

IN FOCUS

- The **Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)** launched its flagship **Global Wind Report 2025** in London, revealing that a record-breaking **117 GW of new wind capacity was installed worldwide in 2024**.
- GWEC warned, however, that annual additions must **triple to about 320 GW by 2030** to meet the COP28 pledge on renewables, underscoring that present growth meets only **77 % of the required trajectory**.
- The report highlighted **mounting policy instability, slow permitting, weak grids and tariff wars** as chief headwinds threatening investor confidence and supply-chain certainty.
- A companion **Supply-Side Data** brief (16 May 2025) showed wind-turbine OEMs **mechanically installed 127 GW across 23,098 units in 2024**, an all-time high despite cost inflation and trade frictions.
- Coverage in India emphasised that the country added 3.4 GW in 2024—its best year since 2017—lifting cumulative capacity to 48.16 GW and keeping India fourth globally for new build.

Global Growth Highlights

- The wind sector added 117 GW in 2024—109 GW onshore and 8 GW offshore—raising total global capacity to 1,136 GW across 149 countries.
- China dominated with 79.8 GW of new installations, while the United States (4.1 GW), Germany (4.0 GW), India (3.4 GW) and Brazil (3.3 GW) rounded out the top-five markets, together accounting for 81 % of global additions.
- Asia-Pacific retained leadership with 75 % market share and 7 % year-on-year growth, whereas Africa & Middle East nearly doubled installations, led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia.
- GWEC projects a compound annual growth rate of 8.8 %, expecting another 981 GW—almost one terawatt—of new wind capacity by 2030 under current policies.

What is new in the 2025 edition?

- GWEC introduces a **Market Volatility Barometer** that tracks permitting delays, grid queues and auction cancellations, signalling higher risk scores for parts of Europe and North America.
- A **Supply-Chain Diagnostic** reveals that **29 turbine suppliers installed a record 127 GW**, yet more than half reported negative profit margins, highlighting the need for fair-price auctions and raw-material hedging mechanisms.
- The report also debuts an **Offshore Auction Tracker**, noting that **56.3 GW of offshore wind was awarded in 2024**, with Europe securing 23.2 GW and China 17.4 GW, laying groundwork for **offshore additions to rise from 16 GW in 2025 to 34 GW by 2030**.

Region-wise Insights

- **China** supplied **70 % of 2024's global growth** and now exceeds **520 GW of cumulative wind capacity**, a milestone that makes wind one-tenth of Chinese electricity generation.
- **North America's** installations dipped, with the U.S. adding its **lowest onshore total since 2014**, reflecting grid-connection backlogs despite IRA-driven investment momentum.
- **Europe** saw record onshore auction awards (17 GW), spearheaded by Germany's 11 GW tender, but actual builds slowed under supply-chain pressure.
- **Latin America's** share fell as Brazil's growth cooled, whereas **Africa & Middle East** recorded **107 % year-on-year expansion**, anchored by Egypt's 794 MW mega-farm.

India-Specific Observations

- India installed **3.4 GW in 2024**, the highest annual addition since 2017, taking total capacity past 48 GW and ranking fourth for new build after Germany.
- Most new turbines were sited in **Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu**, and the country crossed the **1 GW mark in repowering and hybrid wind-solar auctions** for the first time.
- GWEC and India's MNRE forecast wind capacity could reach **122 GW by 2032**, contingent on timely grid upgrades and streamlined land-acquisition norms.

11

POPE LEO XIV BECOMES THE FIRST AMERICAN PONTIFF IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- On **8 May 2025** the conclave elected Chicago-born **Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, OSA**, as **Pope Leo XIV**, making him the **first pope ever born in the United States and the 267 th Bishop of Rome**.
- The new pontiff, aged 69 and a former Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, chose the name “**Leo**” to **honour Pope Leo XIII’s social-justice legacy** and was formally presented to the world from the Loggia of St Peter’s.
- During his **inaugural Pentecost Mass on 8 June 2025** he denounced rising nationalist politics, urging believers to “open borders and break down walls,” a homily that set an inclusive tone for his pontificate.
- Photographs of the pope **wearing a Chicago White Sox cap at a Wednesday audience on 11 June 2025** went viral, highlighting his Mid-western roots and relaxed public style.
- On **13 June 2025** Leo XIV announced he will canonise **Carlo Acutis**, paving the way for the Church’s first millennial saint and signalling continuity with Francis’ focus on youth and digital evangelisation.

Election and Personal Background

- Robert Francis Prevost was **born on 14 September 1955 in Chicago’s South Side** to a mixed-heritage Catholic family and entered the **Order of Saint Augustine (OSA)** in 1977, professing solemn vows three years later.
- He **spent 18 years as a missionary and later bishop in Peru**, gaining dual U.S.–Peruvian citizenship and fluency in Spanish, before returning to Rome to head the Augustinians and subsequently the Dicastery for Bishops.
- As **Prefect for Bishops (2023–25)** he implemented Pope Francis’ reforms on episcopal accountability, which many cardinals cited when backing him as a “bridge-builder” between continents.

Policy Signals and Theological Priorities

- In his first major homily he **condemned exclusionary nationalism** and prayed for the dismantling of “walls of hatred,” echoing Francis’ migrant-centric teaching.
- A **Crux analysis on 12 June 2025** suggests he may refine the synodal process by adding permanent lay voting members, indicating continuity with, yet evolution of, Francis’ “synodality” agenda.
- Speeches to tech leaders and a Denver Catholic interview show he will **prioritise ethical AI**, calling algorithms “servants, never masters,” aligning with UN goals on humane tech use.

International and Ecumenical Reactions

- Governments from **Taiwan, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom** welcomed his election, citing hopes for deeper dialogue on peace and tolerance.
- Middle-Eastern Christian leaders praised his choice of the name **Leo**, recalling Leo XIII’s advocacy for workers and social justice, while African bishops expressed optimism for stronger attention to climate resilience.
- Ecumenical observers note that his **Augustinian heritage** may encourage fresh engagement with Protestant traditions rooted in Augustinian theology.

12

INDIA EXPANDS ARABIAN SEA ECS
CLAIM

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- India submitted a **re-worked, two-part claim to the U.N. Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) on 3 April 2025** that enlarges its prospective seabed jurisdiction in the **Central Arabian Sea by ~10,000 km²** while carving out the politically sensitive Sir Creek overlap with Pakistan.
- If endorsed, New Delhi would gain sovereign rights to explore and exploit mineral and hydrocarbon resources on a stretch of seabed that pushes India's overall **extended-shelf portfolio above 1.2 million km²**—almost matching its land area.
- The move follows the CLCS's 2023 rejection of India's earlier "western" submission and illustrates how coastal States can re-sequence partial claims to secure uncontested areas first.

Why this matters now

- India **lodged two revised executive summaries with the CLCS**, replacing its single-block 2009 "**Western Arabian Sea**" submission that Pakistan had objected to.
- Goal:** lock in rights over a resource-rich central sector while postponing the Sir Creek question; New Delhi's fresh dossier sidesteps any area within 100 nm of the disputed estuary.
- Added area:** ~10,000 km² are now claimed beyond the 200-nm Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), taking India's Arabian-Sea shelf ask to ~360,000 km².
- The CLCS will begin its **64th session review in August 2025**; recommendations become final and binding once a coastal State accepts them.

Legal & Scientific Basis

Parameter	Key rule	HDI 2023
UNCLOS Art. 76 outer-shelf test	Up to 350 nm or 100 nm beyond the 2,500 m isobath, whichever is less.	8,700 km of multibeam bathymetry, 14 seismic lines and sediment-thickness grids from MoES agencies.
Natural prolongation	Shelf must be geologically continuous with the landmass.	India highlights the Laxmi Basin & Laccadive Ridge as rifted continental fragments, not true ocean crust.
Partial submissions	Permitted to "freeze" uncontested zones (CLCS Rules of Procedure 46).	2025 filing is split into Central and South-Western packets; the latter will be tabled after bilateral talks with Pakistan.

Key features of the 2025 claim

- Central Arabian Sea block** spans roughly **16–19 °N, 64–68 °E**, enclosing the Laxmi Basin and parts of the Laccadive Ridge that exhibit >1 % sediment-thickness criteria.
- Adds **10,000 km²** to India's earlier geometry, justified by newly mapped basement highs and continuous crustal reflectors interpreted from 2022–24 seismic cruises.
- Omits any shelf south-west of Kori Creek to neutralise Pakistan's 2021 objection; Islamabad's counter-memorial is therefore inoperative against this installment.

13

U.S. AGAIN PLACES INDIA ON 'PRIORITY WATCH LIST'

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) released its **Special 301 Report 2025**, keeping India on the **Priority Watch List for the twelfth consecutive year** alongside China, Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Chile, and Venezuela.
- USTR said India “remains one of the world’s most challenging major economies” on intellectual-property (IP) protection, pointing to **long patent-grant delays, risk of revocations, and inadequate criminal enforcement**.
- No **additional sanctions were announced**, but the designation could trigger bilateral pressure under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act.
- India’s Commerce Ministry reiterated that its **IPR regime is TRIPS-compliant** and called the report a “unilateral exercise” that exceeds multilateral norms.
- The 2025 list came just weeks before a scheduled **India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum Intellectual-Property Working Group meeting in July 2025**, raising stakes for ongoing talks on a \$500-billion trade-target roadmap.

Key Findings of the Special 301 Report 2025

- **Eight countries** are on the Priority Watch List; India’s inclusion reflects “**lack of progress on longstanding concerns**” despite improved engagement and awareness programmes.
- USTR flagged **pharmaceutical and agricultural-chemical patents** as areas where “patentability criteria are applied inconsistently and revocations occur without sufficient due process.”
- The report highlighted **excessive patent-examination backlogs** (average pendency ≈ 55 months) and **burdensome disclosure rules** that can deter innovators.
- **Online piracy, counterfeit pharmaceuticals, and weak border enforcement** remain priority U.S. complaints, with USTR citing “minimal criminal prosecutions” in 2024.

Indian Government & Industry Response

- The Commerce Ministry said India’s **2024 IPR Policy Review**, adoption of **Patent (Amendment) Rules 2024** (cutting paperwork, fee waivers for start-ups), and launch of the **National IPR Awareness Mission** show “steady, measurable progress.”
- Domestic pharma bodies (IPA, OPPI) argued that Section 3(d) prevents “ever-greening” and **balances innovation with public-health needs**, urging USTR to recognise the provision’s WTO legitimacy.
- U.S. industry groups (PhRMA, USIBC) welcomed India’s retention on the list, urging “**time-bound action plans**” and warning that unresolved issues could “slow Make-in-India ambitions in semiconductors and AI.”

Trade & Policy Implications

- Placement on the list **does not automatically trigger sanctions**, but it enables USTR to begin **out-of-cycle reviews or Section 301 investigations** if talks stall.
- Analysts note that the designation could **complicate negotiations on a limited trade package** (tariff concessions on electronics and medical devices) that both sides hoped to close before the U.S. election cycle.
- Conversely, continued dialogue through the **IP Working Group** offers India leverage to seek recognition of its **Patent Opposition System** as a best practice against frivolous patents, provided enforcement gaps are narrowed.

14

UNESCO NAMES 16 NEW GLOBAL
GEOPARKS IN 2025

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- UNESCO's Executive Board, at its 221st session, formally approved **16 new UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGps)**, expanding the worldwide network to **229 sites in 50 countries**.
- The official press brief framed the move as a “milestone for sustainable geotourism and community-led conservation,” coinciding with the **10th anniversary of the International Geoscience & Geoparks Programme (IGGP)**.
- Two member-states—**Saudi Arabia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)**—entered the network for the first time, each receiving landmark designations.

General Highlights

- With the 16 additions, the **UNESCO Global Geopark Network (UGGN)** now comprises **229 sites across 50 countries**, up from 213 in 2023.
- Asia received the largest share of new inscriptions (**10 of 16**), while **Europe added 4** and **South America 2**; Africa and Oceania saw no new designations this cycle.
- **Mount Paektu** became **North Korea's first UGGp**, symbolising rare international engagement for the country.
- **North Riyadh and Salma Geoparks** marked **Saudi Arabia's debut**, reflecting Riyadh's push to diversify its tourism portfolio under “Vision 2030”.
- **China** consolidated its world-leading position, now hosting **49 geoparks** after Kanbula and Yunyang joined the list.

What is new in the 2025 edition?

- **First-ever global economic-impact snapshot:** UNESCO's technical annex estimates that geopark-driven geotourism generates **US \$1.1 billion annually** in direct local revenue, a figure published for the first time this year.
- **Digital Geo-trails Initiative:** All new sites commit to producing open-access 3-D virtual tours by 2026 to widen educational outreach—another first in UGGN history.
- Launch of a “**Youth Geopark Rangers**” pilot in 5 of the 16 parks (Arran, Costa Quebrada, Lang Son, Kebumen, Kanbula) to embed local schools in conservation tasks.

Noteworthy Regional & Thematic Insights

- **First-time entries:** DPRK and Saudi Arabia became the 49th and 50th countries in the network, respectively.
- **Volcanism dominates:** 9 of 16 sites are volcano-related, signalling UNESCO's focus on active geological hazards and community resilience.
- **Marine-coastal emphasis:** Costa Quebrada and Gyeongbuk Donghaean join a growing cohort of shoreline geoparks prioritising blue-economy education.
- **UGGp total now surpasses World Heritage natural-site count**, underscoring geoparks' rising prominence in UNESCO's conservation toolkit.

India-Specific Observations

- **India still has zero UNESCO Global Geoparks;** proposals for **Siwalik Fossil Park (Himachal Pradesh)** and **St Mary's Island Columnar Basalts (Karnataka)** remain at concept stage.
- Geological Survey of India's 2025 draft “National Geopark Policy” cites the rapid 2025 UGGN expansion as a rationale for accelerating domestic nominations.

15

**BOMBAY HC DECLARES KANJURMARG
A 'PROTECTED FOREST'****ENVIRONMENT****IN FOCUS**

- On 2 May 2025, a Division Bench of **Justices Girish S. Kulkarni and Somasekhar Sundaresan** restored “protected forest” status to **119.91 ha of the Kanjurmarg landfill** in Mumbai, quashing a 2009 State notification that had opened the site for dumping and giving the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) **three months to obtain forest clearance and begin restoration**.
- The order arose from a **2013 PIL filed by NGO Vanashakti**, which argued that the salt-pan-turned-mangrove tract was already notified as protected forest in 2008 and fell inside a Coastal Regulation Zone.
- The court declined the State’s request for an immediate stay, but **allowed dumping to continue for up to three months** to avoid a sudden waste-management crisis.
- Within days, the **BMC announced plans to file a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court**, warning that the ruling imperils disposal of nearly **6,000 t of garbage generated daily—about 90 % of Mumbai’s total**.

Judgment Highlights

- The Bench held that once land is notified as a protected forest under the **Indian Forest Act 1927 and the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980**, it **cannot be de-notified without prior Central approval under FCA § 2**; the 2009 State order was therefore ultra vires.
- Citing its own 2005 mangrove-protection directions, the Court ruled that **mangrove areas enjoy the status of forest even when on salt-pan or revenue land**, squarely bringing Kanjurmarg within the purview of forest law.
- The judges ordered the **Forest Department to demarcate boundaries, erect fencing and prepare a restoration plan** in consultation with the Union Environment Ministry.

Background to the Dispute

- 2005-08 – Mangrove PILs:** A series of Bombay HC orders directed the State to secure mangrove parcels; on **10 July 2008** the Revenue Department notified 425 ha at Kanjurmarg as protected forest.
- 2009 – De-notification:** To develop a city dump-yard, the government partially revoked the forest status, citing “administrative error”; this became the heart of Vanashakti’s challenge.
- 2013-24 – PIL & hearings:** Vanashakti’s PIL traversed multiple benches; satellite imagery showed dense mangrove cover contrary to the State’s claim of only 20 ha.

Implications for Waste Management & Urban Projects

- Kanjurmarg handles ≈5,900 t of solid waste daily**; losing 120 ha would cripple Mumbai’s sole operational landfill unless alternative sites or waste-to-energy plants come online swiftly.
- The verdict revives debate over **decentralised waste segregation and biomethanisation** that could reduce landfill dependency in the medium term.
- City planners warn that any expansion of the **Metro-car-shed or other infrastructure in the Kanjurmarg belt now faces stringent FCA and CRZ scrutiny**, potentially delaying projects for years.

16

ACTION PLAN 2025 FOR THE RIVER
CITIES ALLIANCE

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) formally approved the **Action Plan 2025** for the River Cities Alliance, outlining a year-long calendar of capacity-building, technical and knowledge-exchange activities for its 145 member cities.
- A press brief framed the roadmap as “*India’s step-change from project-centric river clean-ups to city-led, river-sensitive urban governance*,” signalling a shift from ad-hoc schemes to an institutionalised approach.
- The Plan covers **145 cities across 22 States**, including mega-cities such as Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad, and basin towns from Dehradun to Durgapur.
- The framework will steer the preparation of **25 new Urban River Management Plans (URMPs) in 2025**, the first tranche of a World-Bank-assisted goal of 60 URMPs by 2027.
- RCA’s growing global footprint—formalised at **COP 28 through the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)**—was cited as a catalyst for raising domestic ambition.

General Highlights

- The **RCA network expanded from 30 founding cities in 2021 to 145 by April 2025**, covering every major river basin in India.
- Action Plan 2025 commits all member-cities to embed **river-sensitive provisions in their statutory Master Plans via River-Sensitive Master-Planning (RSMP) guidelines**.
- Five pioneer URMPs—Kanpur, Ayodhya, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Moradabad and Bareilly—serve as reference cases; their methodologies will be replicated nationwide.
- The Plan creates **Thematic Expert Groups** on hydromorphology, biodiversity, nature-based solutions, and riverfront design to hand-hold cities through project scoping.
- A new **RCA benchmarking dashboard** will score cities annually on 10 River Development Goals (RDGs) derived from the URMP framework.

What is new in the 2025 edition?

- **Basin-linked governance advisory:** NMCG will issue the first national guidance on vertical coordination between basin, district and city river plans, responding to fragmentation flagged in 2024 reviews.
- **Financial advisory cell:** RCA will pilot a help-desk to connect cities with blended-finance windows, multilateral loans and CSR funds for river projects—an identified gap in earlier cycles.
- **Weekly case-study series (“Monday Motivation”):** Every Monday in 2025, the RCA portal will publish an Indian or global best practice, fostering peer-to-peer learning.
- **International learning track:** Under GRCA, exchange visits with Aarhus (Denmark) and Mississippi River towns (USA) are scheduled, marking the first outbound study tours for Indian river cities.

Region-wise Insights

- **Ganga Basin (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal):** Together these five States host **105 of 145 member cities (~72 %)**, reflecting the Alliance’s Ganga origins. Steering committees have already been constituted in each State to fast-track 25 new URMPs this year.
- **Peninsular Rivers (South & West India):** Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune anchor capacity-building hubs for the Cauvery, Musi and Mula-Mutha sub-basins, respectively, with thematic focus on flood-plain zoning and treated-water reuse.
- **Himalayan & North-East Corridors:** Dehradun and Guwahati will host **RSMP training camps** to adapt ridge-to-valley concepts for high-gradient catchments—a first for the Alliance.

17 WORLD FOOD PRIZE 2025

AWARDS

IN FOCUS

- On **13 May 2025**, the World Food Prize Foundation announced that Brazilian soil-microbiologist **Dr Mariangela Hungria** had been selected as the 2025 Laureate.
- Hungria was honoured for four decades of research on **biological nitrogen fixation** and microbial seed treatments that have replaced chemical fertilisers on more than 40 million ha of cropland.
- Her work is credited with helping Brazil boost soybean output from about 15 million t in the 1980s to over 170 million t today, making the country the world's largest producer and exporter.
- The Laureate will receive the **US \$500 000** prize and a Saul Bass-designed sculpture at a ceremony in the Iowa State Capitol on **23 October 2025**, during World Food Prize Week (19–25 Oct.) and the Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue.
- Hungria becomes the first Latin-American scientist to win the Prize since 2017 and the 56th laureate overall, reigniting debate on scaling low-carbon agronomy in tropical regions.

About the World Food Prize

- Established in **1986** by Nobel Peace Laureate **Norman E. Borlaug**, the Prize recognises individual achievements that expand the **quality, quantity or availability of food** worldwide.
- It is endowed with a **US \$500 000** cash award and formally presented each October on or around **UN World Food Day** in Des Moines, Iowa.
- The week-long programme now includes the Borlaug Dialogue, Global Youth Institute and multiple side events that convene scientists, policymakers and producers from more than 80 countries.

2025 Laureate – Dr Mariangela Hungria

- Hungria is a Senior Researcher at **Embrapa Soja**, Brazil's National Soybean Centre, where she has led soil-microbiology and bio-fertiliser research since 1991.
- Her career has yielded **>30 commercial technologies**—chiefly microbial inoculants for soy, beans, maize, wheat and pasture grasses—that improve nutrient uptake without synthetic nitrogen.
- She has published over **500 scientific works**, mentored a generation of agronomists and championed women's leadership in agricultural science.

Scientific Contributions and Innovations

- Hungria isolated elite strains of **rhizobia** that form nitrogen-fixing nodules on legumes, allowing farmers to cut imported fertiliser use dramatically.
- She pioneered seed inoculation with **Azospirillum brasilense** in maize, enlarging root systems so crops capture deeper moisture and nutrients—vital for climate-stressed tropics.
- Her innovations now cover **>40 million ha** in Brazil alone, saving growers about **US \$25 billion annually** in input costs and preventing an estimated **230 million t CO₂-e** emissions.

Impact on Brazil and Global Food Security

- By lowering production costs and environmental footprints, Hungria's bio-fertiliser packages helped position Brazil as a **"global bread-basket,"** underpinning its rise in soy, maize and bean exports.
- Her farmer-centric extension model has been replicated in **Latin America, Africa and Asia**, demonstrating that sustainable intensification can succeed at scale.
- The Prize committee highlighted her work as a model for achieving **food-system decarbonisation** while maintaining yields—key to meeting the Paris Agreement's 1.5 °C pathway.

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INTERNATIONAL BOOKER
PRIZE 2025

AWARDS

IN FOCUS

- On **20 May 2025**, the Booker Prize Foundation announced that **“Heart Lamp”**, written in Kannada by **Banu Mushtaq** and translated into English by **Deepa Bhashthi**, had won the **2025 International Booker Prize** at a ceremony in London’s Tate Modern.
- This win marks the **first time a work originally written in Kannada** and the **first short-story collection** have received the award, drawing global attention to Indian regional literature.
- The announcement, made by author **Max Porter**, chair of the five-member jury, reignited debates on linguistic diversity in world publishing and the role of small presses.
- The £50,000 prize—shared equally between author and translator—highlights the growing recognition of translation as a collaborative art.

About the International Booker Prize

- Established in **2005** (and revamped in 2016), the International Booker celebrates a **single work of fiction translated into English** and published in the U.K. or Ireland, distinguishing it from the English-language Booker Prize.
- The purse of **£50,000** is split 50-50 between author and translator, with each shortlisted title also receiving £5,000, underscoring the prize’s commitment to translators’ labour.
- Past winners include works in Korean, Hebrew, Polish and Spanish; the 2025 result extends the linguistic roster to **Kannada**, India’s 22nd scheduled language.

2025 Laureates – Banu Mushtaq & Deepa Bhashthi

- Banu Mushtaq**, 77, is a writer-activist from Hassan, Karnataka, long associated with the **Bandaya Sahitya** protest-literature movement; “Heart Lamp” gathers 12 of her stories written between 1990 and 2023.
- Deepa Bhashthi**, based in Madikeri, crafted an English translation praised by the jury for capturing “radical colloquial cadences” without exoticising the original.
- Both laureates emphasised that the award validates **women’s voices from non-metropolitan India** and underscores the urgency of translating sub-continental languages beyond Hindi and Tamil.

The Winning Work – “Heart Lamp: Selected Stories”

- The collection portrays **everyday resistance** by rural and small-town women and children, weaving themes of caste, patriarchy and ecological precarity through deceptively simple narratives.
- Jurors commended its **“quiet formal daring”**—stories shift between first-person, collective-voice and folk-ballad structures—demonstrating the plasticity of short fiction.
- Publication by U.K. indie **And Other Stories** reflects the prize’s increasing dependence on small presses to surface global talent.

2025 Shortlist & Distinctive Features

- The shortlist comprised six titles—from Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, India and the U.S. via Chile—all **issued by independent publishers** (Faber, Fitzcarraldo, Granta, Lolli Editions, Small Axes and And Other Stories).
- Works ranged from Solvej Balle’s metaphysical novel **“On the Calculation of Volume I”** to Hiromi Kawakami’s magical-realist **“Under the Eye of the Big Bird”**, illustrating the jury’s tilt toward formally ambitious fiction.
- Observers noted a **record number of women authors (four of six)** and the prevalence of climate-anxiety motifs across the list.

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PRESIDENT CONFERS 58TH JNANPITH
AWARDS

AWARDS

IN FOCUS

On **16 May 2025**, President **Droupadi Murmu** conferred the **58th Jnanpith Award** on Sanskrit scholar **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, honouring his lifetime contribution to Sanskrit literature.

- The same award, for 2023, was also bestowed on celebrated Urdu poet-lyricist **Gulzar** (Sampoorn Singh Kalra); owing to ill-health, he received the citation and Vagdevi statuette later at a brief ceremony at his Mumbai residence on **23 May 2025**.
- This year's twin honour marks only the **second time a Sanskrit author** and the **fifth time an Urdu writer** have been recognised in the prize's six-decade history, spotlighting linguistic plurality in Indian letters.
- The award carries **₹11 lakh in cash, a bronze Saraswati/Vagdevi idol and a citation**, presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith trust, India's premier literary foundation since 1961.

Jnanpith Award

- Instituted in **1961** and first awarded in **1965**, the Jnanpith is India's **highest literary honour**, recognising "outstanding contribution to Indian literature" in any of the Eighth-Schedule languages or English.
- A 15-member **selection committee of scholars and previous laureates** examines nominations from Sahitya Akademis and universities, ensuring regional balance and gender diversity in short-listing.
- As of 2025, **65 laureates** have been honoured, with the award alternating annually among different language families to avoid repetition.

The 58th Laureates

- **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** (born 1950), a visually-impaired spiritual leader and chancellor of Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyanga University, has authored **240-plus books** in Sanskrit and Hindi, including four modern epics—rare in post-classical Sanskrit literature.
- His works synthesise **Ram-bhakti, Advaita metaphysics and disability advocacy**, exemplified by the mahākāvya *Śrī-Rāghavīyama*, written in 21 metres without using a single labial consonant.
- **Gulzar** (born 1934) revitalised **Urdu-Hindi poetic idiom** through film lyrics, *nazms* and prose; seminal collections like *Raat Pashmine Ki* and *Pukhraj* bridge popular culture and literary craft.
- Across a six-decade career, he has won the Sahitya Akademi Award, Dadasaheb Phalke Award and an Oscar, but the Jnanpith is his **first pan-Indian literary crown**, affirming Urdu's living resonance.

Highlights of the 2025 Conferral

- The President praised Rambhadracharya's "unyielding scholarship despite visual impairment" and wished Gulzar a swift recovery, noting his "lyrical bridge between generations and languages."
- Union Culture Minister **G. Kishan Reddy** announced that both laureates' manuscripts will be digitised under the National Mission for Manuscripts for wider access.
- The ceremony featured recitations: Rambhadracharya chanted a verse from his epic *Śrī-Rāghavīyama*, while actor-writer **Piyush Mishra** read Gulzar's poem "Khali Sheesha."

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 2, CLAT 2025

DAIWIK AGARWALA

I don't think I've ever given so many tests in my life as I did at NPLC in just one year. They made me take so many mocks that I became almost mechanical before the actual exam. The course structure here is such that hard work is non-negotiable. And last, but not least, Nishant Sir would connect with your parents and keep them informed about your every day scores, which added a bit of pressure and made all of us work harder. There were times when my scores didn't meet my expectations, and I felt low, but Sir was always there to motivate me.



AIR 2, AILET 2025

CHAITANYA GHOSH

This place is not your regular coaching institute that you see around. They don't just make you work hard—they make you smart. NPLC has been my best choice for both CLAT and AILET preparation. These exams cover general topics that seemed easy to me initially, but it wasn't until I started attending classes at NPLC that I realized the major challenges I would have faced if I solely depended on self-study. The competitive environment and Sir's dedicated guidance have been key in helping me clear every law entrance exam I took. I cleared every law entrance exam I wrote.



AIR 4, CLAT 2025

ADITYA GAUTAM ANKHAD

It's all about AILET and CLAT here. Students eat, drink, and sleep law entrance preparation! I used to go to another institute in XIth, but somehow, I was just an enrollment number there. Initially, when I joined, the competition and pressure from Sir felt overwhelming, but thanks to him, everything became much easier. Here, no one calls you by batch number or enrollment ID. All of us studying together were very good friends, but we competed intensely. Since they have a limited intake, we received a lot of personalized attention. I recall most of my batchmates at NPLC making it to the top NLUs. This place is even better than you can imagine!

"At NPLC, branding isn't on T-shirts — it's in the AIRs."

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 6, AILET 2025

DHRUV KAMATH

I had never experienced such intense competition in any classroom before I did my first class at NPLC. It was a bit horrifying initially however it got better with time. If you can't work hard, I do not feel this is the place for you. Nishant sir is simply amazing. I never liked him till I was at the center as there was too much pressure from his side unlike my school, However, I can tell you, that I could make it to NLU Delhi, and only because of him. I recall almost everyone with me in the class who got through either of the top 5 NLUs.



AIR 10, AILET 2025

VIDISHA SINGH

Nishant Sir's classes are the complete package. While there's a great deal of hard work expected, he creates an environment where you can ease your way into cracking the exam. Unlike the rigid and monotonous teaching methods of many other coaching institutions, his classes are a perfect blend of learning and fun. His approach is practical, reliable, and tailored to real exam scenarios, which is reflected in his incredible track record of sending most of his students to the top 5 NLUs. Even after completing his classes, you'll find yourself wanting to go back for more (I still do).



AIR 24 AILET 2025
& OXFORD

SAMYUKTHA KOVILAKATH

People often ask me how I managed to prepare for Indian law entrances and the Oxford Law entrance at the same time. My answer is simple: NPLC gave me the discipline, perspective, and clarity to handle both. Nishant Sir's classroom isn't just a place where laws are taught - it's where ambition is refined and sharpened. What stood out to me most was how the training here doesn't chase trends - it builds fundamentals. I never felt like I was preparing for just one exam - I was preparing to think like a lawyer.

This journey hasn't just taken me to AILET AIR 24—it's also taken me across continents. And for that, I credit the environment, the mentorship, and the unwavering standards at NPLC.

"Mentorship isn't a model here — it's a method."

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**Duration of Test:** 2 Hours (120 Minutes)**Maximum Marks:** 120

1. Detach and keep the carbon-copy OMR response sheet that comes with the question booklet; this is your only answer sheet.
2. If you spot any defect in your question booklet, immediately ask the invigilator for a replacement set along with a fresh OMR sheet—do not reuse the previous OMR.
3. Only one blank OMR sheet will be provided under any circumstance, so treat it carefully and avoid damage.
4. Answer every question; no queries or clarifications about the question paper will be entertained during the exam.
5. Electronic gadgets (phones, smartwatches, etc.) are strictly forbidden inside the examination hall.
6. Any attempt at using unfair means will lead to cancellation of your exam.
7. Impersonation is a serious offense: it results in disqualification and possible legal action.
8. The exam comprises 120 multiple-choice questions for a total of 120 marks; note that 0.25 marks are deducted for each incorrect answer or if more than one option is shaded.
9. Use only a black or blue ballpoint pen to fill in your roll number and other identification details on the OMR sheet.
10. Shade the chosen answer circle completely (with black/blue pen), selecting exactly one option per question—partial or multiple shading invalidates the response.
11. Since responses on the OMR cannot be erased or changed, be sure before you mark any circle.
12. Retain your admit card, duly signed by the invigilator; you will need to present it when required (e.g., at admission).
13. Handle the OMR sheet gently—do not fold it. Ensure both invigilator and you sign in the designated spaces. Also, write the question booklet number and the OMR sheet number as instructed, sign the attendance sheet, and after the exam, return the original OMR page to the invigilator. Only fill in information in the allotted fields—avoid any stray markings.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE**Passage 1:**

A new bride from Rajasthan's Balotra district flying to join her husband in London. A Bikaner businessman going to visit, for the first time in a decade, his family settled abroad. A doctor couple and their three young children, en route from Banswara to a much-dreamed-of new life. A 21-year-old flight attendant who belonged to strife-torn Manipur. A former chief minister on his way to visit his daughter. A medical student, in his hostel, eating lunch. They were among the over 240 lives cruelly cut short when a London-bound Air India flight crashed into a residential area in Ahmedabad on Thursday – a British national of Indian origin is the sole survivor. The video, showing the aircraft crashing into the hostel of BJ Medical College and Civil Hospital and exploding into a fireball, will remain scorched into a nation's memory.

The day after, an impartial inquiry – involving Indian authorities, Boeing and international regulators – must be the priority. Till now, the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, having flown over one billion passengers since its introduction in 2011, was considered to have a respectable safety record, even though technical issues like engine shutdowns, flight control failures, smoke in cabins and hydraulic leaks were flagged repeatedly. Quality control issues in 2019 forced the company to pause delivery of new aircraft between January 2021 and August 2022. A Boeing engineer filed a whistleblower complaint in 2024 with the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), alleging that it took shortcuts in the making of its 777 and 787 Dreamliner jets.

As India mourns, Air India and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation must act with urgency and transparency. Compensation, while necessary, is not a substitute for accountability. The bereaved deserve closure, they must not be left in the dark, as all too often happens in the aftermath of calamities. The disaster should serve as a wake-up call and draw attention to the structural problems that afflict India's aviation sector. There needs to be a rigorous check of the engineering departments of all Indian airlines. With Air India being one of the two dominant players in the market, there is inadequate pressure to continuously elevate standards of safety and upgrade quality. The DGCA lacks the wherewithal to effectively regulate a growing sector – it was only a few years ago that the aviation watchdog was awarded the power to impose fines on airlines. Aviation consultancy firm Capa India has warned that the shortage of pilots is growing more serious. Every effort must be made to uncover the causes, and to address them. That is the only meaningful tribute to those who boarded Air India Flight 171 but did not reach their destination.

[Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/express-view-after-the-ahmedabad-plane-crash-10065178/>]

1. What is the primary purpose of the passage?

- A. To lament the human tragedy of the Air India crash and call for generous compensation.
- B. To highlight pilot shortages in India's aviation sector and propose training initiatives.
- C. To urge an impartial, transparent investigation into the crash and systemic safety reforms in India's aviation industry.
- D. To critique Boeing's commercial strategies and recommend that India ban its aircraft.

2. In the line "The DGCA lacks the wherewithal to effectively regulate a growing sector," the word **wherewithal** most nearly means:

- A. The necessary means or resources to do something.
- B. The collective approval or consensus of stakeholders.

C. A formal ritual or procedure.

D. The legal authority granted by statute.

3. Which of the following words is closest in meaning to "scorched" as used in the passage ("...will remain scorched into a nation's memory")?

- A. Charred
- B. Soaked
- C. Frozen
- D. Enveloped

4. DGCA : regulate :: Capa India : _____

- A. innovate
- B. advise
- C. warn
- D. investigate

5. The author's attitude toward compensation in the aftermath of the crash is best described as:

- A. Advocacy that compensation alone is sufficient redress for victims.
- B. Scepticism that compensation can substitute for accountability and systemic reform.
- C. Indifference to financial relief so long as safety improves.
- D. Rejection of any compensation until inquiries conclude.

6. Which option best corrects the fragment "A doctor couple and their three young children, en route from Banswara to a much-dreamed-of new life," into a complete, grammatical sentence?

A. A doctor couple and their three young children are en route from Banswara to a much-dreamed-of new life.

B. A doctor and couple, with their three young children, en route from Banswara to a much-dreamed-of new life.

C. A doctor couple and their three young children, who were en route from Banswara to a much-dreamed-of new life.

D. A doctor couple and their three young children. They were en route from Banswara to a much-dreamed-of new life.

Passage 2:

A reputation for political violence is one reason Northern Ireland has historically attracted fewer immigrants than the rest of the UK. In that context, increasing diversity could be read as a measure of progress; a peace dividend after the Troubles. That isn't how it has felt to families cowering in fear of racist mobs this week. The riots started in Ballymena, ostensibly triggered by the arrest of two boys, reported to be of Romanian origin, accused of sexually assaulting a teenage girl. A community vigil mutated into a racist rampage. Masked thugs targeted the local migrant population. When police came to quell the pogrom, officers were attacked with bricks, fireworks, petrol bombs. There was contagion. Windows were smashed and a fire started at a leisure centre in nearby Larne that had been used as a temporary refuge for those fleeing the Ballymena violence. There were outbreaks of disorder in other towns.

Leaders from across Northern Ireland's political spectrum have condemned the violence. But on the unionist side in particular, there has also been much leavening of opprobrium with reference to "legitimate" underlying grievances. Judiciously expressed, the complaint is that migration has been poorly managed, putting a strain on local services. In its more pungent iteration, it is the insinuation that new arrivals get preferential treatment, especially regarding housing.

Northern Ireland is the least diverse part of the UK. Immigrants make up about 3.4% of the population, compared with 18.3% in England and Wales, and 12.9% in Scotland. But that comparison belies relatively rapid and concentrated demographic change in places such as Ballymena. And while sectarian violence is no longer endemic, the Troubles cast a shadow of intercommunal suspicion that makes it harder for outsiders to integrate. There is also a developed infrastructure of far-right extremism that evolved through close ties to loyalist paramilitaries. Those are distinct Northern Irish inflections on a problem that is far from unique to the region. The escalation from a single spark to a conflagration of violent bigotry is grimly familiar from the rioting that erupted across the UK last summer. Then it was the murder of three young girls in Southport that became the pretext for a malevolent carnival of xenophobic rage. Then, too, it was possible to excavate a kernel of socioeconomic grievance from the ashes. There are places across the UK where deprivation and social alienation, simmering for years, can be mobilised as racist violence. There is a line between acknowledging the social conditions that make such a danger possible and narrating those conditions in ways that make violence more likely. The boundary is not hard to see, which brings all the more shame on the politicians who routinely cross it.

[Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/13/the-guardian-view-on-riots-in-northern-ireland-racist-violence-does-not-express-legitimate-grievance>]

7. What is the primary purpose of the passage?

- A. To celebrate Northern Ireland's growing diversity as evidence of post-Troubles peace.
- B. To describe a series of violent riots against migrants and call out political complicity in stoking them.
- C. To analyze the demographic trends in UK immigration and recommend integration policies.
- D. To compare sectarian distrust in Northern Ireland with economic deprivation elsewhere.

8. In the sentence "But on the unionist side in particular, there has also been much leavening of opprobrium with reference to 'legitimate' underlying grievances," the word leavening most nearly means:

- A. Dilution or weakening by introducing a lighter element.
- B. Intensification through the addition of harsh criticism.
- C. Masking or covering over with a superficial layer.
- D. Transformation into a rigid or hardened state.

9. Which word is closest in meaning to "conflagration" as used in the passage ("...escalation from a single spark to a conflagration of violent bigotry...")?

- A. Embers
- B. Wildfire
- C. Embellishment
- D. Consecution

10. According to the passage, which of the following correctly lists the immigrant population percentages in Northern Ireland, England & Wales, and Scotland?

- A. 3.4% in Northern Ireland; 18.3% in England & Wales; 12.9% in Scotland

B. 3.4% in Northern Ireland; 12.9% in England & Wales; 18.3% in Scotland

C. 12.9% in Northern Ireland; 3.4% in England & Wales; 18.3% in Scotland

D. 18.3% in Northern Ireland; 12.9% in England & Wales; 3.4% in Scotland

11. The author draws a parallel between the Ballymena riots and the UK-wide disturbances last summer to illustrate that:

- A. socio-economic grievances invariably lead to peaceful protests when managed properly.
- B. single incidents can rapidly ignite widespread xenophobic violence under similar social conditions.
- C. political leaders consistently prevent riots by acknowledging community concerns.
- D. sectarian and racial violence follow entirely different dynamics and cannot be compared.

12. How does the author view politicians who "routinely cross" the line between acknowledging social conditions and narrating them in ways that make violence more likely?

- A. As principled actors responsibly highlighting genuine public grievances.
- B. As shameless opportunists whose rhetoric stokes violence for political gain.
- C. As well-intentioned but misguided individuals unaware of the risks of their words.
- D. As inevitable mediators who must sometimes provoke debate to spur reform.

Passage 3:

In the long-running philosophical debate, about free will and determinism, it is often said that we cannot answer the question of whether we have free will unless we first decide what we mean by free will. Something similar is true when it comes to political freedom. So what is freedom? Is it "just another word for nothing left to lose", as the song goes? Well, political philosophers often distinguish between negative freedom and positive freedom. Negative freedom is freedom from something. Positive freedom is freedom to do something. Sometimes different claims of freedom may conflict: I might feel that my desire to walk downtown without fear is threatened by your wish to carry an assault rifle. The extent and nature of the freedoms we should enjoy will always be very much a matter of debate and in this issue we can't pretend to do anything more than scratch the surface.

Freedom is always contested. For example, here in Britain laws on demonstrations were drastically tightened by the last government, and now a law passed by Parliament last year to put a legal duty on universities to protect free speech has been binned by the incoming government, without debate and with no coherent justification given. The one constant is that if you want freedoms, you'll have to demand them and make a lot of fuss – you will rarely be simply given them by those in power, who on the whole would rather have a quiet life. Yet when that right is taken away, it is very frightening and hard to reverse.

It seems appropriate that this issue contains a lot of references to France. Firstly, because the Olympics are taking place in Paris right now. Magnifique! Secondly, it is appropriate because of the central role of freedom in the political imagination of France which, after all, provided the Statue of Liberty as a gift to the American people. Our front cover illustration is based on the famous 1830 painting by Delacroix of 'Liberty Leading the People', a symbolic representation of the revolution of that same year. Our artist Steve Lillie has given it his own special twists: perhaps the revolutionaries themselves are being manipulated? It happens. But these ones are trying to cut their strings. You'll also spot references to that earlier French Revolution, of 1789, and to a dazzling array of French intellectuals alive and dead, including Jean-Paul Sartre, with his existentialist notions of radical freedom. Sartre believed that we are all inescapably free, regardless of politics, and equally unable to escape the burden of responsibility that comes with that freedom.

[Source: https://philosophynow.org/issues/163/The_Politics_of_Freedom]

13. What is the primary purpose of the passage?

- A. To provide a historical overview of free will debates and their relevance to modern politics.
- B. To trace the evolution of French revolutionary symbols and their artistic reinterpretations.
- C. To explore the contested nature of political freedom, contrasting theoretical definitions with real-world power dynamics.
- D. To argue that universities should enshrine free speech protections in law.

14. In the phrase "we can't pretend to do anything more than scratch the surface," the expression scratch the surface most nearly means:

- A. To create a detailed and comprehensive analysis.
- B. To perform a superficial examination that ignores deeper complexities.
- C. To damage the foundational layer of an argument.
- D. To polish or refine an existing idea.

15. Negative freedom : freedom from :: Positive freedom : _____

- A. freedom from external constraints
- B. freedom to pursue one's own goals and capabilities
- C. freedom to enact laws restricting behavior
- D. freedom from the burden of responsibility

16. Which inference about political change does the author most strongly support?

- A. Governments willingly grant new freedoms without public pressure.
- B. Reversing entrenched restrictions on freedom is often easy once political will changes.

C. Citizens must actively demand rights because those in power prefer "a quiet life."

D. Legal duties on universities to protect free speech should never be repealed.

17. In describing Delacroix's painting with "perhaps the revolutionaries themselves are being manipulated? ... But these ones are trying to cut their strings," the author uses which figure of speech?

- A. Metaphor, comparing revolutionaries to puppets controlled by unseen hands.
- B. Hyperbole, exaggerating the extent to which art can influence politics.
- C. Synecdoche, using "strings" to stand for the entire revolutionary movement.
- D. Irony, suggesting that revolutionaries both control and are controlled.

18. How does the author view Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of radical freedom?

- A. As an irrelevant abstraction that overlooks political and social constraints.
- B. As a powerful reminder that freedom carries an inescapable burden of responsibility.
- C. As evidence that existentialism undermines collective demands for legal rights.
- D. As a doctrine best applied only within academic settings, not politics.

Passage 4:

My mainstream media job did not always allow me the latitude to report on this aspect of the real India I met behind closed doors and in fancy hotels, and that is finally what set me off on an inquiry into the modern nation state of India. How robust is its democracy? How fair? Have its institutions been maturing over the years? Are the waves of transparency and well-fought elections improving the lot of its poor? Are the

cleavages between its institutions deepening, or disappearing? Why do other institutions not challenge the duplicity of the political classes often enough? Is everyone tangled up in a grand conspiracy to subvert the republic?

The narratives of urban India that truly decide the fate of this sovereign, socialistic, secular, democratic republic remain unwritten, unreported. Constitutional lawyers manage and manipulate media coverage and public perception of almost every issue; bribes and intimidation are what you need to get your way; billion-dollar deals go through only if the right people are paid; political parties collect black money to fund their operations; coverage in the media is available for a fee and paid news is officially a business; civil servants assist the political class to subvert the system; 'facilitation' is the most successful business in its booming economy. Everything and everyone (with a few honourable exceptions) is on sale. You only need to find the right intermediary and pay the right bribe. The creaky government machinery moves only when the lubricant bribe is applied.

The cumulative result of this systemic rot is shocking. India's chaotic cities are choking on pollution. Child malnutrition is one of the highest in the world (over 42 per cent of children under five years are underweight). The country's youth population, the world's largest, has very slim access to quality education. Over 60 per cent of its people do not have bathrooms. Over 330 million Indians do not get safe drinking water. Thousands of its ordinary residents are harassed and humiliated daily by oppressive and misogynistic institutions. Violence is today's reality.

For a vast majority of Indians, their country is not much of a republic and even less of a democracy. How else could a generation of entrepreneurs blatantly abuse power and still thrive? How could so many bury their way into the legislatures and parliaments, only to manipulate public processes for their private gains? How can leaders whose moral politics is inept continue to control the levers of power? How can 'bench hunting' be an acknowledged lexicon in the Indian legal fraternity? And paid news such a thriving industry? When politicians, generals and bureaucrats conspired to build an apartment complex in the name of war widows — I've been working for over two decades, the list is long.

[Source: Josy Joseph, A Feast of Vultures: The Hidden Business of Democracy in India]

19. What is the primary purpose of the passage?

- A. To chronicle the author's personal career frustrations in mainstream media and the resulting investigative journey.
- B. To expose pervasive systemic corruption in modern India and question the strength of its democratic institutions.
- C. To celebrate India's economic boom while acknowledging minor bureaucratic hurdles.
- D. To compare India's social challenges with those of other developing nations.

20. In the sentence "My mainstream media job did not always allow me the latitude to report on this aspect of the real India..." the word latitude most nearly means:

- A. A geographical distance from the equator.
- B. Scope for freedom of action or choice.
- C. A precise measurement or exactness in reporting.
- D. A temperamental tendency toward calmness.

21. Which of the following is the closest antonym of robust as used in "How robust is its democracy?"

- A. Resilient
- B. Vigorous
- C. Frail
- D. Sturdy

22. What is the effect of using the passive voice in the clause "Coverage in the media is available for a fee?"

- A. It highlights the individuals who control media narratives by obscuring institutions.
- B. It intensifies the moral outrage by focusing on the victimization of the public.
- C. It injects ambiguity about who pays for and who provides the coverage.
- D. It underscores the impersonal, systemic nature of corruption by removing active agents from focus.

23. Which inference about India's social conditions does

the author support through the statistics on malnutrition, lack of sanitation, and water scarcity?

- A. That India's youth population is overeducated but unemployable.
- B. That infrastructural neglect and corruption have tangible, life-threatening effects on ordinary citizens.
- C. That rapid urbanization has solved most public-health problems in Indian cities.
- D. That international aid, rather than domestic reform, is the primary solution to India's challenges.

24. How does the author view India's standing as a republic and democracy?

- A. As a largely thriving system marred only by minor inefficiencies.
- B. As fundamentally compromised, with power abused for private gain and democratic norms subverted.
- C. As an ideal model for other democracies to emulate, despite surface-level corruption.
- D. As dangerously subverted, demanding vigilant public scrutiny and active reform.

CURRENT AFFAIRS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Passage 5:

The Pahalgam terror strike, on April 22, 2025, perpetrated by Pakistan proxies, and India's retribution through Operation Sindoor, on May 7, 2025, have fundamentally altered the security landscape of the region. While Operation Sindoor represents an undeniable tactical and operational success, its strategic efficacy in diminishing the long-term terrorist threat remains uncertain. At present, the discourses across all the forums in the country, unfortunately centre exclusively on matters of foreign policy and the external application of military force. The aspects concerning internalisation of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) have often been given a miss, thereby missing the wood for the trees. Here, it is crucial to understand that in the overall context, it has always been about winning Kashmir rather than defeating Pakistan.

It is beyond any doubt that Pakistan bears substantial accountability for the security situation in J&K, since Independence. After exploding in 1989, the security landscape was transformed from predominantly indigenous insurgency to significant participation of foreign terrorists, around the mid-1990s. Notwithstanding the foreign terrorists, a long-term analyses of patterns of terrorism reveal that local dynamics related to identity, marginalisation, repression and political disenfranchisement have played pivotal roles. These factors have given Pakistan the fuel to foment trouble. The interplay between external sponsorship and internal vulnerabilities creates a complex ecosystem of terrorism that defies simplistic military solutions, internally or externally.

[<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/introspecting-counter-terrorism-after-operation-sindoor/article69611262.ece>]

25. Which of the following statements best reflects the symbolic reasoning behind naming the 2025 Indian retaliatory strike as "Operation Sindoor"?

- A. The operation was named to commemorate a sacred ritual symbolising marital commitment, honouring the widows affected by the terror attack.
- B. The operation aimed to project the fiery strength of Indian womanhood and mythological war goddesses, hence the name.
- C. The operation was named after the colour red to symbolise the blood of the martyrs and terror victims.
- D. The operation name was chosen based on a tradition of naming military operations after rivers and religious symbols to inspire nationalism.

26. What distinguished Operation Sindoor from earlier Indian military responses such as Operation Bandar and Operation Safed Sagar?

- A. It was the first time India used naval assets to strike across the Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- B. Unlike earlier operations, it was conducted in coalition with international allies and received logistical support from foreign airbases.
- C. It was executed entirely from Indian territory using precision-guided munitions to avoid escalation, demonstrating India's ability to strike without violating international airspace.
- D. The operation relied exclusively on ground forces without involving the Indian Air Force or advanced weapon systems.

27. Which of the following statements correctly pairs an operation with its objective or context?

- A. Operation Trident – Indian Air Force campaign to reclaim Tololing peak in the Kargil War.
- B. Operation Riddle – Indian counter-mobilisation during the 1971 Indo-Pak War in Eastern theatre.
- C. Operation Cactus Lily – Indian Army-Air Force coordinated thrust across the Meghna River to advance toward Dhaka during the 1971 war.
- D. Operation Ablaze – Naval blockade of Karachi Harbour during the 1965 Indo-Pak War to weaken Pakistan's supply lines.

28. In the context of advanced weapon systems used in counterterror operations, which of the following is most accurately matched with its feature or usage?

- A. HAMMER – A submarine-launched ballistic missile used for long-range strategic strikes in naval warfare.
- B. Loitering Munition – Aerial weapon system that can remain airborne for extended durations and identify and strike targets in real-time.
- C. SCALP – A short-range air-dropped bomb used for trench warfare and bunker neutralisation.
- D. Storm Shadow – Israeli-manufactured short-range tactical rocket with range under 100 km for anti-infantry strikes.

Passage 6:

Following more than three years of arduous negotiations, member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday (May 20) adopted a legally binding treaty designed to tackle future pandemics better.

The pandemic treaty, which has been adopted without the United States, is the only the second legally binding accord in the WHO's history, the first being the tobacco control treaty.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was “a victory for public health, science and multilateral action”.

[<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/who-adopt-global-pandemic-treaty-10020127/>]

31. Under the new WHO Global Pandemic Agreement, what is the obligation of pharmaceutical companies with respect to sharing pandemic-related medical products?

- A. They must contribute 5% of their production to WHO and sell another 15% at market prices to national governments.
- B. They are required to fund local healthcare infrastructure in low-income countries in exchange for access to pathogen data.
- C. They are required to provide 10% of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics free of cost to WHO and another 10% at affordable prices.
- D. They must disclose proprietary drug formulas to WHO to enable compulsory licensing during pandemics.

29. Which of the following treaties marked the formal conclusion of hostilities after the Indo-Pak conflict that included Operations Riddle and Ablaze?

- A. Simla Agreement (1972)
- B. Tashkent Agreement (1966)
- C. Lahore Declaration (1999)
- D. Delhi Pact (1950)

30. MBDA, the European manufacturer of the SCALP cruise missile, is best described as:

- A. A private Indian-European joint venture focused solely on manufacturing submarine-launched ballistic missiles for NATO.
- B. A NATO combat alliance headquartered in Brussels that provides logistics for arms transfer to Ukraine.
- C. A European multinational defence company that develops guided weapon systems, including the SCALP missile, used in various combat scenarios globally.
- D. A France-based cybersecurity company that supplies encryption systems for defence communications and military espionage tools.

32. Which of the following best reflects the function of the newly established Global Supply Chain and Logistics Network (GSCL) under the WHO Pandemic Treaty?

- A. To create central warehouses in all six WHO regions to stockpile vaccines and medical supplies for emergencies.
- B. To eliminate logistical barriers and facilitate fair, timely, and safe access to pandemic-related health products during international health emergencies.

C. To supply WHO laboratories with real-time virus sequencing data and modelling equipment for predictive outbreak control.

D. To fund bilateral agreements between WHO and pharmaceutical companies for faster distribution of medicines during future pandemics.

33. Which of the following is the most accurate comparison between the WHO Pandemic Agreement and the WHO's previous major treaty under Article 19 of its Constitution?

A. Unlike the Tobacco Control Convention, the Pandemic Agreement is not legally binding on any WHO member.

B. The Pandemic Treaty permits WHO to override national laws during global health emergencies, while the Tobacco Control Convention does not.

C. Both treaties are adopted under the same constitutional authority of the WHO, but the Pandemic Treaty is only the second such legal instrument after 2003.

D. The Tobacco Control Convention was adopted in 2011 during the SARS crisis, while the Pandemic Agreement emerged after the Zika virus pandemic.

34. How does the WHO Pandemic Agreement balance the global public interest with national sovereignty during international health emergencies?

A. It limits WHO's authority to issue travel bans or impose vaccination or lockdown mandates, leaving full pandemic response authority with individual governments.

B. It authorises WHO to override vaccine patents when public health interests override commercial rights, irrespective of national approval.

C. It gives WHO temporary emergency powers under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to deploy international health workers without country approval.

D. It allows WHO to coordinate regional pandemic task forces that can unilaterally intervene if a country's response is inadequate or delayed.

35. When did the World Health Organization officially come into existence, and which date is now commemorated as World Health Day every year?

A. 10 December 1948; International Health Solidarity Day

B. 24 October 1945; United Nations Health Day

C. 7 April 1948; World Health Day

D. 1 January 1946; Global Health Commitment Day

36. Which of the following best describes the WHO's institutional structure and mode of collaboration with its member states?

A. WHO is a quasi-governmental agency with 120 members, operating primarily through international NGOs in each member country.

B. WHO has 194 member states, functions through 150 country offices and six regional offices, and works intergovernmentally, mainly via national health ministries.

C. WHO is a non-binding advisory body headquartered in Paris with regional hubs in developing nations and no formal treaty-making powers.

D. WHO is a UN-funded humanitarian task force with authority to deploy peacekeepers for health emergencies under WHO Chapter 12.

Passage 7:

The Padma awards have frequently generated controversy, especially in recent years. The main criticism has been that they have been given to undeserving persons or that deserving persons are left out. It is not without basis. Political, personal and other considerations have weighed with governments in the selections. No government has been able to resist that temptation. Politics has influenced the choice of persons even in areas like the arts. Politicians have also got unfair and excessive representation in the awards list and have often been conferred the higher categories of the awards. Two eminent artists - percussionist Anindya Chatterjee and musician Sandhya Mukherjee - have rejected this year's awards as they think they should have got them much earlier. No list has been free of criticism in any year, though many of the government's choices have been received well in the past.

It would be difficult to find fault with the selection of many of the people who were awarded this year. Scientists, doctors, social workers, artists, sportspersons and businessmen have found a place in the list, along with some who played key roles in the country's fight against Covid, like vaccine-makers and health administrators.

[<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/editorial/padma-awards-a-very-political-turn-1075345.html>]

37. How many individuals were conferred with Padma Awards for the year 2025?

- A. 131 B. 139 C. 124 D. 120

38. Which of the following statements is not true about the Padma Awards Committee?

- A. It is chaired by the President of India and includes former Padma awardees and ministers.
B. It includes the Home Secretary and Secretary to the President of India.
C. It is appointed annually by the Prime Minister of India.
D. It submits its recommendations to the Prime Minister and the President for final approval.

39. When were the Padma Awards first instituted?

- A. 1950 B. 1954 C. 1962 D. 1947

40. What is the correct legal position on the use of Padma Awards as titles?

- A. They are constitutional titles and can be used as prefixes only.
B. They are recognised as State honours and can be suffixed after the recipient's name.
C. They are not titles under Article 18(1) and cannot be used as prefixes or suffixes.

D. They are international civilian awards and governed by a separate legal framework under Article 51.

41. Which of the following reflects a key eligibility principle for Padma Awards?

- A. Only citizens of India can receive the award, with foreign recipients needing presidential discretion.
B. All individuals are eligible, but the award cannot be given to people involved in political activity.
C. All persons, regardless of race, position, occupation, or sex, are eligible for the award.
D. The award is restricted to contributions in arts, public affairs, and science & technology only.

42. What significant change has been made to Padma Awards since 2014?

- A. The maximum number of annual recipients was raised from 100 to 120.
B. The focus has shifted towards recognising "unsung heroes," rebranding the awards as the "People's Padma."
C. A new category below Padma Shri was introduced for grassroots workers.
D. The Padma Vibhushan was declared equivalent to the Bharat Ratna for foreign citizens.

Passage 8:

India's space programme is not just about scientific exploration but also about empowering its citizens and helping its economic and social development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a pre-recorded message at the Global Space Exploration Conference 2025 on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister's video message for the conference, being held in New Delhi from May 7 to 9, came hours after India carried out military strikes at multiple terrorist targets in Pakistan in an early morning raid.

The pre-recorded message, addressing the delegates of the conference, obviously did not have any reference to this morning's actions. "For India, space is about exploration as well as about empowerment. It empowers governance, enhances livelihoods and inspires generations. From fishermen alerts to (data for) Gatishakti platform, from railway safety to weather forecasting, our satellites look out for the welfare of every Indian," Modi said.

[<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/2-dead-500-arrested-france-after-paris-saint-germain-psg-champions-league-win-10042025/>]

43. Which of the following joint missions focuses specifically on observing Earth's surface changes every 12 days?

- A. NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar)
B. LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration)
C. Megha-Tropiques
D. Gaganyaan

44. What was the central theme of the 2025 Global Space Exploration Summit (GLEX)?

- A. Exploring Mars and Beyond: A New Scientific Frontier
B. Reaching New Worlds: A Space Exploration Renaissance
C. One Earth, One Sky: Global Unity in Space
D. Towards Moon Colonization and Deep Space Mining

45. The LUPEX mission is jointly undertaken by which two countries, and what is its primary goal?

- A. USA and India; long-term space station construction on Mars
- B. France and India; Earth-based weather simulation in lunar orbit
- C. Japan and India; assessing water presence in Moon's polar regions
- D. Russia and India; retrieval of lunar rock samples for analysis

46. Which of the following correctly identifies ISRO's active commercial and marketing arm?

- A. NSIL (NewSpace India Limited)
- B. Department of Space Services Limited
- C. Bharat Aerospace Ventures
- D. Antrix Corporation Limited

47. Who was the first Indian citizen to travel to space, and through which mission?

- A. Kalpana Chawla aboard Columbia STS-107
- B. Ritu Karidhal aboard ISRO's Gaganyaan test module
- C. Rakesh Sharma aboard Soviet Soyuz T-11
- D. Sunita Williams aboard the International Space Station

48. Which international organization is the co-organiser of GLEX and includes agencies like ESA, Roscosmos, and astronauts such as Rakesh Sharma?

- A. United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS)
- B. International Space Commerce Association (ISCA)
- C. International Astronautical Federation (IAF)
- D. World Space Council (WSC)

Passage 9:

Inequality reduced India's Human Development Index (HDI) score by a staggering 30.7 per cent, one of the highest losses in Asia, according to the 2025 Human Development Report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on May 6, 2025. Despite this, India continued to make steady progress, climbing from rank 133 in 2022 to 130 in 2023 out of 193 countries. The country's HDI value rose from 0.676 to 0.685, bringing it closer to the high human development threshold of 0.700.

However, the report warned that inequality, particularly in income and gender, continued to hold back India's human development potential. Female labour force participation and political representation remained low, although a recent constitutional amendment reserving one-third of legislative seats for women was seen as a promising shift.

[<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/lesson-from-cannes-roll-up-the-red-carpet-10025060/>]

49. What is the title of the 2025 Human Development Report?

- A. "A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI"
- B. "New Horizons: Redefining Equity in the AI Era"
- C. "The Human Dividend: AI, Development and Dignity"
- D. "Inequality and Innovation: Challenges in the 21st Century"

50. Which of the following countries was ranked last in the 2025 HDR?

- A. Yemen
- B. Somalia
- C. Sudan
- D. South Sudan

51. What was the Human Development Index (HDI) value of Iceland, the top-ranked country in the HDR 2025?

- A. 0.962 B. 0.975
- C. 0.972 D. 0.967

52. In which year was the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) established?

- A. 1955
- B. 1965
- C. 1971
- D. 1948

LEGAL REASONING**Passage 10:**

In tort law, the principle of *volenti non fit injuria* operates as a complete defence available to a defendant who is sued for causing harm. The Latin maxim translates to “to a willing person, no injury is done,” and reflects the core idea that no legal wrong has been committed when a person voluntarily consents to a known risk. The law presumes that individuals who knowingly and freely accept the possibility of harm cannot subsequently claim damages arising from that harm.

For a defendant to successfully rely on *volenti non fit injuria*, two essential conditions must be fulfilled: (1) the plaintiff must have actual knowledge of the nature and extent of the risk, and (2) the plaintiff must have voluntarily consented to undertake the risk. Both elements are cumulative, meaning the absence of even one negates the applicability of the defence.

The requirement of knowledge implies that the plaintiff must be aware of both the kind of risk and the magnitude of harm likely to arise. General awareness of danger is insufficient – what is necessary is that the plaintiff comprehended the specific risk involved in the activity. Courts generally presume that a person who merely finds themselves in a dangerous situation, without being informed or aware of the exact risk, cannot be said to have consented to it.

The second requirement is that of free consent. Consent must not be obtained through coercion, misrepresentation, fraud, mistake, or undue influence. It must stem from the plaintiff's own free will. In situations where the consent is vitiated – such as when a person is misled about the nature of the risk – the defence is not available. Furthermore, in cases involving minors or persons of unsound mind, consent may be deemed invalid, as the law presumes they lack the requisite capacity to understand the risk. In such cases, the consent of a legally authorised guardian or representative may be considered.

Importantly, the defence of *volenti non fit injuria* is not limited to express consent. It can also arise through implied conduct – for example, when a person voluntarily participates in a sport known to involve physical risks, or rides in a vehicle after being warned of a defect. However, the courts are cautious in applying this defence, especially where the plaintiff had no real choice but to accept the risk. Mere knowledge without an option to avoid the harm does not amount to voluntary consent.

[Edited from <http://student.manupatra.com/Academic/Abk/Law-of-Torts/Chapter5.htm>]

53. A boutique adventure tourism company organises guided zip-line tours over a rainforest canopy. Before boarding, participants sign a standard waiver form stating risk of serious injury from equipment failure. On the morning of the tour, the guide verbally warns that recent inspections revealed possible cable corrosion but assures that maintenance is scheduled later in the week. Despite hearing this warning, P consents to proceed because transport back to the lodge relies on completing the tour. Mid-zip-line, the cable snaps, causing P to fall and suffer severe injuries. P sues the company for negligence. Based on the principle of *volenti non fit injuria*, can the defendant successfully rely on that defence?

A. Yes, because P had actual knowledge of the specific risk from cable corrosion and voluntarily consented

despite dependency on the tour for transport.

B. No, because P lacked genuine consent, having no real alternative means of returning to the lodge, vitiating voluntariness.

C. No, because a standard waiver cannot exclude liability when the defendant admits equipment defect and delays maintenance.

D. Yes, because implied consent arises when one accepts known risks in adventure activities, regardless of any lack of alternatives.

54. A professional racing driver agrees to test-drive a prototype car on a closed circuit after signing a helmet waiver. During briefing, the manufacturer's engineer mentions in passing that braking performance may be unpredictable at high speeds but downplays

thesignificance. The driver, aware of possible unpredictability, nonetheless proceeds because sponsorship obligations demand test completion. At high speed, brakes fail and the car crashes, injuring the driver. The driver sues the manufacturer. Under *volenti non fit injuria*, is the defence likely to succeed?

A. Yes, because the driver had general awareness of braking unpredictability and assumed the risk by signing the waiver and proceeding.

B. No, because downplaying by the engineer constitutes misrepresentation, vitiating consent despite awareness of some risk.

C. No, because although driver knew of specific risk, the undue pressure of sponsorship obligations negates free consent.

D. Yes, because participation in professional testing implies implied consent to inherent mechanical risks once briefed about unpredictability

55. A local gym organises a “high-intensity obstacle course” for members, prominently advertising risks of falls and sprains. A minor, aged 16, enrolls after parental consent via a general membership form but without a specific guardian-signed risk acknowledgement. During the course, the minor suffers severe injury due to a hidden structural defect unknown to both gym and participant. The minor sues for negligence. Does *volenti non fit injuria* apply?

A. Yes, because the minor and parent were informed generally of risks, constituting implied consent to usual hazards of the activity.

B. No, because structural defect was hidden and thus knowledge element of *volenti* fails.

C. Yes, because parental consent to gym membership covers all associated risks, including obstacle courses.

D. No, because minors lack capacity to consent to specific risks without explicit, guardian-signed acknowledgement, so defence fails.

56. An experienced construction worker volunteers to work on scaffolding after being verbally assured by the contractor that safety harnesses meet latest standards, despite seeing worn-out equipment. Later, the worker learns that harnesses were refurbished substandardly but still accepts deployment because refusal might jeopardise future employment. Worker falls and sues for negligence. Under *volenti non fit injuria*, can the defence succeed?

A. Yes, because experienced worker had implicit awareness of scaffold risk and implicitly consented by continuing work.

B. No, because misrepresentation about harness standards vitiated free consent despite worker’s awareness of worn equipment.

C. No, because economic pressure to accept work undermines voluntariness, nullifying defence.

D. Yes, because implied consent arises when a worker continues work knowing general dangers of construction activities.

57. During a mountaineering expedition, a participant P is informed of avalanche risk in a specific valley. The expedition leader emphasises that alternative routes exist but warns they require additional days. P chooses the riskier valley route to meet sponsorship schedule. En route, an avalanche occurs, injuring P. P sues the expedition organiser. Is *volenti non fit injuria* defence available?

A. Yes, because P had actual knowledge of avalanche risk and freely chose the riskier route for scheduling reasons.

B. No, because expedition organiser should have disallowed selection of high-risk route given foreseeable harm.

C. No, because sponsorship pressure negates genuine free consent despite alternatives.

D. Yes, because implied consent applies when a participant knowingly selects a known risk in adventure contexts.

58. According to the passage on *volenti non fit injuria*, which statement most accurately reflects the cumulative nature of its conditions?

A. The defence applies if the plaintiff had either knowledge of risk or voluntary consent, as long as one condition is clearly satisfied.

B. The defence applies where implied consent is demonstrated, regardless of whether the plaintiff comprehended the magnitude of the risk.

C. The defence is inapplicable if the plaintiff lacked real choice, but only if knowledge was absent, not affecting free consent requirement.

D. The defence requires both actual knowledge of the specific risk and genuine voluntary consent; absence of either defeats the defence.

Passage 11:

Trespass to land is a tort that involves unlawful interference with another person’s possession of land. The interference must be direct and physical, involving a tangible object or presence. Crucially, trespass is actionable *per se*, meaning that the claimant is not required to prove actual damage to the property in order

to seek legal remedy. The mere act of interference, without lawful justification, is sufficient to give rise to a cause of action.

Trespass can occur in several ways. Firstly, it includes unauthorised entry onto another's land. Secondly, if a person remains on land after their permission has expired or been revoked, it amounts to trespass. Thirdly, performing an act that physically interferes with another's land - such as throwing stones or allowing animals to stray - is also considered trespass. However, if there is no interference with possession, no trespass has occurred.

Importantly, intent, force, or damage are not required to establish this tort. Even accidental or mistaken entry may constitute trespass unless it falls within a recognized exception. Where the interference is indirect or consequential, the act does not qualify as trespass but may instead constitute nuisance. For instance, allowing smoke, fumes, or waste to spread onto a neighbour's land would be treated as nuisance, not trespass. Planting a tree on someone else's land is trespass, but if roots or branches from a tree planted on one's own land spread onto a neighbour's property, it is treated as nuisance.

A person may also commit trespass by exceeding the scope of permission. For example, if someone is invited to enter a drawing-room but enters a bedroom without consent, it amounts to trespass. However, if boundaries between permitted and non-permitted areas are ambiguous, mere unintentional crossing may not be considered trespass.

There are exceptions. In *Madhav Vithal Kudwa v. Madhavdas Vallabhdas*, the court held that a tenant in a multi-storey building had the implied right to park in the compound without explicit permission from the landlord, provided it did not inconvenience others. Thus, trespass occurs through unjustified physical interference with possession, while indirect intrusions are generally governed by the law of nuisance.

[Edited from <https://blog.ipleaders.in/trespass-to-land/#:~:text=If%20the%20interference%20is%20not,the%20wrong%20of%20a%20nuisance.>]

59. A software maintenance team is granted access to the office premises daily between 9 AM and 5 PM. One evening at 6 PM, after the formal permission period, an employee from that team remains on the premises troubleshooting a critical server fault, unaware that building security revoked entry rights at 5 PM. The employee moves cables across office corridors and uses company equipment. The owner discovers and sues for trespass. Under the principles of trespass to land, is the employee liable?

- A. Yes, because remaining after permission expired, performing acts physically interfering with premises possession amounts to trespass per se.
- B. No, because troubleshooting critical server fault constitutes an implied necessity exception that overrides expired access permission without inconvenience.
- C. No, because accidental retention on premises without intent or damage cannot constitute trespass under the need for intent or damage.
- D. Yes, because use of equipment and moving cables

after hours constitutes indirect interference, treated as nuisance rather than trespass.

60. A homeowner invites a surveyor to inspect only the ground-floor rooms of a bungalow. The surveyor, believing the same access applies, inadvertently enters the locked first-floor terrace through an unlocked door left by a guest, takes measurements, and leaves without realizing overstepping. The homeowner sues for trespass. Which outcome aligns with the passage?

- A. Surveyor liable because any entry beyond the invited area constitutes trespass regardless of ambiguity in boundaries.
- B. No trespass because ambiguous boundary of unlocked door and absence of intention or knowledge mean unintentional crossing may not attract liability.
- C. Surveyor liable because taking measurements constitutes physical interference with possession even if entry was accidental.
- D. No trespass because implied permission to inspect the entire property arises from the initial ground-floor invitation unless explicit restriction is given.

invitation unless explicit restriction given.

61. A livestock owner's cow escapes onto neighbour's field through a broken fence, eats crops, and is rounded up by neighbour, who drives it back across the fence and keeps it overnight awaiting compensation talks. The neighbour then shifts the animal back onto the livestock owner's land. The livestock owner sues the neighbour for trespass when the cow was on neighbour's land and when the neighbour kept it overnight. How should courts view this under trespass principles?

A. Neighbour liable for trespass during crop-eating because allowing animals to stray onto land is trespass, but keeping the animal overnight is a remedial act, not separate trespass.

B. No trespass during crop-eating because broken fence created implied permission to enter; keeping overnight is trespass since detention exceeds necessity.

C. Neighbour liable for both presence on field and detention overnight because any unauthorised presence and continued possession constitute direct trespass per se.

D. No liability because animal intrusion is indirect interference and must be treated under nuisance principles, not trespass.

62. A factory emits fine dust that settles on adjacent property, causing discoloration of outdoor furniture. Additionally, the factory stores heavy machinery on the owner's land for loading but occasionally parks machinery wheels partly on neighbour's driveway while loading. The neighbour sues for trespass regarding machinery wheels and for nuisance regarding dust. How do the principles apply?

A. Trespass for dust intrusion because direct physical interference; nuisance for machinery parked partly on driveway because intermittent and indirect effect.

B. No trespass for dust since indirect interference qualifies only as nuisance; trespass for machinery wheels because direct physical intrusion onto neighbour's land without permission.

C. No remedy for dust because slight discoloration is de minimis; no trespass for machinery since incidental parking within ambiguous boundary cannot be actionable.

D. Trespass for dust because actionable per se without proving damage; no trespass for machinery wheels since parking constitutes implied licence under usage norms.

63. A tenant has permission to use the entire garden of a rented house but not the garage. One day, the tenant parks a guest's car in the garage without landlord's consent. Landlord sues for trespass. How does the passage guide the outcome?

A. Tenant liable for trespass by exceeding the scope of permission, because garage access was not included in the tenancy rights.

B. No trespass because tenant's overall permission to the property implies access to ancillary spaces like garage unless expressly excluded.

C. No trespass because parking in garage is indirect interference and should be treated as nuisance, not trespass.

D. Tenant liable only if parking inconvenienced others; if no one was inconvenienced, implied right may cover incidental use.

64. According to the passage, which statement best captures the difference between trespass and nuisance?

A. Trespass requires proof of actual damage to the property, whereas nuisance is actionable per se without showing damage or interference.

B. Trespass involves indirect or consequential interferences like smoke or roots, while nuisance covers direct physical presence issues.

C. Trespass is direct physical interference with possession actionable per se without proof of damage, whereas nuisance addresses indirect or consequential interferences.

D. Trespass and nuisance overlap entirely when interference is physical, so distinction is only procedural, not substantive.

65. Which principle follows from the *Madhav Vithal Kudwa v. Madhavdas Vallabhdas* exception described?

A. Implied permission may arise for beneficial or non-inconvenient uses within a tenancy, preventing trespass claims for certain expected activities.

B. Any use of common areas by tenants always requires explicit landlord permission, irrespective of inconvenience to others.

C. Tenant parking cannot amount to trespass because animals or objects within compound do not interfere physically with land possession.

D. Tenant's implied rights are limited to residential activities; parking vehicles always falls outside implied permission and is trespassable.

Passage 12:

Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC), empowers the High Courts in India to exercise their inherent jurisdiction to prevent the abuse of the process of law and to ensure that justice is not subverted by procedural misuse.

One of the key applications of this inherent power is the quashing of a First Information Report (FIR) or criminal proceedings that are frivolous, malicious, or legally untenable.

The power to quash an FIR under Section 482 CrPC is discretionary and is to be exercised sparingly, cautiously, and in exceptional circumstances. The guiding principle is whether allowing the proceedings to continue would amount to a miscarriage of justice. High Courts are not expected to conduct a detailed inquiry or trial at this stage but must examine whether, even if the allegations in the FIR are taken at face value, they disclose the commission of a cognizable offence. If not, or if the allegations appear absurd, improbable, or clearly mala fide, the Court may quash the FIR.

A person accused in an FIR may file a petition before the High Court under Section 482, requesting quashing. In such proceedings, both the State and the complainant are typically made respondents. The High Court then assesses the petition in light of all material facts - such as the FIR, statements made to the police, and other supporting documents - to determine whether continuation of proceedings would serve the interests of justice. Importantly, the Supreme Court has clarified that the High Court's power under this section must not be used to short-circuit legitimate investigations. Courts should not examine the truth or falsity of allegations in-depth, nor should they engage in evaluating the sufficiency of evidence. These are matters for trial. However, courts can quash proceedings in cases where a statutory bar exists to criminal prosecution, where the dispute is purely civil in nature, or where the criminal law is being misused to settle personal scores. Nevertheless, the power to quash an FIR is an exceptional remedy, not the general rule. The objective is to ensure that innocent persons are not subjected to the rigours of criminal trial without just cause, while still preserving the prosecutorial rights of victims and the investigative prerogatives of law enforcement agencies.

[Edited from <https://www.indialawoffices.com/legal-articles/quashing-of-fir-requirements-and-procedure>]

66. A corporate executive faces an FIR alleging criminal breach of trust based on a failed commercial transaction, whereas the underlying dispute concerns unpaid dues under a civil contract. The accused files a Section 482 petition seeking quashing. The local police have not yet completed investigation, but the contract dispute is pending in civil court. Should the High Court quash the FIR under Section 482?

- A. Yes, because the allegations arise purely from a civil contractual dispute without any cognizable criminal offence disclosed, fitting the misuse-of-criminal-law exception.
- B. No, because until investigation concludes, the High Court must not quash an FIR even if the underlying dispute appears civil in nature, as inquiry is incomplete.
- C. No, because the possibility that evidence may reveal criminal elements requires preserving the FIR for full investigation before any quashing consideration.
- D. Yes, because discretion under Section 482 allows quashing whenever the accused prefers civil adjudication, even if cognizable offence may exist.

67. A professional football coach is accused via FIR of sexual harassment by a former trainee. The FIR contains detailed allegations describing incidents. The accused moves to quash under Section 482, arguing the

allegations are too general, lacking specifics, and the complaint is motivated by personal animus. The police have begun a preliminary inquiry but have not filed a charge sheet. How should the High Court proceed?

- A. Grant quashing because the coach has shown malice and the allegations are general, so continuing proceedings would be misuse of criminal law.
- B. Dismiss petition because absence of charge sheet means no full investigation, so quashing at this stage would short-circuit legitimate inquiry.
- C. Dismiss petition because, taken at face value, the allegations disclose a cognizable offence of sexual harassment warranting investigation, and detailed inquiry on merits is for trial stage.
- D. Grant quashing because preliminary inquiry shows insufficient evidence, and High Court may intervene to prevent harassment of accused.

68. A retired judge faces an FIR for alleged defamation lodged by a public figure after critical remarks made in a published article. The statute under which defamation is alleged is non-cognizable unless complaint is made by the aggrieved person in writing. The complainant filed private complaint without statutory compliance. The accused files a petition to quash under Section 482 before any investigation begins. Should the High Court quash the FIR?

- A. No, because defamation allegations require deeper examination of truth and public interest, which cannot be resolved at this stage.
 B. Yes, because statutory bar exists on criminal prosecution without mandatory compliance, making the FIR legally untenable and fit for quashing.
 C. No, because even if procedural defect exists, the Court should allow investigation to consider possible cognizable elements before quashing.
 D. Yes, because the High Court may quash frivolous FIR for defamation when the complaint fails to meet statutory prerequisites, preventing abuse of process.

69. An entrepreneur is charged via FIR with criminal conspiracy and cheating based on novel financial scheme allegations. The allegations appear far-fetched, relying solely on speculative future gains without concrete transactions. The accused petitions to quash under Section 482 before any evidence collection. Should the High Court quash the FIR?

- A. No, because speculative nature does not automatically render allegations non-cognizable; trial will determine veracity.
 B. No, because High Court must not quash where prima facie cognizable offence may exist, even if allegations seem improbable.
 C. Yes, because improbable and absurd allegations alone justify quashing to prevent miscarriage of justice without trial.
 D. Yes, because if allegations appear absurd or improbable at face value, the Court may quash FIR to avert abuse of process.

70. A nonprofit organization leader is booked under an FIR for misappropriation of funds after a whistleblower complaint. The police investigation has found prima facie evidence of diversion of funds but is ongoing. The leader files a Section 482 petition claiming the investigation is tainted by political vendetta. Should the High Court quash the FIR at this stage?

- A. No, because there is prima facie evidence disclosing a cognizable offence and an ongoing legitimate investigation, so quashing would short-circuit proper inquiry.

- B. Yes, because mere prima facie evidence in a politicised context compels quashing to prevent harassment of innocents.
 C. No, because allegations of political vendetta require trial-level scrutiny, not quashing at preliminary stage.
 D. Yes, because exceptional remedy under Section 482 should be used when investigation appears politically motivated, regardless of prima facie evidence.

71. According to the passage, which statement best reflects the High Court's approach under Section 482 when faced with an FIR?

- A. The High Court may quash any FIR at the accused's request if continuing the case may inconvenience the accused, even if allegations disclose a cognizable offence.
 B. The High Court must always await completion of police investigation and charge sheet before considering any quashing petition, regardless of apparent defects.
 C. The High Court examines whether allegations, taken at face value, disclose a cognizable offence; if not, or if absurd/mala fide, it may quash without detailed inquiry.
 D. The High Court can engage in evaluating evidence sufficiency at the quashing stage to determine whether conviction is unlikely, and quash if success seems remote.

72. Which principle from the passage governs the exercise of quashing power under Section 482 CrPC?

- A. Quashing power should be used liberally to protect accused from drawn-out investigations, even in borderline cases.
 B. Quashing power is discretionary and must be exercised sparingly, cautiously, and only in exceptional circumstances to prevent miscarriage of justice.
 C. High Courts should substitute their own view of evidence at quashing stage to ensure only strong cases proceed to trial.
 D. Quashing is routine whenever the complainant appears vexatious, without regard to whether allegations may disclose a cognizable offence.

Passage 13:

Under the Indian Contract Act, 1872, fraud and misrepresentation are two forms of defective consent that can affect the validity of a contract. Both allow the aggrieved party to void the contract, but they differ significantly in terms of intent, knowledge, and legal consequences.

Fraud, defined under Section 17 of the Act, refers to intentional deception by one party in order to secure an unfair contractual advantage.

It includes knowingly making false statements, concealing material facts, or making promises without the intention to perform them, all with the aim of misleading the other party. The essence of fraud is the presence of dishonest intent. For example, if a seller falsely claims to have the authority to sell property, knowing that they do not, it constitutes fraud. When fraud is proven, the aggrieved party can rescind the contract and is also entitled to claim damages for any loss suffered. The burden is on the claimant to show that the false representation was made knowingly, without belief in its truth, or recklessly, and that it induced them to enter the contract.

In contrast, misrepresentation, governed by Section 18, involves false statements made without intent to deceive. These typically arise from honest mistakes, negligence, or misunderstandings. Misrepresentation occurs when a party conveys inaccurate information while genuinely believing it to be true. For instance, if a party, based on outdated records, assures another that land is unencumbered, but in reality, it is mortgaged, this would be misrepresentation – not fraud. Like in fraud, the contract is voidable at the option of the misled party, but the remedies differ. Since there is no fraudulent intent, the party responsible for misrepresentation may not always be liable for damages, especially if they acted in good faith.

The central difference lies in intention and knowledge. Fraud involves deliberate falsehood, whereas misrepresentation stems from inadvertent error. Both vitiate consent and make the contract voidable, but fraud carries greater legal consequences. Misrepresentation, although it leads to incorrect consent, is treated with more leniency due to the absence of mala fide intention.

[Edited from <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/difference-between-fraud-and-misrepresentation/>]

73. A machinery seller, S, knowingly conceals a lien on equipment and falsely represents that the machinery is unencumbered, inducing buyer B to enter a sale contract. After discovering the lien, B seeks to rescind and claim damages. Which statement correctly classifies S's conduct?

- A. This is misrepresentation because B could have independently checked records, so S's false claim arises from negligence rather than deliberate intent.
- B. This is neither fraud nor misrepresentation because concealment of lien is a collateral issue not affecting the main contract on machinery performance.
- C. This is fraud, as S intentionally concealed a material fact to mislead B and secure unfair advantage, satisfying dishonest intent under Section 17.
- D. This is only negligent misrepresentation, since the lien might not have materially affected machinery's performance, and B's loss is speculative.

74. A financial advisor, believing in good faith but based on outdated market reports, advises client C that a particular stock is unencumbered by regulatory restrictions. Relying on this, C invests and incurs loss when restrictions emerge. How should C's remedy be characterized?

- A. C's remedy is rescission plus damages for fraud because the advisor should verify all facts before advising, so failure amounts to deliberate recklessness.

B. C's remedy is rescission for misrepresentation without entitlement to heavy damages, since the advisor genuinely believed the statement true but was mistaken.

C. C cannot void the contract because investment advice is only opinion, not a statement of fact under Sections 17–18.

- D. C's remedy includes punitive damages because negligent advice that causes loss always qualifies as fraud under Section 17.

75. A vendor promises performance of complex software integration within three weeks, despite knowing that internal resource constraints make this impossible, intending to induce the buyer to contract immediately. Later, vendor fails to deliver. What is the correct classification of vendor's conduct?

- A. This is only misrepresentation, since time estimates are not material facts under the Indian Contract Act and cannot amount to fraud.
- B. This is neither fraud nor misrepresentation because performance timelines are subjective projections, not factual assurances.
- C. This is misrepresentation because the vendor believed it might manage resources despite constraints, so intent to mislead is absent.
- D. This is fraud because vendor made a promise without intention to perform, concealing inability to deliver within three weeks to secure the contract.

76. A property owner, believing in good faith based on an old survey, assures prospective lessee that land has clear title, unaware of a recent encumbrance. Upon discovering the encumbrance, the lessee seeks to void the lease but not claim damages beyond costs. What best describes this scenario?

- A. This is misrepresentation, since owner genuinely believed land unencumbered (no intent to deceive), so contract is voidable but damages limited.
- B. This is fraud, because the owner should have checked updated records before giving assurance, implying reckless disregard for truth.
- C. This is neither fraud nor misrepresentation because the assurance relates to past status and the encumbrance does not affect current use, so no defective consent arises.
- D. This is fraud because failure to verify critical title information constitutes concealment of material fact, indicating dishonest intent.

77. A purchaser enters a contract to buy vintage art based on seller's assurance, relying on catalogue stating the piece is original. Later, it emerges that the catalogue was compiled from outdated inventory listings and the art is a replica. Seller believed catalogue accurate at the time. What is the correct legal characterization?

- A. This is misrepresentation, as the seller gave false statement believing it true, arising from honest mistake under Section 18.

B. This is fraud, because the seller should have verified authenticity personally before listing, so their failure is dishonest concealment.

C. This falls outside both fraud and misrepresentation because art authenticity disputes are inherent risk in art transactions.

D. This is misrepresentation but allows damages as well, since reliance on catalogue incurs liability regardless of seller's belief.

78. According to the passage, which statement best captures the distinction between fraud and misrepresentation under the Indian Contract Act?

- A. Fraud and misrepresentation both require dishonest intent, but misrepresentation carries lesser damages because losses are typically smaller.
- B. Fraud involves deliberate or reckless falsehood to induce contract, whereas misrepresentation arises from honest error without intent to deceive.
- C. Misrepresentation always allows both rescission and damages, while fraud only permits rescission to prevent abuse of contract law.
- D. Fraud and misrepresentation differ only in terminology, as both vitiate consent and carry identical legal consequences under Sections 17 and 18.

Passage 14:

Under criminal law, an unlawful assembly is defined as a gathering of five or more persons who share a common objective that falls within certain prohibited categories. An assembly becomes unlawful when the group's purpose includes the use or threat of criminal force against the government, legislature, or a public servant in the discharge of lawful duty. It is also unlawful if the object is to resist the execution of a law, commit mischief, criminal trespass, or any offence, to deprive a person of their legal rights, or to compel someone to act against the law or prevent them from exercising legal rights.

Significantly, a gathering that begins as lawful may later become unlawful if its common object changes to one that falls within these prohibited purposes. Anyone who hires, engages, promotes, or encourages others to join an unlawful assembly is punishable as though they were a member, even if they are not physically present. If an offence is committed by any member of an unlawful assembly in furtherance of the group's common object, every person who was a member of the assembly at that time is held equally guilty of that offence, regardless of whether they personally took part in the criminal act. This is known as the principle of constructive liability.

Furthermore, if any member of an unlawful assembly uses force or violence to pursue the group's unlawful objective, all members are guilty of rioting, a specific offence under criminal law. The offence of rioting emphasizes the collective nature of violence and imposes group accountability for actions that disturb public peace. This framework ensures that not only active participants, but also instigators and facilitators of group-based criminal conduct, are held liable.

The principle of collective criminality acts as a deterrent against unlawful group behaviour and promotes the maintenance of law and public order.

[Edited from the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023
(https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/250883_english_01042024.pdf)]

79. A group of six citizens lawfully assembles outside a government office to petition for improved public services. Midway, the group's objective shifts as the leader urges resorting to threats of property damage against officials to force compliance. Despite peaceful start, P participates in the new plan. Later, one member vandalizes office windows. P did not physically partake in vandalism but supported threats earlier. Is P liable under principles of unlawful assembly?

- A. No, because P did not personally commit vandalism or use force, so cannot be held as member under constructive liability.
- B. Yes, because the assembly's object changed to threaten property damage, making it unlawful, and P supported the new plan, incurring liability as a member.
- C. No, because initial lawful gathering cannot attract liability for later actions if P only joined early peaceful part and left before violence.
- D. Yes, but only for incitement if P was physically absent during vandalism, not as full member of unlawful assembly.

80. X hires Y, Z, and three others to join a demonstration against a public servant's policy, intending to resist the execution of that policy. X remains at home and communicates via messages encouraging participation. During the assembly, a member throws stones at the public servant's residence. X never attends but his messages spurred others. Is X liable as a member of unlawful assembly?

- A. No, because liability as member requires physical presence at the assembly location; remote encouragement is insufficient.
- B. No, because only those physically present share constructive liability; instigators unconnected physically are not treated as members under the framework.
- C. Yes, because anyone who hires or encourages others to join an unlawful assembly is punishable as if they were a member, even if not physically present.
- D. Yes, but only for abetting the offence, not under unlawful assembly provisions.

81. Five individuals assemble to protest lawfully. On noticing police arrival, they decide to commit criminal trespass into a restricted area to obstruct law enforcement. During trespass, one member assaults an officer. Some members did not anticipate assault but joined trespass. Are those who did not assault liable for

the officer's injury?

- A. No, because only those who physically assaulted the officer bear liability for that offence, as others lacked intent for violence.
- B. No, because initial objective was lawful protest; liability should not extend to unintended consequences under group context.
- C. Yes, but only for trespass, not for assault, since assault was not part of common object when trespass began.
- D. Yes, because once the assembly became unlawful with common object to trespass, any offence committed in furtherance implicates all members under constructive liability

82. Seven protestors gather to resist execution of a law peacefully. During the protest, a member uses violence against officials, and another damages public property. The rest did not physically join violence but remained part of assembly. Which statement is correct regarding rioting liability?

- A. Only active participants in violence are guilty of rioting, since collective liability requires physical act.
- B. No one is guilty of rioting because initial assembly was peaceful; violence was spontaneous and not part of original object.
- C. All members are guilty of rioting because if any member uses force to pursue the unlawful objective, all members are guilty of rioting.
- D. Only those who knew in advance that violence would occur are guilty of rioting; others are exempt.

83. A small group of four convenes to deprive a neighbor of legal rights by minor obstruction of access; they block entrance temporarily. Does this constitute unlawful assembly under the given framework?

- A. No, because unlawful assembly requires gathering of five or more persons, so liability under assembly provisions does not apply.
- B. Yes, because collective intent to deprive legal rights suffices regardless of number, attracting unlawful assembly liability.
- C. Yes, because blocking access is criminal trespass and any group committing trespass qualifies as unlawful assembly.
- D. No, because absence of force or threat excludes unlawful assembly, even if four persons attempt to deprive rights.

79. According to the passage, which statement best captures the principle of constructive liability in unlawful assembly?

- A. Only those who physically commit the offence are liable; constructive liability applies solely when members voluntarily admit participation after the fact.
- B. Liability for offences committed by assembly members applies only if each member directly intended that specific offence at the outset.

C. Constructive liability holds all members equally guilty of any offence if committed in furtherance of the common unlawful object, regardless of personal participation.

D. Members are liable for group offences only when they actively assist during the offence, not merely by sharing the object of assembly.

LOGICAL REASONING

Passage 15:

In the wake of the brutal terrorist attack on Pahalgam, the government has done the right thing by heightening security across the country. It has intensified operations against terrorists and given greater urgency to increasing surveillance along the borders. Last month, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order asking states and Union Territories to detect and deport foreigners, especially people from Bangladesh and Myanmar, living illicitly in the country. The Centre's instructions have prompted several states to intensify their ongoing operations against suspected illegal immigrants. From the West Bengal government's allegation, earlier this year, of BSF's laxity against Bangladeshi "infiltrators" to Delhi's erstwhile AAP government's drive against "illegal Bangladeshi" students to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's frequent diatribes against immigrants from India's eastern neighbour, the issue of illegal immigration has raised its head time and again in the heat and dust of Indian politics. The Centre and state governments must understand that the current moment has a far more compelling imperative than polarising politics – the two should be kept scrupulously apart. However, reports in this newspaper shine a light on the disquieting tendency among authorities to ignore court proceedings – and take the short cut bypassing due process. Among the people caught in the no man's land between India and Bangladesh is an Assam school teacher whose citizenship case is being heard by the Supreme Court. And, days ago, a 50-year-old woman was pushed into Bangladesh and then brought back after her lawyer flagged that she was legally in the clear.

In Assam and several other regions of the Northeast, the movement of people across the mostly porous border across Bangladesh is an immensely sensitive and fraught issue. On the one hand, the movement of people across regions has a long history that predates Partition. On the other hand, the anti-outsider sentiment was the major trigger for the Assam agitation and has often led to violence in the state. In recent years, the state's BJP government has stoked anxieties around identity and demography by framing the narrative in communal terms. The state government's aggressive use of the Foreigner's Tribunal – it sets March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for citizenship in Assam – has left thousands with an uncertain future. The onus is almost always on the accused to prove their citizenship. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has cited a Supreme Court directive of February in support of the latest anti-immigration drive. However, Sarma's past pronouncements – especially his use of dog whistles, "land jihad" and "flood jihad," to refer to the migrant problem – do not inspire confidence.

[<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/crackdown-against-illegal-immigrants-has-to-follow-due-process-10042651/>]

85. Which of the following statements from the passage serves as a factual premise for the author's claim that some authorities are bypassing due process in their anti-immigration operations?

- A. "Among the people caught in the no man's land between India and Bangladesh is an Assam school teacher whose citizenship case is being heard by the

Supreme Court."

- B. "In Assam and several other regions of the Northeast, the movement of people across the mostly porous border across Bangladesh is an immensely sensitive and fraught issue."

C. “The state government’s aggressive use of the Foreigner’s Tribunal – it sets March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for citizenship in Assam – has left thousands with an uncertain future.”

D. “Himanta Biswa Sarma’s past pronouncements – especially his use of dog whistles, ‘land jihad’ and ‘flood jihad,’ to refer to the migrant problem – do not inspire confidence.”

86. Based on the passage, which of the following can be logically inferred about the author’s view concerning the relationship between national security measures and political polarization?

A. The author believes that greater surveillance along the borders inherently undermines democratic values.

B. The author implies that security operations and anti-immigrant drives are always motivated solely by genuine national security concerns.

C. The author suggests that political actors may exploit heightened security imperatives to further communal agendas.

D. The author contends that any reference to illegal immigration by state governments is inherently an act of communal bigotry.

87. Which of the following best states a conclusion that follows from the author’s overall argument in the passage?

A. The March 25, 1971 cut-off date for Assam citizenship was arbitrarily chosen with no legal basis.

B. All foreign nationals from Bangladesh and Myanmar living in India should be immediately deported.

C. The Assam government’s use of the Foreigner’s Tribunal necessarily guarantees fair treatment for all migrants.

D. The urgency of counter-terrorism measures should not override citizens’ legal rights or due process.

88. The author asserts that “the Centre and state governments must understand that the current moment has a far more compelling imperative than polarising politics – the two should be kept scrupulously apart.”

Which of the following is a hidden assumption underlying this statement?

A. High-profile terrorist attacks only occur when political polarization is high.

B. Political polarization and due process can conflict with one another, so avoiding polarization helps protect legal rights.

C. The Home Ministry’s orders to deport foreigners are inherently unconstitutional.

D. Surveillance along the borders will automatically resolve all security threats.

89. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author’s argument that anti-immigrant operations risk bypassing legal procedures?

A. Several detainees were discovered to have valid citizenship documents, but were still held by local authorities for weeks without formal charges.

B. The Supreme Court recently upheld all Foreigner’s Tribunal orders without reviewing documentary evidence.

C. Border states have unanimously demanded that the Centre stop enforcing deportation orders citing humanitarian concerns.

D. State governments receive additional federal funding for each deportation or detention of suspected illegal immigrants.

90. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author’s assertion that the Assam government “stoked anxieties around identity and demography by framing the narrative in communal terms”?

A. The Assam government passed legislation requiring every immigrant claimant to register with local administrative offices, irrespective of religion or ethnicity.

B. Independent observers found that most public statements by state officials referenced economic concerns rather than communal or religious factors.

C. A high court ruling explicitly noted that none of the official directives mentioned religion, while reiterating historical migration data.

D. Opposition parties in Assam criticized the government for being too lenient on illegal immigration and demanded stricter action.

Passage 16:

So much has changed since Bridget Jones’s Diary came out. It was a thought universally acknowledged that a career woman in her 30s would be in dire need of a husband and a baby, in that specific order. At least, that was the premise of Bridget Jones’s Diary, about a hapless and adorably plump heroine whose misadventures with bad boyfriends, hangovers and failed diets elicited many a laugh. The 2001 romantic comedy based on Helen Fielding’s eponymous 1998 book was an instant hit because who doesn’t identify with a gloriously messy bungler whose repeated attempts to fix things end up making situations infinitely worse?

Bridget Jones's Diary was a movie of its time. It came about after the thriving rom-com era of When Harry Met Sally (1989) and Sleepless in Seattle (1993), feel-good cinema that willfully ignored brutal realities and kept its gaze firmly narrow, on escapist happily-ever-afters. Those of us young and hopeful then, suffused with rose-tinted dreams, were just discovering that the course of true love doesn't run smooth. The sequels, though not as good as the first, mirrored the shifting cultural context and the changing dynamics between men and women.

In the second Bridget Jones movie, The Edge of Reason (2004), the ditsy (and still chubby) character had moved on from reluctant singleton to making the not-so-startling discovery that nabbing Mr Right isn't all it's cracked up to be. Fast forward 20 years later, the final installment, Mad About The Boy is all set for a February release. Judging by the trailer, our heroine is middle-aged and a widow, a mother to two young children, still looking for love, and whew, still just about winging it. We tend to think that nothing ever changes but one only needs to rewatch a late '90s hit to see how different the world actually is. Rapacious and vacant social media feeds didn't exist when the first Bridget Jones premiered. The relentless sickness of comparison hadn't taken over, so, that's one big plus for the early 2000s.

Most of the other changes time has wrought, however, are overwhelmingly positive; the way single women were socially positioned, as "tragic barren spinsters" at the ripe old age of 35, has, thank goodness, diminished. Till then, the air of desperation that clung to Miss Havisham seemed to envelope 30-something women but as all the various Jones films over the years have shown, when women have their own apartments, cars and friends, they don't have to also have a permanent man to enjoy life. Dating apps have been enormously liberating. The old-fashioned point of view is that the surfeit of choices available suits men more than women – true only because men tend to be less picky – but that presumes that all women are seeking long-term relationships in the first place. The ticking biological clock is no longer the issue it was. The option of freezing eggs, using sperm donors, and the acceptance of single parenthood means women no longer need to settle.

[<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/what-an-older-bridget-jones-in-mad-about-the-boy-can-teach-us-about-love-and-imperfection-9696171/>]

91. Which of the following statements from the passage serves as a factual premise for the author's claim that single women today no longer need to settle because "the ticking biological clock is no longer the issue it was"?

- A. "The option of freezing eggs, using sperm donors, and the acceptance of single parenthood means women no longer need to settle."
- B. "Most of the other changes time has wrought, however, are overwhelmingly positive; the way single women were socially positioned, as 'tragic barren spinsters' at the ripe old age of 35, has, thank goodness, diminished."
- C. "Rapacious and vacant social media feeds didn't exist when the first Bridget Jones premiered. The relentless sickness of comparison hadn't taken over, so, that's one big plus for the early 2000s."
- D. "In the second Bridget Jones movie, The Edge of Reason, the ditsy (and still chubby) character had moved on from reluctant singleton to making the not-so-startling discovery that nabbing Mr Right isn't all it's cracked up to be."

92. Based on the passage, which of the following can be logically inferred about the author's attitude toward dating apps?

- A. They are inherently problematic because they flood users with superficial choices and exacerbate loneliness.
- B. They have made no significant difference in relationship dynamics since traditional match-making methods still predominate.
- C. The author believes dating apps pose a new form of moral hazard, encouraging reckless romantic behavior without consequences.
- D. The author views dating apps as a liberating force for women, enabling them to pursue relationships on their own terms rather than feeling compelled to settle.

93. Which of the following best captures a conclusion that follows from the author's discussion of how Bridget Jones's portrayal of a single woman in her 30s would differ today?

- A. Bridget Jones's Diary would be a commercial failure if released in today's cultural climate because no one would relate to a single woman's romantic misadventure

B. The narrative of a hapless career woman desperately seeking a husband would feel anachronistic today, since contemporary single women have greater autonomy and options.

C. Women in their 30s face more societal pressure today than they did in 2001, given the saturation of romanticized relationships on social media.

D. The central comedic premise of Bridget Jones would remain unchanged, as women's romantic anxieties have not evolved over time.

94. The author claims that “the old-fashioned point of view is that the surfeit of choices available suits men more than women – true only because men tend to be less picky – but that presumes that all women are seeking long-term relationships in the first place.” Which of the following is an assumption underlying this claim?

A. Men generally have more disposable time to scroll through profiles and meet potential partners than women do.

B. Long-term relationships require a higher level of commitment that women are inherently less capable of than men.

C. The stereotype that women must prioritize marriage over personal goals rests on the belief that women's primary aim is to find a spouse rather than pursue independent aspirations.

D. All dating platforms are inherently gender-biased in their algorithms, offering men a greater numerical advantage over women.

95. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that “dating apps have been enormously liberating” for women?

A. A recent study shows that 70% of dating-app users still report feeling pressure to settle down quickly due to fear of dwindling options.

B. Surveys indicate that a significant proportion of single women now use apps to secure casual companionship or networking without any expectation of marriage, a departure from earlier norms.

C. Data reveals that men on dating apps are three times more likely to ghost their matches, leading to increased mistrust among female users.

D. Interviews with relationship counsellors show that the quality of connections made on dating apps has not significantly improved women's emotional well-being compared to traditional meeting methods.

96. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's assertion that “the surfeit of choices available suits men more than women – true only because men tend to be less picky – but that presumes that all women are seeking long-term relationships in the first place”?

A. Market research reveals that a growing segment of women actively use dating apps to form non-monogamous or short-term arrangements, indicating that not all women seek long-term relationships.

B. A demographic report finds that men's average age of first marriage has increased significantly, suggesting men now face greater pressure to commit than women do.

C. Social commentary argues that dating apps have reduced men's pickiness because they now face more rejection, forcing them to broaden their criteria.

D. A survey indicates that 80% of single women consider marriage a fundamental life goal, aligning their priorities with traditional long-term relationship norms.

Passage 17:

The data on India's economic performance in 2024-25, released on Friday, have something for everybody. Those with an optimistic outlook can rejoice at the seemingly robust growth in the fourth quarter. Pessimists can despair over the four-year low annual growth figure. The realist's assessment, however, is that there is cause for some restrained celebration, and more than a healthy dose of disappointment. The Q4 growth of 7.4% was considerably higher than what was expected for the quarter, and the fastest seen in an otherwise dismal financial year. The main drivers were the construction sector returning to double-digit growth, and the agriculture sector posting a strong showing. These are also two major employment drivers. Services, too, continued their steady and strong growth. The manufacturing sector, on the other hand, grew at just 4.8%, down from 11.3% in Q4 of the previous year. There is a reality check hiding in the aggregate numbers, as well. The GDP growth rate of 7.4% was achieved in large part due to a 12.7% growth in net taxes. This bump in tax collections provided a statistical boost without which growth in actual economic activity would have come in at around 6.8%. The much-hyped 'Maha Kumbh effect' on consumption expenditure also does not seem to have materialized. Growth in Private Final Consumption Expenditure in Q4 – the Kumbh quarter – came in at 6%, the slowest in five quarters. Capital formation, however, grew a robust 9.4% as the government finally sped up its sluggish capital investments.

Government officials and Union Ministers have expressed their satisfaction at the 6.5% growth in 2024-25, the slowest since the pandemic, saying it is still the fastest among major economies, and not bad in the context of a “growth-scarce” global environment. All of this is true. Yet, ‘not bad’ is not nearly good enough for India. The race is not with the rest of the world, but is an effort to keep pace with the country’s growing requirements. The Modi government, with its sights set on a ‘Viksit Bharat’ by 2047, must be held to a higher standard in line with its aspirations. If, as the Economic Survey points out, Viksit Bharat by 2047 requires “sustained economic growth of close to 8% every year for at least a decade”, then India is decidedly moving very slowly, even if in the right direction. In his press conference, Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran said India was entering a phase of low inflation and stable growth. Stability can be good, since it implies lower chances of growth slowing. Yet, it also implies growth is unlikely to accelerate significantly either. The government needs to consider whether this is truly a satisfactory situation for a transitioning economy.

[<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/growing-pains-economic-performance-viksit-bharat/article69645342.ece>]

97. Which of the following statements from the passage serves as a factual premise for the author’s claim that actual economic activity growth, excluding the boost from tax collections, would have been significantly lower than the reported 7.4%?

- A. “Services, too, continued their steady and strong growth.”
- B. “The GDP growth rate of 7.4% was achieved in large part due to a 12.7% growth in net taxes. This bump in tax collections provided a statistical boost without which growth in actual economic activity would have come in at around 6.8%.”
- C. “The much-hyped ‘Maha Kumbh effect’ on consumption expenditure also does not seem to have materialised. Growth in Private Final Consumption Expenditure in Q4 – the Kumbh quarter – came in at 6%, the slowest in five quarters.”
- D. “If, as the Economic Survey points out, Viksit Bharat by 2047 requires ‘sustained economic growth of close to 8% every year for at least a decade’, then India is decidedly moving very slowly, even if in the right direction.”

98. Based on the passage, which of the following can be logically inferred about the author’s view of the government officials’ pride over 6.5% annual growth as “the fastest among major economies”?

- A. The author believes that the manufacturing sector’s slowdown alone poses an existential threat to India’s growth trajectory.
- B. The author implies that the ‘Maha Kumbh effect’ on consumption will soon reverse, rendering any short-term gains moot.
- C. The author suggests that construction and agriculture, despite recent strength, cannot be relied upon as primary drivers of sustained GDP growth.
- D. The author infers that emphasizing India’s relative

ranking among major economies overlooks the more important goal of meeting the country’s unique domestic requirements.

99. Which of the following best captures a conclusion that follows from the author’s overall argument regarding India’s 6.5% growth in 2024-25?

- A. Because India’s growth is still the fastest among major economies, there is no urgent need for policy recalibration.
- B. Since services and agriculture performed well, the government can afford to deprioritise manufacturing in its next budget.
- C. India must aim for at least 8% annual growth for a sustained period to meet the aspirational targets of Viksit Bharat by 2047.
- D. The 12.7% bump in net taxes demonstrates that macroeconomic stability is more important than actual productive activity.

100. The author contends that “‘not bad’ is not nearly good enough for India,” because the country is racing to meet its own requirements rather than those of other nations. Which of the following is an assumption underlying this contention?

- A. Maintaining a higher growth rate than neighboring countries will automatically translate into improved living standards for all Indians.
- B. India’s domestic needs—such as job creation, infrastructure, and poverty reduction—demand economic growth significantly above the current 6.5% level.
- C. A 6.5% growth rate is unsustainable given global volatility, so a higher target is moot.
- D. The government’s aspirational rhetoric (for a Viksit Bharat by 2047) is more symbolic than grounded in realistic planning.

101. The following two observations from the passage appear to be in tension:

- (i) "The Q4 growth of 7.4% was considerably higher than what was expected for the quarter, and the fastest seen in an otherwise dismal financial year."
- (ii) "The government officials and Union Ministers have expressed their satisfaction at the 6.5% growth in 2024-25, the slowest since the pandemic..."

Which of the following best identifies the apparent paradox?

- A. If Q4 alone grew at 7.4%, how could the full year still register only 6.5% growth, implying other quarters must have been much weaker.
- B. The celebration of 6.5% growth is inconsistent with the claim that capital formation has finally picked up steam.
- C. A "disastrous financial year" should preclude any quarter from achieving high growth, so Q4's robust performance is inexplicable.
- D. Government satisfaction at 6.5% contradicts the statement that services, agriculture, and construction are strong—those sectors alone should have produced more than 6.5%.

102. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that India needs to exceed 6.5% growth and aim for close to 8% annually to achieve the "Viksit Bharat by 2047" target?

- A. International comparisons show that no country has ever raised its per capita income to the level in India's Economic Survey projections without sustaining at least 7.5% growth for a decade.
- B. A survey of economists suggests that any growth rate above 7% would necessarily trigger inflationary pressures too severe for the Indian economy to handle.
- C. Independent analyses indicate that if India persists at a 6.5% growth rate, per capita GDP in 2047 will be 20% below the level required for the government's stated development goals.
- D. Reports from rating agencies show that India's creditworthiness improves only when growth exceeds 8%, whereas 6.5% growth leads to downgrades within three years.

Passage 18:

When the government's 10-year health plan is published in July, prevention is expected to get a promotion. This won't be the first time that ministers will have stressed the importance of healthy lifestyles. But nine months after Wes Streeting announced that a shift from treatment to prevention would be one of the principles governing Labour's stewardship of the NHS, we are just a few weeks away from knowing how the idea will be put into practice, and turned into a narrative for voters.

In recent years, obesity has dominated discussions of the rising burden of chronic illness. But alcohol, too, is expected to feature in sections of the plan dealing with public health. Alcohol-related deaths in the UK reached a record high of 10,473 in 2023, with men more than twice as likely to die as women, and over-55s drinking far more than younger adults. The highest death rates are in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In his review of the crisis facing the NHS, Lord Darzi highlighted that the rise in deaths in England coincided with alcohol's increasing affordability. By contrast, in Scotland, research suggests – though it does not definitively prove – that the introduction of minimum unit pricing has led to fewer deaths and hospitalisations.

Pressure for a tougher approach from policymakers to alcohol is also growing internationally. Two years ago the World Health Organization (WHO) made a public statement that there is no safe amount of alcohol. Last month, in Amsterdam, a new European Health Alliance on Alcohol was launched. It plans to campaign for the reduction of alcohol-related injuries and illnesses. Later this year, a UN general assembly meeting on non-communicable diseases is expected to include discussion of alcohol-related illness.

If governments decide to act in response to such pressure, the options open to them include minimum pricing, taxes, advertising restrictions and stricter guidelines (in the UK, adults are recommended not to exceed 14 units a week, while pregnant women are advised not to drink at all). Other public health interventions include specialist clinics and other local services for those who are already addicted or ill.

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Before last year's election, Labour ruled out minimum unit pricing in England, although this was introduced by a Labour administration in Wales. If this decision has not already been reviewed in connection with the 10-year health plan, then it should be.

But lobbyists will ensure that this and other challenges to the industry won't be easy. Last month, the Guardian reported on how new restrictions on ultra-processed foods were watered down under pressure from the Food and Drink Federation. While the guidance to retailers was softened under the last government, these changes have not been reversed by Labour. Unsurprisingly, a government that has staked its reputation on economic growth is a good listener to businesses.

[<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/01/the-guardian-view-on-alcohol-and-public-health-the-drinks-industry-must-not-control-the-narrative>]

103. Which of the following statements from the passage serves as a factual basis for the author's assertion that minimum unit pricing in Scotland has had a positive impact on alcohol-related harms?

- A. "Alcohol-related deaths in the UK reached a record high of 10,473 in 2023, with men more than twice as likely to die as women, and over-55s drinking far more than younger adults."
- B. "Lord Darzi highlighted that the rise in deaths in England coincided with alcohol's increasing affordability."
- C. "By contrast, in Scotland, research suggests – though it does not definitively prove – that the introduction of minimum unit pricing has led to fewer deaths and hospitalisations."
- D. "Last month, in Amsterdam, a new European Health Alliance on Alcohol was launched. It plans to campaign for the reduction of alcohol-related injuries and illnesses."

104. Based on the passage, which of the following can be logically inferred about why Labour's decision to rule out minimum unit pricing in England "should be" reviewed for the 10-year health plan?

- A. The Labour government believes that raising retail prices of alcohol conflicts with its broader economic growth agenda.
- B. The author implies that, given mounting evidence of minimum pricing's effectiveness and international pressure, England's decision is inconsistent with a genuine prevention-focused strategy.
- C. Labour quantitatively calculated that minimum unit pricing would reduce alcohol-related revenue without significantly affecting public health.

D. The author suggests that any policy introduced in Wales should automatically be adopted in England for consistency.

105. Which of the following best captures the conclusion that follows from the author's overall argument regarding the coming 10-year health plan and alcohol policy?

- A. Because the WHO and European Health Alliance are campaigning internationally, England must mirror all European alcohol policies immediately.
- B. Labelling obesity as the dominant public health challenge implies that alcohol should be deprioritised in the plan.
- C. The government's economic-growth priorities justify maintaining the status quo on alcohol regulation despite health concerns.
- D. If Labour truly intends to shift from treatment to prevention, it must reconsider its stance on minimum unit pricing and other evidence-backed interventions.

106. The author contends that "a government that has staked its reputation on economic growth is a good listener to businesses." Which of the following is an assumption underlying this contention?

- A. The government is unwilling to jeopardise economic growth by enacting regulations that businesses strongly oppose.
- B. Public health measures always have no measurable impact on businesses' bottom lines.
- C. Only governments prioritising economic growth can effectively balance health and industry interests.
- D. Stating a commitment to economic growth necessarily implies hostility toward any public health

interventions.

107. The following two observations appear to create a tension:

(i) "Labour ruled out minimum unit pricing in England, although this was introduced by a Labour administration in Wales."

(ii) "These changes [restrictions on ultra-processed foods] have not been reversed by Labour."

Which of the following best identifies the apparent paradox?

A. If Labour values public health enough to introduce minimum unit pricing in Wales, why does it refuse to reverse food-industry concessions elsewhere?

B. The launch of the European Health Alliance on Alcohol makes it strange that Labour has not reversed any of the previous government's public health compromises.

C. Labour's introduction of minimum pricing in one region but not addressing ultra-processed foods policies elsewhere suggests an inconsistent approach to prevention.

D. The fact that the WHO says there is no safe amount of alcohol contradicts Labour's refusal to adopt minimum unit pricing in England.

108. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that Labour needs to reconsider its refusal to adopt minimum unit pricing in England?

A. A recent peer-reviewed study found that, after minimum unit pricing was introduced in Wales, overall alcohol sales fell by 15% with no observed decline in local pub revenues.

B. An industry-funded report claimed that minimum unit pricing in Scotland had no statistically significant effect on hospital admissions.

C. Polling data indicate that 72% of the English public supports minimum unit pricing if it will reduce the NHS burden, even if prices rise moderately.

D. A comparative analysis showed that England's per-capita alcohol consumption remained static while Scotland's fell after pricing reform.

QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

Passage 19:

CityRide operates a fleet of 120 vehicles across three distinct classes—Economy, Sedan, and SUV—to serve the high-volume metropolitan market. Last month, the company logged a total of 1,200 car-rental days, allocated by class as follows: Economy cars (40 vehicles) accounted for 50% of all rentals, Sedans (50 vehicles) for 30%, and SUVs (30 vehicles) for the remaining 20%. Standard daily rates are set at ₹1,200 for Economy, ₹1,800 for Sedan, and ₹3,000 for SUV. To boost weekend usage, the "Weekend Special" applies every Friday through Sunday: Economy rentals receive a flat ₹100 discount per day; Sedan drivers enjoy a 10% reduction off the daily rate; and SUV customers benefit from a "rent two days, get the third day free" offer. Corporate accounts—comprising 20% of renters—earn an additional 5% rebate on their monthly invoice total, calculated after all other discounts. Every rental incurs a fuel surcharge of ₹150 per day, irrespective of vehicle class, and customers may opt for an in-car GPS unit at ₹200 per rental day. Maintenance schedules ensure 48-hour service cycles, but downtime is factored into overall fleet availability. At month's end, management reviews revenue by class, net of weekend promotions, surcharges, and corporate rebates, then computes each car's effective per-day earning.

109. How many rental-days last month were recorded for SUV class vehicles?

- A. 180 days B. 240 days
C. 300 days D. 360 days

110. What was the total base-rate revenue (before any discounts, surcharges, or add-ons) earned from all Sedan rentals last month?

- A. ₹648,000 B. ₹720,000
C. ₹540,000 D. ₹432,000

111. Under the "rent two days, get the third day free"

offer for SUVs, what is the effective daily rate (excluding fuel surcharge and GPS add-on)?

- A. ₹2,000 B. ₹1,500
C. ₹2,500 D. ₹3,000

112. A non-corporate customer rents an Economy car for a three-day weekend (Friday–Sunday) and adds GPS for each day. What is the total charge for those three days (including fuel surcharge but excluding any corporate rebate)?

- A. ₹4,350 B. ₹4,650
C. ₹4,050 D. ₹3,900

113. A corporate client's invoice totals ₹50,000 after all class-based discounts, surcharges, and GPS charges but before the corporate rebate. What final amount must they pay?

- A. ₹47,500 B. ₹48,500
C. ₹45,000 D. ₹46,000

114. What is the ratio of total base-rate revenue (ignoring discounts, surcharges, GPS) from Economy rentals to that from SUV rentals last month?

- A. 1 : 2 B. 1 : 1
C. 2 : 3 D. 3 : 5

Passage 20:

GreenLeaf occupies a 200 m by 150 m rectangular lot on the edge of town, divided into four equal quadrants of 100 m by 75 m for specialised horticultural projects. Quadrant A is dedicated to a vegetable patch comprising 12 raised beds, each measuring 8 m by 5 m; these beds are replenished monthly with fertilizer at ₹15 per square meter. Quadrant B is seeded as a perennial flower meadow, covering three-quarters of its 7,500 m² area, mowed bi-monthly at ₹2 per square meter per visit. Quadrant C features a triangular herb garden whose base spans the full 100 m width of the quadrant and whose height runs 60 m inward; intercropped herbs in this triangle are harvested quarterly. Quadrant D houses a rectangular reflecting pond measuring 30 m by 20 m, surrounded by a 2 m-wide paved maintenance path; pond upkeep—including algae treatment and path cleaning—costs ₹50 per linear meter of shoreline each month. The entire 200 m by 150 m perimeter is enclosed by a 2 m-high wooden fence, which is painted annually at ₹25 per square meter of surface area (both faces).

115. What is the total monthly fertilizer cost for all the raised beds in Quadrant A?

- A. ₹6,000 B. ₹7,200
C. ₹8,400 D. ₹9,600

118. What is the monthly maintenance cost for the pond shoreline in Quadrant D?

- A. ₹2,500 B. ₹5,000
C. ₹7,500 D. ₹10,000

116. What is the total cost per month to mow the flower meadow in Quadrant B?

- A. ₹18,750 B. ₹22,500
C. ₹15,000 D. ₹30,000

119. What is the total annual cost to repaint the fence enclosing the entire plot (both faces)?

- A. ₹70,000 B. ₹100,000
C. ₹52,500 D. ₹87,500

117. What is the area of the triangular herb garden in Quadrant C?

- A. 2,500 m² B. 3,000 m²
C. 3,750 m² D. 4,000 m²

120. What is the ratio of the area of the paved path around the pond (Quadrant D) to the total vegetable-bed area (Quadrant A)?

- A. 9 : 20 B. 1 : 2
C. 3 : 7 D. 2 : 5

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Passage 1:

1. Answer: C

Explanation: The passage begins by humanizing the victims of the crash and then pivots to demand an impartial inquiry and systemic aviation reforms.

The author emphasizes transparency and structural change over mere financial redress.

Option A is incorrect because, although compensation is mentioned, it is explicitly deemed insufficient alone.

Option B is incorrect as pilot shortages are noted only tangentially, not as the main focus.

Option D is incorrect since the author does not call for a Boeing ban but for collaborative investigation with Boeing and regulators.

The core message is accountability plus reform, making C the precise summary.

This aligns with the concluding call for meaningful tribute through investigation and sectoral improvements.

2. Answer: A

Explanation: “Wherewithal” refers to the practical means or resources required to accomplish something.

In context, the DGCA lacks the budget, personnel, or technical capacity to regulate effectively.

Option B is incorrect because “wherewithal” does not imply stakeholder consensus.

Option C is incorrect as “wherewithal” does not denote any ritual or procedure.

Option D is incorrect since statutory authority differs from actual resources or capacity.

Thus, only option A captures the sense of necessary means or resources.

3. Answer: A

Explanation: “Scorched” metaphorically means burned or branded indelibly—akin to being “charred.”

The passage conveys that the crash video will sear into collective memory.

Option B (“soaked”) is wrong because it implies saturation, not burning.

Option C (“frozen”) is the opposite of burned and conveys cold immobility.

Option D (“enveloped”) merely means covered, lacking the connotation of irreversible marking.

Only “charred” carries the sense of intense, permanent burning.

4. Answer: C

Explanation: The DGCA’s function is to regulate airlines; Capa India’s role, as described, is to warn about pilot

shortages.

Option A (“innovate”) is incorrect—no innovation role is mentioned.

Option B (“advise”) is too broad; the passage specifies a warning.

Option D (“investigate”) does not reflect Capa India’s activity in the text.

Hence, “warn” is the precise parallel: DGCA regulates :: Capa India warns.

5. Answer: B

Explanation: The author states, “Compensation, while necessary, is not a substitute for accountability,” expressing skepticism that payouts alone suffice.

This acknowledges compensation’s importance but insists on concurrent investigations.

Option A is incorrect as the author rejects compensation as sufficient by itself.

Option C is wrong because the author is not indifferent to compensation’s role—they call for both compensation and accountability.

Option D is too extreme—the author does not delay compensation but demands it alongside an inquiry.

Thus, the author is skeptical that compensation can replace systemic reform.

6. Answer: A

Explanation: Option A adds the verb “are,” completing a single, coherent sentence: “A doctor couple and their three young children are en route ...”

Option B misplaces commas and lacks a clear main verb.

Option C leaves a subordinate clause without a main clause to anchor it.

Option D splits the thought into two fragments, disrupting flow and cohesion.

Only A restores grammatical completeness and maintains the original succinctness.

Passage 2:

7. Answer: B

Explanation: The passage recounts recent racist violence in Northern Ireland—riots targeting migrants—then critiques the way some unionist leaders mixed legitimate service-strain grievances with language that inflamed hate. The author’s chief aim is to expose both the immediate brutality of these attacks and the political rhetoric that underpins them. Option A is incorrect because, although the passage contrasts diversity with past conflict, it does not celebrate that diversity; rather, it highlights the violence against newcomers. Option C is wrong since policy recommendations or integration strategies are not

offered; the focus is on events and culpability. Option D is mistaken because, while sectarian distrust and deprivation are mentioned, the central thread is the Muslim-mob violence and the language that fuels it. Thus B—not A, C, or D—best captures the dual narrative of violence description and political condemnation.

8. Answer: A

Explanation: “Leavening” literally refers to adding yeast to dough, lightening its texture. Metaphorically, here it signifies that some measure of opprobrium (harsh criticism) was lightened—or diluted—by invoking “legitimate” grievances. Option B (“Intensification”) is incorrect because it implies making the criticism stronger, whereas the author says the opprobrium was softened by the grievance talk. Option C (“Masking”) is wrong; the passage does not suggest a superficial cover-up but a genuine mixing that reduced the bite of condemnation. Option D (“Transformation into a rigid state”) misreads the metaphor entirely. Only A conveys the sense of diluting severity by blending in something lighter or more palatable.

9. Answer: B

Explanation: A “conflagration” is a large, destructive fire. Metaphorically, the author uses it to describe how isolated acts of bigotry can spread into a widespread, burning turmoil—much like a wildfire. Option A (“Embers”) are the small, dying remnants of a fire and do not connote a raging blaze. Option C (“Embellishment”) is unrelated to fire and means decorative exaggeration. Option D (“Consecution”) is not a standard word and certainly not a fire metaphor. Only “wildfire” correctly mirrors the idea of rapid, uncontrollable spread.

10. Answer: A

Explanation: The passage explicitly states Northern Ireland has about 3.4% immigrants, England & Wales 18.3%, and Scotland 12.9%. Option B incorrectly swaps the England & Wales and Scotland figures—12.9% belongs to Scotland, not England & Wales. Option C misattributes 12.9% to Northern Ireland and 3.4% to England & Wales, reversing the actual statistics. Option D places the highest figure (18.3%) in Northern Ireland, which directly contradicts the text. Only choice A faithfully reflects the passage’s data.

11. Answer: B

Explanation: The author likens the Ballymena riots’ escalation from “a single spark” to “a conflagration of violent bigotry” to last summer’s UK riots sparked by a tragic murder. This demonstrates that isolated incidents can rapidly trigger mass xenophobic violence when socio-economic grievances and extremist networks are

present. Option A is wrong because the passage does not portray grievances leading to peaceful protests; it shows them leading to violence. Option C is incorrect: the passage criticizes, not praises, political leaders’ handling of grievances—some politicians “cross” the line and stoke further violence. Option D is mistaken since the author explicitly draws a direct parallel between sectarian (Northern Ireland) and racial (elsewhere) violence, showing they share dynamics. Hence, B captures the analogous logic.

12. Answer: B

Explanation: The author condemns those politicians who, in referencing “legitimate” grievances, cross into rhetoric that “makes violence more likely.” This language reflects moral outrage at leaders who exploit public discontent to stoke xenophobia—describing them as “routinely” shaming themselves by fueling disorder. Option A is incorrect because the author does not portray them as principled, but rather as culpable. Option C is wrong; there’s no suggestion of naiveté—these politicians knowingly use inflammatory narratives. Option D misreads the passage: politicians here are not framed as necessary provocateurs for reform but as destructive instigators of violence. Only B correctly identifies them as opportunists using hateful rhetoric for political ends.

Passage 3:

13. Answer: C

Explanation:

The passage surveys competing concepts of political freedom—negative versus positive—and illustrates how freedom must be claimed, not passively received. It highlights recent British legislative changes and French revolutionary imagery to underscore the contestation of freedom. Option A is incorrect: while free will debates are mentioned, the focus is political freedom specifically. Option B is wrong because Delacroix’s painting is a springboard for discussing manipulation and revolt, not art history per se. Option D is too narrow: the repeal of a university free-speech duty is an example, not the central thrust. Only C captures both theoretical definitions and practical power struggles.

14. Answer: B

Explanation: “Scratch the surface” idiomatically means to address a topic only superficially, without delving into deeper details or complexities. The author flags that the discussion will be introductory. Option A is wrong—it’s the opposite of comprehensive analysis. Option C misreads the metaphor as destructive (“damage”) rather than cursory inspection. Option D

(“polish or refine”) also misinterprets it, suggesting improvement rather than superficiality. Hence, B precisely conveys the intended meaning of a shallow or preliminary treatment.

15. Answer: B

Explanation: By definition, negative freedom is freedom from interference; positive freedom is freedom to act—to pursue goals or exercise capabilities. Option A merely restates negative freedom, not its positive counterpart. Option C conflates political power with freedom, missing the individual agency emphasis. Option D misattributes positive freedom as absence of responsibility, whereas the passage (via Sartre) underscores responsibility as intrinsic to freedom. Only B correctly parallels the concept of “freedom to” do something meaningful.

16. Answer: C

Explanation: The author asserts that “if you want freedoms, you’ll have to demand them” because those in power “would rather have a quiet life.” This implies active civic engagement is necessary. Option A is incorrect: it says governments grant rights willingly, directly contradicting the text. Option B is wrong because, far from easy, the author warns that lost rights are “very frightening and hard to reverse.” Option D builds an unwarranted absolutist prescription about university speech duties; the author mentions their repeal but does not claim they should never be repealed. Thus, C best reflects the author’s view on political change.

17. Answer: A

Explanation:

Describing revolutionaries as if they have “strings” being cut is a metaphor: people likened to puppets controlled by unseen forces. Option B (“hyperbole”) is incorrect—there is no exaggeration about art’s power to influence politics; it’s a conceptual device. Option C (“synecdoche”) misidentifies the part/whole relationship; “strings” do not stand for the movement itself, but for external control. Option D (“irony”) is not supported: the passage doesn’t suggest that revolutionaries both control and are controlled in an ironic twist, but simply employs a metaphor of liberation from manipulation. Therefore, A is correct.

18. Answer: B

Explanation: The author highlights Sartre’s view: “we are all inescapably free” and bear the “burden of responsibility” that comes with freedom. This endorsement frames existential freedom as both universal and weighty. Option A is wrong—Sartre’s

abstraction is presented as relevant, not irrelevant. Option C incorrectly reads existentialism as undermining legal struggles, whereas the passage situates Sartre alongside other freedom discourse. Option D wrongly confines Sartre’s doctrine to academia; the author uses it to enrich the political discussion. Only B accurately captures the author’s portrayal of Sartre’s radical freedom.

Passage 4:

19. Answer: B

Explanation: The passage vividly catalogues entrenched bribery, paid news, black-money politics, and institutional decay, then repeatedly questions the fairness and strength of Indian democracy. This sustained exposé of systemic corruption and its corrosive impact on governance underpins the author’s central aim.

- Option A is incorrect because the author’s personal media frustrations serve only as framing for a broader critique, not as the main focus.
- Option C is wrong; the tone throughout is critical, not celebratory, emphasizing “shocking” consequences rather than an “economic boom.”
- Option D is incorrect; there’s no comparative analysis with other nations—only a deep dive into India’s internal failures.
- Thus, B precisely captures the passage’s purpose.

20. Answer: B

Explanation: Here, “latitude” metaphorically denotes the freedom or leeway the author lacked in reporting—i.e., scope for editorial choice.

- Option A is wrong; while “latitude” can mean geographic, the context is about professional freedom, not the equator.
- Option C misreads the term as precision, whereas latitude implies flexibility, the opposite of exactness.
- Option D is incorrect because latitude does not relate to temperament or calmness.
- Only B aligns with the intended meaning of discretionary freedom.

21. Answer: C

Explanation: “Robust” implies strength and resilience. Its antonym is “frail,” meaning weak or feeble.

- Option A (“Resilient”) is actually a synonym of “robust.”
- Option B (“Vigorous”) likewise connotes energy and strength.
- Option D (“Sturdy”) again aligns with robustness, not its opposite.
- Thus, C is the only true antonym among the options.

22. Answer: D

Explanation: By shifting to passive voice—"Coverage...is available" rather than "Authorities sell coverage"—the author removes specific actors and highlights the systemic, impersonal nature of corruption as an institutionalized practice.

Option A is incorrect; passive voice does not highlight individuals but rather omits them.

Option B is wrong because moral outrage arises from content, not whether the clause is active or passive.

Option C misattributes ambiguity as the goal; the real effect is depersonalization, not confusion.

Only D correctly identifies that passive construction underscores an ingrained, impersonal system where corruption operates autonomously of named agents.

23. Answer: B

Explanation: The alarming statistics on child malnutrition, lack of sanitation, and water scarcity demonstrate that neglect and corruption within institutions translate directly into life-threatening conditions for the population.

Option A is incorrect: the data point to undernutrition and inadequate infrastructure, not overeducation or unemployment challenges.

Option C is wrong because these figures illustrate worsening public-health crises, not solutions from urbanization.

Option D is incorrect; the author emphasizes domestic institutional failure, not international aid.

Hence, B is the only inference supported by the evidence.

24. Answer: D

Explanation: The author explicitly states that for most Indians "their country is not much of a republic and even less of a democracy," detailing how corruption, paid news, and political manipulation have subverted democratic norms. This view demands vigilant scrutiny and active reform rather than passive acceptance.

Option A is incorrect: the author portrays the system as deeply flawed, not merely inefficient.

Option B, while close, understates the call for active vigilance and reform implied by the exposé; the framing "dangerously subverted" goes further.

Option C is wrong; there is no praise or idealization of India's system.

Only D captures both the depth of subversion and the necessity for public vigilance and reform implicit in the author's critique.

CURRENT AFFAIRS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Passage 5:

25. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The name "Operation Sindoor" was a symbolic tribute, specifically chosen to honour the widows of the Pahalgam terror attack. Sindoor is traditionally worn by married Hindu women, and its invocation here served as a subtle yet poignant gesture acknowledging personal loss and civilian sacrifice.

Option B is incorrect because the operation was not named to project mythological or feminine strength.

Option C misinterprets the symbolism; while sindoor is red, the naming wasn't centred on blood or martyrdom.

Option D is incorrect as the naming does not follow a consistent military tradition linked to rivers or nationalism.

26. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Operation Sindoor was executed from within Indian territory using high-precision weapons like SCALP and HAMMER, allowing India to strike high-value targets without entering Pakistani airspace, reducing escalation risks. This approach represents a strategic evolution in India's retaliatory doctrine.

Option A is wrong; naval assets were not used in PoJK strikes.

Option B is incorrect; no international coalition or foreign logistical support was involved.

Option D is false; the operation prominently involved the Air Force and advanced aerial systems.

27. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Operation Cactus Lily refers to the coordinated Indian Army-Air Force offensive during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, particularly the river-crossing manoeuvre over the Meghna River towards Dhaka.

Option A is incorrect; Operation Trident was a naval operation during the 1971 war targeting Karachi, not the Kargil War.

Option B is incorrect; Operation Riddle was from the 1965 war, not 1971.

Option D wrongly attributes a naval blockade role to Operation Ablaze, which was a troop mobilisation effort in 1965, not a maritime strike.

28. Correct Option: B

Explanation: Loitering munitions are drones or air-deployed systems capable of circling an area for an extended period and engaging targets as they are identified, combining surveillance with real-time strike capability.

Option A is incorrect; HAMMER is an air-to-ground guided bomb, not a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

Option C is inaccurate; SCALP (Storm Shadow) is a long-range air-launched cruise missile, not a short-range bomb.

Option D is false; Storm Shadow (SCALP) is manufactured by MBDA, a European company, not Israel, and its range exceeds 250 km.

29. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The Tashkent Agreement was signed in January 1966 to formally end hostilities after the 1965 Indo-Pak War, which included military operations like Riddle and Ablaze. The Soviet Union mediated the agreement in Uzbekistan.

Option A (Simla Agreement) ended the 1971 war, not the 1965 one.

Option C (Lahore Declaration) pertains to post-1999 efforts at bilateral peace.

Option D (Delhi Pact) refers to an agreement on minority rights between Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan, not a wartime resolution.

30. Correct Option: C

Explanation: MBDA is a prominent European multinational defence company specialising in guided weapon systems, including SCALP (Storm Shadow). It supplies advanced munitions to several NATO countries and has participated in combat operations in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine.

Option A is incorrect; MBDA is not an India-Europe venture and doesn't focus exclusively on submarine-launched weapons.

Option B misrepresents MBDA as a NATO body; it is a company, not a military alliance.

Option D incorrectly describes MBDA's function; it deals in weapons, not cybersecurity or espionage software.

Passage 6:

31. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The treaty creates a quid pro quo system wherein pharmaceutical companies get access to global pathogen data and in return, they are required to share 10% of pandemic-related medical supplies (vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics) with the WHO for free and another 10% at affordable prices.

Option A is incorrect; the percentage is wrong and does not mention free contributions to WHO.

Option B is inaccurate because there is no such mandate requiring funding healthcare infrastructure.

Option D misstates the requirement; companies are not obligated to disclose proprietary drug formulas to the

WHO.

32. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The GSCL is designed to enhance equitable and timely access to health products during emergencies. It tackles logistical obstacles such as delays, unaffordability, and trade restrictions, ensuring health products reach all countries fairly during global health crises.

Option A is incorrect; there is no mandate for physical warehouses in each WHO region.

Option C misrepresents GSCL's function, which is supply chain-focused, not virus sequencing.

Option D inaccurately casts the GSCL as a funding agency for pharma-WHO bilateral deals, which is not its role.

33. Correct Option: C

Explanation:

Article 19 of the WHO Constitution allows the World Health Assembly to adopt legally binding conventions or agreements. The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), adopted in 2003, was the first and only treaty under this article—until now. The Pandemic Agreement would be the second such treaty, making this statement accurate.

34. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The treaty is structured to maintain national sovereignty. WHO cannot impose lockdowns, vaccine mandates, or travel restrictions. It only facilitates coordination, data-sharing, and technical support. All substantive public health decisions rest with national authorities.

Option B is incorrect; overriding patents is not a WHO power under this treaty.

Option C wrongly references the UN Charter, which is unrelated to WHO's treaty.

Option D falsely claims unilateral intervention powers, which contradicts the treaty's sovereignty-respecting framework.

35. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The WHO was officially established on 7 April 1948, and this date is commemorated globally as World Health Day. The organization began operating on this date following the ratification of its constitution.

Option A is incorrect; 10 December marks Human Rights Day, and the name cited does not exist.

Option B confuses the founding date of the UN with WHO's timeline.

Option D is an incorrect date with a fictional day.

36. Correct Option: B

Explanation: WHO functions as an inter-governmental organization with 194 Member States, operates through 150 country offices and six regional offices, and collaborates primarily through national Ministries of Health.

Option A understates membership and mischaracterizes its operational model.

Option C misidentifies its headquarters and misstates its powers.

Option D confuses WHO's mandate with that of UN peacekeeping bodies and introduces a non-existent "Chapter 12."

Passage 7:

37. Correct Option: B

Explanation: In 2025, 139 individuals were conferred Padma Awards across the three categories—Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri. This figure does not include the usual exclusions (posthumous awards, NRIs, OCI holders, and foreigners).

Option A (131) is close but incorrect.

Option C (124) is inaccurate and randomly chosen.

Option D (120) represents the cap excluding special categories and is not the total for 2025.

38. Correct Option: A

Explanation: Not True — The Padma Awards Committee is not chaired by the President of India. It is typically headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes the Home Secretary, Secretary to the President, and eminent persons including former Padma awardees, but not the President or ministers as chair.

39. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The Padma Awards were first instituted in 1954, along with the Bharat Ratna. They have since become one of India's most prestigious civilian honours.

Option A (1950) predates the awards' actual institution.

Option C (1962) is inaccurate and reflects no historical link.

Option D (1947) refers to Indian independence, not the

awards.

40. Correct Option: C

Explanation: In *Balaji Raghavan v. Union of India* (1996), the Supreme Court held that national awards, including the Padma Awards, do not amount to titles under Article 18(1) of the Constitution. Hence, recipients cannot use them as prefixes or suffixes to their names.

Option A misrepresents the nature of the awards.

Option B is wrong as it wrongly claims they can be suffixed.

Option D is invalid; there is no separate Article 51 framework governing such awards.

41. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The eligibility for the Padma Awards is universal, with no discrimination on the basis of sex, race, profession, or nationality. All persons are eligible, regardless of position or background.

Option A restricts eligibility unnecessarily.

Option B incorrectly imposes a bar on political involvement.

Option D is too narrow; many more fields are included than those listed.

42. Correct Option: B

Explanation: Since 2014, there has been an explicit push to honour "unsung heroes" from ordinary backgrounds who have done extraordinary service in various fields. This move is popularly referred to as the transformation of Padma Awards into "People's Padma".

Option A refers to the annual cap, not a reform.

Option C incorrectly mentions a new category, which does not exist.

Option D falsely equates Padma Vibhushan with Bharat Ratna, which remains the highest civilian honour.

Passage 8:

43. Correct Option: A

Explanation: NISAR is a NASA-ISRO joint project using synthetic aperture radar to scan Earth's surface, mapping it every 12 days. It helps monitor changes in ecosystems, groundwater, ice, and hazards like landslides and earthquakes.

Option B (LUPEX) is lunar-focused, not Earth observation.

Option C (Megha-Tropiques) is about tropical climate and monsoon-related studies, not global surface mapping.

Option D (Gaganyaan) is a human spaceflight mission, unrelated to radar-based Earth observation.

44. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The theme of the 2025 GLEX Summit was

“Reaching New Worlds: A Space Exploration Renaissance”, indicating a renewed global commitment to space collaboration and innovation.

Option A is fictitious and refers to Mars, which is not the central focus.

Option C sounds plausible but is incorrect.

Option D wrongly focuses on colonization and mining, which were not the summit's focus.

45. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The LUPEX mission is a collaboration between India and Japan (ISRO and JAXA) aimed at exploring Moon's polar regions, especially permanently shadowed areas to detect water, crucial for future lunar habitats.

Option A is inaccurate and Mars-related.

Option B is factually incorrect and wrongly attributes France as a partner.

Option D confuses LUPEX with older Soviet-Indian cooperation.

46. Correct Option: A

Explanation: NSIL (NewSpace India Limited) NSIL is the current commercial arm of ISRO, established in 2019 under the Department of Space. It is responsible for the commercialization of space products, services, and technologies developed by ISRO. It plays a major role in satellite launches, transponder leasing, and marketing of space-based services.

47. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Rakesh Sharma was the first Indian citizen to go to space aboard the Soviet Soyuz T-11 in 1984, becoming a national icon.

Option A (Kalpana Chawla) was Indian-origin but an American citizen.

Option B is fictional; Ritu Karidhal has not been on any test mission.

Option D (Sunita Williams) is also Indian-origin but a U.S. astronaut.

48. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is the co-organiser of GLEX, a major NGO that includes astronauts, space agencies like ESA and Roscosmos, and national organisations such as ISRO.

Option A is a UN body for space law and diplomacy, not a GLEX organiser.

Option B is fictional and has no official presence.

Option D (WSC) does not exist as a recognised space coordination body.

Passage 9:

49. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The title of the 2025 HDR is “A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI”. It focuses on how AI technologies intersect with human development, especially in the context of inequality, job displacement, and opportunity.

Option B sounds similar but is not the actual title.

Option C and D are fictional titles with no official usage in the HDR 2025.

50. Correct Option: D

Explanation: South Sudan ranked last in the 2025 HDR, with an HDI of 0.388, reflecting severe developmental and humanitarian challenges.

Option A (Yemen), B (Somalia), and C (Sudan) all rank low globally but were not the lowest in this report. South Sudan continues to suffer from conflict, poverty, and fragile governance, impacting its development indicators.

51. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Iceland, the highest-ranked country in HDR 2025, recorded an HDI of 0.972, owing to its robust social protection systems, education, and healthcare access.

Option A and D are slightly lower values and do not match Iceland's official ranking.

Option B overstates the figure.

52. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The UNDP was founded in 1965 by the UN General Assembly to support sustainable development, especially in the least developed countries. It has since become one of the most important development agencies globally.

Option A (1955) predates the actual establishment.

Option C and D are unrelated to UNDP's timeline.

LEGAL REASONING

Passage 10:

53. Correct Option: A

Explanation: P's scenario involves two cumulative requirements under *volenti non fit injuria*: actual

knowledge of the specific risk and voluntary consent. First, P signed a waiver alerting to serious injury risk from equipment failure and then received a verbal warning of possible cable corrosion. This satisfies actual knowledge of both the kind (zip-line equipment failure)

and a specific defect (cable corrosion) (references to lines describing waiver and warning). Second, although P's consent was influenced by dependency on the tour for transport, the passage clarifies that voluntariness persists if the individual, aware of risk, still chooses to proceed (lines on free consent and caution about real choice). Dependency alone does not automatically vitiate consent if an alternative (refusing and arranging different transport) existed, even if inconvenient (lines on voluntariness and real choice). Option B wrongly assumes no genuine consent simply because of dependency; the passage indicates courts examine whether a real choice existed, not eliminate voluntariness per se. Option C misapplies waiver analysis: volenti may apply even when defendant admits defect if plaintiff was informed and consented. Option D overgeneralizes implied consent without addressing the need for specific knowledge and genuine choice. Thus, Option A correctly captures that P had actual knowledge (waiver + warning) and voluntarily consented despite constraints, satisfying the defence requirements.

54. Correct Option: C (But next closest should be B)

Explanation:

In this scenario, the driver was informed that braking performance "may be unpredictable at high speeds," satisfying actual knowledge of the kind and magnitude of the risk (lines on warning by engineer). However, the passage emphasizes that voluntary consent must be free from coercion, misrepresentation, or undue pressure. Here, sponsorship obligations create undue pressure that undermines genuine free consent (lines on free consent and caution where no real choice). Option A incorrectly treats general awareness plus waiver as enough; the passage specifies that if consent is vitiated by pressure, volenti fails. Option B focuses on misrepresentation by downplaying but is weaker because the driver was still aware of unpredictability; the main issue is undue pressure, not necessarily false information. Option C correctly identifies that sponsorship obligations negate free consent even though knowledge exists. Option D incorrectly posits that implied consent in professional testing always succeeds irrespective of pressure; the passage requires voluntariness unaffected by undue influence. References: lines on actual knowledge (warning) and lines on voluntariness and real choice highlight that economic or contractual pressure can vitiate consent. Hence, Option C is correct.

55. Correct Option: C (But next closest should be B)

Explanation: The correct answer is (c) because parental consent to the gym membership reasonably extends to

typical activities offered by the gym, including high-intensity obstacle courses, unless the risk is extraordinary or intentionally concealed. Since the injury arose from a hidden structural defect that neither the gym nor the participant was aware of, the situation does not clearly indicate negligence, and the general consent by the parent is likely to suffice for the defence of volenti non fit injuria. The next closest is (b), which correctly notes that volenti requires knowledge of the specific risk and voluntary assumption of it—both of which are arguably missing due to the hidden nature of the defect. However, it overlooks that if the injury was not caused by a known or avoidable hazard, and parental consent was broad, the defence may still succeed despite lack of specific risk awareness. Options (a) and (d) are incorrect because general risk warnings do not cover unknown hazards (a), and explicit guardian-signed acknowledgement is not always legally required when general parental consent exists (d).

56. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The passage makes clear that consent vitiated by misrepresentation is invalid (lines on free consent and misrepresentation). The worker was assured verbally that harnesses met standards, yet saw worn equipment, indicating a misrepresentation about safety. This misrepresentation prevented true knowledge of the extent of risk and undermined voluntary consent. Option A incorrectly relies on implied consent from awareness of general scaffold risks but ignores the effect of misrepresentation. Option C highlights economic pressure; while economic pressure can affect voluntariness, the passage gives stronger weight to misrepresentation as vitiating consent. Option D overstates implied consent from continuing work despite dangers; misrepresentation negates that. Option B precisely identifies misrepresentation about harness standards vitiating consent, aligning with lines emphasizing that free consent must not stem from false assurances. References: lines on actual knowledge compromised by misrepresentation and lines on free consent vitiation.

57. Correct Option: A

Explanation: Here, P was informed of avalanche risk in a specific valley and told of alternative safer routes requiring more time. This meets actual knowledge of the risk's nature and magnitude. P freely chose the riskier route to satisfy sponsorship schedule; since an alternative existed, voluntariness persists under the passage's guidance on real choice. Option B improperly shifts focus to organiser's duty rather than plaintiff's consent; volenti examines plaintiff's awareness and choice. Option C overemphasizes sponsorship pressure;

although pressure existed, the availability of an alternative preserves free consent when P knowingly opts for risk. Option D refers to implied consent but is less precise: this instance involves express informed choice. Option A correctly applies that actual knowledge plus voluntary decision (with alternative available) satisfy cumulative requirements. References: lines on knowledge of specific risk, lines on voluntariness and real choice.

58. Correct Option: D

Explanation: The passage states clearly that *volenti non fit injuria* requires both actual knowledge of the specific risk and genuine voluntary consent; absence of either defeats the defence (lines on two essential cumulative conditions). Option A contradicts cumulative requirement by suggesting either condition suffices. Option B ignores the necessity of comprehending risk magnitude even with implied consent. Option C misreads the voluntariness element, focusing solely on knowledge absence while overlooking that lack of real choice also bars consent. Option D accurately reflects the conjunctive nature: both knowledge and voluntary consent are required, with absence of either negating the defence. References: lines specifying cumulative elements and lines on voluntariness and real choice confirm this interpretation.

Passage 11:

59. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The employee remained on the premises after formal permission had expired and engaged in direct physical interference by moving cables and using equipment. Under the principles of trespass to land, any unauthorized presence or activity on another's property constitutes trespass per se—no proof of intent or actual damage is required. The passage specifies that staying beyond revoked permission is itself trespass, and physical acts like handling cables or equipment clearly interfere with possession. There is no general “necessity” exception in the text that would allow after-hours troubleshooting to override the revoked access rights, nor any indication that such operational emergencies create implied permission. Therefore, the employee is liable for trespass. Option B suggests a necessity exception for critical server work, but the passage only mentions narrow, recognized exceptions (e.g., implied parking rights in specific tenancy contexts), not broad emergency overrides. Option C wrongly asserts that accidental presence without intent or damage cannot be trespass; in fact, the tort is actionable per se, and even mistaken entry can give rise to liability absent an applicable exception. Option D

mischaracterizes the interference as indirect nuisance; moving tangible objects and using premises equipment are direct, physical interferences, fitting trespass rather than nuisance. Thus, given the unauthorized stay and direct interference, Option A correctly applies the trespass principles.

60. Correct Option: B (Next closest should be C)

Explanation: Here, the surveyor invited to inspect ground-floor inadvertently enters first-floor terrace through an unlocked door. Exceeding scope of permission is trespass (line 15–17). But because the boundary was ambiguous and entry was unintentional, the passage says mere unintentional crossing may not be trespass (line 17). Option B states no trespass because ambiguous boundary and absence of intention or knowledge means unintentional crossing may not attract liability—this aligns with line 17 and line 11 (accidental entry may still be trespass unless exception; here ambiguity may qualify as exception). Option A is incorrect because it ignores ambiguity provision (line 17). Option C is incorrect: taking measurements is indeed a physical act but entry was unintentional; the passage requires direct physical interference, but unintentional entry in ambiguous boundary may not be trespass (line 17). Option D wrongly asserts implied permission extends to entire property without restriction; the passage emphasises explicit scope, and implied permission only arises in specific circumstances (line 17). Thus Option B matches the passage's guidance on ambiguous boundaries and unintentional crossing.

61. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Allowing animals to stray onto neighbour's land is direct physical interference and thus trespass per se (line on “allowing animals to stray” as trespass). When the cow ate crops, its unauthorized presence on the field constitutes trespass, regardless of how it arrived. Further, the neighbour's act of detaining the cow overnight without the owner's consent continues the direct interference with the owner's possession (line on “interference must be direct and physical”). Intent or damage is not required to establish trespass (line on “intent, force, or damage are not required”), so the neighbour's control over the animal overnight remains trespass. There is no recognized exception for detaining stray livestock pending compensation—this is not akin to the narrow implied parking right in *Madhav Vithal Kudwa*. A is incorrect since Treating overnight detention as merely “remedial” ignores that keeping another's animal without permission is unauthorized interference, hence trespass. B is incorrect since a broken fence does not imply permission; trespass focuses on unauthorized presence, not fence condition

and D is incorrect as Animal intrusion is direct, not indirect; the passage explicitly classifies stray animals entering another's land as trespass, not nuisance.

62. Correct Option: B

Explanation: Under the passage, dust settling on a neighbour's property is an indirect or consequential interference ("allowing smoke, fumes, or waste to spread onto a neighbour's land would be treated as nuisance, not trespass"), so the claim for dust must proceed as nuisance, not trespass. Conversely, parking heavy machinery wheels partly on the neighbour's driveway constitutes a direct physical intrusion onto their land ("direct and physical, involving a tangible object or presence"), and trespass is actionable per se regardless of damage or intent. Thus, the machinery wheels scenario fits trespass per se, while the dust scenario fits nuisance. Why A is incorrect: It wrongly treats dust as direct interference warranting trespass; the passage clearly classifies airborne particulates settling on adjacent land as indirect interference, hence nuisance. It also mislabels machinery parking as indirect, whereas it is direct physical intrusion. Why C is incorrect: The passage does not recognize a de minimis exception for slight discoloration; even minimal interference can ground a nuisance action. Nor does it excuse machinery intrusion on grounds of ambiguous boundaries—parking wheels partly on the driveway is a clear, unauthorized physical presence, so trespass applies. Why D is incorrect: It misapplies "actionable per se" to dust, treating indirect interference as trespass; in fact, per the passage only direct interferences are trespass. It also posits an implied licence for machinery parking without support: no implied right to park on a neighbour's driveway is indicated, so trespass liability stands for the wheels on the neighbour's land.

63. Correct Option: A

Explanation: Tenant has permission to use garden but not garage. Parking in garage exceeds scope of permission (line 15–16). Trespass arises when one exceeds granted permission (line 15–16). Option A states tenant liable for trespass by exceeding scope—this aligns with passage. Option B wrongly implies broad implied permission (passage emphasises specific scope, line 15). Option C wrongly treats parking as indirect interference (parking is direct physical interference, line 2). Option D suggests no liability if no inconvenience—passage's exception for implied permission based on no inconvenience appears only in the specific Madhav Vithal Kudwa context (line 19), not a general rule for tenants. Here tenancy agreement excluded garage; no implied right. Thus Option A correctly follows passage: exceeding permission is trespass (line 15–16), so tenant

liable.

64. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Passage distinguishes trespass as direct physical interference with possession actionable per se without proof of damage (line 1–4, line 10–11) and nuisance as indirect or consequential interference (line 12–14). Option C captures this: trespass is direct, actionable per se, whereas nuisance covers indirect interferences. Option A is wrong because trespass does not require proof of damage (but nuisance may require proof of damage). Option B inverts the roles (it says trespass involves indirect, which is wrong). Option D wrongly states they overlap entirely; passage distinguishes them substantively (line 12). Therefore Option C aligns directly with lines 1–4 and line 12.

65. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The Madhav Vithal Kudwa exception states that a tenant had implied right to park in compound without explicit permission, provided it did not inconvenience others (line 19). Option A: implied permission may arise for beneficial or non-inconvenient uses within tenancy, preventing trespass claims for expected activities—this matches line 19. Option B contradicts line 19 (requires explicit permission irrespective of inconvenience). Option C mischaracterizes parking as non-physical or relates to animals; passage says parking is a use but here treated as implied permission if no inconvenience. Option D overgeneralizes that parking always outside implied permission; but line 19 shows parking may fall within implied permission if no inconvenience. Thus Option A correctly reflects the principle at line 19.

Passage 12:

66. Correct Option: A

Explanation: In this scenario, the FIR arises from a dispute over unpaid dues under a civil contract, which prima facie discloses no cognizable criminal offence. The passage states that courts may quash proceedings when the dispute is purely civil in nature (line 13). Although the police investigation has not concluded (line 5 indicates High Courts should not short-circuit legitimate investigations), here there is no foundation for any cognizable offence because the allegations solely concern breach of contract. Hence, permitting the FIR to proceed would amount to misuse of criminal law to resolve a civil dispute, subverting justice (lines 1–4, 13). Option B is incorrect because, while the High Court is cautious about quashing before investigation concludes (line 10), that principle does not override the clear absence of any cognizable offence. Option C is incorrect because there is no plausible criminal element to

preserve for investigation; taken at face value, the FIR discloses only a civil matter (line 5). Option D misstates discretion: the power under Section 482 is to be exercised sparingly (line 3) and not simply because the accused prefers civil adjudication; it hinges on whether a cognizable offence is disclosed. Thus, A correctly applies the “purely civil dispute” exception (line 13).

67. Correct Option: C

Explanation: Here, although the FIR alleges sexual harassment by the coach with some general allegations and possible animus, the High Court must examine whether, taken at face value, the allegations disclose a cognizable offence (line 5). Sexual harassment is a cognizable offence, and detailed inquiry into truth or falsity is for trial (lines 10–12). The preliminary inquiry stage does not permit quashing simply because allegations seem general or motivated by personal animus absent proof that they disclose no offence. Option A is incorrect because malice alone does not justify quashing if allegations, on their face, disclose a cognizable offence (line 6: mala fide must clearly render allegations untenable). Option B is incorrect in form because while quashing before charge sheet may short-circuit investigation (line 10), this is subordinate to the requirement that the allegations must not disclose an offence; here they do. Option D is incorrect because the High Court should not delve into adequacy of evidence at this stage (line 11) or presume insufficiency; that is for trial. Option C correctly reflects that since the allegations, taken at face value, disclose the offence, the petition must be dismissed and investigation/trial allowed to proceed (lines 5–6, 10–12).

68. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The passage states that High Courts may quash proceedings where a statutory bar exists to criminal prosecution (line on “courts can quash proceedings in cases where a statutory bar exists to criminal prosecution”). Here, defamation under the relevant statute is non-cognizable unless the aggrieved person files a written complaint, and that mandatory procedural requirement was not met. Since the FIR arises from a complaint lacking the required statutory compliance, it is legally untenable from the outset. Allowing such proceedings to continue would subvert justice by subjecting the accused to trial despite the clear statutory bar. Thus, the High Court should quash the FIR without waiting for investigation, as no cognizable offence is disclosed due to the procedural defect. Why A is incorrect: It suggests deeper examination of truth or public interest is needed; however, the presence of a statutory bar means the matter cannot proceed at all, so there is no stage at

which truth-finding could legitimize the FIR. Why C is incorrect: It argues for permitting investigation despite a procedural defect, but when a statutory bar precludes prosecution ab initio, investigation is futile and courts should quash immediately rather than short-circuiting a potentially legitimate probe. Why D is incorrect: Although superficially similar, this option describes quashing a “frivolous FIR,” whereas the correct basis here is the statutory bar rendering the FIR legally untenable; labeling it “frivolous” is less precise than citing the mandatory procedural non-compliance, which is the definitive ground for quashing under Section 482.

69. Correct Option: D

Explanation: The passage states that when considering a quashing petition under Section 482, the High Court must take the FIR allegations at face value and determine if they disclose a cognizable offence; if they appear absurd or improbable, the Court may quash the FIR to prevent a miscarriage of justice (line 5–6). Here, the entrepreneur’s allegations rest solely on speculative future gains without any concrete transactions, making them far-fetched and improbable on their face. Thus, the High Court is justified in quashing the FIR at this stage, since proceeding to investigation or trial on such implausible allegations would subvert justice. Option A is incorrect because, while it is true that trial ultimately determines veracity, the High Court need not await trial if the allegations, even taken as true, do not disclose any reasonable basis for a cognizable offence. Option B is incorrect because it overstates the need for prima facie evidence; if allegations are inherently absurd or improbable such that no cognizable offence is disclosed, quashing is appropriate despite any theoretical possibility. Option C is close but misleading in tone: it suggests that “improbable and absurd allegations alone justify quashing,” but the passage emphasizes that the Court “may” quash in such circumstances rather than automatically doing so; Option D more accurately reflects the discretionary nature (“may quash ... to avert abuse of process”) aligned with the passage’s cautious approach. Therefore, Option D best captures the correct application of the “absurd or improbable” ground for quashing under Section 482.

70. Correct Option: A

Explanation: In this case, the police have found prima facie evidence of fund diversion, indicating a cognizable offence and a continuing legitimate investigation. The passage emphasizes that the High Court must not short-circuit legitimate investigations (lines 10–12), and quashing is an exceptional remedy, not the general rule (line 14). Allegations of political vendetta alone do not

suffice to quash when prima facie offence is disclosed (lines 4–6, 10). Option B is incorrect because quashing solely on politicization ignores the prima facie evidence requiring trial. Option C is incorrect because it misstates that vendetta allegations require trial-level scrutiny; rather, vendetta may be raised during trial but does not justify quashing at the threshold if offence is disclosed. Option D is incorrect because exceptional power cannot override the need to allow legitimate investigation when prima facie case exists (line 10). Option A correctly applies the principle that, since a cognizable offence is disclosed and investigation is ongoing legitimately, quashing would improperly short-circuit inquiry (lines 5–6, 10–12).

71. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The passage instructs that the High Court examines whether, even if allegations in the FIR are taken at face value, they disclose a cognizable offence; if not, or if allegations are absurd, improbable, or mala fide, the Court may quash (lines 5–6, 13). It also cautions against detailed inquiry into truth or evidence sufficiency at this stage (lines 10–12). Option A is incorrect because quashing is not based merely on inconvenience to accused or their preference (lines 3, 14). Option B is incorrect because the Court need not always await completion of investigation if allegations disclose no offence or are clearly untenable (lines 5–6, 13). Option D is incorrect because High Courts must not evaluate evidence sufficiency at quashing stage (line 11). Option C correctly encapsulates the High Court's approach: take allegations at face value, check for cognizable offence or absurd/mala fide nature, and quash if those conditions warrant (lines 5–6, 10–13).

72. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The passage repeatedly underscores that Section 482 power is discretionary, to be exercised sparingly, cautiously, and only in exceptional circumstances to prevent miscarriage of justice (lines 3–4, 14). Option A is incorrect because it suggests liberal use, contrary to the “sparingly, cautiously” mandate (line 3). Option C is incorrect because High Courts must not substitute their own view of evidence at quashing stage; they avoid detailed evidence evaluation (lines 10–12). Option D is incorrect because quashing requires more than mere vexatious complaint; the Court must ensure no cognizable offence or clear misuse, not quash indiscriminately (lines 5–6, 13). Option B correctly states the governing principle of sparing, cautious exercise in exceptional cases (lines 3, 14), aligning with the passage's explicit guidance.

Passage 13:

73. Correct Option: C

Explanation: In this scenario, S knowingly conceals a lien on the machinery while representing it as unencumbered, intending to mislead B into contracting. That satisfies the elements of fraud: intentional deception to secure unfair advantage (line 3), concealing material facts with dishonest intent (line 4–5), as in the example at line 6. The buyer's inducement and subsequent rescission plus damages claim align with remedies for proven fraud (line 7–8). Option A is incorrect because it treats the concealment as negligence; here, S's conduct is intentional, not an honest mistake (contrary to line 9–11). Option B is wrong: the lien directly affects title—a material fact—so it is neither collateral nor irrelevant. Option D wrongly categorizes the concealment as negligent misrepresentation; since S knew of the lien and intended to mislead, it is not mere negligence (line 5). The correct classification is fraud (line 3–6, line 7–8), making Option C the right answer.

74. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The financial advisor relied on outdated reports in good faith, genuinely believing the stock was unencumbered, and did not intend to deceive C. This fits misrepresentation under Section 18: false statement made without intent to mislead but arising from honest mistake or negligence (line 9–11). The remedy is rescission of the investment contract or unwindment, but heavy damages for fraud are not appropriate absent dishonesty (line 13–14). Option A is incorrect because it treats the advisor's conduct as fraud despite lack of dishonest intent; mere failure to verify does not equate to intentional deception (line 9–11). Option C is incorrect because the statement about regulatory restrictions is a statement of fact, not mere opinion—insofar as it was presented as fact. Option D wrongly asserts that negligent advice qualifies as fraud under Section 17; the passage clearly distinguishes misrepresentation arising from honest error from deliberate falsehood (line 3–5, line 9–11). Therefore, Option B correctly characterizes the remedy as rescission for misrepresentation without entitlement to heavy damages.

75. Correct Option: D

Explanation:

Here, the vendor promises performance within three weeks while knowing resource constraints make timely delivery impossible, intending to induce the buyer to contract. This is a promise made without intention to perform, concealing inability to deliver, which constitutes fraud under Section 17: deliberate falsehood

to secure unfair advantage (line 3–5, line 6 example applies to promises without intention to perform).

Option A is incorrect because time estimates given without intention to perform are material promises; they go beyond mere subjective projection (line 4–5). Option B is wrong since this is more than a subjective estimate: vendor knowingly misrepresented capacity. Option C is incorrect because the vendor did have knowledge of constraints, so cannot be said to believe performance possible; absence of intent to perform makes it fraud, not misrepresentation (line 3–5). Thus, Option D accurately identifies dishonest intent and fraudulent promise, fitting fraud's greater legal consequences (line 7 for damages entitlement).

76. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The owner assured clear title based on an old survey, unaware of a recent encumbrance. This reflects misrepresentation: a false statement made without intent to deceive, arising from honest mistake (line 9–11, line 12 example). The contract is voidable at the lessee's option, but damages beyond costs may not be available if owner acted in good faith (line 13–14). Option B is incorrect because mere failure to verify does not automatically amount to fraud absent evidence of dishonest intent (line 5, line 9–11). Option C is wrong: the encumbrance directly affects title, so consent was defective; this is not outside misrepresentation. Option D incorrectly classifies it as fraud by asserting dishonest intent from failure to verify; but passage instructs that honest belief negates fraud (line 9–11, line 14). Therefore, Option A correctly describes the scenario as misrepresentation with limited remedy.

77. Correct Option: A

Explanation: The purchaser relied on seller's assurance drawn from an outdated catalogue; seller genuinely believed the catalogue accurate. This is classic misrepresentation: false statement without intent to deceive, arising from honest mistake or negligence (line 9–11, line 12 illustration). The contract is voidable at buyer's option; damage entitlement depends on good faith (line 13–14). Option B is incorrect because requiring personal verification does not automatically imply dishonest intent; seller believed the catalogue's accuracy and did not deliberately mislead (line 9–11). Option C is wrong: authenticity dispute does not fall outside consent vitiation—false belief about originality vitiates consent. Option D misstates that damages always follow misrepresentation; the passage clarifies that misrepresentation may not always attract damages if acted in good faith (line 14). Thus, Option A best fits misrepresentation under Section 18.

78. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The passage emphasizes that fraud involves deliberate deception or promises without intent to perform, indicating dishonest intent under Section 17 (lines 3–6, line 15–16), whereas misrepresentation arises from honest mistakes or negligence without intent to deceive (lines 9–11, line 14). Option A is incorrect because misrepresentation does not require dishonest intent (contrary to line 9–11). Option C is wrong: misrepresentation does not always allow damages; absence of intent often precludes heavy damages (line 13–14), and fraud allows both rescission and damages. Option D is incorrect since the passage distinguishes legal consequences for fraud and misrepresentation (line 17–18). Therefore, Option B accurately captures the distinction: deliberate or reckless falsehood versus honest error without intent.

Passage 14:

79. Correct Option: B

Explanation: The assembly began lawfully but changed objective to threaten property damage, falling within prohibited categories (resisting execution by threats of mischief) (line 4). Once the group's object shifted to unlawful purpose, it became an unlawful assembly. P supported the new plan, making him a member at that time. Under constructive liability, if an offence (vandalism) is committed in furtherance of the common unlawful object, every member at that time is equally guilty, regardless of personal participation (line 6). Option A is incorrect because liability does not require personal commission of the offence; constructive liability covers all members (line 6). Option C is wrong since membership and support during the shift implicate P despite initial lawful participation (line 4). Option D misstates that absence of physical presence limits liability; the provision treats supporters as members once objective changes (line 5, line 6).

80. Correct Option: C

Explanation: X hired and encouraged participation to resist execution of policy—a prohibited objective—rendering the assembly unlawful once that purpose materializes (line 3). Although X was not physically present, anyone who hires or encourages others to join an unlawful assembly is punishable as though a member (line 5). Option A is incorrect because physical presence is not required for member liability when encouragement is present (line 5). Option B wrongly limits constructive liability to physical attendees; the passage explicitly includes instigators or facilitators (line 5). Option D separates abetting from unlawful assembly liability, but under the framework,

encouragement equals membership liability (line 5).

81. Correct Option: D

Explanation: The five individuals formed an assembly that shifted from lawful protest to unlawful trespass (resisting execution of law) (line 3). The assault on the officer occurred in furtherance of the group's common unlawful object to trespass and obstruct law enforcement. Under constructive liability, every member at that time is equally guilty of offences committed in furtherance of the common object, regardless of personal participation (line 6). Option A is incorrect because liability extends beyond those physically committing assault (line 6). Option B ignores that the assembly became unlawful once trespass objective emerged (line 3, line 4). Option C misapplies constructive liability by excluding assault since assault occurred during the unlawful assembly; the offence committed furthers the object and implicates all members (line 6).

82. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The assembly's objective to resist execution of law was unlawful; when a member uses violence against officials or damages property in pursuit of that object, the offence of rioting applies. The passage states that if any member uses force to pursue the group's unlawful objective, all members are guilty of rioting, emphasizing collective nature of violence (line 7). Option A is incorrect because constructive liability for rioting does not require personal physical act; mere membership at the time suffices (line 7). Option B is wrong; the initial peaceful assembly became unlawful when resisting law execution, and subsequent violence triggers rioting liability (line 4, line 7). Option D is incorrect because liability does not hinge on prior knowledge of violence; sharing the unlawful object and remaining part of assembly when violence occurs is enough (line 7).

83. Correct Option: A

Explanation: Unlawful assembly is defined as a gathering of five or more persons sharing a prohibited common objective (line 1). Here only four persons convened; even with intent to deprive a neighbor of legal rights, the number requirement is unmet, so it does not constitute unlawful assembly under the framework. Option B is incorrect because number threshold is essential (line 1). Option C misinterprets trespass as automatically creating unlawful assembly regardless of number; the passage requires five or more (line 1). Option D wrongly excludes force requirement as necessary; while force or threat may define prohibited object, the primary disqualifier here is insufficient number (line 1).

84. Correct Option: C

Explanation: The passage defines the principle of constructive liability by stating that "if an offence is committed by any member of an unlawful assembly in furtherance of the group's common object, every person who was a member of the assembly at that time is held equally guilty of that offence, regardless of whether they personally took part in the criminal act" (line describing constructive liability). Option C precisely mirrors this: all members are equally guilty if the offence furthers the common unlawful object, irrespective of personal participation. Why A is incorrect: It limits liability to those who physically commit the offence or later admit participation, whereas the passage makes clear that liability attaches to all members present when the offence occurs, regardless of whether they acted or admitted involvement. Why B is incorrect: It requires that each member directly intended the specific offence at the outset; the passage instead focuses on whether the offence was committed in furtherance of the common object, not on each member's specific intent for that act. Why D is incorrect: It conditions liability on active assistance during the offence, but the passage states that mere sharing of the unlawful object and membership at the time of the offence suffices to render all members guilty under constructive liability.

LOGICAL REASONING

Passage 15:

85. Answer: A

Explanation: This statement provides a concrete example—an Assam school teacher currently embroiled in a Supreme Court citizenship case—showing that individuals with legal proceedings underway have nonetheless been targeted by immigration operations. By citing this instance, the author grounds the general claim ("authorities... bypass due process") in a specific empirical scenario.

Why B is incorrect: Although it contextualizes border complexity, it doesn't illustrate authorities ignoring legal processes.

Why C is incorrect: It describes the Tribunal's policy effect but does not show an instance of due-process bypass.

Why D is incorrect: Sarma's rhetoric is about communal framing, not about ignoring court orders or due process.

86. Answer: C

Explanation: The author's discussion of needing to keep security measures separate from "polarising politics" and references to Sarma's "dog whistles" imply that political actors could exploit security concerns to advance communal narratives. This inference aligns with the warning that the political exploitation of security contexts can stoke communal agendas.

Why A is incorrect: The author does not equate increased surveillance with an inherent threat to democracy.

Why B is incorrect: The passage suggests scepticism about purely security-based motives, indicating that drives are not always solely for national security.

Why D is incorrect: The author does not claim that every reference to illegal immigration is communal bigotry; the critique is more nuanced.

87. Answer: D

Explanation: The entire passage emphasizes that while strengthening security after a terrorist attack is justified, it should not come at the cost of citizens' legal rights or due process. This conclusion directly follows from the argument that due process is being undermined by rushed anti-immigration drives.

Why A is incorrect: There's no argument about the cut-off date's legality; the focus is on its application.

Why B is incorrect: The author warns against blanket deportations without due process.

Why C is incorrect: The passage suggests the Tribunal's use has caused uncertainty and unfairness, not guaranteed fairness.

88. Answer: B

Explanation: To argue that politics must be kept separate from counter-terror measures, the author assumes that when political polarization occurs, it conflicts with or threatens due process. Without this assumption, the warning loses force, since politics and due process would be viewed as unrelated.

Why A is incorrect: The author doesn't assert a direct causal link between polarization and terrorism.

Why C is incorrect: The author is concerned with enforcement, not the constitutionality of the Home Ministry orders themselves.

Why D is incorrect: The statement is about politics' impact on due process, not about the efficacy of surveillance.

89. Answer: A

Explanation: Evidence that people with valid citizenship documents are detained without formal charges is direct proof that authorities are ignoring legal procedures. This fact greatly strengthens the author's

warning about due-process violations in anti-immigrant operations.

Why B is incorrect: This scenario suggests judicial acquiescence, not executive bypass. The concern is about authorities ignoring the courts, not courts deferring.

Why C is incorrect: Humanitarian protests are not direct evidence of due-process violations by authorities.

Why D is incorrect: Potential financial incentives suggest motive but do not confirm actual procedural violations.

90. Answer: C

Explanation: A high court ruling explicitly stating that official directives contained no communal references directly contradicts the claim that the government framed immigration narratives in communal terms. That authoritative finding undermines the author's assertion about communal framing.

Why A is incorrect: Neutral registration requirements don't negate the possibility of communal rhetoric in public discourse.

Why B is incorrect: Observer reports are less authoritative and may overlook deeper nuances; a court ruling is more conclusive.

Why D is incorrect: Opposition demands for stricter action don't address whether the government's language was communal or not—they reflect political disagreement over policy stringency.

Passage 16:

91. Answer: A

Explanation: The author's claim that "the ticking biological clock is no longer the issue it was" relies on concrete examples showing why women no longer must settle under biological pressures. Sentence A—"The option of freezing eggs, using sperm donors, and the acceptance of single parenthood means women no longer need to settle"—directly lists advancements (medical and social) that reduce the urgency to marry early. Thus, it is the factual premise underpinning the author's broader conclusion.

Why B is incorrect: While B acknowledges a shift in how single women are socially viewed, it speaks generally about societal positioning, not specifically about biological clock issues or technological options like egg freezing.

Why C is incorrect: This option discusses social media and comparison culture, which is unrelated to biological clock or reproductive choices. It cannot serve as a premise for the clock argument.

Why D is incorrect: Although D shows Bridget's realization about Mr. Right, it does not address reproductive technology or social acceptance of single

parenthood; it instead focuses on romantic fulfillment rather than the biological clock.

92. Answer: D

Explanation: Throughout the passage, the author states that “the old-fashioned point of view is that the surfeit of choices available suits men more than women,” but then immediately qualifies this, arguing that many women do not necessarily seek long-term relationships. The author emphasizes that dating apps have “been enormously liberating,” signaling a positive stance. One can infer that the author perceives these apps as empowering tools that liberate women from the pressure to settle.

Why A is incorrect: The passage never suggests dating apps exacerbate loneliness or superficiality as an inherent trait; the author’s tone is broadly favorable toward them.

Why B is incorrect: Rejecting dating apps’ influence contradicts the author’s explicit statement that they have “been enormously liberating,” indicating significant impact.

Why C is incorrect: There is no suggestion of “reckless romantic behavior” or moral hazard; the author focuses on autonomy and choice rather than reckless conduct.

93. Answer: B

Explanation: The passage contrasts the 2001 cultural moment—when a career woman in her 30s was assumed to need a husband and baby—with today’s context, where “women have their own apartments, cars and friends, they don’t have to also have a permanent man to enjoy life.” Therefore, concluding that the narrative of a hapless career woman desperately seeking marriage is now anachronistic (B) follows directly from the author’s argument about shifting social norms and women’s autonomy.

Why A is incorrect: Nothing in the passage indicates an absolute commercial failure; rather, the author says the premise would feel outdated, not that no one would relate.

Why C is incorrect: The author implies that single women today face less societal pressure, not more, due to liberalization of reproductive choices and social acceptance, so C contradicts the passage.

Why D is incorrect: The author specifically notes that women’s romantic anxieties have evolved (e.g., they no longer see the clock ticking), so claiming the comedic premise is unchanged misreads the argument.

94. Answer: C

Explanation: When the author asserts that presuming all women seek long-term relationships is part of an “old-fashioned point of view,” the unstated assumption is

that that stereotype—that women’s primary aim is to find a spouse—still undergirds societal expectations. Option C identifies this very assumption: that the stereotype about women’s primary aim underlies the author’s critique. Only by assuming that society expects marriage above all can the author argue that this presumption is erroneous.

Why A is incorrect: The author does not discuss time management or scrolling habits as relevant; the focus is on relationship goals, not spare time.

Why B is incorrect: This option falsely posits that the author believes women are incapable of commitment; there is no suggestion of innate incapacity, merely a critique of societal assumptions.

Why D is incorrect: The author does not argue that algorithms are gender-biased; the discussion is about assumptions regarding women’s relationship goals, not technical bias in apps.

95. Answer: B

Explanation: The author’s statement that “dating apps have been enormously liberating” hinges on how apps expand choices beyond traditional matchmaking. Option B—“Surveys indicate that a significant proportion of single women now use apps to secure casual companionship or networking without any expectation of marriage, a departure from earlier norms”—directly confirms that many women use apps for purposes other than long-term commitment, illustrating true liberation from prior constraints. It shows women are no longer compelled to seek marriage first, thus strengthening the author’s argument.

Why A is incorrect: If 70% feel pressure to settle quickly, it suggests apps do not liberate but reinforce anxiety, which would actually weaken the claim rather than strengthen it.

Why C is incorrect: While ghosting is a negative phenomenon, it does not contradict or reinforce the idea of liberation; it only highlights a flaw.

Why D is incorrect: Interview evidence about “quality of connections” not improving emotional well-being does not address women’s agency or choice. It focuses on outcomes rather than expanded autonomy.

96. Answer: A

Explanation: The author criticizes the presumption that “all women are seeking long-term relationships.” Option A states that “a growing segment of women actively use dating apps to form non-monogamous or short-term arrangements, indicating that not all women seek long-term relationships.” This fact directly undermines any assumption that women uniformly want marriage, thereby weakening the author’s statement that the presumption is erroneous. Actually, it shows that the

presumption was never universally held, so the critique loses force.

Why B is incorrect: A finding that men face more pressure to commit does not directly address women's preferences; it shifts focus to men rather than showing that some women reject long-term relationships.

Why C is incorrect: Commentary about reducing men's pickiness does not speak to whether women seek long-term relationships; it addresses male behavior, not women's goals.

Why D is incorrect: If 80% of single women do seek marriage, that supports rather than undermines the presumption that women mainly pursue long-term commitments, thus strengthening the author's claim instead of weakening it.

Passage 17:

97. Answer: B

Explanation: Statement B directly reveals that the 7.4% Q4 growth was inflated by a 12.7% surge in net tax collections, and without that boost, real economic expansion would have been only 6.8%. This provides the concrete factual basis (or premise) for saying that reported GDP growth was bolstered by tax statistics rather than purely by underlying productive activity. In other words, it shows that excluding the tax bump, the economy grew less robustly, thereby substantiating the author's claim about a statistical boost.

Why A is incorrect: "Services... continued their steady and strong growth" tells us one sector performed well, but it does not isolate or reveal how much of the aggregate growth figure was driven by taxes versus actual sectoral output. It doesn't speak to the discrepancy between reported and underlying activity.

Why C is incorrect: The statement about the "Maha Kumbh effect" on consumption simply addresses private consumption weakness (6% growth), which is relevant to demand but not to the question of how much GDP growth was artificially inflated by taxes. It does not directly quantify the net-tax effect on overall numbers.

Why D is incorrect: The Viksit Bharat target of sustained 8% growth by 2047 is aspirational and forward-looking, but it does not serve as a factual premise about how current growth was calculated. It has nothing to do with the immediate statistical distortion from net-tax collections.

98. Answer: D

Explanation: The author explicitly criticizes the government's pride over 6.5% annual growth by pointing out that, although it is the fastest among major economies, that comparison does not address India's deeper imperatives—job creation

, infrastructure needs, poverty reduction, etc. Hence, the logical inference is that focusing on relative performance versus other nations misses the point; the real benchmark must be domestic requirements. That inference (D) encapsulates the author's view that relative ranking is a hollow metric if India's own goals remain unmet.

Why A is incorrect: The passage does mention manufacturing underperforming (4.8% vs. prior 11.3%), but it never asserts that this slowdown poses an existential threat; it simply notes it is a lagging sector. The author's principal critique is not limited to manufacturing risk.

Why B is incorrect: While the "Maha Kumbh effect" may not have materialised, the author does not suggest that it will reverse or render short-term gains moot; rather, the author uses it to show that an anticipated consumption boost did not happen. Inferring a future reversal goes beyond the text.

Why C is incorrect: The author does point to construction and agriculture as recent drivers, but nowhere does the text explicitly say these sectors cannot be relied upon for sustained growth—only that manufacturing is weak and that 7.4% was set off by net taxes. It does not rule out their future importance.

99. Answer: C

Explanation: The author's overarching message is that 6.5% growth—though relatively high compared to other countries—is insufficient for India's own developmental goals. He reminds us that to achieve "Viksit Bharat by 2047," India needs sustained 8% growth. Therefore, the conclusion that flows naturally is that India must aim for at least 8% annual growth if it is serious about its long-term aspirations (C). The author ties these aspirational targets directly to the need for higher growth.

Why A is incorrect: Although the government touts 6.5% as the fastest among major economies, the author argues that this comparative achievement is inadequate. Thus, saying "there is no urgent need for recalibration" misreads the passage's insistence that "not bad" is insufficient.

Why B is incorrect: While services and agriculture did perform strongly, the passage never suggests that manufacturing can be deprioritised. In fact, the author laments manufacturing's slowdown and highlights a need for overall acceleration.

Why D is incorrect: The statement about net taxes provides context for why 7.4% may overstate underlying activity, but it does not suggest that macroeconomic stability should replace productive activity. The author's key emphasis is on real growth, not suggesting that tax collections are more important than productive expansion.

100. Answer: B

Explanation: For the author to claim that “not bad” is insufficient because India must meet its own growing requirements (jobs, infrastructure, poverty reduction, etc.), one must assume that India’s domestic needs indeed demand growth well above 6.5%. Otherwise, if domestic requirements could be met at 6.5%, then the author’s criticism collapses. Thus, assumption B—that India’s domestic needs require growth significantly higher than 6.5%—underlies and enables the contention. Why A is incorrect: The author does not claim that outperforming neighbors automatically raises living standards. The focus is on absolute domestic targets, not relative neighbor comparisons.

Why C is incorrect: There is no indication that the author believes 6.5% is “unsustainable” because of global volatility. The argument centers on adequacy, not sustainability.

Why D is incorrect: If the government’s “Viksit Bharat” rhetoric were purely symbolic, the author would not treat it as a serious benchmark. The author explicitly uses that target to criticize current growth, so he assumes the rhetoric is meaningful rather than hollow.

101. Answer: A

Explanation: Observation (i) states that Q4 registered an unexpectedly strong 7.4% expansion—the fastest quarter in an otherwise weak year—while (ii) notes that the full-year 6.5% growth is a four-year low. At first glance, a quarter growing at 7.4% should pull up the annual average, so how can the final yearly figure still be low? This indicates that other quarters must have been considerably weaker, thus producing a low annual average despite one strong quarter. That tension (paradox) is captured by choice A: If Q4’s performance was so robust, how could the full year still come in at 6.5%? The answer is that earlier quarters must have underperformed.

Why B is incorrect: This option conflates capital formation with annual growth. The passage does say capital formation rose 9.4%, but the paradox lies in reconciling a strong single quarter with a four-year low annual result, not in how capital investments relate to overall satisfaction.

Why C is incorrect: The author does not call the entire financial year “disastrous.” He calls the year “dismal” relative to expectations, but that term does not imply zero quarters of good performance. Therefore, it is not inexplicable for one quarter to outperform in a generally weak year.

Why D is incorrect: Government satisfaction about 6.5% growth does not directly conflict with strong sector performance. Even if services, agriculture, and construction grew well, manufacturing and other

quarters may have been weak, so 6.5% could still be deemed “slow.” Hence, this choice does not identify the genuine paradox.

102. Answer: C

Explanation: The author argues that India’s 6.5% growth, while relatively strong internationally, is insufficient to meet the long-term Viksit Bharat goals requiring roughly 8% growth. Choice C states that if India continues at 6.5%, its per capita GDP in 2047 will fall 20% short of what is needed for those development targets. This directly bolsters the author’s contention by quantifying the shortfall and showing that persisting at current growth rates will derail aspirational outcomes, making the argument for targeting closer to 8% all the more urgent.

Why A is incorrect: While demonstrating that no country raised its per capita income without 7.5% growth is persuasive, it does not directly tie to India’s specific 2047 targets. It references international precedent rather than the government’s own stated goals.

Why B is incorrect: If economists believe that growth above 7% will cause intolerable inflation, that actually undermines (weakens) the author’s argument for aiming at 8%, since an inflationary constraint would argue against higher targets.

Why D is incorrect: Credit rating improvements are important for borrowing costs, but they do not directly connect to the Viksit Bharat development imperatives. Even if growth above 8% fosters better creditworthiness, the author’s key argument is about meeting domestic socio-economic needs, not about rating considerations.

Passage 18:

103. Answer: C

Explanation: Statement C explicitly states that research in Scotland “suggests – though it does not definitively prove – that the introduction of minimum unit pricing has led to fewer deaths and hospitalisations.” This sentence provides the concrete evidence linking Scotland’s pricing reform to a reduction in alcohol-related harm. Because the author desires to show that minimum unit pricing can be effective, C functions as the factual premise: it reports actual observed outcomes (fewer deaths and hospitalisations) directly tied to the policy.

Why A is incorrect: While the record-high death toll (10,473) for the UK in 2023 is a relevant statistic about the scale of the problem, it does not specify any link to minimum unit pricing’s impact. It only illustrates the severity of alcohol-related mortality, not the specific effects of pricing policy.

Why B is incorrect: Lord Darzi's observation about England's rising deaths coinciding with increasing affordability points to a correlation in England, but does not serve as direct evidence regarding Scotland's minimum unit pricing. It explains why affordability matters but does not show the outcome of Scotland's policy, which is what the question asks.

Why D is incorrect: The founding of a European Health Alliance on Alcohol might indicate growing international concern, yet it does not supply direct evidence that Scotland's minimum unit pricing reduced deaths or hospitalisations. It speaks to advocacy efforts, not empirical outcomes.

104. Answer: B

Explanation: The author points out that research in Scotland suggests (even if not conclusively) that minimum unit pricing has reduced alcohol-related harms, and mentions international recommendations (WHO, EU alliance). Having this body of evidence and global pressure makes England's refusal inconsistent with a genuine prevention focus. Therefore, B correctly infers that the author thinks the decision needs reconsideration because it clashes with evidence and international momentum toward evidence-backed prevention.

Why A is incorrect: There is no direct statement or implication that Labour made its decision based explicitly on conflict with its economic-growth agenda. While the author criticizes Labour for listening to business, the inference asked for is specifically about why the author believes the minimum-pricing decision merits review. A is too narrow and assumes motivation without textual support.

Why C is incorrect: The passage does not provide or imply any quantitative health-economic trade-off analysis that Labour conducted. There is no mention that Labour chose policy based on calculations of revenue versus health.

Why D is incorrect: The author nowhere suggests that policies adopted in Wales must automatically carry over to England. While the contrast is noted, the key point is that evidence supports pricing reform and would fit a prevention framework. Automatically adopting Welsh measures is not stated or implied.

105. Answer: D

Explanation: The author lays out a chain of reasoning: Labour claims it will shift NHS focus from treatment to prevention. International evidence (WHO, EU alliance) and Scottish data suggest minimum unit pricing is an effective preventive measure. Yet Labour in England has ruled it out. If prevention is genuinely being prioritized, Labour must revisit its stance on minimum pricing (and

potentially other interventions). Thus, D summarizes the conclusion: to align rhetoric with evidence, Labour must reconsider pricing.

Why A is incorrect: Although WHO and European alliances are campaigning, the author does not argue for wholesale adoption of all European measures "immediately." The conclusion is specifically about minimum unit pricing as part of prevention, not about rigidly adopting every foreign policy.

Why B is incorrect: The passage does not claim that obesity's primacy implies alcohol should be deprioritised. In fact, the author states alcohol will feature prominently in sections of the plan, so B is directly opposite to the author's thrust.

Why C is incorrect: While the author acknowledges the government's economic growth priorities, he does not conclude that these priorities justify maintaining the status quo on alcohol regulation. Rather, he contends the economic-growth stance is precisely why Labour must overcome business pressure and embrace evidence-based prevention measures.

106. Answer: A

Explanation: The author remarks that a government staking its reputation on economic growth "is a good listener to businesses." Implicit is the assumption that the government will be reluctant to enact regulations businesses strongly oppose, because doing so could harm growth or provoke business backlash. If one accepts A—that the government is unwilling to jeopardize economic growth by enacting regulations that businesses strongly oppose—then it follows naturally why Labour would refrain from reversing food-industry concessions or adopting minimum unit pricing. Hence, A underlies the author's observation.

Why B is incorrect: The statement that public health measures have no measurable business impact is not needed to justify the author's contention. The author specifically suggests the opposite: that business lobbying succeeded in watering down restrictions because the government cares about growth. B asserts a universal non-impact, which conflicts with the point that businesses influence policy.

Why C is incorrect: The author does not claim that only growth-focused governments can balance health and industry issues; that is too sweeping. He simply observes that this growth-focused government listens to businesses. C extrapolates too far, positing an exclusivity not present in the text.

Why D is incorrect: While the author links economic growth commitments to business friendliness, he does not assert that such a commitment automatically implies hostility to all public health interventions. D is too broad; the passage concedes that certain public

health measures do survive (e.g., guidelines), even if they are watered down, so hostility is not universal.

107. Answer: C

Explanation: Observation (i) notes that Labour introduced minimum unit pricing in Wales, while observation (ii) states that Labour has not reversed the previous administration's diluted restrictions on ultra-processed foods. The paradox is that, on one hand, Labour has shown itself willing to legislate a potentially unpopular public health measure (minimum pricing) in Wales, yet, on the other, it refuses to reinstate stricter food guidelines in England even though it campaigned on a prevention agenda. In other words, if Labour is committed to public health prevention, why selectively apply it (Wales) but ignore it (England)? That inconsistent approach to two analogous prevention initiatives is captured in C.

Why A is incorrect: While A touches on a similar theme, it singles out public health value as the criterion. The real tension is not only that Labour values public health in Wales but is neglecting it elsewhere; it is that Labour's approach to prevention is inconsistent across policy domains, not merely between regions. A oversimplifies the paradox by focusing on Wales versus food policy, rather than on the incoherent prevention strategy.

Why B is incorrect: The existence of the European Health Alliance on Alcohol is separate and not directly tied to the paradox. The tension lies within Labour's own actions on two frontiers (alcohol pricing vs. food restrictions), not between domestic inaction and European advocacy.

Why D is incorrect: The WHO statement about zero "safe amount" of alcohol is cited to support more robust alcohol regulation but does not generate the paradox described. The real contradiction is that, despite some proactive steps in Wales, Labour fails to reverse weakened food guidelines in England. D does not identify that specific inconsistency.

108. Answer: C

Explanation: The author contends that, since prevention is meant to be a guiding principle, Labour's refusal to adopt minimum unit pricing in England must be reconsidered. Polling data showing 72% of the English public supports pricing reform if it will reduce NHS burden—"even if prices rise moderately"—directly strengthens the author's argument. It demonstrates that a large majority of voters would back the measure, undermining any political rationale for refusing it and bolstering the case that Labour should align policy with public opinion and prevention goals.

Why A is incorrect: Although a peer-reviewed study showing a 15% drop in alcohol sales with no pub revenue decline in Wales is interesting, it speaks to economic impacts rather than public or political acceptability. It does not directly address Labour's need to reverse its stance, because the author's argument hinges on both health outcomes and voter support. A shows a favorable economic outcome, but Labour's refusal has more to do with perceived economic risk; voter support (C) cuts closer to the political rationale.

Why B is incorrect: An industry-funded report claiming no significant effect in Scotland could weaken the case for pricing, not strengthen it. It introduces doubt about the effectiveness, running directly counter to the author's call for reconsideration.

Why D is incorrect: A comparative static on per-capita consumption is useful, but the author's argument depends on more than consumption metrics; he stresses that minimum unit pricing can reduce hospitalisations and deaths. Merely showing consumption stayed static undermines rather than bolsters the moral and public-health case for the policy. Polling data reflecting public support (C) directly addresses the political need to reconsider the policy.

QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

Passage 19:

109. Answer: B. 240 days

Explanation:

1. Last month saw 1,200 rental-days in total (line 2).
2. SUVs accounted for 20% of all rentals (line 2).
3. Calculate SUV rental-days: 20% of 1,200 = $1,200 \times 0.20 = 240$ days.

Why other options are incorrect:

Option A (180): Would correspond to 15% of 1,200, not the stated 20%.

Option C (300): Is 25% of 1,200, not applicable.

Option D (360): Equals 30% of 1,200, which matches Sedan's share (line 2), not SUV's.

110. Answer: A. ₹648,000

Explanation:

1. Sedans comprised 30% of the 1,200 rental-days (line 2).
2. Number of Sedan days = $1,200 \times 0.30 = 360$ days.
3. Standard Sedan rate = ₹1,800 per day (line 3).
4. Base-rate revenue = $360 \text{ days} \times ₹1,800/\text{day} = 360 \times 1,800 = ₹648,000$.

Why other options are incorrect:

Option B (₹720,000): Equals 400 days $\times$ ₹1,800; no 400-day count.

Option C (₹540,000): Would be $300 \times ₹1,800$, i.e. 25% of rentals, not 30%.

Option D (₹432,000): Equals $240 \times ₹1,800$, the SUV days (line 2), not Sedan.

111. Answer: A. ₹2,000

Explanation:

1. SUV standard rate = ₹3,000/day (line 3).

2. Under "rent two, get third free," a customer pays only for 2 days but uses 3 days (line 4).

3. Effective daily rate = total paid : days used = $(2 \times ₹3,000) : 3 = ₹6,000 : 3 = ₹2,000$.

4. Why other options are incorrect:

Option B (₹1,500): Would apply a 50% discount each day, not a "free third day."

Option C (₹2,500): Implies paying 5/6 of full rate per day; no basis in the "2 for 3" deal.

Option D (₹3,000): Is the standard rate, ignoring the promotion.

112. Answer: A. ₹4,350

Explanation:

1. Economy standard rate = ₹1,200/day (line 3); Weekend discount = ₹100 off, so discounted rate = ₹1,100/day (line 4).

2. Fuel surcharge = ₹150/day (line 6).

3. GPS add-on = ₹200/day (line 6).

4. Total per day = $1,100 + 150 + 200 = ₹1,450$.

5. For 3 days: $3 \times ₹1,450 = ₹4,350$.

6. However, non-corporate means no 5% rebate (line 5), so full amount.

7. Correct total = ₹4,350.

Why other options are incorrect:

Option B (₹4,650): Too high—seems to use full ₹1,550/day (no weekend discount).

Option C (₹4,050): Too low—perhaps mistakenly omitted either surcharge or GPS.

Option D (₹3,900): Omits GPS or surcharge incorrectly.

113. Answer: A. ₹47,500

Explanation:

1. Corporate rebate = 5% on monthly invoice after all discounts and surcharges (line 5).

2. Invoice before rebate = ₹50,000 (question stem).

3. Rebate amount = 5% of 50,000 = ₹2,500.

4. Final payment = $50,000 - 2,500 = ₹47,500$.

5. Why other options are incorrect:

Option B (₹48,500): Applies a 3% rebate, not 5%.

Option C (₹45,000): Implies 10% rebate instead of 5%.

Option D (₹46,000): Implies 8% rebate; no basis in passage.

114. Answer: B. 1 : 1

Explanation:

1. Economy rental-days = 50% of 1,200 = 600 days (line 2); SUV days = 20% of 1,200 = 240 days (line 2).

2. Base-rate revenue from Economy = $600 \times ₹1,200 = ₹720,000$.

3. Base-rate revenue from SUVs = $240 \times ₹3,000 = ₹720,000$.

4. Ratio = $₹720,000 : ₹720,000 = 1 : 1$.

5. Why other options are incorrect:

Option A (1 : 2): Would be 720k : 1.44m or vice versa; not supported.

Option C (2 : 3): No 2:3 split in those revenues.

Option D (3 : 5): No such ratio arises from 720k vs. 720k.

Passage 20:

115. Answer: B. ₹7,200

Explanation:

1. Raised-bed total area: Each bed = $8 \text{ m} \times 5 \text{ m} = 40 \text{ m}^2$; 12 beds $\rightarrow 12 \times 40 = 480 \text{ m}^2$ (line 2).

2. Fertilizer rate: ₹15 per m^2 per month (line 2).

3. Total monthly cost: $480 \text{ m}^2 \times ₹15/\text{m}^2 = ₹7,200$.

4. Why other options are incorrect:

₹6,000 (A): Would result from $400 \text{ m}^2 \times ₹15$, not the correct 480 m^2 .

₹8,400 (C): Implies $560 \text{ m}^2 \times ₹15$ —too high.

₹9,600 (D): Corresponds to $640 \text{ m}^2 \times ₹15$, far above actual bed area.

116. Answer: B. ₹22,500

Explanation:

1. Quadrant B area: $100 \text{ m} \times 75 \text{ m} = 7,500 \text{ m}^2$ (line 1).

2. Meadow coverage: $\frac{3}{4}$ of 7,500 = 5,625 m^2 (line 3).

3. Mowing rate: ₹2 per m^2 per visit, bi-monthly = 2 visits/month (line 3).

4. Total monthly cost: $5,625 \text{ m}^2 \times ₹2 \times 2 = ₹22,500$.

5. Why other options are incorrect:

₹18,750 (A): Uses only 1.67 visits or a wrong area multiplier.

₹15,000 (C): Assumes coverage of 3,750 m^2 , not 5,625 m^2 .

₹30,000 (D): Would be 2 visits on full quadrant (7,500 m^2), ignoring the $\frac{3}{4}$ factor.

117. Answer: B. 3,000 m^2

Explanation:

1. Triangle base = 100 m, height = 60 m (line 4).

2. Area formula: $\frac{1}{2} \times \text{base} \times \text{height} = \frac{1}{2} \times 100 \times 60 = 3,000 \text{ m}^2$.

3. Why other options are incorrect:

2,500 m^2 (A): Implies height = 50 m or base = 50 m.

3,750 m^2 (C): Would be $\frac{3}{4}$ of rectangle $100 \times 60 = 4,500 \text{ m}^2$.

4,000 m^2 (D): Treats triangle as full rectangle 100×40 or similar miscalculation.

118. Answer: B. ₹5,000

Explanation:

1. Pond shoreline length: Perimeter of 30 m × 20 m rectangle = $2 \times (30 + 20) = 100$ m (line 5).

2. Monthly upkeep rate: ₹50 per linear meter (line 5).

3. Total cost: $100 \text{ m} \times ₹50/\text{m} = ₹5,000$.

4. Why other options are incorrect:

₹2,500 (A): Half the correct total, as if only one side treated.

₹7,500 (C): 1.5× the correct amount, no basis.

₹10,000 (D): Doubles the correct cost, misreading ₹100/m.

119. Answer: A. ₹70,000

Explanation:

1. Perimeter of entire lot: $2 \times (200 + 150) = 700$ m (line 1).

2. Fence height: 2 m (line 6).

3. Surface area (both faces): Perimeter × height × 2 = $700 \times 2 \times 2 = 2,800 \text{ m}^2$.

4. Painting rate: ₹25 per m^2 (line 6).

5. Annual cost: $2,800 \text{ m}^2 \times ₹25/\text{m}^2 = ₹70,000$.

Why other options are incorrect:

₹100,000 (B): Would require $4,000 \text{ m}^2$ at ₹25.

₹52,500 (C): Uses only one face or wrong perimeter ($2,100 \text{ m}^2$).

₹87,500 (D): Implies $3,500 \text{ m}^2$ painted.

120. Answer: A. 9 : 20

Explanation:

1. Pond + path outer dimensions: Pond 30×20 , path adds 2 m each side → outer dims = $34 \text{ m} \times 24 \text{ m}$ (line 5).

2. Outer area: $34 \times 24 = 816 \text{ m}^2$.

3. Pond area: $30 \times 20 = 600 \text{ m}^2$.

4. Path area: $816 - 600 = 216 \text{ m}^2$.

5. Vegetable-bed area: 480 m^2 (from Q7).

6. Ratio: $216 : 480 = \text{divide by } 24 \rightarrow 9 : 20$.

7. Why other options are incorrect:

1 : 2 (B): Simplifies $216 : 432$, not our numbers.

3 : 7 (C): No link to $216 : 504$.

2 : 5 (D): Would be $200 : 500$, unrelated.



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