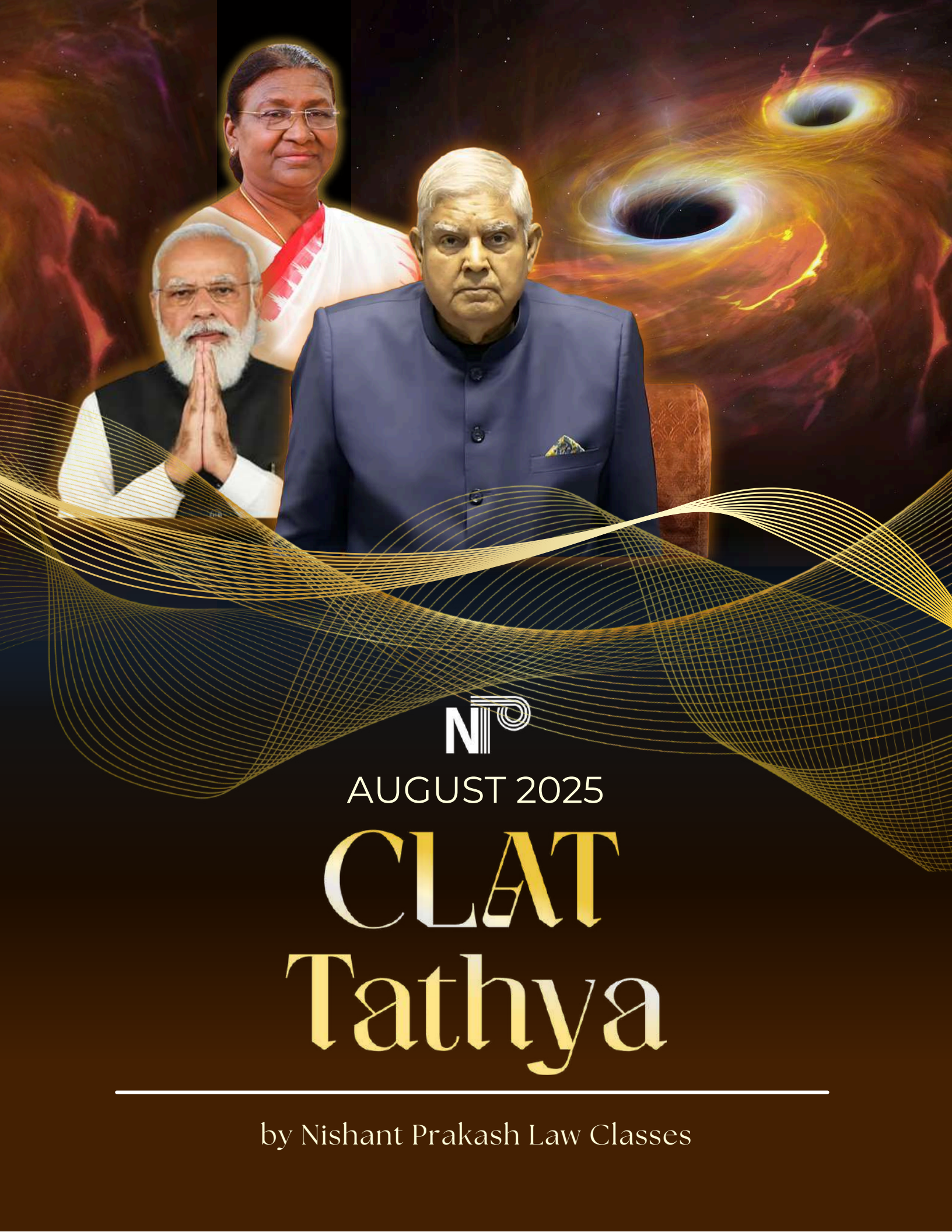




AUGUST 2025

CLAT Tathya

by Nishant Prakash Law Classes

NPLC's TOP 10 GLORY 2025

A salute to our five toppers who turned pressure into purpose – their journey fuels the ambition of every student aiming for the top.



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Ankhad**



Chaitanya Ghosh



Daiwik Agarwala



Dhruv Kamath



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Dhruv Kamath



AIR 10, AILET



Vidisha Singh



AIR 24, AILET



Samyuktha Kovilakath



AIR 30, AILET



Goohika Joshi



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Aditya Mehta



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Yutika Kumar

YE POSTER NAHI, PROOF HAI!

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Nishant Prakash



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, 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.

Know your Mentor |



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.

Their Next Chapter



NLSIU - Bengaluru

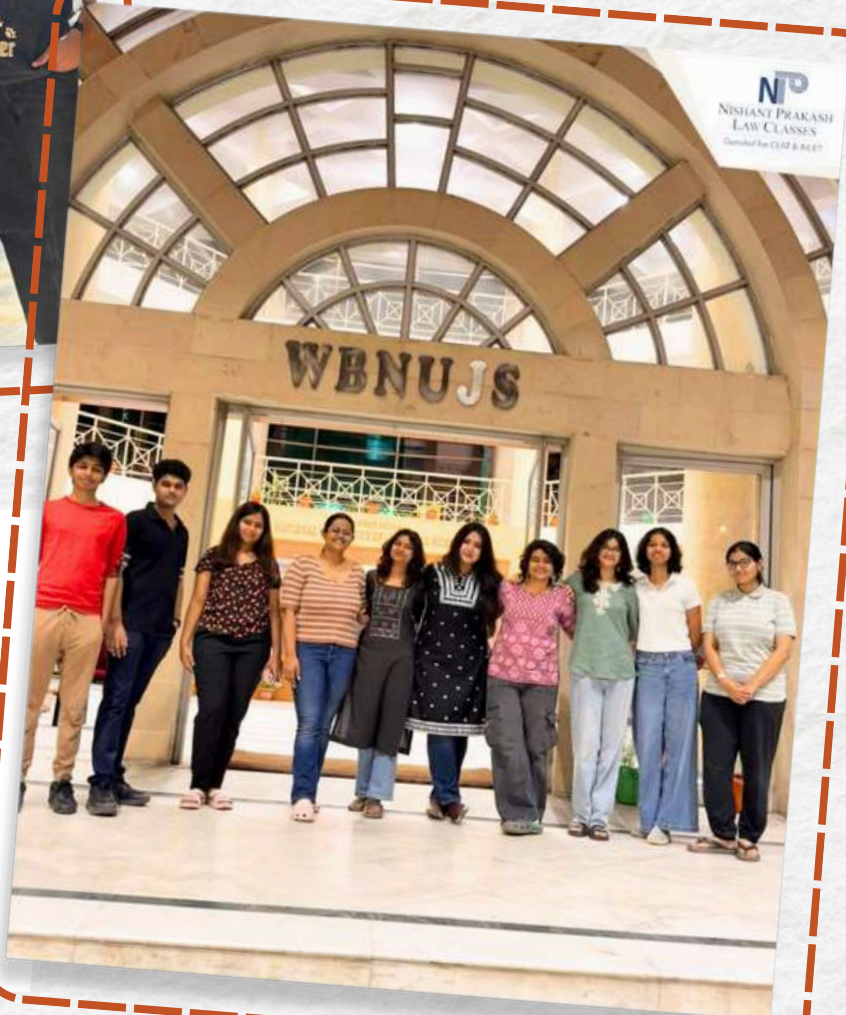
(Left to Right)

**Dainik Agarwala
Daksh Balakrishnan
Dhruv Kamath
Aditya Ankhad**

WBNUJS - Kolkata

(Left to Right)

**Reyhaan Aryan, Shashwat
Singh, Aanya Arora,
Shivakshi Dixit, Dhara
Mittal, Vaishali Bhatra,
Labonyo Banerjee, Yutika
Kumar, Janani Murugan,
Megha Malhotra**



Their Next Chapter



NLU - Delhi

(Left to Right)
**Ananya Prakash,
Amoolya Kapani, Vidisha
Singh, Goohika Joshi,
Masirah Hussain, Krish
Walia, Chaitanya Ghosh,
Aditya Mehta**

NLU - Jodhpur

(Left to Right)

**Vivaan Mehta
Khushi Gaur
Maahi Yadav
Shefali Talwar
Kaushtubh Anand**



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NISHANT PRAKASH
LAW CLASSES

1

INDIA OPPOSES AMENDMENTS
TO PLANT TREATY

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Venue and Date:** The Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) meets in Lima, Peru (July 7–11, 2025).
- **Stakeholder Appeal:** Indian farmer organisations and State officials have urged the Union Agriculture Ministry to oppose amendments to Annex I of the treaty.
- **Core Concern:** They warn that expanding the Multilateral System (MLS) to include “all Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA)” would undermine India’s seed sovereignty, dilute farmers’ rights, and encroach upon the constitutional powers of State Biodiversity Boards.

Background: The Plant Treaty and Annex I

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United NationsInternational Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

- The **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** (commonly known as the Plant Treaty) was adopted by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** in 2001 and officially entered into force in 2004.
- A key feature of the Treaty is the establishment of a **Multilateral System (MLS)** that provides facilitated access to the genetic materials of **64 major food crops and forage species**, which are listed in Annex I of the Treaty. These crops—such as rice, wheat, maize, and potatoes—are essential to global food security.
- The exchange of these genetic resources within the Multilateral System is governed by a **Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA)**. This **legally binding** contract standardizes the terms and conditions under which plant genetic materials can be accessed and used.

The Proposed Amendment to Annex I



- The current proposal seeks to replace the specific crop list in Annex I with a broad definition encompassing “**all PGRFA**”—that is, **every plant genetic resource with potential value for food and agriculture**.
- Under this approach, **all germplasm** held by member states, including **wild, uncultivated, and non-edible species**, would automatically enter the **Multilateral System** and be subject solely to the **SMTA terms** determined by the Treaty’s **Governing Body**, leaving no room for **national terms and conditions**.

India's Core Concerns

01

Erosion of Sovereign Rights: India argues that **mandatory sharing** of all **germplasm via MLS** would undermine its sovereign control over genetic resources

02

Threat to Farmers' Rights & Seed Sovereignty: Such amendment could dilute farmers' rights to save, use, exchange, and sell seeds, embedded in both the Treaty (Article 9) and India's national laws. There are fears this may harm traditional seed practices and community-based seed systems.

03

Inadequate Benefit-Sharing: The current SMTA mechanisms have produced low monetary contributions. Expanding access without stronger and fairer benefit-sharing—especially regarding digital sequence information (DSI/GSD)—may enable biopiracy and offer few real returns to provider countries like India

04

Undermining National & Federal Systems: India has raised concerns over lack of consultation with State governments, farmers, and biodiversity boards—key stakeholders under India's federal structure. Agriculture falls under the State List, and bypassing state-level inputs undermines governance norms

05

Risk of Biopiracy: Vulnerability increases if indigenous or traditional varieties get subsumed into global access mechanisms without protection or commensurate benefit-sharing

Federal Principles and Consultation Deficit: Critics emphasise that **agriculture** and **agricultural research** reside under the **State List (Entry 14, Schedule VII)** of the **Constitution of India**, and that **State Biodiversity Boards** play a vital role in implementing both the **Biodiversity Act, 2002** and the **FRA**. They decry the absence of any **formal consultation** with **State Governments, farmers' organisations, or biodiversity authorities** before finalising India's negotiating position, warning that unilateral endorsement would undermine federalism and local stewardship of genetic resources.

Stakeholder Positions

- The **Bharath Beej Swaraj Manch** and the **Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh** have written jointly to the Union Agriculture Ministry demanding prior consultation with farmers.
- **Kerala's Agriculture Minister, P. Prasad**, has formally petitioned the Centre to reject the amendments on federal grounds.
- Meanwhile, the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**, through its Director General **M.L. Jat**, has assured that **Principal Scientist Sunil Archak**—India's nominee and **Co-Chair** of the Working Group—will safeguard national interests throughout the negotiations.
- A number of **plant scientists** have also endorsed the farmers' stance, warning that unfettered access would permit multinational seed companies to appropriate India's germplasm without reciprocal benefits.

Implications for India's Negotiating Strategy

- With the **Governing Body meeting scheduled for November 2025**, India faces a critical window to articulate its position.
- A refusal to endorse expansion could isolate it within the Treaty forum, yet acceding without reservations risks compromising **seed sovereignty, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and farmers' customary rights**.
- Experts urge a **middle path**: India should demand a **dual-track system** allowing **Annex I** crops to remain under the MLS while negotiating **bilateral or regional agreements** for additional genetic resources under national terms.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Where was the July 2025 meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the ITPGRFA held?
(a) Nairobi, Kenya (b) Rome, Italy
(c) Jakarta, Indonesia (d) Lima, Peru
2. Which section of the International Treaty have Indian farmer organisations urged the Agriculture Ministry to oppose amending?
(a) Annex I (b) Annex II
(c) Annex III (d) Annex IV
3. Which international organisation adopted the Plant Treaty in 2001 to govern plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?
(a) UNEP (b) FAO (c) WTO (d) WIPO
4. Since which year has the Plant Treaty, adopted by the FAO in 2001, been in force globally?
(a) 2002 (b) 2003 (c) 2004 (d) 2005
5. What legal framework under the Plant Treaty adopted by the FAO, governs the exchange of plant genetic materials in the Multilateral System?
(a) General Biodiversity Protocol Agreement
(b) International Seed Trade Regulation Act
(c) Global Crop Exchange Facilitation Pact
(d) Standard Material Transfer Agreement
6. How many crops and forages listed in Annex I are accessible under the Multilateral System of the Plant Treaty?
(a) 64 major crops and forages
(b) 45 primary crops and pulses
(c) 58 food grains and legumes
(d) 50 key cereals and forages
7. Which section of the Plant Treaty currently lists the specific crops and forages proposed to be replaced with a broader definition of all PGRFA?
(a) Annex II (b) Annex III (c) Annex I (d) Annex IV
8. Which sections that safeguard sovereign and farmers' rights are threatened by the proposed expansion of the Plant Treaty's scope, according to Indian stakeholders?
(a) Articles 2–4 and Section 7 of the SMTA
(b) Preamble and Articles 10–11, Article 9
(c) Clause 8.3 and Annex II of the Treaty
(d) Guidelines III–V and Rule 14 of MLS
9. Which constitutional category in India includes agriculture and agricultural research, as emphasised by critics?
(a) Union List (b) Concurrent List
(c) Central List (d) State List
10. Which of the following legislations are State Biodiversity Boards responsible for implementing?
(a) Environment Protection Act, 1986 and the FRA
(b) Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and the FRA
(c) Biodiversity Act, 2002 and the FRA
(d) Mines and Minerals Act, 1957 and the FRA
11. Which of the following farmer groups, along with the Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh, jointly wrote to the Union Agriculture Ministry demanding prior consultation with farmers?
(a) All India Kisan Sabha
(b) Bhartiya Kisan Union
(c) Bharath Beej Swaraj Manch
(d) Jai Kisan Andolan
12. Which state's Agriculture Minister formally petitioned the Centre to reject the proposed amendments to the Plant Treaty on federal grounds?
(a) Kerala (b) Punjab
(c) Maharashtra (d) Odisha
13. Who has been nominated by India and is serving as the Co-Chair of the Working Group under the Plant Treaty negotiations to safeguard national interests?
(a) Ramesh Chand (b) P. Prasad
(c) Jairam Ramesh (d) Sunil Archak

SOLUTIONS

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

2 BRICS SUMMIT 2025

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Date & Venue:** The 17th BRICS Summit convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 6–7 July 2025 under the banner “Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance.”
- **Indian Leadership:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged unequivocal sanctions against terrorism and pressed for reforms of global financial and security institutions.
- **Key Deliverables:** The Rio de Janeiro Declaration embraced India’s concerns on **cross-border terrorism**, **UNSC reform**, and **equitable multilateralism**; it also confirmed **Indonesia’s induction** as a new BRICS member and named **India the BRICS Chair for 2026**.

Key Outcomes: BRICS 2025 Summit



Political & Security Commitments

- Leaders issued a forceful condemnation of the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, calling it “criminal and unjustifiable” and urging collective action against all forms of terrorism, including cross-border threats.
- There was renewed support for the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism under the UN framework, and a rejection of double standards in counter-terrorism.
- The declaration also took a stronger tone on Middle East conflicts, though stopped short of direct criticism of specific states

Financial Integration & Currency Strategy

- BRICS nations reaffirmed their push to explore a **cross-border payment system**, signaling efforts to reduce reliance on traditional global financial structures.
- The BRICS currency project progressed, targeting a **potential launch between 2026 and 2027**, alongside initiatives like the **BRICS Multilateral Guarantees mechanism**.
- Finance-related declarations also called for **IMF quota reforms**: incl. revising the “**gentlemen’s agreement**” though ambitions were tempered relative to prior summits.

Climate Action & Sustainability

- A strong declaration on climate finance emphasized that developed nations must provide new, additional, grant-based funding, separate from existing development aid, for climate mitigation in emerging economies.
- The summit backed Brazil's "Tropical Forests Forever Facility", with China and the UAE signaling readiness to invest.

Institutional Development & Future Agenda

- The summit welcomed Indonesia as a full member, marking a significant expansion toward Southeast Asia; invitations were extended to other nations as well.
- India was confirmed as the **2026 rotating chair**, with plans already underway for New Delhi to lead the **18th BRICS Summit**.
- Summit documents outlined over 126 commitments spanning governance, finance, health, AI, climate, and more.
- New pilot initiatives were launched under the New Development Bank (NDB) infrastructure, including incubation of the **BRICS Multilateral Guarantees (BMG) scheme**.

Global Governance Reform & Multipolarity

- A joint declaration reaffirmed BRICS' strategic partnership to promote peace, inclusive growth, and a more representative international order, including calls for reforming WTO, IMF, and World Bank to better reflect Global South realities.
- Consensus was reached to endorse Brazil and India for UN Security Council seats, with Africa's representative still undetermined.

Artificial Intelligence Governance

- Leaders adopted a dedicated declaration on AI governance, urging the UN to take the lead in establishing international norms that ensure inclusive, sustainable, and human rights-respecting AI development.
- AI was characterized as a "unique opportunity" for inclusive growth, with a warning against widening digital inequality.

India's Priorities at the Rio Summit

- India centered its intervention on **peace, security, and institutional reform**. Condemning the **22 April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack** as "a blow to the soul of India and all humanity," Prime Minister Modi demanded **firm, non-politicised sanctions** against terrorists and reiterated support for the stalled **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**.
- On governance, he criticised the **under-representation of the Global South** in bodies such as the **UN, IMF, and World Bank**, arguing that forums excluding **two-thirds of humanity** undermine legitimacy.
- India therefore called for **UNSC expansion** and **IMF quota reforms** that elevate **Emerging Markets and Developing Countries (EMDCs)**.

India's Bilateral Engagements on the Sidelines

- Prime Minister Modi maximised the summit's diplomatic bandwidth. He and **Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim** explored cooperation on **defence, digital infrastructure, and tourism**; with **Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel** he discussed **pharmaceutical R&D, UPI expansion, and biotechnology**; and with **South African President Cyril Ramaphosa** he reaffirmed historical ties. These meetings demonstrated India's use of **BRICS as a diplomatic multiplier** to deepen **South-South solidarity**.

India's 2026 BRICS Chairship: Opportunities and Responsibilities

- As incoming **Chair for 2026**, India can drive initiatives such as creating a **permanent BRICS secretariat** with **weighted voting**, launching a **BRICS+ Free Trade Agreement** and an **NDB 2.0**, and leading consensus on **UNSC reform** and a **global counter-terrorism strategy**.

- Delhi also plans to champion **joint innovation hubs** in **AI, green technology, and space**, introduce **student-exchange programmes** under a **BRICS+ University Network**, and negotiate **visa-free tourism corridors**, thereby pairing **hard-power finance** with **soft-power outreach**.

Evolution and Expansion of BRICS (2001–2025)

Origin as “BRIC” (2001–2009)

- The term BRIC was coined in **2001** by **Jim O’Neill**, a Goldman Sachs economist, to describe four major emerging economies — **Brazil, Russia, India, and China** projected to dominate global growth.
- BRIC was initially a financial and economic grouping, not a political bloc.
- The **first informal foreign ministers’ meeting** took place on the **sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2006**, marking the beginning of formal political coordination.

Formation of BRICS: Addition of South Africa (2010)

- **South Africa** officially joined the grouping in **December 2010**, transforming BRIC into BRICS (adding the “S”).
- South Africa’s inclusion brought continental representation from Africa, making BRICS a truly intercontinental coalition.

Institutional Consolidation (2010–2016)

- Annual leaders’ summits began with the **2009 Yekaterinburg Summit**.
- A major milestone came in **Fortaleza, Brazil (2014)**, where BRICS established:
 - The **New Development Bank (NDB)** with an initial capital of US\$100 billion.
 - The **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**, also worth US\$100 billion, to assist members during liquidity crises.
- India’s Goa Summit in 2016 mainstreamed issues like counter-terrorism and digital economy, showing growing political engagement beyond economics

Historic Expansion at the Johannesburg 2023 Summit

- In August 2023, at the **15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg**, the bloc announced the first formal expansion since 2010.
- **Six new countries** were invited to become full members from January 1, 2024: Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Ethiopia, Argentina (**Note:** Argentina later withdrew in late 2023 under its new leadership)
- **Indonesia** officially joined as a full member during the **17th BRICS Summit** in Rio de Janeiro, marking the first Southeast Asian country in BRICS.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which edition of the BRICS Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in July 2025?
(a) 16th (b) 17th (c) 18th (d) 19th
- Which country was confirmed as the next BRICS Chair for the year 2026 during the Rio Summit?
(a) China (b) Russia (c) India (d) Argentina
- Which proposed international agreement has India consistently supported to establish a universal legal framework to counter terrorism?
(a) UN Declaration on Regional Harmony and Peace
(b) Global Compact for Human Rights and Security
(c) Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism
(d) World Protocol for Security and Peaceful Order
- Which global institutions did India highlight at the BRICS Summit for lacking sufficient Global South representation?
(a) G7, UNHRC, and EU Commission
(b) WEF, ILO, and IAEA
(c) OECD, ICC, and FAO
(d) UN, IMF, and World Bank
- Which institution was scaled up by BRICS leaders while piloting BRICS Multilateral Guarantees to de-risk private capital?
(a) International Finance Corporation
(b) Asian Development Bank
(c) African Export-Import Bank
(d) the New Development Bank
- Which of the following initiatives was formalized through an MoU to advance climate cooperation within BRICS?
(a) BRICS Carbon Markets Partnership
(b) BRICS Green Energy Fund
(c) BRICS Circular Economy Network
(d) BRICS Clean Development Mechanism
- Which of the following areas are targeted under the BRICS Partnership for the Elimination of Socially Determined Diseases (PESDD)?
(a) Maternal mortality and genetic disorders
(b) Malnutrition and lifestyle-related diseases
(c) Non-communicable diseases and vaccine hesitancy
(d) Tuberculosis and health inequities
- Which country formally became a full member of BRICS during the 17th Summit in Rio de Janeiro?
(a) Argentina (b) Indonesia
(c) Saudi Arabia (d) Egypt
- Which of the following is NOT among the countries that entered BRICS as partner countries during the 17th Summit?
(a) Belarus (b) Vietnam
(c) Colombia (d) Uzbekistan
- What percentage of global crude-oil output is currently commanded by BRICS, enhancing its energy leverage?
(a) 44 percent (b) 36 percent
(c) 50 percent (d) 29 percent
- Which of the following initiatives can India drive as the incoming Chair of BRICS in 2026?
(a) Expansion of SAARC and launch of Global South Index
(b) Formation of a new WTO dispute panel and climate reparations forum
(c) Setting up a unified BRICS health surveillance system and AI alliance
(d) BRICS+ Free Trade Agreement and an NDB 2.0
- Which initiative is India planning to introduce to enhance educational cooperation among BRICS nations?
(a) BRICS Student Mobility Task Force
(b) Unified South-South Education Charter
(c) BRICS+ University Network
(d) Global Skills Bridge Programme
- Who coined the term "BRIC" in 2001, which later evolved into the BRICS bloc?
(a) Joseph Stiglitz (b) Jim O'Neill
(c) Raghuram Rajan (d) Jeffrey Sachs
- How many new West-Asian and African countries were added to BRICS during the historic expansion approved at the Johannesburg 2023 Summit?
(a) Six (b) Four (c) Eight (d) Ten



SOLUTIONS

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

3 PRADA-KOLHAPURI CONTROVERSY

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Venue and Timing:** At its Spring/Summer 2026 menswear show in Milan, luxury label **Prada** unveiled leather sandals eerily similar to India's **GI-tagged Kolhapuri chappals**.
- **Price Disparity and Omission:** Retailing for over **₹1 lakh**, the sandals were marketed with no reference to **India, Kolhapur**, or the hereditary artisan culture behind the craft.
- **Wider Debate:** The incident has reignited scrutiny of the **limitations of global intellectual-property regimes**, fair-trade obligations, and equitable benefit-sharing with indigenous communities

Historical Legacy and Craftsmanship of Kolhapuri Chappals

- **Origins and geography.** The craft traces back to the 12th century in and around Kolhapur (Maharashtra), with parallel clusters across today's southern Maharashtra and northern Karnataka (e.g., Kolhapur, Sangli, Ichalkaranji, Athani, Belagavi). Over centuries it evolved from courtly footwear patronised by local royalty to an everyday staple known for toughness and comfort.
- **Materials and tanning.** Traditional makers use thick cow or buffalo hide, vegetable-tanned with plant sources rather than chromium salts. Tanners rely on natural tannins from barks, leaves, and fruits; the slow tanning process yields a firm, breathable leather that softens with wear and lasts for years.
- **Handcrafting process.** Artisans cut soles and uppers by hand, shape the footbed, and stitch layers using leather thongs or strong thread. Signature braided straps (often a single continuous weave) and punched or stamped motifs are added before edges are burnished and oiled. Each stage—from soaking, cutting, and skiving to braiding, stitching, finishing, and sun-curing—is manual, with skills passed down within artisan families.



Geographical Indication Status and India's Expanding GI Portfolio

- Kolhapuris secured a **Geographical Indication (GI)** in **2019** under India's **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**, covering eight districts across the two states.
- As of **March 2025**, India has registered **658 GI goods**, including **214 handicrafts** and **104 handloom products**, signalling the country's commitment to safeguarding traditional knowledge systems and region-specific reputations.

Concept and Legal Framework of Geographical Indications

- A **GI tag** is an intellectual-property sign used on products whose qualities or reputation are inseparably linked to a particular geography. India's regime is anchored in the **GI Act, 1999**, enacted to meet the **TRIPS Agreement (1995)** and rooted in the **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883)**.
- The Act came into force in **2003** and provides: **Registration and protection** of GI products, **Civil enforcement remedies and Penalties** for misrepresentation and unauthorised use. Internationally, the **Lisbon System (1958)** and **Madrid System** provide optional, fragmented protection, underscoring the absence of a single binding global framework.
- GI rights are **collective, non-assignable, and territorial**; protection ends at the national border unless the mark is separately registered or recognised abroad. Consequently, Prada was able to replicate Kolhapuri aesthetics legally by avoiding the protected term "Kolhapuri" and marketing the sandals outside India's jurisdiction illustrating the **jurisdictional gap** in current GI enforcement.



Global Intellectual-Property Gaps and Precedents of Misappropriation

- India has previously fought similar battles: the **1997 Ricetec "Basmati-style" patent** in the United States, the **1995 turmeric wound-healing patent** by the University of Mississippi, and the **2000 neem pesticide patent** held by **W.R. Grace and the USDA** were all revoked only after protracted legal challenges.
- These precedents show that, without a universal GI regime, **biopiracy and design misappropriation** recur despite local protections.

Domestic and International Challenges in Enforcing GI Protection

- Within India, enforcement is hindered by **low logo uptake**, limited marketing channels, and counterfeits flooding online marketplaces.
- Fewer than **30 percent** of authorised users display the national GI logo, and many producer groups still lack legal personality or quality-control mechanisms.
- Internationally, the high cost of cross-border registration illustrated by the **₹9 crore** spent over a decade to protect **Darjeeling Tea** in 35 jurisdictions coupled with India's non-accession to the **Lisbon-Geneva Act (2015)**, weakens legal recourse abroad.

Key Features of India's Geographical Indications Act, 1999

- The Act established the **GI Registry** in Chennai under the DPIIT, empowered associations of producers to file applications, and provided **civil and criminal remedies** against infringement. Protection runs for **ten years**, renewable indefinitely, and authorises both producer associations and individual **authorised users** to sue for misrepresentation or unauthorised use.
- By conferring an **exclusive right** to use the geographical name, GI tags enhance **market competitiveness**, build **consumer trust**, and channel premium prices back to rural producers. They preserve **cultural heritage**, incentivise **sustainable production**, and act as bulwarks against **biopiracy**, thereby fostering holistic **rural development**.
- To qualify, an applicant must furnish historical evidence linking a product's **unique characteristics** to its geography, climate, or traditional practices. Eligible categories span **agricultural produce** (e.g., Basmati rice), **handicrafts** (Madhubani paintings), **foodstuffs** (Tirupati laddu), **manufactured goods** (Mysore sandal soap), and **natural resources** (Makrana marble).
- The **GI Registry** processes applications nationwide; India's first GI was granted to **Darjeeling Tea**. Over two decades, every state and union territory has contributed to the national GI tapestry, reflecting the country's vast **biocultural diversity**.
- As of July 2025, Uttar Pradesh holds the highest number of GI (Geographical Indication) tags in India. Uttar Pradesh has 75 GI-tagged products. Following Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu is also a leading state in terms of GI tags.
- States showcase distinctive portfolios: Andhra Pradesh is famed for Srikalahasti Kalamkari and Guntur chilli; Karnataka for Mysore silk and Byadagi chilli; Tamil Nadu for Kancheepuram silk and Erode turmeric; West Bengal for Darjeeling tea and Nakshi Kantha; Uttar Pradesh for Khurja pottery and Malihabadi Dussehri mango; Jammu & Kashmir for Pashmina wool and Kashmir saffron. Some products, such as Basmati rice and Warli painting, enjoy joint GI status across multiple states, underscoring the collaborative nature of India's cultural geography.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- At which global fashion venue did Prada unveil leather sandals resembling India's GI-tagged Kolhapuri chappals during its Spring/Summer 2026 menswear show?
(a) Paris (b) London (c) New York (d) Milan
- What was the approximate retail price of the Prada sandals that resembled India's GI-tagged Kolhapuri chappals at the 2026 Milan show?
(a) ₹1 lakh (b) ₹50,000 (c) ₹75,000 (d) ₹25,000
- Which century is associated with the origin of India's traditional Kolhapuri chappals?
(a) 15th (b) 18th (c) 14th (d) 12th
- Which material is primarily used in crafting the traditional Kolhapuri chappals?
(a) Resin-coated calf leather
(b) Vegetable-tanned leather
(c) Faux leather and rubber
(d) Industrial tanned hide
- From which Indian states does the heritage of Kolhapuri chappal-making originate and continue to be preserved?
(a) Punjab and Haryana
(b) Odisha and Chhattisgarh
(c) Maharashtra and Karnataka
(d) Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- In which year did Kolhapuri chappals receive the Geographical Indication (GI) tag under Indian law?
(a) 2004 (b) 2011 (c) 2016 (d) 2019
- How many Geographical Indication (GI) goods has India registered under its GI regime?
(a) 658 (b) 500 (c) 745 (d) 820
- Which of the following options best defines the term 'GI tag'?
(a) A license allowing free trade between states
(b) A certificate for exported goods only
(c) An intellectual-property sign linking product quality to geography
(d) A symbol used to identify luxury branded products
- With which international agreement was India's GI Act, 1999 aligned to protect geographical indications?
(a) Hague Agreement (b) TRIPS Agreement
(c) Madrid Protocol (d) WIPO Copyright Treaty
- In which year did the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act officially come into force in India?
(a) 1999 (b) 2000 (c) 2001 (d) 2003
- Which of the following international systems provide optional and fragmented protection for geographical indications?
(a) the Berne Convention and Hague System
(b) the TRIPS Agreement and Paris Convention
(c) the Lisbon System and Madrid System
(d) the Geneva Act and WIPO Copyright Treaty
- Which of the following is a patent dispute India contested in 1997 over the misappropriation of a GI-tagged product?
(a) Texmati 'Tea-blend' patent
(b) Punjab 'Sona Masuri' patent
(c) Ricetec "Basmati-style" patent
(d) Dehradun 'Aromatic Grain' patent
- Which international agreement has India not acceded to, limiting its ability to protect GIs like Darjeeling Tea globally?
(a) Lisbon-Geneva Act (2015)
(b) Berne Protocol Amendment (2016)
(c) TRIPS Extension Treaty (2017)
(d) WIPO Trade Accord (2018)
- Which Indian state is known for Srikalahasti Kalamkari and Guntur chilli as part of its GI-tagged product portfolio?
(a) Karnataka (b) West Bengal
(c) Maharashtra (d) Andhra Pradesh
- Which of the following GI products enjoy joint registration across multiple Indian states?
(a) Kanjeevaram silk and Channapatna toys
(b) Basmati rice and Warli painting
(c) Banarasi sarees and Madhubani painting
(d) Mysore sandalwood and Pattachitra art

SOLUTIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 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) | 14. (d) | 15. (b) | |

4

FIRST US JUDGEMENTS ON AI
AND COPYRIGHT LAWS

INTERNATIONAL/ LEGAL

IN FOCUS

- **Landmark Judgments (June 2025):** Two U.S. District Courts ruled in favour of **Anthropic** and **Meta**, dismissing **copyright infringement** claims over training their Generative AI models on copyrighted datasets.
- **Key Cases:** In **Bartz v. Anthropic**, Judge **William Alsup** found training **Claude AI** on pirated books to be **transformative fair use**; in **Silverman v. Meta**, Judge **Vince Chhabria** held that plaintiffs failed to prove **market harm** in Meta's use of text for **LLaMA**.
- **Outstanding Issues:** Both courts upheld the **fair use doctrine** but left unresolved the **unauthorised data acquisition** from shadow libraries, deferring **damages** and **liability** questions to future trials.
- **Global Ripple Effect:** The decisions have spurred over **21 active U.S. lawsuits**—including suits by **The New York Times**, music labels, and visual artists—and parallel challenges in **India** by ANI, DNPA, Indian Express, and NDTV.
- **Regulatory Call:** Observers warn that these verdicts underscore the urgent need for legal reforms on data mining, creator compensation, and AI-specific copyright exceptions.

Artificial Intelligence

Is the field of study

Machine Learning

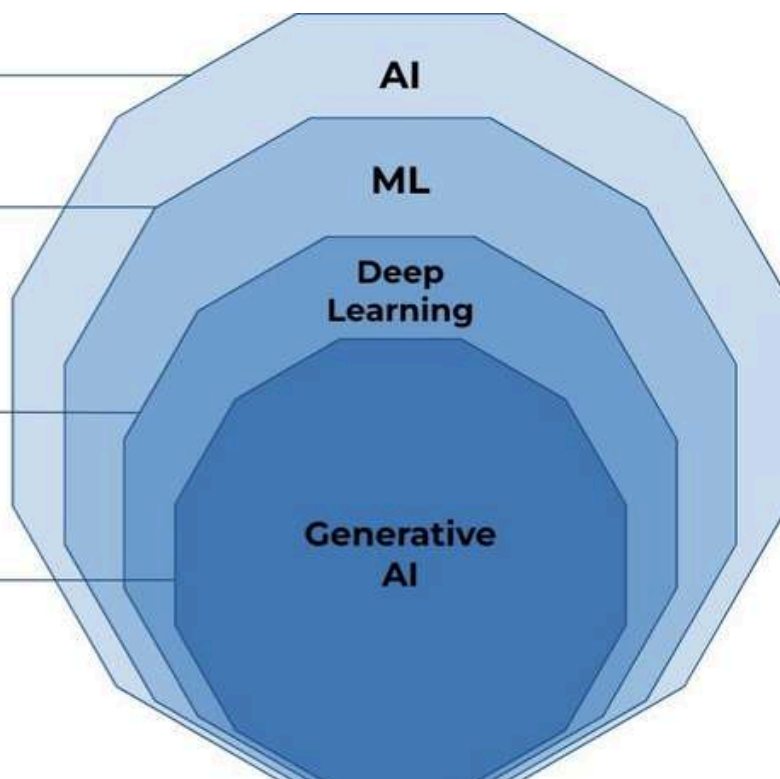
Is a branch of AI that focus on the creation of intelligent machines that learn from data. Another very well know branch inside AI is **Optimization**.

Deep Learning

Is a subset of Machine Learning methods, based on **Artificial Neural Networks**.
Examples: CNNs, RNNs

Generative AI

A type of ANNs that generate data that is similar to the data it was trained on.
Examples: GANs, LLMs



- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)** is a specialized branch of **Deep Learning**, itself under the broader umbrella of **Machine Learning** and **Artificial Intelligence**.
- While **AI** equips machines to mimic human cognition and **ML** enables pattern learning from data, **GenAI**—exemplified by systems like **ChatGPT**, **Claude**, **Gemini**, **DALL·E**, and **Midjourney**—**generates original**

- **content** (text, images, audio, video, or code) by extrapolating from massive, **internet-scraped datasets**. These corpora often include **copyrighted books, images, songs, and news articles**, raising pivotal legal questions about whether such use constitutes **unauthorised copying** or qualifies as **transformative fair use**.

Bartz v. Anthropic PBC (N.D. Cal. — Judge William Alsup)

- **Filed:** August 19, 2024 (putative class by authors led by Andrea Bartz).
- **Core allegation:** Anthropic used millions of pirated books (e.g., Books3/LibGen/PiLiMi) to build an internal corpus and to train Claude without permission or payment.

Procedural posture & headline rulings (June 2025):

- **Training = fair use.** Judge Alsup held that using books to train an LLM is “quintessentially/ exceedingly transformative,” and the amount copied was necessary for that purpose; plaintiffs hadn’t shown that training harmed a relevant market.
- **Pirated downloads ≠ fair use.** Separately, he found Anthropic’s mass downloading/retention of ~7M books from shadow libraries to build a “central library” was not fair use; that copying will proceed to a jury for liability/damages.
- **What goes to trial & when:** The court set a jury trial on damages (and any remaining liability questions tied to the pirated corpus) for December 1, 2025.
- **Class certification:** In July 2025, Judge Alsup certified a litigation class for rightsholders of millions of titles in the LibGen/PiLiMi sets Anthropic downloaded (Books3 was excluded in the class definition due to metadata issues).

Why this matters (doctrinal takeaways):

- **Sharp line between “training” and “acquisition.”** Training on text can be fair use, but how you obtained/kept the data still matters; the court condemned the build-and-keep library of pirated books.
- **Factor analysis highlights:** (1) Purpose/character: training is transformative; (2) Nature: creative books weigh against fair use but were outweighed; (3) Amount: copying entire works was functionally necessary for training; (4) Market: authors didn’t show training itself displaced a traditional or cognizable market. For the pirated library, Alsup said every factor cut against fair use.

Kadrey (a/k/a Silverman) v. Meta Platforms, Inc. (N.D. Cal. — Judge Vince Chhabria)

Filed: July 2023 (13 authors including Sarah Silverman, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Junot Díaz, Andrew Sean Greer).

Core allegation: Meta trained LLaMA on books scraped from shadow libraries (Books3/LibGen/others), infringing copyrights and violating the DMCA.

June 25–27, 2025 rulings:

- Meta wins on fair use (training). The court granted summary judgment for Meta on the authors’ copyright claim: the training use was highly transformative, and plaintiffs failed to present evidence of market harm/dilution sufficient to tip factor four against fair use. The judge also rejected two plaintiff theories as “clear losers”: (i) that LLaMA reproduces enough of their text to matter, and (ii) that authors hold an exclusive “AI-training license” market.
- DMCA claim also fails (separate order). The court later issued a separate order disposing of the DMCA §1202 claim in Meta’s favor.
- **What remains?** Judge Chhabria scheduled a case-management conference to address a narrow, separate allegation that Meta distributed copies while torrenting (a question not

resolved by the training fair-use ruling).

Judge's cautions (important dicta):

- The ruling does not declare all AI training lawful; it turns on this record. The judge emphasized that with better evidence of market dilution (e.g., LLMs flooding the market with substitutable works), future plaintiffs might defeat fair use. He also remarked that if training truly requires copyrighted books, companies “will figure out a way to compensate copyright holders.”
- **Status as of Aug 10, 2025:** Authors' main copyright and DMCA claims were dismissed on summary judgment; limited proceedings on any alleged distribution during torrenting were to be discussed with the court. Major coverage underscores that the door remains open for better-pled market harm theories in other cases.

The Fair Use Doctrine and Its Interpretation in AI Cases

- Under **Section 107** of the **U.S. Copyright Act**, **fair use** permits limited use of copyrighted work for purposes such as **criticism, news reporting, research, or teaching**, judged by four factors: (1) **purpose and character** (transformative vs. commercial), (2) **nature** of the work, (3) **amount and substantiality** used, and (4) **effect on the market**.
- Both Anthropic and Meta argued that model training produces novel outputs rather than replicating expressions, rendering it a non-infringing, transformative act. U.S. courts have thus far favoured innovation and public interest in transformative technologies, even as they signal the need for future regulations on unauthorised data use and creator remuneration.

Legal and Policy Position in India

- India's **Copyright Act, 1957** reserves copyright for **natural persons** under **Section 13**, excluding purely **AI-generated** works. **Section 52** (fair dealing) permits limited uses—**research, education, review, reporting, and transient storage**—but courts have yet to test its applicability to **AI training** on copyrighted Indian content.
- No specific provisions address text and data mining or large-scale dataset acquisition. Key precedents—**Civic Chandran v. Ammini Amma (1996)** on parody, **EBC v. D.B. Modak (2008)** on originality threshold, **India TV v. Yashraj Films (2012)** on cinematographic fair dealing, and **the DU Photocopy Case (2016)** on educational exceptions—offer interpretive guidance, but the legal landscape remains unsettled.
- A **2025 Commerce Ministry Panel** is reviewing amendments to plug gaps on AI authorship, data mining, and transformative use, in line with **TRIPS Article 13**.

Global Comparative Frameworks

- Different jurisdictions adopt varied stances on **AI-generated content**. In the **United States**, copyright protects only works with **substantial human creativity** (*Thaler v. Perlmutter*, 2023).
- The **European Union's AI Act (2024)** mandates **training-data transparency** and debates **sui generis rights** for AI outputs. **China** recognises AI-generated works as copyrightable if they involve **human originality**.
- The **United Kingdom** under **Section 9(3) CDPA 1988** grants copyright in **computer-generated** works to the person arranging creation. **South Africa** pioneered granting a **patent** to an AI system (**DABUS**, 2021), setting a precedent for **AI inventorship** in patent law.

Emerging Legal and Ethical Concerns

- The rapid rise of **GenAI** spotlights four critical issues: (1) **Ownership and authorship ambiguity**, as AI outputs lack clear human authors; (2) **Market dilution and livelihood losses**, since AI-generated content can supplant originals and erode royalties; (3) **Deepfakes and disinformation**, where synthetic media threaten democratic discourse; and (4) **Data-acquisition ethics**, as reliance on **pirated shadow libraries** like **Books3** and **Libgen** exposes tech firms to civil and criminal liability despite fair-use defenses.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who ruled in favour of Anthropic and Meta by dismissing copyright infringement claims over the training of their Generative AI models on copyrighted data?

- (a) U.S. Supreme Court
- (b) Two U.S. District Courts
- (c) U.S. Court of Appeals
- (d) Federal Trade Commission

2. Which companies were ruled in favour of by two U.S. District Courts in copyright cases involving the training of Generative AI models on copyrighted datasets?

- (a) Anthropic and Meta
- (b) OpenAI and Google
- (c) Amazon and Microsoft
- (d) Adobe and IBM

3. In which case did Judge William Alsup rule that training Claude AI on pirated books constituted transformative fair use?

- (a) Silverman v. OpenAI
- (b) Getty Images v. Stability AI
- (c) Bartz v. Anthropic
- (d) New York Times v. Microsoft

4. Which Generative AI model was ruled to have been trained on pirated books in a manner that constituted transformative fair use in the case of Bartz v. Anthropic?

- (a) Gemini AI
- (b) ChatGPT
- (c) DALL-E
- (d) Claude AI

5. Who was the judge in Silverman v. Meta, that held the plaintiffs failed to prove market harm from Meta's use of text to train its LLaMA model?

- (a) Judge Vince Chhabria
- (b) Judge William Alsup
- (c) Judge Amy Berman
- (d) Judge Charles Breyer

6. Which AI model in Silverman v. Meta, was at the center of the dispute where plaintiffs failed to prove market harm from the use of copyrighted text?

- (a) Claude AI
- (b) LLaMA
- (c) Gemini
- (d) PaLM

7. How many active U.S. lawsuits—including those by The New York Times, music labels, and visual artists—have been spurred globally following the court rulings in favor of Anthropic and Meta?

- (a) 12 active U.S. lawsuits
- (b) 30 active U.S. lawsuits
- (c) 21 active U.S. lawsuits
- (d) 15 active U.S. lawsuits

8. Which branch of Artificial Intelligence is a specialized subset of Deep Learning and focuses on creating new content such as text, images, or audio?

- (a) Generative Artificial Intelligence
- (b) Predictive Analytics
- (c) Reinforcement Learning
- (d) Symbolic AI

9. In which case did authors led by Andrea Bartz allege that Anthropic trained its Claude AI model using pirated digital copies from the Books3 shadow library without authorisation or compensation?

- (a) Bartz v. Anthropic
- (b) Silverman v. Meta
- (c) New York Times v. OpenAI
- (d) Getty Images v. Stability AI

10. How many authors in Silverman v. Meta case, including Sarah Silverman and Ta-Nehisi Coates, alleged that Meta's LLaMA models were trained on pirated datasets like Books3, Libgen, and Anna's Archive?

- (a) 10 authors
- (b) 13 authors
- (c) 7 authors
- (d) 15 authors

11. Which datasets in the Silverman v. Meta, did the 13 authors, including Sarah Silverman and Ta-Nehisi Coates, claim were used without consent to train Meta's LLaMA models?

- (a) Common Crawl, Project Gutenberg, and ArXiv
- (b) Reddit, Wikipedia, and Stack Overflow
- (c) Books3, Libgen, and Anna's Archive
- (d) Open Library, PubMed, and JSTOR

12. Who found insufficient evidence of market harm, accepted Meta's mitigation claims, and suggested that tech firms create compensation mechanisms for creators in the context of LLaMA's training data use?

- (a) Judge Alsup
- (b) Judge Berman
- (c) Judge Breyer
- (d) Judge Chhabria

13. Under which provision of the U.S. Copyright Act is the fair use doctrine—based on four key factors including purpose, nature, amount used, and market effect—defined?

- (a) Section 107
- (b) Section 102
- (c) Section 120
- (d) Section 108

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

14. Under which Indian law is copyright reserved for natural persons, thereby excluding purely AI-generated works from protection?

- (a) Information Technology Act, 2000
- (b) Copyright Act, 1957
- (c) AI Ethics Framework, 2021
- (d) Patents Act, 1970

15. Which section of India's Copyright Act permits fair dealing for limited purposes like research, education, review, reporting, and transient storage, though its applicability to AI training remains untested?

- (a) Section 13
- (b) Section 31
- (c) Section 52
- (d) Section 57

SOLUTIONS

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

5

QUAD LAUNCHES CRITICAL
MINERALS INITIATIVE

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Date & Venue:** On **1 July 2025**, the foreign ministers of the **Quad nations—India, the United States, Japan, and Australia**—convened in **Washington, D.C.** to inaugurate the **Quad Critical Minerals Initiative**.
- **Joint Statement:** The ministers expressed “**deep concern**” over the **abrupt constriction** and uncertain reliability of **key mineral supply chains**, pinpointing **China’s monopoly and coercive practices** as strategic threats.
- **Strategic Expansion:** The initiative marks a **major expansion** of the Quad’s **economic and security cooperation**, underscoring its evolving **strategic role** in the **Indo-Pacific**.
- **Collaborative Goal:** By **securing and diversifying** global access to **critical minerals**, the Quad seeks to reduce **coercive dependencies** and bolster **technological sovereignty** among democracies.

- **Critical minerals** including **rare earth elements** such as **neodymium, dysprosium, samarium, and lithium** are foundational to numerous **strategic and high-technology sectors**.
- They power **electric-vehicle motors** through **rare-earth magnets**, underpin **semiconductors, circuit boards, displays and sensors**, and are integral to **defence and aerospace systems** like **radar, jet engines, and satellites**.
- Moreover, these minerals are essential components of **renewable-energy systems**, particularly **wind-turbine generators** and **battery-storage** solutions, making their secure supply a linchpin of both economic growth and national security.

China’s Dominance and Economic Coercion

- **China** currently commands **60–68 percent** of global production and processing of **lithium, cobalt, and nickel**, while maintaining a near monopoly on rare-earth magnet manufacturing. By imposing export restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles—most notably the 2024 bans on gallium, germanium, and heavy rare earths like yttrium and terbium—Beijing has demonstrated its willingness to weaponize supply chains, disrupting industries worldwide, including India’s EV manufacturing, which depends heavily on Chinese NdFeB magnets.

Objectives and Structure of the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative

The Quad initiative is designed to **diversify and secure** the sourcing of **critical minerals** through four strategic goals:

- (1) **securing alternative supply chains** beyond dominant producers;
- (2) **promoting e-waste recycling and mineral reprocessing**
- (3) **facilitating public-private partnerships** to attract investment in extraction and processing, and
- (4) **strengthening the economic security and technological sovereignty** of the **Indo-Pacific**.

Implementation will prioritise the identification of new lithium, graphite, and rare-earth deposits, the development of refining capacity in Quad countries, the recovery of minerals from electronic waste, and the convening of investment forums in collaboration with mineral-rich emerging economies.

Complementary Initiatives: G7, TRUST, and National Missions

The Quad announcement builds on the **G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan (June 2025)**, which pledges **collaboration with developing countries, local value creation**, and a **\$50 million World Bank-led RISE** initiative funded by G7 members.

- It dovetails with the **India-US TRUST Initiative (February 2025)**, under which both nations will jointly develop extraction and processing technologies, especially for lithium, rare earths, and battery minerals, via the Critical Materials Innovation Hub.
- Domestically, **India's National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) launched in 2025** with an outlay of ₹ **16,300 crore** aims to boost exploration, fund overseas mining acquisitions, incentivise PPPs in mining technologies, support R&D in refining and recycling, and build strategic reserves through **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)** in **Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile**.

India's Strategic Concerns and Challenges

- **China's export restrictions** have severely disrupted **India's EV sector**, as no Indian firm has gained approval to source **rare-earth magnets**, with Beijing insisting on **bulk purchases of assembled Chinese motors** instead.
- This condition has slowed production schedules and raised national security alarms given the dual-use nature of these materials. Beyond raw-material dependencies, India faces a critical processing deficit: while global mineral reserves are ample, refining infrastructure remains limited, forcing reliance not only on imported ores but also on value-added derivatives controlled by competitors.

Future Directions and Quad's Expanding Role

- The Quad is extending cooperation into maritime security and infrastructure, including piracy and illegal-fishing enforcement, the **"Quad-at-Sea" Ship Observer Mission**, and the Ports of the Future Partnership Conference in Mumbai (October 2025) to enhance regional connectivity.
- Additionally, India's **2023 accession to the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)**, a US-led coalition of **G7 and Indo-Pacific allies** complements Quad efforts by offering a platform for data-sharing, investment facilitation, and standards harmonisation, and by opening access to alternative mineral hubs in Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America.

Evolution of the Quad



- **2004–2007: Origins.** Ad-hoc coordination among the **four after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami** led to diplomatic consultations; the **first "Quad" officials' meeting took place in 2007** on the margins of ASEAN fora. The grouping then lapsed due to shifting political calculations.
- **2017: Revival ("Quad 2.0").** Senior officials from the four reconvened in **November 2017 (Manila)** and restarted regular consultations, emphasising a rules-based order and practical cooperation.

2021: Leader-level upgrade.

- **Mar 12, 2021:** First-ever Leaders' Summit (virtual) adopted **The Spirit of the Quad vision** and launched vaccine, climate, and tech initiatives.
- **Sept 24, 2021: First in-person Leaders' Summit (Washington, DC)** laid out a broad, action-oriented slate across health, infrastructure, climate, emerging tech, cyber, and talent.
- **2022: Maritime focus.** Tokyo Leaders' Summit (May 23–24, 2022) launched IPMDA to give partners near-real-time maritime awareness across the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.
- **2023: Consolidation.** Hiroshima Leaders' Summit (May 20, 2023) reaffirmed principles (law of the sea, sovereignty, no coercion) and expanded work in space, cyber, critical tech, and connectivity.

- **2024: Wilmington Declaration.** Leaders marked four years of leader-level Quad and underscored delivery on public goods while reiterating respect for ASEAN, PIF, and IORA. India was slated to host the 2025 Leaders' Summit; the US to host the 2025 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following is NOT among the Quad nations that convened on July 2025 in Washington, D.C. to launch the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative?
(a) India (b) Australia (c) Canada (d) Japan
- Where did the foreign ministers of the Quad nations meet on July 2025 to launch the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative?
(a) Washington, D.C. (b) Canberra
(c) Tokyo (d) New Delhi
- Which country currently commands 60–68 percent of global production and processing of lithium, cobalt, and nickel, and holds a near monopoly on rare-earth magnet manufacturing?
(a) China (b) Australia
(c) United States (d) DR of Congo
- Which of the following is NOT among the rare earth elements that are foundational to numerous strategic and high-technology sectors?
(a) Neodymium (b) Dysprosium
(c) Samarium (d) Lithium
- On which of the following components, Beijing's export bans on gallium, germanium, and heavy rare earths disrupted global industries, including India's EV sector in 2024?
(a) Lithium-ion anodes
(b) Chinese NdFeB magnets
(c) German silicon wafers
(d) South Korean battery modules
- Which component, heavily relied upon by India's EV manufacturing industry, has been disrupted due to Beijing's export restrictions and control over rare earth supply chains?
(a) Beijing magnets
(b) Korean battery packs
(c) Japanese microcontrollers
(d) U.S. charging infrastructure
- On which June 2025 framework does the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative build, promoting collaboration with developing countries and supporting the \$50 million World Bank-led RISE initiative?
(a) Indo-Pacific Green Corridors Accord
(b) G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan
(c) BRICS Mineral Security Framework
(d) ASEAN Rare Earths Cooperation Pact
- Which bilateral initiative, launched in February 2025, complements the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative by enabling joint development of extraction and processing technologies between India and the United States?
(a) Indo-Pacific Minerals Corridor
(b) U.S.–India Rare Earths Pact
(c) Strategic Minerals Supply Alliance
(d) India–US TRUST Initiative
- Which 2025 Indian initiative, launched with an outlay of ₹16,300 crore, aims to boost mineral exploration, support overseas mining acquisitions, and incentivise public–private partnerships in mining technologies?
(a) Atmanirbhar Mineral Security Plan
(b) India's National Critical Mineral Mission
(c) Strategic Mining and Processing Scheme
(d) Bharat Rare Earth Development Program
- Which of the three countries under India's National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), are key targets for building strategic reserves through Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)?
(a) Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile
(b) Brazil, Peru, and Colombia
(c) Australia, South Africa, and Canada
(d) Indonesia, Myanmar, and Vietnam

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

11. In which city is the Ports of the Future Partnership Conference—part of the Quad’s maritime cooperation strategy—scheduled to be held in October 2025 to enhance regional connectivity?

- (a) Tokyo
- (b) Sydney
- (c) Mumbai
- (d) Honolulu

12. Which US-led coalition, joined by India in 2023, complements Quad efforts by promoting data-sharing, investment facilitation, standards harmonisation, and access to alternative mineral hubs across Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America?

- (a) Indo-Pacific Economic Framework
- (b) Global Gateway Minerals Initiative
- (c) Strategic Raw Materials Alliance
- (d) Minerals Security Partnership

SOLUTIONS

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

6

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES EMPLOYMENT
LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME

NATIONAL/POLITY

IN FOCUS

- **Cabinet Approval:** On **1 July 2025** the Union Cabinet, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, cleared the **₹ 99,446 crore** Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme, a flagship of the **₹ 2 lakh crore Youth Employment Package** announced in the Union Budget 2024-25.
- **Implementation Window:** The scheme will operate from **1 August 2025 to 31 July 2027**, targeting the creation of **over 3.5 crore formal jobs**.
- **Dual Incentive Design:** Part A provides a one-month wage subsidy (up to ₹ 15,000) to first-time employees; Part B offers two- to four-year wage incentives to employers that generate additional employment, with a special thrust on manufacturing.
- **Digital Delivery:** All payments will flow through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) using Aadhaar-linked and PAN-linked accounts to curb leakages and uphold transparency.

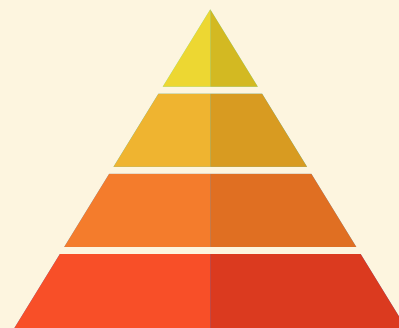
Background and Policy Context

- The **ELI Scheme** forms the keystone of a **five-scheme Youth Employment Mission** pledged in the **Union Budget 2024-25**, which aims to boost **employment, skilling, formalisation, and entrepreneurship** for **4.1 crore youth**.
- It responds to accelerating labour-market momentum: the Finance Ministry's **Monthly Economic Review 2025** reported **4.67 crore new jobs** in FY 2023-24 and steady growth in **EPF, ESIC, and NPS** enrolments during the first half of FY 2024-25.
- By linking fiscal incentives to formal hiring, the government seeks to consolidate these gains and embed social security in India's post-pandemic recovery.



Structure of the ELI Scheme

- The scheme comprises two complementary components. **Part A** targets **1.92 crore first-time workers** registered with the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**. Eligible employees earning up to **₹ 1 lakh per month** will receive a wage subsidy—capped at **₹ 15,000**—in **two equal instalments** after **six and twelve months** of continuous service, the latter contingent on completing a **financial-literacy module**.
- A fraction of the payout will be sequestered in a **savings instrument** to inculcate long-term financial discipline.



- **Part B** incentivises employers to expand their workforce. EPFO-registered establishments hiring workers on salaries up to ₹ 1 lakh will earn a graded subsidy: ₹ 1,000 for wages ≤ ₹ 10,000; ₹ 2,000 for wages between ₹ 10,001-20,000; and ₹ 3,000 for wages between ₹ 20,001-1,00,000.
- Firms with **fewer than 50 employees** must add at least **two workers**, while larger firms must add **five**; employment must be retained for six months to unlock payments. Manufacturing units qualify for an extended **four-year** incentive, acknowledging their capacity to absorb **low- and medium-skilled labour**.

Implementation and Disbursement Mechanism

- Employee benefits will be routed via **DBT** on the **Aadhaar Bridge Payment System**, whereas employer incentives will credit directly into **PAN-linked bank accounts**.
- This architecture aligns with the government's **Digital India** agenda, minimises administrative overheads, and facilitates real-time monitoring through an integrated **MIS dashboard**.

Institutional Framework: EPFO and Employment Formalisation

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**—a statutory body under the **Ministry of Labour & Employment** that administers the **Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952**—is pivotal to scheme delivery. **As one of the world's largest social-security institutions, EPFO manages provident-fund, pension, and insurance benefits for over 10 crore members.**
- By funnelling first-time workers into EPFO accounts, the **ELI Scheme** expands **formal employment**, granting entrants immediate access to **social protection, retirement savings, and occupational insurance**. Concurrently, employer incentives are conditional on EPFO registration, thereby extending the social-security net and enhancing the quality of India's labour force.

Expected Outcomes and Sectoral Focus

- The policy targets **1.92 crore jobs** through direct employee support and **2.60 crore jobs** via employer incentives, totalling **over 3.5 crore** new formal positions.
- While open to all industries, the scheme designates **manufacturing** as a priority sector—granting longer subsidy tenures to reinforce **Make in India**, bolster domestic value chains, and enhance export competitiveness.

Significance and Long-Term Impact

- By lowering hiring costs for **MSMEs** and large firms alike, the **ELI Scheme** is poised to stimulate **private-sector recruitment**, particularly among **young graduates, migrant workers**, and women entering the labour force.
- Its linkage to **financial-literacy certification** promotes savings culture and workforce stability. Over time, the initiative should narrow the **urban-rural employment gap** by encouraging job creation in **Tier II and Tier III cities**, fostering balanced regional development.

Challenges and Considerations

- The nearly **₹ 1 lakh-crore** outlay demands vigilant fiscal stewardship, robust **third-party evaluations**, and granular **MIS tracking** to deter misuse.
- Success ultimately hinges on seamless integration with **skilling programmes**—such as **PMKVY** and the **Digital Skilling Initiative**—so that job creation aligns with evolving industry demand and yields **sustainable, high-quality employment**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who chaired the Union Cabinet meeting that approved the ₹99,446 crore Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme in July 2025, as part of the ₹2 lakh crore Youth Employment Package?
(a) Nirmala Sitharaman (b) Narendra Modi
(c) Rajnath Singh (d) Dharmendra Pradhan
2. What form of support is provided to first-time employees under Part A of the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme?
(a) Skill training vouchers
(b) Provident fund reimbursement
(c) One-month wage subsidy
(d) Travel allowance reimbursement
3. Which component of the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme offers two- to four-year wage incentives to employers for generating additional jobs, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector?
(a) Part C (b) Part A (c) Part B (d) Part D
4. Which mechanism is used under the ELI Scheme to route all payments via Aadhaar-linked and PAN-linked accounts to ensure transparency and prevent leakages?
(a) Unified Payment Interface
(b) Public Financial Management System
(c) Digital Employment Wallet
(d) Direct Benefit Transfer
5. Which broader initiative announced in the Union Budget 2024–25 includes the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme as a key component to promote employment, skilling, formalisation, and entrepreneurship for 4.1 crore youth?
(a) National Skill Accelerator Program
(b) India@100 Startup Growth Plan
(c) Youth Empowerment and Innovation Drive
(d) Five-scheme Youth Employment Mission
6. Which set of social security schemes saw steady growth in enrolments during the first half of FY 2024–25, according to the Finance Ministry's Monthly Economic Review 2025 highlighting labour-market momentum?
(a) EPF, ESIC, and NPS
(b) PM-KISAN, PMAY, and EPF
(c) EPF, PM-JAY, and PMAY
(d) PMAY and EPF, ESIC
7. With which organisation are 1.92 crore first-time workers being registered under Part A of the ELI Scheme to promote formal employment?
(a) National Skill Development Corporation
(b) Labour Bureau of India
(c) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
(d) Employees Provident Fund Organisation
8. After how many months of continuous service will eligible employees earning up to ₹1 lakh per month receive the two equal instalments of the wage subsidy under the ELI Scheme?
(a) Three and nine months (b) Six and twelve months
(c) Four and eight months (d) Two and ten months
9. How many employees are required to add at least two new workers under the ELI Scheme in order to qualify for wage incentives?
(a) 20 employees (b) 100 employees
(c) 50 employees (d) 75 employees
10. Through which system will employee benefits under the ELI Scheme be routed via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), while employer incentives will be credited into PAN-linked bank accounts?
(a) Bharat Interface for Money
(b) National Automated Clearing House
(c) Jan Dhan Payment Gateway
(d) Aadhaar Bridge Payment System
11. Which of the following is NOT managed by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)?
(a) Provident Fund benefits
(b) Pension benefits
(c) Medical treatment reimbursements
(d) Insurance benefits

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

12. In which areas to promote balanced regional development does the ELI Scheme aim to encourage job creation and narrow the urban-rural employment gap?

- (a) Metropolitan cities
- (b) Tier II and Tier III cities
- (c) Special Economic Zones (SEZs)
- (d) Border and tribal regions

13. Which of the following measures is essential for ensuring transparency and preventing misuse under the nearly ₹1 lakh-crore outlay of the ELI Scheme?

- (a) MIS tracking
- (b) Skill certification audits
- (c) Online job fairs
- (d) Tax rebate filing

SOLUTIONS

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

7

MADRAS HC STRIKES DOWN
MHA'S PHONE TAP ORDER

NATIONAL/LEGAL

IN FOCUS

- **Landmark Judgment & Date:** On **July 2 2025**, the **Madras High Court** struck down a **2011 surveillance order** issued by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, declaring it unconstitutional.
- **Petitioner & Context:** The ruling arose from a **writ petition** filed by **P. Kishore**, former Managing Director of **Everonn Education Ltd.**, whose phone had been tapped during a **CBI bribery investigation**.
- **Key Holding:** Justice **N. Anand Venkatesh** held that **covert interception** without a **public emergency** or **public-safety threat** violates the **fundamental right to privacy** under **Article 21**.
- **Statutory Basis Challenged:** The order, authorised under **Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act 1885** and **Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules 1951**, was deemed *ultra vires*.
- **Broader Impact:** The judgment emphasised that anti-corruption probes alone cannot justify phone tapping, spotlighting procedural lapses and reinforcing **post-Puttaswamy privacy jurisprudence**.

Bench

Justice N. Anand
Venkatesh

Key Highlights

The controversy originated on **August 12 2011**, when the **Union Home Secretary** authorised the interception of **Kishore's mobile phone** under **Section 5(2)** and **Rule 419A** to aid a **CBI** enquiry into an alleged **₹ 50 lakh bribe** paid to an Income Tax official. Although sacks of cash were reportedly recovered, Kishore was absent during the seizure, and no money was found in his possession. After a **2014 criminal petition** was dismissed on technical grounds, Kishore re-approached the court in **2018** under **Article 226**, culminating in the present decision.

Legal Issues and Judicial Findings

- The decisive question was whether **secret interception for detecting corruption**, in the absence of **public emergency** or **public safety concerns**, is permissible under **Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act**.
- The court ruled that the 2011 order was **ultra vires** and **unconstitutional**, stressing that the statute does not authorise surveillance "aimed at the detection of crimes" unless the stringent thresholds of emergency or safety are met.
- Citing **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**, the judge pronounced that any intrusion on privacy must satisfy a **just, fair and reasonable** procedure, which the MHA order failed to do. Moreover, the mandatory **Review Committee** scrutiny mandated by **Rule 419A** never occurred, compounding the illegality.

Reliance on PUCL v. Union of India (1997)

- Drawing heavily on **PUCL**, the court reiterated that phone tapping is lawful only when both **public emergency** and **public safety** criteria are clearly established. A 2011 Government press note clarifying that **tax-evasion cases** alone cannot trigger interception further bolstered the court's reasoning.

Statutory and Constitutional Framework for Interception

- **Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act 1885** authorises interception solely during a **public emergency** or

- **in the interest of public safety**, and only on specified grounds such as **sovereignty, security, public order or incitement to an offence**. **Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules 1951** requires written authorisation by the **Home Secretary**, urgent-case approval by a **Joint Secretary**, periodic **Review Committee** oversight within two months, and a maximum validity of **180 days**.
- Parallely, **Section 69 of the Information Technology Act 2000** governs electronic interception under similar safeguards. Post-**Puttaswamy**, **Article 21** shields privacy as a fundamental right, demanding proportional, least-intrusive surveillance consistent with **Articles 19(2) and 21**.

Divergent High Court Approaches on Phone Tapping

- In 2025, the **Delhi High Court** upheld phone tapping in a **₹ 2,149 crore corruption case**, reasoning that large-scale corruption threatens **public safety** and fits within **Section 5(2)**.
- By contrast, the **Madras High Court** found that a **₹ 50 lakh bribery allegation** fails to meet the emergency or safety threshold, underscoring the need for **Supreme Court clarification** on the permissible scope of interception in criminal probes.

Supreme Court Precedents Guiding the Verdict

- The judgment reaffirmed **PUCL (1997)** guidelines on authorisation and review, the **Puttaswamy (2017)** privacy framework requiring legality, necessity and proportionality, and **Maneka Gandhi (1978)**, which insists that any deprivation of rights follow a **just, fair and reasonable** procedure.

Implications of the Judgment

- By quashing the interception order, the court strengthens **procedural safeguards** and signals robust **judicial oversight** of executive surveillance powers.
- The ruling fortifies **privacy jurisprudence** and nudges Parliament toward enacting a **comprehensive privacy and data-protection statute**, addressing interception, oversight, remedies and transparency.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which ministry's 2011 surveillance order was declared unconstitutional by the Madras High Court in a landmark judgment on July 2, 2025?
(a) Ministry of Law and Justice
(b) Ministry of Electronics and IT
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs
(d) Ministry of External Affairs
2. Who filed the writ petition that led to the Madras High Court's July 2025 ruling declaring the 2011 surveillance order unconstitutional?
(a) P. Kishore (b) R. Subramanian
(c) A. Krishnan (d) S. Balasubramaniam
3. To which specific context did the writ petition filed by P. Kishore—leading to the Madras High Court's July 2025 judgment on illegal phone tapping—relate?
(a) Corporate tax evasion probe
(b) CBI bribery investigation
(c) Insider trading case
(d) Cybercrime surveillance audit
4. Who delivered the Madras High Court's July 2025 judgment holding that covert interception without a public emergency or public-safety threat violates the fundamental right to privacy?
(a) Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul
(b) Justice M. Sundar
(c) Justice Indira Banerjee
(d) Justice N. Anand Venkatesh
5. Which provision of law, along with Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules, 1951, was cited as the legal basis for the 2011 surveillance order that was later struck down by the Madras High Court?
(a) Section 66A of the IT Act
(b) Section 69 of the IT Act
(c) Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885
(d) Section 3 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923
6. Which specific rule of the Telegraph Rules, 1951 was invoked along with Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, to authorise the 2011 interception of P. Kishore's mobile phone?
(a) Rule 420 (b) Rule 419A
(c) Rule 41B (d) Rule 21C
7. By which agency was the enquiry being conducted that led to the 2011 interception of P. Kishore's phone, allegedly involving a ₹50 lakh bribe paid to an Income Tax official?
(a) ED (b) CBI (c) SFIO (d) NIA
8. Under which constitutional provision did P. Kishore re-approach the Madras High Court in 2018 after the dismissal of his 2014 criminal petition, eventually resulting in the 2025 judgment?
(a) Article 226 (b) Article 32
(c) Article 21 (d) Article 14
9. Which landmark Supreme Court case was cited by the Madras High Court to assert that any intrusion on privacy must follow a just, fair, and reasonable procedure?
(a) Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)
(b) A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras (1950)
(c) Selvi v. State of Karnataka (2010)
(d) K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)
10. Which statutory body's mandatory oversight, as required under Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules, was not conducted in the 2011 surveillance case, thereby compounding its illegality?
(a) Surveillance Authorization Board
(b) Review Committee
(c) Data Protection Tribunal
(d) Central Vigilance Panel
11. To which law does Section 5(2), which permits phone interception only during a public emergency or in the interest of public safety, belong?
(a) Indian Telegraph Act 1885

- (b) Information Technology Act 2000
- (c) Indian Penal Code 1860
- (d) Official Secrets Act 1923

12. Within what time frame must the Review Committee examine an interception order under Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules, 1951?

- (a) One month
- (b) Fifteen days
- (c) Two months
- (d) Ninety days

13. Who is authorised to approve phone interception orders under Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules, 1951, in urgent cases, before Review Committee oversight?

- (a) Cabinet Secretary
- (b) Additional Secretary
- (c) Chief Vigilance Commissioner
- (d) Joint Secretary

14. Which provision of the Information Technology Act, 2000 governs electronic interception and mandates similar safeguards as Rule 419A of the Telegraph Rules?

- (a) Section 66A
- (b) Section 69
- (c) Section 72A
- (d) Section 43

SOLUTIONS

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

8

**2025 PARAKH RASHTRIYA
SARVEKSHAN****NATIONAL/REPORT****IN FOCUS**

- **Survey Release:** The **PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) 2024-25**, conducted by **NCERT** for the **Ministry of Education**, measured learning among **21 lakh + Grade 3, 6 and 9 students** in **74,229 schools** across **781 districts**.
- **Key Alert:** Results show that **foundational skills have not rebounded to pre-Covid levels**, with steep deficits in **mathematics, science and language**.
- **NEP Alignment:** PARAKH, created under **NEP 2020**, replaces the National Achievement Survey and is India's first **autonomous, nation-wide assessment authority**.
- **Policy Leverage:** Findings will steer initiatives such as **NIPUN Bharat, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, DIKSHA** and upcoming **Technology-Assisted Learning & Assessment (TALA)** diagnostics.

**PARAKH
Sarvekshan****Genesis and Mandate of PARAKH**

PARAKH **Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development** was notified in **2023** to standardise outcome-based school assessments. Anchored in **NEP 2020**, the body's remit is to generate comparable state-wise data, spotlight learning inequities and guide curricular reforms. Its elevation from the older National Achievement Survey underscores a strategic shift from rote testing to **competency-based measurement**.

Grade-wise Learning Outcomes

At the **foundational level**, **67 percent** of Grade 3 pupils could use everyday vocabulary, yet only **60 percent** comprehended short stories; mathematics revealed stark weakness, with barely **54 percent** understanding simple multiplication and half grasping geometry or money concepts. By **Grade 6**, fractions mastery dipped to **29 percent**, and only **38 percent** solved real-life arithmetic tasks; Environmental Studies showed that fewer than **40 percent** could predict local environmental patterns. In **Grade 9**, language proficiency slid further, just **54 percent** extracted key ideas from editorial texts while mathematics fluency collapsed to **28-31 percent** for percentage or fraction applications. Science fared little better: only **34 percent** could differentiate living from non-living traits and **37 percent** understood basic physics concepts such as pressure or electric circuits.

Survey Scope, Sample and Methodology

The December 2024 assessment covered **21,15,022 students**, **2.7 lakh teachers** and school leaders. It applied **grade-aligned, competency-based instruments** at three NEP transition points: **Grade 3 (foundational)**, **Grade 6 (preparatory)** and **Grade 9 (middle)**. Test domains included **Language, Mathematics, Environmental Studies**, and for Grade 9, **Science and Social Science**. Data capture spanned government, aided and private schools, enabling granular disaggregation by **state, district and school type**.

State and School-Type Performance Patterns

Consistently high performers were **Punjab, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli – Daman & Diu**. In contrast, **Sahebganj (Jharkhand)** and **Reasi/Rajouri (J&K)** ranked at the bottom for Grade 3, while numerous districts in **Meghalaya** and **Shi Yomi (Arunachal Pradesh)** lagged in Grades 6 and 9. A striking anomaly emerged: **Kendriya Vidyalayas** scored below average in **Grade 3 Mathematics** yet excelled in **Grade 9 Language**, revealing intra-system inconsistencies. State-run and aided schools underachieved particularly in higher-grade mathematics and science, highlighting teacher-capacity gaps.

Comparative Insights from ASER 2024 and FLN Study 2022

Pratham's **ASER 2024** reported a rebound in rural reading. **Class 3 proficiency in government schools rose to 23.4 percent**, approximating the **2018** baseline while **Class 5 arithmetic** climbed to **48.7 percent**. However, the new digital-literacy module exposed **gendered disparities** in smartphone use despite **90 percent** adolescent access. The **NCERT FLN Study 2022** showed that **37 percent** of Class 3 children possessed limited numeracy, and **15 percent** lacked basic English, validating PARAKH's warning that early-grade deficits persist.

Policy Alignment under NEP 2020 and Associated Interventions

NEP 2020 mandates competency-based, stage-wise assessments and targets **universal foundational literacy and numeracy by 2026-27**. The **NIPUN Bharat Mission (2021)** operationalises this through activity-based pedagogy and household-level engagement. Digital amplifiers such as **DIKSHA, PM e-Vidya and SWAYAM** supply multilingual e-content, while the **TALA platform** promises AI-driven diagnostics. **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** aggregates funding across access, equity and quality, channelling resources to the weakest districts revealed by PARAKH.

Systemic Concerns and Learning Gaps

Persistent **conceptual fragility in mathematics and science**, widening **urban-rural divides**, and repeated underperformance of **North-Eastern districts** expose structural inequities. Moreover, disparate outcomes within the same management category from Kendriya Vidyalayas to state-run schools demand **school-level interventions**, robust teacher-mentoring and context-specific remediation.

Indian Education Policies, Initiatives and Key Facts

Historic Policy Milestones and Rights-based Guarantees: Post-Independence, the **National Policies on Education 1968 and 1986/92** established a common-school vision; the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009** translated the 86th Constitutional Amendment into an enforceable eight-year schooling right. **NEP 2020** superseded the 34-year-old framework, pledging **universal FLN by 2025, 100 percent GER in school education by 2030 and 50 percent GER in higher education by 2035**.

NEP 2020 Implementation Snapshot (2023-25): The **National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023** introduced multilingual, activity-centric textbooks and ten **new NCERT titles for Classes 5 & 8** were released in July 2025.

- The **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)** scheme is upgrading **14,500** exemplars, with **10,855** sanctioned by October 2024. At the tertiary level, the **Common University Entrance Test (CUET)** standardises admissions (registrations hit **13.5 lakh** for **CUET-UG 2025**), while the forthcoming **National Digital University** and **Academic Bank of Credits** enable modular, credit-linked degrees.
- **Flagship Schemes and Digital-First Initiatives:** Unified under **Samagra Shiksha**, programmes like **NIPUN Bharat**, **PM e-Vidya/DIKSHA**, **SOAR 2025 (Skilling for AI Readiness)**, **Atal Tinkering Labs** and **NEAT 4.0** embed STEM, AI literacy and ed-tech marketplaces into the school ecosystem.
- **Equity, Inclusion and Nutrition:** Funds such as the **Gender Inclusion Fund**, **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas**, and the expansion of **Eklavya Model Residential Schools** operationalise inclusive mandates. The revamped **PM Poshan** scheme now covers pre-primary children and distributes fortified rations during holidays, tackling nutrition-learning linkages.
- **Quality Assurance, Governance and Funding:** The **Performance Grading Index 2024** rated seven states in the top '**Daksh**' tier. The forthcoming **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** bill aims to collapse multiple regulators into a four-vertical architecture. On finance, the **Union Budget 2025-26** raised the Ministry of Education allocation to **₹ 1.28 lakh crore** with **61 percent** directed to school education and priority capital set for universal school broadband and Digital University seed funding.
- **Key Indicators and Targets:** Current literacy stands at **80.9 percent (PLFS 2023-24)**; higher-education GER is **29.5 percent (AISHE 2022-23 provisional)**; the secondary dropout rate is **14.1 percent (UDISE+ 2023-24)**; and the elementary **teacher-pupil ratio** averages **1:26**, bettering the **RTE norm of 1:30**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which institution conducted the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) 2024-25 to assess learning levels across India?
 - National Testing and Talent Council
 - Central Institute of Educational Assessment
 - National Council of Educational Research and Training
 - All India School Evaluation Authority
- Which student grades were assessed in the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) 2024-25 across 74,229 schools?
 - Grade 3, 6 and 9
 - Grade 5, 8 and 10
 - Grade 2, 4 and 7
 - Grade 1, 6 and 8
- Which subjects showed steep learning deficits according to the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) 2024-25 findings?
 - Social science, art and environmental studies
 - Mathematics, science and language
 - Computer skills, history and geography
 - Civics, music and general knowledge
- Which upcoming diagnostic initiative will be guided by the findings of the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) 2024-25?
 - National Education Policy Evaluation Mission
 - Digital India Learning Enhancement Drive
 - Bharat Foundational Skills Mission
 - Technology-Assisted Learning & Assessment
- What does the acronym PARAKH stand for in the context of India's national education assessment framework?
 - Programme for Academic Review and Knowledge Harmonisation
 - Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development
 - Policy for Rationalising Assessments and Knowledge Hierarchies
 - Pedagogical Audit and Review of Academic Knowledge and Habits
- What percentage of Grade 3 students demonstrated understanding of simple multiplication, according to the PARAKH RS 2024-25 findings?
 - 67%
 - 60%
 - 54%
 - 50%

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

7. Which of the following is NOT among the consistently high-performing states/UTs in the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024-25?

- (a) Kerala (b) Gujarat
(c) Chandigarh (d) Himachal Pradesh

8. Which grade level showed the lowest performance in districts like Sahebganj (Jharkhand) and Reasi/Rajouri (J&K) as per PARAKH RS 2024-25?

- (a) Grade 6 (b) Grade 3 (c) Grade 9 (d) Grade 5

9. Which of the following states had districts that lagged behind in student performance in Grades 6 and 9 as per the PARAKH RS 2024-25 report?

- (a) Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh
(b) Mizoram and Tripura
(c) Sikkim and Manipur
(d) Nagaland and Assam

10. What was the reported Class 3 reading proficiency in government schools according to Pratham's ASER 2024 report?

- (a) 15.2 percent (b) 30.1 percent
(c) 18.9 percent (d) 23.4 percent

11. Which programme aggregates funding across access, equity, and quality to support underperforming districts identified by the PARAKH survey?

- (a) NIPUN Bharat Mission
(b) Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan
(c) DIKSHA Digital Platform
(d) National Curriculum Framework

12. Which constitutional provision was translated into an enforceable right through the Right to Education Act, 2009?

- (a) 86th Amendment (b) 42nd Amendment
(c) 74th Amendment (d) 91st Amendment

13. For which classes were the new NCERT textbooks released in July 2025 under the NEP 2020 framework?

- (a) Classes 3 & 4 (b) Classes 6 & 7
(c) Classes 5 & 8 (d) Classes 9 & 10

14. Which government scheme aims to upgrade 14,500 exemplar schools, with 10,855 sanctioned by October 2024?

- (a) National Model School Excellence Mission
(b) Bharat Shiksha Sankalp Yojana
(c) Vidya Vikas Abhiyan 2025
(d) Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India

SOLUTIONS

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

9 NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY 2025

SPORTS

IN FOCUS

- **Cabinet Approval:** On 1 July 2025 the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the **National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025**, superseding the 2001 policy.
- **Vision 2036 Olympics:** The policy positions India to emerge as a **global sporting powerhouse**, with the **2036 Olympic Games** identified as the strategic horizon for podium success.
- **Five Thematic Pillars:** It is anchored on **Excellence on the Global Stage**, **Sports for Economic Development**, **Sports for Social Development**, **Sports as a People's Movement**, and **Integration with Education (NEP 2020)**, each backed by a time-bound implementation plan.

Historical Evolution of Sports Policy in India

India's modern sports journey began with hosting the **1951 Asian Games** and setting up the **All India Council of Sports (1954)**, yet progress was hamstrung by skeletal funding and patchy infrastructure. Even as legends like **Milkha Singh** and **Kamaljeet Sandhu** won acclaim, institutional neglect persisted until the creation of a dedicated **Department of Sports (1982)**, later upgraded to the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) in 2000**.

Early Policy Experiments and Structural Limits: The inaugural **National Sports Policy 1984** and its echo in the **National Education Policy 1986** stressed mass participation and infrastructure. **Establishing the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in 1986** signalled intent, but implementation floundered amid a federal structure, low budgets, and minimal public-private collaboration.

The **2001 Policy** foregrounded elite performance and mass engagement yet yielded moderate gains. Governance codification arrived with the **National Sports Development Code 2011**, while flagship schemes **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (2014)**, **Khelo India (2017)**, and the **Fit India Movement (2019)** broadened talent pipelines. Nevertheless, **gender gaps**, **cricket's dominance**, and federation scandals illustrated unresolved systemic weaknesses.



Excellence on the Global Stage
Sports for Economic Development
Sports for Social Development
Sports as a People's Movement
Integration with Education (NEP 2020)

The key pillars of Sports Policy 2025

- **Excellence on the Global Stage:** NSP 2025 envisages a cradle-to-podium pathway featuring **competitive leagues, urban-rural infrastructure grids, and sports-science integration**. It pledges capacity-building for **NSFs**, creation of a **trained coach cadre**, and deployment of **sports medicine and analytics** to sharpen athlete performance.
- **Sports for Economic Development:** By promoting **sports tourism, equipment manufacturing, and start-up ecosystems**, the policy treats sport as an economic engine. Incentives such as “**One Corporate-One Sport**” **CSR models** aim to crowd-in private capital and spur job creation along the sports value chain.
- **Sports for Social Development:** The document positions sport as a lever of **social inclusion**, encouraging participation by **women, persons with disabilities, tribal communities, and economically weaker groups**, while reviving **indigenous games** and leveraging the **Indian diaspora** for mentorship and investment.
- **Sports as a People’s Movement:** To embed a pan-Indian sports culture, the policy calls for **nation-wide fitness campaigns, school and workplace fitness indices**, and universal access to facilities, seeking to transform physical activity into a mass habit rather than an extracurricular after-thought.
- **Integration with Education (NEP 2020):** Aligned with **NEP 2020**, the NSP embeds **physical literacy** in school curricula, supports **dual-career pathways** for student-athletes, and mandates teacher training in sports pedagogy, ensuring grassroots engagement commences early and sustains through adolescence.



Strategic Implementation Framework

- **Governance and Legal Reforms:** A proposed **sports-governance code** will entrench **transparency, accountability, and professionalism** in NSFs, advocating a **whole-of-government approach** that mainstreams sport across ministerial programmes.
- **Technology and Innovation:** The NSP pledges to harness **AI, data analytics, wearable tech, and digital twins** for talent scouting, injury prevention, and adaptive coaching, bringing Indian training ecosystems on par with global best practice.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** A national KPI dashboard with time-bound targets will track progress; the Centre will publish annual “State of Sport Reports,” nudging States and UTs to align local policies with the NSP template.

Critical Gaps and Challenges

- **Non-Enforceable Inclusion Architecture:** Despite rhetoric on diversity, the policy omits **rights-based quotas, gender-balancing mandates, or diversity plans** for NSFs, unlike frameworks in **Australia or Sport England**.
- **Silence on Transgender Participation:** By failing to recognise **transgender and gender-diverse athletes**, the NSP bypasses the **Supreme Court’s NALSA judgment (2014)** and global norms on **self-identification and anti-discrimination safeguards**.
- **Para-Sport Marginalisation:** Para-athletes remain peripheral; the policy lacks **universal-design facility norms, inclusive PE curricula, and coach up-skilling** in disability sport, diluting India’s commitments under the **UN CRPD**.
- **Governance Deficits and Market Distortions:** Persistent **politicisation, red tape, and scandals** evidenced by the **2023 Wrestling Federation harassment case** and the **IOA suspension (2022)** erode trust and hamper efficient resource utilisation.
- **Gender, Regional, and Sport-Wise Imbalances:** According to **UNESCO 2024, 49 percent** of Indian girls drop out of sport early, citing safety and stigma, while rural and tribal scouting remains ad-hoc. Moreover,

- cricket still commands **87 percent** of national sports investment (2023), crowding out Olympic disciplines and undermining multisport development.
- Academic Overload versus Physical Literacy:** School systems continue to valorise exam performance, relegating sport to optional status; the NSP's success hinges on recalibrating educational priorities to treat **physical literacy as core learning**, not a distraction.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which earlier policy was superseded by the National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025 ?
(a) National Physical Fitness Policy, 1995
(b) Youth Sports Development Policy, 1999
(c) Sports Excellence Framework, 2005
(d) National Sports Policy, 2001
- What forms the foundational framework of the National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025 approved by the Union Cabinet?
(a) Five Thematic Pillars
(b) Four Strategic Mission
(c) Six Performance Goals
(d) Three Core Values
- With which major international event hosted in 1951 did India's modern sports journey begin?
(a) Commonwealth Games (b) Olympic Games
(c) South Asian Games (d) Asian Games
- In which year was the All India Council of Sports established to support India's emerging sports ecosystem post-Independence?
(a) 1951 (b) 1954 (c) 1956 (d) 1962
- Which institution was established in 1986 to implement India's National Sports Policy and support mass participation in sports?
(a) National Institute of Sports
(b) Indian Olympic Association
(c) Sports Authority of India
(d) National Council of Sports
- Which CSR-based initiative under the National Sports Policy 2025 aims to attract private capital into the sports sector?
(a) Play for Progress Initiative
(b) Corporate Champions League Scheme
(c) Adopt an Athlete Program
(d) One Corporate–One Sport Model
- Which of the following is published annually by the Centre to monitor the implementation of the National Sports Policy?
(a) State of Sport Reports
(b) National Sports Census
(c) India Sports Tracker
(d) Annual Khelo Index
- Which landmark Supreme Court judgment is bypassed by the National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025 due to its silence on transgender athlete participation?
(a) Vishaka judgment (1997)
(b) Navtej Singh Johar judgment (2018)
(c) NALSA judgment (2014)
(d) Justice K.S. Puttaswamy judgment (2017)
- Which high-profile incident, along with the IOA suspension in 2022, highlighted the growing concerns over politicisation and governance failures in Indian sports bodies?
(a) 2021 Hockey India financial audit case
(b) 2023 Wrestling Federation harassment case
(c) 2020 All India Football Federation match-fixing inquiry
(d) 2022 National Shooting Federation selection dispute
- What percentage of Indian girls drop out of sports early due to safety concerns and social stigma, as per UNESCO's 2024 report?
(a) 35 percent (b) 42 percent
(c) 46 percent (d) 49 percent

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

11. Which sport continues to command 87 percent of national sports investment in India, thereby limiting resources for Olympic disciplines and hindering multisport development?

- (a) Wrestling
- (b) Athletics
- (c) Cricket
- (d) Badminton

SOLUTIONS

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

10

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN 2024-25
AWARDS

POLITY

IN FOCUS

- **Presidential Ceremony:** On 17 July 2025, President Droupadi Murmu presented the **Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 Awards** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- **Cleanest Million-Plus City:** Ahmedabad topped the million-plus category, while Indore, Surat and Navi Mumbai entered the inaugural Super Swachh League (SSL).
- **Scale of Assessment:** The 9th edition of the survey evaluated 4,589 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) between April 2024 and March 2025, using a revamped ten-section framework.
- **New Initiatives:** Launch of the Swachh City Partnership mentoring model and the Accelerated Dumpsite Remediation Program under Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0.
- **3R Focus:** The awards foregrounded the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” philosophy, showcasing waste-to-wealth artefacts as symbols of India’s circular-economy ethos.

Conceived in 2016 under the **Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U)**, **Swachh Survekshan** has grown from an inaugural cohort of seventy-three cities to the world’s largest urban-cleanliness audit, encompassing every ULB in India by the 2024-25 cycle. Designed to instil **competitive federalism** and galvanise **citizen engagement**, the survey benchmarks sanitation, solid-waste management and faecal-sludge practices, driving continuous improvement through data-driven rankings.



The latest edition introduced a ten-theme matrix that sharpened focus on **tourist nodes**, **high-footfall public areas** and **real-time citizen feedback**. Novel indicators such as **Project Grounding scores**, **City Transport Unit (CTU) transformation metrics** and **school-level sanitation audits** broadened the evaluative lens. Weightages were recalibrated to incentivise source segregation, decentralised processing and plastic-waste elimination, aligning with **SBM–Urban 2.0** objectives of achieving **Garbage-Free and ODF Plus** status by 2026.



Key Outcomes and Recognitions

Super Swachh League (SSL) – Elite cities

- In the million-plus category, the Super Swachh League recognises Indore, Surat, Navi Mumbai, and Vijayawada as elite cities that are no longer part of the competitive rankings.
- In the three-to-ten-lakh category, the SSL designates Noida, Chandigarh, Mysuru, Ujjain, Gandhinagar, and Guntur as elite performers outside the regular leaderboard.
- In the fifty-thousand-to-three-lakh category, New Delhi (NDMC), Tirupati, Ambikapur, and Lonavala are accorded elite status and are therefore excluded from routine competition.
- In the twenty-thousand-to-fifty-thousand category, Vita, Saswad, Deolali Pravara, and Dungarpur are placed in the elite bracket and removed from the standard rankings.
- In the under-twenty-thousand category, Panchgani, Patan, Panhala, Bishrampur, and Budni are honoured as elite cities and are not considered in the regular contest.

Population-based national rankings

- Among million-plus cities, **Ahmedabad** secures the **national first position**, followed by **Bhopal** in second place and **Lucknow** in third place.
- Among three-to-ten-lakh cities, Mira-Bhayandar ranks first at the national level, with Bilaspur placed second and Jamshedpur placed third.
- Among fifty-thousand-to-three-lakh cities, Dewas attains the top national rank, while Karad and Karnal take the second and third positions respectively.
- Among twenty-thousand-to-fifty-thousand cities, Panaji is adjudged the national winner, with Aska in second place and Kumhari in third place.
- Among towns under twenty thousand population, Bilha is ranked first nationally, followed by Chikiti in second place and Shahganj in third place.

Special honours

- Prayagraj is recognised as the Best Ganga Town for its overall performance on river-linked sanitation parameters.
- Secunderabad Cantonment receives the award for the Best Cantonment Board in recognition of its sanitation and waste management systems.
- Visakhapatnam, Jabalpur, and Gorakhpur are declared Safaimitra Surakshit Shehar for prioritising sanitation worker safety and mechanisation of hazardous tasks.
- For Mahakumbh 2025 Urban Waste Management, the Government of Uttar Pradesh, the Prayagraj Mela Adhikari, and the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation are specially commended for exemplary large-event sanitation planning and execution.

“Promising Swachh Shehars” (State/UT toppers)

- In keeping with the “One City, One Award” principle, thirty-four State and Union Territory top performers are acknowledged as Promising Swachh Shehars, which include prominent cities such as Vadodara, Jaipur Greater, Greater Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Pimpri-Chinchwad, and Agra, with the complete State/UT-wise list available in the official award document.

Circular-Economy and Sustainability Emphasis

President Murmu underscored the **3R paradigm** as the year’s theme, praising an artisanal **sarangi** fashioned from reclaimed materials to exemplify India’s indigenous circular-economy heritage. She invoked tribal societies’ low-waste lifestyles as models for mainstream adoption, encouraging **self-help groups, green entrepreneurs and youth volunteers** to accelerate the sanitation revolution through **waste-to-wealth enterprises**.

Partnership-Driven and Remediation-Focused Policy Launches

The **Swachh City Partnership Initiative**, introduced by Union Minister **Manohar Lal**, institutionalises peer learning by pairing each of seventy-eight top-ranked municipalities with a lagging counterpart within the same state, operationalising the credo **“Each One Clean One.”** Complementing this knowledge-transfer model, the **Accelerated Dumpsite Remediation Program**, commencing **15 August 2025**, seeks to clear the remaining **42 percent** of legacy landfills through central grants, innovative financing and stringent monitoring, thereby releasing urban land for productive use and expediting the SBM-Urban 2.0 goal of **garbage-free cities**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who presented the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 Awards at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 17 July 2025?

- (a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- (b) Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister
- (c) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar
- (d) President Droupadi Murmu

2. Which city was declared the cleanest in the million-plus population category in the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25?

- (a) Ahmedabad
- (b) Indore
- (c) Surat
- (d) Navi Mumbai

3. Which edition of the Swachh Survekshan evaluated 4,589 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) between April 2024 and March 2025?

- (a) 7th edition
- (b) 8th edition
- (c) 9th edition
- (d) 10th edition

4. Which mentoring initiative was introduced along with the launch of the Accelerated Dumpsite Remediation Program, under Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0?

- (a) Swachh Survekshan Innovation Index
- (b) Urban Cleanliness Incentive Model
- (c) Sanitation Best Practices Network
- (d) Swachh City Partnership mentoring model

5. Which of the following principles was prominently showcased at the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 awards to reflect India's waste-to-wealth and circular economy vision?

- (a) Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- (b) Remove, Replace, Rebuild
- (c) Reuse, Rethink, Reinvest
- (d) Recycle, Reorient, Reclaim

6. What new framework was introduced in the latest edition of Swachh Survekshan to enhance focus on tourist areas, high-footfall public spaces, and citizen feedback?

- (a) Swachh Bharat Impact Index
- (b) City Sanitation Scorecard
- (c) Ten-theme matrix
- (d) Urban Cleanliness Dashboard

7. By which year does SBM–Urban 2.0 aim to achieve Garbage-Free and ODF Plus status, as reflected in the recalibrated weightages for Swachh Survekshan?

- (a) 2025
- (b) 2026
- (c) 2027
- (d) 2030

8. Which of the following cities did not lead the three-to-ten-lakh population cohort in the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 rankings?

- (a) Mira Bhayandar
- (b) Lucknow
- (c) Bilaspur
- (d) Jamshedpur

9. Which trio of cities topped their respective categories among smaller cities in the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 rankings?

- (a) Ujjain, Mysuru and Durg
- (b) Silvassa, Margao and Korba
- (c) Dewas, Panaji and Bilha
- (d) Nashik, Vasco and Raigarh

10. Which programme recognised cities like Visakhapatnam, Jabalpur, and Gorakhpur for prioritising the safety and mechanisation of sanitation work?

- (a) Smart Sanitation Model City Award
- (b) Urban Health and Hygiene Index
- (c) Safaimitra Surakshit Shehar
- (d) Waste-Free Workforce Campaign

11. Which city received special honours as the best Ganga town in the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25?

- (a) Prayagraj
- (b) Varanasi
- (c) Haridwar
- (d) Patna

12. What concept did President Murmu promote as the central theme of the Swachh Survekshan awards, demonstrated through a reclaimed-material sarangi?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (a) Atmanirbhar Sanitation
- (b) Green Growth Mission
- (c) Swachh Bharat Model
- (d) 3R paradigm

13. Who introduced the Swachh City Partnership Initiative that pairs 78 top-ranked municipalities for peer learning?

- (a) Hardeep Singh Puri (b) Manohar Lal
- (c) Gajendra Shekhawat (d) Dharmendra Pradhan

14. Under which motto does the Swachh City Partnership Initiative pair 78 high-performing municipalities with underperforming peers to promote intra-state sanitation mentoring?

- (a) United for Clean Cities
- (b) One City, One Mentor
- (c) Each One Clean One
- (d) Leading for a Swachh Future

SOLUTIONS

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

11

4 MEMBERS NOMINATED TO RAJYA
SABHA

POLITY

IN FOCUS

- **Presidential Nomination:** On 13 July 2025, President Droupadi Murmu nominated **Harsh Vardhan Shringla**, **Ujjwal Nikam**, **Dr. Meenakshi Jain**, and **C. Sadanandan Master** to the **Rajya Sabha** under **Article 80(1)(a)** of the Constitution.
- **Diverse Expertise:** The appointees bring proven excellence in **foreign policy**, **criminal jurisprudence**, **historical research**, and **grass-roots social service**, enriching parliamentary deliberations with non-electoral perspectives.
- **Upper-House Dynamics:** Their entry revives debate on whether the **nominated seats** still serve the framers' ideal of introducing "**learned and non-political voices**" into the legislature or have become instruments of partisan consolidation.

Biographical Contributions of the 2025 Nominees

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, a 1984-batch **Indian Foreign Service** officer and former **Foreign Secretary (2020–2022)**, steered India's pandemic-era diplomacy and initial **G20-2023** preparations; his leadership during the "**Howdy Modi**" diaspora outreach in Texas underscored India's soft-power strategy.

Harsh Vardhan
Shringla

Ujjwal Nikam, celebrated special public prosecutor, secured the conviction of **Ajmal Kasab** for the **2008 Mumbai attacks** and has argued landmark cases from the **1993 Bombay blasts** to the **Khairlanji Dalit massacre**, making him a symbol of India's counter-terrorism jurisprudence.



Ujjwal Nikam

Dr. Meenakshi Jain, Padma Shri historian, authored the NCERT's revised medieval-history textbook and has produced seminal works on **religious identity** and **Ram Janmabhoomi**, reflecting the ascendant emphasis on **civilisational scholarship** in policy circles.



Dr. Meenakshi Jain

C. Sadanandan Master, a physically challenged educator from Kannur, survived a violent 1994 attack but continued social-service activism and political mentorship, epitomising **resilience**, **ideological conviction**, and **grass-roots commitment** in Kerala's polarised landscape.

C. Sadanandan
Master

Constitutional Foundation of the Rajya Sabha

- The **Rajya Sabha (Council of States)** is established by **the Constitution of India** as part of a bicameral Parliament comprising the **President, the Rajya Sabha, and the Lok Sabha under Article 79**.
- The composition, method of election, maximum strength, and nomination to the Rajya Sabha are laid down in **Article 80**, which provides for a maximum strength of **250 members—up to 238 representatives of States and Union Territories and 12 nominated members** with special knowledge or practical experience in literature, science, art, or social service.
- Members representing States are elected by the elected members of the State Legislative Assemblies through proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote; members for Union Territories with legislatures are elected as Parliament provides by law (presently NCT of Delhi and Puducherry), while nominated members are appointed by the President under Article 80(3).
- The Rajya Sabha is a permanent House and is not subject to dissolution; instead, one-third of its members retire every two years, and each member serves a six-year term.
- The Vice-President of India is the **ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha** under **Articles 64 and 89(1)**, and the House elects a Deputy Chairman from amongst its members under Article 89(2).
- The qualifications and disqualifications for membership apply through **Article 84 (qualifications) and Article 102 (disqualifications)**, and the Tenth Schedule applies to Rajya Sabha members with respect to defection. A nominated member may join **a political party within six months** of taking his or her seat without attracting disqualification; joining a party after six months invites the anti-defection consequences.
- In the legislative process, the Rajya Sabha is co-equal with the Lok Sabha for ordinary bills and Constitution Amendment Bills (there is no joint sitting for constitutional amendments), but it has limited powers over Money Bills under **Article 109**, as it can recommend amendments which the **Lok Sabha may accept or reject**, and it can **delay a Money Bill by up to 14 days**.
- The Rajya Sabha has distinct federal powers: under **Article 249**, it may—by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting—authorise Parliament to legislate on matters in the **State List** in the national interest, and under **Article 312**, it may authorise the creation of All-India Services in the national interest.
- Proceedings of the **Supreme and High Courts** do not govern House procedure; rather, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States and the Handbook for Members guide internal functioning, while the quorum requirement is one-tenth of the total membership for a sitting to transact business.



- The Rajya Sabha's lineage can be traced to **the Council of State** under **the Government of India Act, 1919**, and its later reconfiguration under the Government of India Act, 1935, both of which familiarised India with a second chamber at the central level.
- The Constituent Assembly debated the merits of bicameralism and ultimately adopted a federal second chamber to represent the States, ensure review and revision of legislation, and moderate majoritarian impulses, leading to its constitutional establishment in 1950.
- The Rajya Sabha came into **being in 1952**, with its first sitting on **13 May 1952**; the **term "Council of States" is the official name**, while **"Rajya Sabha" is its popular title, later adopted for official use**.
- The States Reorganisation Act, 1956, and subsequent reorganisations (including the creation of new States in 1960, 1966, 1971, 2000, and 2014, and the reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir in 2019) periodically reallocated seats among States and Union Territories, demonstrating the House's adaptation to territorial changes.
- In 1985, the Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law) was inserted to curb defections and maintain party discipline in both Houses; the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha adjudicates disqualification petitions, subject to judicial review.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who nominated Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Ujjwal Nikam, Dr. Meenakshi Jain, and C. Sadanandan Master to the Rajya Sabha in July 2025?

- (a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- (b) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar
- (c) President Droupadi Murmu
- (d) Speaker of the Lok Sabha

2. Under which constitutional provision did President Droupadi Murmu nominate Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Ujjwal Nikam, Dr. Meenakshi Jain, and C. Sadanandan Master to the Rajya Sabha on 13 July 2025?

- (a) Article 72(1)(c) (b) Article 74(2)
- (c) Article 105(3) (d) Article 80(1)(a)

3. Under which article of the Indian Constitution is the Rajya Sabha constituted, reserving twelve nominated seats for individuals with special knowledge or experience?

- (a) Article 80 (b) Article 81
- (c) Article 84 (d) Article 84

4. Which of the following fields is not included under Article 80 of the Constitution for nominating individuals to the Rajya Sabha based on special knowledge or practical experience?

- (a) Literature (b) Sports

- (c) Science (d) Social service

5. In which of the following elections may nominated members of the Rajya Sabha participate?

- (a) Election of the President of India
- (b) Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly
- (c) Election of the Prime Minister
- (d) Election of the Vice-President of India

6. During which of the following time periods may a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha join a political party without attracting disqualification under the Tenth Schedule?

- (a) Anytime during their term
- (b) Within three months of oath-taking
- (c) Within six months of oath-taking
- (d) Only after completing one year in office

7. Who championed the design in the Constituent Assembly that allows nominated members to join a political party within six months, aiming to enrich the Rajya Sabha with domain experts?

- (a) B.R. Ambedkar
- (b) N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
- (c) Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar
- (d) Jawaharlal Nehru

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

8. Which diaspora outreach event in Texas highlighted Harsh Vardhan Shringla's role in advancing India's soft-power diplomacy?

- (a) Bharat Rising
- (b) Howdy Modi
- (c) Namaste Trump
- (d) Global India Connect

9. Who among the following is the special public prosecutor known for securing the conviction of Ajmal Kasab in the 2008 Mumbai attacks and arguing major cases like the 1993 Bombay blasts and the Khairlanji Dalit massacre?

- (a) Ujjwal Nikam
- (b) Harsh Vardhan Shringla
- (c) Soli Sorabjee
- (d) Rakesh Asthana

10. Which topic has been a central focus in the historical research and writings of Dr. Meenakshi Jain, reflecting India's evolving civilisational scholarship?

- (a) Swadeshi Movement
- (b) Gupta Empire's decline
- (c) Delhi Sultanate trade routes
- (d) Ram Janmabhoomi

11. Which district is home to C. Sadanandan Master, a nominated Rajya Sabha member known for his commitment to social service and political mentoring despite personal adversity?

- (a) Kollam
- (b) Ernakulam
- (c) Kannur
- (d) Palakkad

12. Which type of bill gives the Lok Sabha exclusive authority, limiting the Rajya Sabha to only making recommendations without the power to amend or reject?

- (a) Financial Bills
- (b) Money Bills
- (c) Appropriation Bills
- (d) Joint Committee Bills

13. By what margin must the Rajya Sabha pass a resolution under Article 249 to empower Parliament to legislate on matters in the State List?

- (a) Two-thirds majority
- (b) Simple majority
- (c) Absolute majority
- (d) Three-fourths majority

SOLUTIONS

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

12

VICE-PRESIDENT JAGDEEP
DHANKHAR'S RESIGNATION

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date & Context:** On 21 July 2025, Vice-President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** submitted his resignation to the President, officially citing **health concerns** just hours after chairing the **Business Advisory Committee (BAC)** of the Rajya Sabha.
- **Opposition Allegations:** The **Congress** claimed that senior ministers' unexplained absence from the reconvened BAC meeting signalled institutional **disrespect**, forcing Dhankhar's hand.
- **Constitutional Vacuum:** His departure leaves the **Vice-President's office vacant**, obliging the **Deputy Chairman** to preside over the Rajya Sabha and triggering the constitutional process for a **fresh election**.
- **Political Reverberations:** The event has reignited debate on the **continuity, autonomy, and prestige** of India's high constitutional offices.

Vice-President of India — Constitutional foundation, election, powers, and position

- The Vice-President of India is a constitutional office created by **Article 63**, which mandates that there shall be a Vice-President of India.
- Under **Article 64**, the **Vice-President is the ex officio Chairman of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha)**; when the Vice-President acts as President or discharges the functions of the President under **Article 65**, he or she does not perform the duties of the Chairman, and during such period the Deputy Chairman or a member chosen to preside performs those duties in accordance with the rules.
- The **method of election is prescribed by Article 66** and the **Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952 (and the 1974 Rules)**: the Vice-President is elected indirectly by an Electoral College consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament, and both elected and nominated members vote in this election by proportional representation through the single transferable vote and secret ballot.
- The qualifications are set out in **Article 66(3)**: the candidate must be a citizen of India, must have completed thirty-five years of age, and must be qualified for election as a member of the Council of States (Article 84); by Article 66(4), a person holding any office of profit under the Union, a State, or a local/other authority subject to their control is ineligible, except for the constitutionally recognised exceptions (e.g., President, Vice-President, Governor, or Minister).
- Under **Article 69**, the Vice-President makes and subscribes the oath or affirmation before the President of India (or a person appointed by the President for that purpose).
- By **Article 67 (main clause)**, the term of office is five years from the date of entry into office, and the Vice-President continues in office until a successor enters upon office; the Constitution does not limit the number of terms.
- The Vice-President's emoluments are drawn as **Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and are charged on the Consolidated Fund of India** in terms of **Article 97 and the Salary and Allowances of Officers of Parliament Act, 1953**; when acting as President, the Vice-President is entitled to the emoluments, allowances and privileges of the President by virtue of Article 65(3).

- In the Rajya Sabha, questions are decided by majority under **Article 100(1)**, and the person presiding does not vote in the **first instance**, but has and exercises a casting vote in the event of an **equality of votes under the proviso to Article 100(1)**; in the Rajya Sabha the Vice-President, as Chairman, accordingly has only a casting vote.
- The Rajya Sabha elects a **Deputy Chairman under Article 89**, and the internal conduct of business is governed by the **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States**.
- The **Vice-President is not a member of either House**; if a sitting Member of Parliament is elected as Vice-President, his or her seat in Parliament ceases on entering office to preserve the independence of the presiding office.
- In the order of precedence, the Vice-President ranks immediately after the President, reflecting the role as first substitute for the Head of State and as the presiding officer of the Upper House.
- Election disputes are governed by Article 71, under which the Supreme Court decides all doubts and disputes arising out of or in connection with the election of a President or Vice-President; Article 71(4) preserves the validity of acts done by a person acting as President or Vice-President notwithstanding a subsequent declaration that the election was void.

Vacancy in the Office of the Vice-President

- A vacancy may occur by **expiration of the term (Article 67)**, by resignation under the **proviso to Article 67(a) (by writing under the Vice-President's hand addressed to the President)**, by removal under the proviso to **Article 67(b) (by a resolution of the Council of States passed by a majority of all the then members and agreed to by the House of the People, after at least fourteen days' notice of intention to move the resolution)**, or by death or otherwise.
- Under **Article 68(1)**, an election to fill a vacancy by expiration of term must be completed before the term expires; under **Article 68(2)**, an election to fill a casual vacancy (resignation, removal, death, or otherwise) shall be held as soon as possible after the occurrence of the vacancy, and the person so elected holds office for a full **five-year term from the date of entering office**.
- When the Vice-President acts as President or discharges the functions of the President under Article 65(1) because the office of President is vacant or the President is unable to discharge the functions of the office, the Vice-President acts until a new President is elected within six months in accordance with Article 62(1) or until the disability ceases; while so acting, he or she enjoys the powers, immunities and emoluments of the President under Article 65(3).
- During any period when the Vice-President is acting as President, the duties of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha are not performed by the Vice-President and are instead performed by the Deputy Chairman or a member chosen to preside, as expressly provided in Article 64 (read with Article 89 and the House Rules).
- In the rare event of a double vacancy—that is, if both the offices of President and Vice-President are vacant (or the Vice-President is unable to act when the President's office falls vacant)—Parliament has provided by law under Article 70 that the Chief Justice of India, or in his absence the senior-most available judge of the Supreme Court, discharges the functions of the President (see the President (Discharge of Functions) Act, 1969) until a President is elected or the disability ceases.

Precedents of Resignation and Casual Vacancy

- India has often accommodated vice-presidential interregna without institutional paralysis. **V. V. Giri** resigned in **1969** to contest the presidency; **R. Venkataraman**, **Shankar Dayal Sharma**, and **K. R. Narayanan** followed similar paths, each leaving the office vacant for weeks.
- The 2002 death of **Krishan Kant** likewise created a three-week hiatus before **Bhairon Singh Shekhawat** took oath. These episodes confirm that a temporary vacancy is **constitutionally permissible** so long as the **Deputy Chairman** sustains Upper-House business.

Constituent-Assembly Rationale and Later Statutory Design

- Draft Article 56 (now **Article 67**) deliberately adopted a **simpler resignation procedure** than that of the President, reflecting the Vice-President's limited executive role. While **Article 70** empowers Parliament to legislate for unforeseen presidential contingencies—resulting in the **President (Discharge of Functions) Act 1969**—no parallel statute covers the Vice-President.
- The historic instance of **Chief Justice M. Hidayatullah** acting as President in 1969 (after both top offices fell vacant) underscores that constitutional designers viewed the Vice-President's duties as **replaceable within Parliament**, not in the wider executive chain.

**Jagdeep Dhankhar**

- Jagdeep Dhankhar (born 18 May 1951, Kithana village, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan) is an Indian lawyer-politician who served as the 14th Vice-President of India and **ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha from August 11, 2022 until his resignation on July 21, 2025**.
- He was elected Vice-President on August 6, 2022, securing 528 electoral votes against Margaret Alva, and he took the oath of office on August 11, 2022 at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Prior to the vice-presidency, he served as the Governor of West Bengal from July 30, 2019 to July 2022, after which he demitted the post on being nominated for the vice-presidential election.
- He enrolled as an advocate in 1979 with the Bar Council of Rajasthan and built a practice in constitutional and commercial matters, appearing before the Supreme Court of India and several High Courts. He was designated Senior Advocate in 1990 by the Rajasthan High Court and later served as President of the Rajasthan High Court Bar Association.
- He entered Parliament as a Member of the 9th Lok Sabha (Jhunjhunu) in 1989 and served as Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs in the Chandra Shekhar government (1990–91). He subsequently served as a Member of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (Kishangarh) from 1993 to 1998.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which Rajya Sabha committee meeting was chaired by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar just hours before submitting his resignation on 21 July 2025?
(a) Legislative Ethics Committee
(b) Business Rules Committee
(c) Legislative Select Committee
(d) Business Advisory Committee
- Who is constitutionally obliged to preside over the Rajya Sabha following the resignation of the Vice-President, until a new election is held?
(a) Deputy Chairman (b) Leader of the House
(c) Secretary General (d) Pro tem Speaker
- Under which constitutional provision can the Vice-President of India resign by submitting a written letter to the President?
(a) Article 56(1)(b) (b) Article 64
(c) Article 67(a) (d) Article 68(2)
- Which article of the Indian Constitution comes into effect to maintain the functioning of the Rajya Sabha when the Vice-President's office is vacant?
(a) Article 62 (b) Article 65
(c) Article 69 (d) Article 66
- What does Article 68(2) of the Constitution prescribe in the event of a vacancy in the office of the Vice-President?
(a) By-election
(b) Joint parliamentary session
(c) Presidential notification
(d) Temporary appointment
- Who clarified during the Constituent Assembly debates that the Vice-President's primary role is to chair the Rajya Sabha rather than serve as an automatic successor to the President?
(a) Alladi K. Ayyar (b) K. M. Munshi
(c) Jawaharlal Nehru (d) B. R. Ambedkar
- Which former Vice-President of India resigned in 1969 to contest the presidential election, demonstrating that temporary vacancies in the office do not disrupt institutional functioning?
(a) Zakir Husain (b) R. Venkataraman
(c) V. V. Giri (d) S. Radhakrishnan
- Which of the following individuals is not among the Vice-Presidents of India who resigned to contest the presidency, thereby leaving the office vacant for weeks?
(a) R. Venkataraman (b) Shankar Dayal Sharma
(c) K. R. Narayanan (d) Hamid Ansari
- Which legislation was enacted under Article 70 to address unforeseen contingencies in the discharge of the President's duties?
(a) Presidential Vacancy Management Act 1952
(b) President (Discharge of Functions) Act 1969
(c) Constitutional Office Continuity Act 1971
(d) Emergency Succession Act 1965
- Who served as Acting President of India in 1969 when both the President and Vice-President offices fell vacant, demonstrating the Constitution's fallback on judicial leadership?
(a) M. Hidayatullah (b) B. G. Kher
(c) R. Venkataraman (d) S. Radhakrishnan
- Which constitutional article mandates that a by-election be held as soon as possible when the office of the Vice-President falls vacant?
(a) Article 66(1) (b) Article 67(b)
(c) Article 68(2) (d) Article 71(1)
- Which of the following opposition leaders interpreted the absence of key ministers from the BAC reconvening as a sign of institutional disregard toward the Vice-President's authority?
(a) Mallikarjun Kharge and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury
(b) Jairam Ramesh and Gaurav Gogoi
(c) Rahul Gandhi and K. C. Venugopal
(d) Sitaram Yechury and D. Raja

SOLUTIONS

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

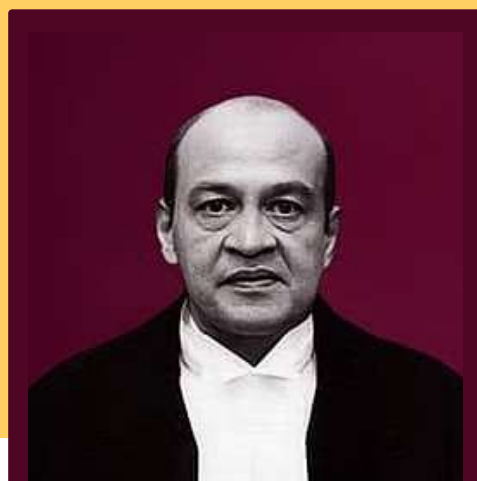
13

MOTION OF IMPEACHMENT
AGAINST JUSTICE VERMA

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- **Date & Confirmation:** On 20 July 2025, Parliamentary Affairs Minister **Kiren Rijiju** confirmed that **100 + MPs** had endorsed a motion to remove **Justice Yashwant Varma** of the **Allahabad High Court**.
- **Triggering Event:** The motion follows a **judicial-panel indictment** after sacks of unaccounted cash were discovered during a **March 2025 fire** at Justice Varma's Delhi residence.
- **Next Step:** The **Lok Sabha Speaker** is expected to constitute a **three-member inquiry committee** under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act 1968**, in consultation with the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)**.
- **Parallel Litigation:** Justice Varma has petitioned the **Supreme Court**, challenging the validity of the in-house inquiry as a **"parallel, extra-constitutional mechanism."**



Justice Yashwant Varma

Allegations Against Justice Varma

In March 2025, firefighters allegedly uncovered burnt currency bundles at Justice Varma's residence. A three-judge in-house panel—formed by then CJI Sanjiv Khanna—found "implied responsibility" and recommended removal. Justice Varma denied wrongdoing and refused to resign, prompting his repatriation to the Allahabad High Court and a bar on judicial work. The CJI forwarded the report to the President and Prime Minister, setting the stage for parliamentary action.

Constitutional foundation

- The Constitution uses the term **"removal" (not impeachment)** for judges of the **Supreme Court and High Courts** and makes removal possible only on the grounds of **"proved misbehaviour or incapacity."**
- For Supreme Court judges, the governing provisions are **Article 124(4) and Article 124(5)**. Article 124(4) sets the substantive threshold and voting majorities; Article 124(5) empowers Parliament to make a law prescribing the procedure for investigation and proof of the alleged misbehaviour or incapacity.
- For **High Court judges**, **Article 218** applies the same removal standard and procedure as in Article 124(4)–(5), thereby maintaining a uniform protection of judicial independence across the higher judiciary.
- **Article 121 bars any discussion in Parliament of the conduct of a judge** in the discharge of judicial duties **except upon a properly framed removal motion**, thereby insulating judges from casual political debate while permitting a constitutionally channelled process when necessary.
- The removal power is formally exercised by the President, but only after each House of Parliament presents an "address" supporting removal by the prescribed special majorities and in the same session.
- An address for removal must be adopted separately by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, each by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting, and the two addresses must be presented in the same session.
- Only after both addresses are so adopted may the President issue the order of removal.

Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 and Rules, 1969

- Acting under **Article 124(5)**, Parliament enacted **the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**, supplemented by **the Judges (Inquiry) Rules, 1969**, which together prescribe the step-by-step process for investigating allegations and, where proved, enabling the Houses to consider removal.
- A removal motion may be moved in either House. It must be signed by **at least 100 members (if moved in the Lok Sabha) or 50 members (if moved in the Rajya Sabha)** and submitted to the Speaker/Chairman.
- The Speaker/Chairman may admit or refuse the motion. If admitted, he or she constitutes a three-member Inquiry Committee comprising:
 - a Judge of the Supreme Court,
 - a Chief Justice of a High Court, and
 - a distinguished jurist (or such judicial combination as the Act permits).



Justice Aravind Kumar
Judge,
Supreme Court



Justice M.M Shrivastava
Chief Justice,
Madras High Court



B.V. Acharya
Senior Advocate,
Karnataka High Court

Lok Sabha Speaker constitutes 3-Member Inquiry Committee to Examine Allegations Against Justice Yashwant Varma

Power of the Committee

- The Committee conducts a formal inquiry with powers akin to a civil court, ensures natural justice (notice, evidence, representation by counsel), and submits a reasoned report stating whether the charges are “proved.”
- If the Committee finds the charges not proved, the process ordinarily ends. If it finds the charges proved, the motion may be taken up for debate and voting in each House; only upon the special majorities being met in both Houses may the matter be presented to the President for removal.
- The Act and Rules thus separate investigation from adjudication, ensuring that proof precedes any parliamentary decision on removal, as the Constitution’s phrase “proved misbehaviour or incapacity” requires.

The judiciary's own "in-house" mechanism (non-statutory)

- Apart from the **constitutional-statutory route**, the higher judiciary has evolved an **"in-house procedure"** for dealing with conduct complaints that may not (yet) warrant a removal motion.
- Under this internal process (developed following leading decisions on judicial accountability), complaints are screened by **the Chief Justice of India**; if the matter concerns a High Court judge, a committee of senior judges conducts a confidential fact-finding; if it concerns a Supreme Court judge, the CJI constitutes a committee of Supreme Court judges.
- The committee may advise that the complaint be closed, that the judge be counselled or admonished, that transfer be **considered (transfer itself lies under Article 222)**, or that the matter is grave enough to warrant initiation of the statutory removal process.
- This process is disciplinary/administrative, not punitive, and does not substitute the constitutional removal route; it preserves independence while providing a structured response to credible complaints.

Subordinate judiciary: distinct constitutional footing

- Judges of the subordinate judiciary (district and below) are not removed through the Article 124/218 route. Their discipline and control are vested in the High Courts under Article 235, and their appointment/removal follows the relevant service rules, with constitutional protections under Articles 309–311 and judicial review available for due-process violations.
- This parallel framework reflects the federal-service character of the State judicial services and is separate from the removal of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Structural Hurdles and Past Precedents

No Indian judge has ever been removed through impeachment. Attempts against **Justice V. Ramaswami (1993)** collapsed after political abstentions despite an adverse report; **Justice Soumitra Sen (2011)** resigned after the Rajya Sabha vote, pre-empting Lok Sabha action. The **special-majority requirement**, absence of statutory deadlines, and the possibility of **mid-process resignation** collectively render the mechanism both **rare and politically fraught**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Of which High Court is Justice Yashwant Varma a judge, against whom a removal motion was endorsed by over 100 MPs in July 2025?
(a) Allahabad High Court (b) Bombay High Court
(c) Gujarat High Court (d) Madras High Court
2. What body is mandated under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 to examine allegations once a motion for judicial removal is admitted in the Lok Sabha?
(a) Judicial Disciplinary Panel
(b) Parliamentary Review Forum
(c) Three-member inquiry committee
(d) Ethics and Accountability Tribunal
3. Who must be consulted by the Lok Sabha Speaker while constituting a three-member inquiry committee under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968?
(a) The Attorney General of India
(b) The Chief Justice of India
(c) The Minister of Law and Justice
(d) The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
4. Which constitutional article provides that a judge may be removed only on the grounds of “proved misbehaviour or incapacity”?
(a) Article 217(1) (b) Article 121
(c) Article 126 (d) Article 124(4)
5. In which legislative body must identical special-majority votes be passed to remove a judge under the impeachment procedure?
(a) Lok Sabha only
(b) Both Houses of Parliament
(c) Rajya Sabha only
(d) A Joint Parliamentary Committee
6. Which of the following is not included in the three-member inquiry committee constituted under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968?
(a) A Supreme Court judge
(b) A Chief Justice of a High Court
(c) The Attorney General of India
(d) An eminent jurist
7. Who must admit a judicial removal motion, after it bears the required number of signatures from MPs, for the process to formally begin?
(a) President of India
(b) Speaker or Chairman
(c) Chief Justice of India
(d) Leader of the Opposition
8. Who is constitutionally authorised to issue the final removal order after both Houses of Parliament pass the removal motion in the same session?
(a) President
(b) Chief Justice of India
(c) Speaker of the Lok Sabha
(d) Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
9. Who constituted the three-judge in-house panel that found “implied responsibility” in the case involving burnt currency bundles at Justice Varma’s residence in March 2025?
(a) Justice Yashwant Varma
(b) Attorney General of India
(c) Lok Sabha Speaker
(d) CJI Sanjiv Khanna
10. Which judge’s removal attempt in 1993 failed due to political abstentions, despite an adverse report by the inquiry committee?
(a) Justice Soumitra Sen (b) Justice Yashwant Varma
(c) Justice V. Ramaswami (d) Justice P. D. Dinakaran

SOLUTIONS

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

14

CONTROVERSY OVER INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT (2023)

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- **Time and Date:** On 2 July 2025, the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** formally requested the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** to **substantiate** the **India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023** claim that titles granted under the **Forest Rights Act (2006)** caused a “negative” change in forest and tree cover.
- The challenge followed protests by **over 150 forest rights and civil-society groups**, which warned that **unverified assertions** risked **undermining** the security and effectiveness of rights recognised under the Forest Rights Act.

ISFR 2023 Findings on Forest and Tree Cover Change

- The **18th biennial ISFR**, released by the **Forest Survey of India**, reported that within **Recorded Forest Areas (RFA)** there was a **loss of over 1,200 sq km** each of **Mid-Dense Forest** and **Open Forest**, alongside an addition of more than 2,400 sq km of **Very Dense Forest**.
- Outside RFAs, the report noted a **decrease of approximately 64 sq km** of **Dense Forest** and **416 sq km** of **Mid-Dense Forest**. Under its “negative” changes section, ISFR 2023 listed human encroachments, natural calamities, short-rotation plantations or logging, and for the first time explicitly attributed titles granted under the Forest Rights Act as a potential cause.

Forest Rights Act: Purpose and Provisions

- The **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** commonly known as the **Forest Rights Act (FRA)**—vests **pre-existing rights** in **Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDST)** and **Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD)** who have lived in forests for at least **three generations (75 years) before 13 December 2005**.
- The FRA empowers Gram Sabhas to initiate rights claims, which are verified by Sub-Divisional and District Level Committees, while mandating that critical wildlife habitats within national parks and sanctuaries remain inviolate. Importantly, the Act does not regularise fresh encroachments but secures tenure for historically forest-dependent communities, including rights to individual and community land, fodder collection, and minor forest produce gathering.

Tribal Affairs Ministry's Rebuttal and Request for Evidence

- In its **2 July 2025** communication, the **Tribal Affairs Ministry's FRA Division** admonished the **MoEFCC** for attributing **forest cover loss** to the FRA without “**adequate scientific evidence**” or “**ground truthing**.”
- The Ministry warned that **unsubstantiated claims** could reinforce **administrative biases** among state and forest officials, thereby **jeopardising** the rights vested under the Act.
- It insisted on a **detailed scientific analysis**, including **specific ground-level instances**, before associating **FRA implementation** with any adverse ecological impacts.

Civil Society and Political Response

- The Ministry's intervention followed a letter from **over 150 forest rights and civil-society organisations**, which decried ISFR's linkage of FRA titles to **deforestation**.
- Former Environment Minister **Jairam Ramesh** amplified these concerns on social media, emphasising that the FRA was never intended to create new land rights detrimental to forest ecosystems.

- In response, the **MoEFCC** issued a statement on **3 July 2025** clarifying that **ISFR 2023** recorded a **substantial net increase** in overall **forest and tree cover**, which it attributed to **community-led conservation**.
- The Ministry labelled civil-society inferences as “**devoid of merit**” and contended that the Environment Minister’s interview remarks—flagging degradation of “**dense prime forests**”—had been taken **out of context**.

Key Findings of the ISFR 2023

Forest and Tree Cover

Total Forest and Tree Cover



The **total forest and tree cover** in India stands at **8,27,357 sq km**, which constitutes about **25.17%** of the country’s total geographical area.

Separate Tree and Forest Cover



This figure includes **forest cover** of **7,15,343 sq km**, which makes up **21.76%** of India’s geographical area, and **tree cover** of **1,12,014 sq km**, which accounts for **3.41%** of the country’s area.

Increase in Forest/ Tree Cover



The report highlights an increase of **1445 sq km** in India’s forest and tree cover compared to the previous assessment done in **2021**. This increase includes an addition of **156 sq km** in forest cover and **1289 sq km** in tree cover.

Maximum Increase in Forest Cover



The states showing the greatest increase in forest cover include **Mizoram** (242 sq km), **Gujarat** (180 sq km), and **Odisha** (152 sq km).

Maximum Increases in Forest and Tree Cover



The states that have seen the largest increase in forest and tree cover are **Chhattisgarh** (with an increase of 684 sq km), followed by **Uttar Pradesh** (559 sq km), **Odisha** (559 sq km), and **Rajasthan** (394 sq km).

States with Largest Forest and Tree Cover



In terms of overall **forest and tree cover**, the states with the largest areas are **Madhya Pradesh** (85,724 sq km), **Arunachal Pradesh** (67,083 sq km), and **Maharashtra** (65,383 sq km).

States with Largest Decrease



Madhya Pradesh (612.41 sq km) followed by **Karnataka** (459.36 sq km), **Ladakh** (159.26 sq km), and **Nagaland** (125.22 sq km).

States with Largest Forest Cover

States with Largest Forest Cover (Area Wise)



The states with the most extensive **forest cover** are **Madhya Pradesh (77,073 sq km)**, **Arunachal Pradesh (65,882 sq km)**, and **Chhattisgarh (55,812 sq km)**.

Percentage of Forest Cover Relative to Geographic Area



In terms of **forest cover percentage** relative to total geographical area, **Lakshadweep** has the highest forest cover at **91.33%**, followed by **Mizoram (85.34%)** and the **Andaman & Nicobar Islands (81.62%)**.

Other Covers

Mangrove Cover

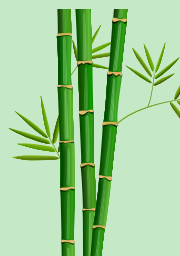


The report reveals that India has a **total mangrove cover of 4,992 sq km**, which is crucial for biodiversity conservation and coastal protection.

Carbon Stock

The total carbon stock of **India's forests** is estimated to be **7,285.5 million tonnes**. This marks an increase of **81.5 million tonnes** in carbon stock compared to the previous assessment. The growing carbon stock indicates India's significant contribution toward carbon sequestration.

Bamboo Area



The **bamboo-bearing area** in India is reported to cover **1,54,670 sq km**, which represents an increase of **5,227 sq km** in bamboo area compared to the 2021 assessment.

Implications for Forest Governance and Tribal Rights

- This dispute underscores the **delicate balance** between **forest conservation** and **rights-based forest management**. By questioning the **scientific basis** for ISFR's attribution, the **Tribal Affairs Ministry** aims to forestall any **unwarranted curtailment** of FRA-granted rights, including individual and community tenure, fodder collection, and minor forest produce gathering.
- Simultaneously, the MoEFCC's emphasis on net forest cover gains reflects the government's commitment to tracking India's progress toward international climate and biodiversity targets, highlighting the need for robust data and collaborative governance to reconcile ecological objectives with tribal rights.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Under which legislation caused a negative change in forest and tree cover, according to the ISFR 2023—prompting a formal query from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to MoEFCC on July 2025?

- (a) Indian Forest Act (1927)
- (b) Environmental Protection Act (1986)
- (c) Wildlife Protection Act (1972)
- (d) Forest Rights Act (2006)

2. Whose protests prompted a challenge to the ISFR 2023 claim that forest rights titles caused a “negative” change in forest cover, warning it could undermine the Forest Rights Act?

- (a) Scheduled Tribes Commission
- (b) National Green Tribunal
- (c) 150 forest rights and civil-society groups
- (d) Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment

3. Which report, released by the Forest Survey of India, documented a loss of over 1,200 sq km each of Mid-Dense and Open Forests and a gain of more than 2,400 sq km of Very Dense Forest within Recorded Forest Areas?

- (a) 16th biennial ISFR
- (b) 18th biennial ISFR
- (c) 19th biennial ISFR
- (d) 17th biennial ISFR

4. In which type of area according to the 18th biennial ISFR released by the Forest Survey of India, was there a reported loss of over 1,200 sq km each of Mid-Dense and Open Forests and a gain of over 2,400 sq km of Very Dense Forest?

- (a) Protected Wetlands
- (b) Ecologically Sensitive Zones
- (c) Community Forest Zones
- (d) Recorded Forest Areas

5. Which of the following best describes the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006?

- (a) A law granting rights to forest dwellers living in forests for 75 years before 2005
- (b) A law promoting tree plantation through joint forest management committees
- (c) A scheme compensating states for forest land diverted to infrastructure use
- (d) A programme regulating interstate movement of forest produce and resources

6. Which ministry issued a clarification in July 2025 stating that ISFR 2023 showed an overall net gain in forest and tree cover?

- (a) Ministry of Tribal Affairs through a special press note
- (b) Ministry of Agriculture via an annual forest bulletin
- (c) Ministry of Home Affairs through a forest data update
- (d) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

7. Which ministry raised concerns about the scientific basis of ISFR 2023 findings to protect FRA-granted forest rights?

- (a) Environment Ministry
- (b) Agriculture Ministry
- (c) Tribal Affairs Ministry
- (d) Home Ministry focusing

SOLUTIONS

1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (a) 6. (d) 7. (c)

15

INDIA ACHIEVES 50% NON-FOSSIL
FUEL POWER CAPACITY

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

- **Historic Milestone:** India announced that **50.08 % of its total installed electricity capacity** now comes from **non-fossil fuel sources**, five years ahead of the **2030 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** target.
- **Capacity Snapshot:** Out of **484.82 GW** nationwide, **242.78 GW** is supplied by **renewables, large hydro and nuclear** power, firmly positioning India among the world's leading low-carbon economies.
- **Ministerial Statement:** Union Minister **Pralhad Joshi** hailed the achievement as proof of India's **clean-energy leadership** and a springboard toward its **net-zero 2070** commitment.
- **Ongoing Challenge:** Despite capacity gains, **thermal plants still generate over 70% of actual electricity**, underscoring the urgent need for storage, grid flexibility and demand-side management.

A Decade of Energy-Transition Acceleration (2015 – 2025)

- In **2015**, non-fossil sources contributed barely **30%** of India's installed capacity. By **2020** the share climbed to **38%**, and in **2025** it breached the **half-way mark**, highlighting the fastest clean-capacity build-out among major economies.
- The surge is largely attributable to **utility-scale solar parks, record-low renewable tariffs, wind-solar hybrids**, and enabling policy instruments that mobilised both public finance and **green bonds**.
- Yet fossil-fuel plants remain baseload workhorses because renewables are **intermittent**; storage technologies, smart grids and market reforms now form India's next frontier in sustaining this transition.

C. Fossil vs Non-Fossil Energy Share in Installed Capacity as on 30.06.2025

Sector	Capacity (in GW)	Percentage
Thermal	242.04 GW	(49.92%)
Non-Fossil Fuel (RE+ LH+Nuclear)	242.78 GW	(50.08%)
Total	484.82 GW	(100%)

- India's power mix stands at **484.82 GW**, comprising **242.04 GW thermal (49.92 %)**, **184.62 GW renewables (38.08 %)**, **49.38 GW large hydro (10.19 %)**, and **8.78 GW nuclear (1.81%)**.
- Collectively, **renewables, hydro and nuclear** deliver **242.78 GW**, nudging the non-fossil share to **50.08%**. This structural diversification reduces exposure to volatile fossil-fuel imports and strengthens energy security.

Flagship Policies Driving the Shift

- India's capacity leap is underpinned by a constellation of programmes. The **PM-KUSUM scheme** has distributed more than **three-lakh solar pumps**, integrating clean power with agricultural resilience. The **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (2024)** intends to solarise **one crore rooftops**, transforming citizens into energy "prosumers."

- Utility-scale expansion thrives on **solar-park and wind-solar hybrid policies**, while the **bioenergy renaissance** fuelled by biogas, ethanol and biomass co-firing advances rural jobs and a **circular economy**. Together these measures equip India to exceed its Paris-era ambitions.

Global Context and India's Climate-Leadership Narrative

- Among G20 peers, India is on the short list of nations projected to **surpass their NDC pledges**. With one of the **lowest per-capita emissions** worldwide, New Delhi champions **climate equity**, the **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) movement**, and a **just transition** for the Global South.
- Its diplomacy at **COP** and **G20** fora consistently presses developed countries on finance and technology transfer, buttressing the principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC)**.

Socio-Economic Co-Benefits of the Clean-Energy Surge

- The renewables boom is generating **rural employment**, improving **air-quality-linked public health**, widening **energy access** in frontier regions, and fostering **women-led solar enterprises** through self-help groups.
- By coupling **waste-to-energy projects** and **solar-panel recycling**, India also embeds **3R (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle)** principles, reinforcing a broader sustainable-development agenda.

The Paris Agreement: Architecture and Obligations

- Adopted at **COP-21 (December 2015)** and effective since **4 November 2016**, the **Paris Agreement** commits Parties to hold global warming **well below 2 °C** and pursue **1.5 °C**. Core elements include **Nationally Determined Contributions**, a **\$100-billion climate-finance pledge**, an **Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF)** for biennial reporting, and a **five-year Global Stocktake (GST)** to gauge collective progress.
- The treaty's hybrid design is binding with respect to **reporting duties**, yet non-prescriptive on individual target levels.

Nationally Determined Contributions: Concept and India's Updated Targets

- **NDCs** are self-defined road maps detailing each country's **mitigation, adaptation and implementation strategies**. India ratified Paris on **2 October 2016** and, in its **2022 update**, pledged to **cut GDP-emissions intensity by 45 % (vs 2005)**, secure **≈50 % cumulative electric capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030**, and create an additional **2.5–3 billion-tonne CO₂ sink** through forest cover. India also enshrined **Mission LiFE** and confirmed a **net-zero 2070** pathway.

Monitoring, Transparency and the Road to 2030

- Under the **ETF**, India will submit **Biennial Transparency Reports** tracking progress toward its NDCs; the first **Global Stocktake (2023)** has already spotlighted the world's emissions gap, raising pressure for enhanced ambition at **COP-30 (2025)**.
- Having met its **50% capacity pledge five years early**, India now focuses on **dispatchable clean-energy share**, battery and pumped-hydro storage, and rapid grid modernisation key steps to convert installed capacity into genuine **decarbonised generation** and to keep the **Paris 1.5 °C goal** within reach.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What percentage of India's total installed electricity capacity came from non-fossil fuel sources?

- (a) 45.12% (b) 48.76% (c) 49.95% (d) 50.08%

2. Which of the following sources continues to dominate actual electricity generation in India, contributing over 70% despite renewable capacity expansion?

- (a) Thermal plants (b) Biomass energy
(c) Nuclear power stations (d) Off-grid solar

3. By which year did India's non-fossil energy sources reach 38% of its total installed capacity, up from 30% in 2015?

- (a) 2017 (b) 2019 (c) 2020 (d) 2022

4. Which combination of energy sources collectively contributes 242.78 GW, pushing India's non-fossil electricity capacity above 50%?

- (a) Thermal, solar, and nuclear
(b) Wind, thermal, and hydro
(c) Solar, coal, and hydro
(d) Renewables, hydro and nuclear

5. Which government scheme has facilitated the distribution of over three lakh solar pumps to promote clean energy use in agriculture?

- (a) PM-KUSUM scheme (b) Solar Krishi Mission
(c) Urja Suraksha Yojana (d) Kisan Ujjwala Project

6. Which 2024 initiative aims to solarise one crore household rooftops and empower citizens as energy "prosumers"?

- (a) Solar Sahyog Abhiyan
(b) Rooftop Urja Yojana
(c) PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana
(d) Ghar Urja Suraksha Scheme

7. Which of the following initiatives, promoted by India, advocates sustainable living and individual responsibility for climate action?

- (a) Mission Amrit Dharohar (b) LiFE movement
(c) Green India Corridor (d) Clean Living Campaign

8. At which global platforms has India prominently demanded climate finance and technology support while championing CBDR-RC?

- (a) UNFCCC and NAM (b) WTO and SCO
(c) ADB and ASEAN (d) COP and G20 fora

9. Which principle is being reinforced in India through solar-panel recycling and waste-to-energy projects as part of its sustainable development agenda?

- (a) Net-Zero Framework
(b) Green Innovation Protocol
(c) 3R (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle)
(d) Clean India Vision

10. Which of the following is not among the core elements of the Paris Agreement framework?

- (a) Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
(b) Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF)
(c) Binding Emissions Caps per Country
(d) Global Stocktake (GST)

11. By which year India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) pledge to secure around 50% of cumulative electric capacity from non-fossil sources?

- (a) 2030 (b) 2028 (c) 2040 (d) 2026

12. Which reporting mechanism will India use under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), to track progress toward its NDCs?

- (a) National Inventory Assessments
(b) Climate Performance Logs
(c) Annual Sustainability Updates
(d) Biennial Transparency Reports

SOLUTIONS

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

16 GLOBAL WETLAND OUTLOOK 2025

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- The **2025 Global Wetland Outlook (GWO)**, released by the **Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention**, has identified **Africa's wetlands** as among the **most degraded ecosystems** in the world.
 - The report was published ahead of the **15th Conference of the Parties (COP15)** to the Ramsar Convention, scheduled from **July 23 to 31, 2025**, in **Zimbabwe**.
 - The main causes of degradation in African wetlands are **urbanisation, industrialisation, and infrastructure development**, with **South Africa's wetlands** degrading faster than restoration efforts can keep pace.
- The **Global Wetland Outlook (GWO)** is the official periodic assessment issued by the **Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)** of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**.
 - The 2025 edition analyses global **trends, ecological conditions, ecosystem service valuations, and policy responses** concerning wetland conservation. It examines **eleven major wetland types** including **Seagrass, Kelp Forests, Coral Reefs, Estuarine Waters, Salt Marshes, Mangroves, Tidal Flats, Lakes, Rivers and Streams, Inland Marshes and Swamps, and Peatlands (Mires)**.
 - The estimated total wetland coverage worldwide in 2025 ranges from **1,425 to 1,800 million hectares**, with a cumulative loss of **411 million hectares since 1970**, representing a **22% global decline** and an average **annual loss rate of 0.52%**.

Key Findings

Africa's Wetland Crisis: The 2025 GWO highlights that **Africa** faces the **most widespread and acute wetland degradation**, followed by **Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean**. In **South Africa**, wetlands are deteriorating at a pace faster than restoration efforts can match. The report also notes that many ecological impacts remain **undetected without detailed field-based assessments**, suggesting that official records may understate the severity. Furthermore, the degradation of wetlands is strongly correlated with **economic status**, as **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**—a significant proportion of which are in Africa—report a **greater proportion of wetlands in poor condition**, while **upper-middle-income and developed nations** generally report better wetland health.

Major Drivers of Wetland Degradation: According to the GWO 2025, the causes of wetland degradation vary regionally. In **Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean**, the dominant drivers are **urban expansion, industrial growth, and large-scale infrastructure projects**. These activities severely disrupt **hydrological flows**, cause **habitat fragmentation**, and endanger both biodiversity and community livelihoods. In contrast, North America and Oceania face threats mainly from invasive species, while Europe contends with degradation driven by droughts and water scarcity.

Economic Value of Wetlands: Wetlands, despite covering only **6% of the Earth's surface**, contribute approximately **7.5% of global GDP** by providing essential ecosystem services such as **food production, flood control, carbon sequestration, and water purification**. In 2023, the estimated **global ecosystem service value of wetlands** was **US \$39 trillion**. **Africa's wetlands** were valued at **US \$825.7 billion**, while **Asia's wetlands** reached **US \$10.581 trillion**. A case study from **Zambia's Kafue Flats** illustrates the local economic significance—where a **US \$300,000 restoration project** supported **over a million people**, revived **natural flood regimes**, and generated **US \$30 million annually** through **artisanal fisheries**. At the macroeconomic level, wetland degradation increases **climate vulnerability**, lowers **agricultural productivity**, and elevates **public spending on disaster recovery**, particularly in countries where **nature-based sectors contribute up to 60% of GDP**.

Conservation vs Restoration: Cost Dynamics: The report emphasises that **preventive conservation** of healthy wetlands is significantly more **cost-effective** than restoration of degraded ones. The **annual cost of wetland restoration** ranges from **US \$1,000 to US \$70,000 per hectare**, depending on ecological condition and region. Therefore, the GWO urges governments and conservation agencies to prioritise proactive conservation strategies over reactive restoration measures.

Recommendations from the GWO 2025

The GWO 2025 recommends that countries align their wetland strategies with the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**. It highlights **Target 2**, which aims to **restore at least 30% of degraded ecosystems**, and **Target 3**, the **30x30 goal to conserve 30% of terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems by 2030**. Meeting these targets requires the restoration of **123 million hectares** and effective conservation of **428 million hectares** of wetlands.

In terms of financing, the report highlights that **biodiversity funding currently constitutes only 0.25% of global GDP**, which is grossly inadequate. It advocates for **mainstreaming wetlands into climate finance, national development plans, and budgetary allocations**. Additionally, it promotes **public-private partnerships for nature-based solutions (NbS)** and emphasises the need for **long-term, LDC-focused conservation financing**.

The report also calls for **regional cooperation** and **grassroots engagement**. Key stakeholders such as **Zimbabwe's Environment Minister Evelyn Ndllovu** and **Ramsar Secretary-General Musonda Mumba** stressed the necessity of **cross-border conservation frameworks, community-led restoration efforts, and integration of wetland services into national economic accounting systems**.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The **Ramsar Convention**, adopted in **1971 in Ramsar, Iran**, is the **world's only multilateral treaty** devoted exclusively to the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It entered into force in 1975 and is managed by the Ramsar Secretariat based in Gland, Switzerland, with technical assistance from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

A wetland qualifies as a **Ramsar Site** if it meets one or more of the following criteria: it **supports endangered or vulnerable species**, **hosts more than 20,000 waterbirds**, or **functions as a breeding, feeding, or nursery habitat** for key aquatic species.

India's Participation in Ramsar Convention

India became a contracting party to the Ramsar Convention in **1982** and has steadily expanded its list of recognised wetlands. As of **August 2025**, India has **91 Ramsar Sites**, with the **Khichan** and **Menar** wetlands in **Rajasthan** being the latest additions. Two Indian sites—**Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan)** and **Loktak Lake (Manipur)**—are currently listed on the **Montreux Record**, indicating significant ecological threats and requiring priority conservation interventions.

India hosts **1,307 identified wetlands**, collectively covering **1.35 million hectares**, making it the **largest wetland holder in South Asia**. The government has implemented several regulatory and programmatic tools, including the **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**, which establish the legal framework for wetland governance. The **Wetlands of India Portal (2021)** offers real-time data monitoring, while the **National Wetland Decadal Change Atlas** tracks spatial and ecological transformations. The **Amrit Dharohar Scheme (2023)** promotes **eco-tourism**, **carbon sequestration**, and **community-based conservation**. Wetlands are also integrated into river management through the **Namami Gange Programme**, which recognises wetlands as vital to **basin-level ecological health**. To spread awareness, **World Wetlands Day** is celebrated annually on **February 2**, marking the **anniversary of the Ramsar Convention's adoption**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which ecosystem, as per the 2025 Global Wetland Outlook by Ramsar Secretariat, is facing some of the highest levels of degradation worldwide?
(a) Arctic tundra (b) Africa's wetlands
(c) Himalayan glaciers. (d) North American grasslands
- Where is the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention, scheduled for July 2025, being held?
(a) Zimbabwe (b) Kenya
(c) Sri Lanka (d) Thailand
- Which of the following is not among the main causes of degradation in African wetlands, as identified in the 2025 Global Wetland Outlook?
(a) Urbanisation
(b) Industrialisation
(c) Infrastructure development
(d) Ecotourism regulation
- Which body under the Ramsar Convention is responsible for publishing the Global Wetland Outlook ?
(a) Ramsar Working Group on Climate Action
(b) International Panel on Wetland Policy
(c) Scientific and Technical Review Panel
(d) Convention Secretariat's Outreach Unit
- How many major wetland types are examined in the 2025 edition of the Global Wetland Outlook (GWO)?
(a) Eleven (b) Nine (c) Seven (d) Thirteen
- Which region, according to the 2025 Global Wetland Outlook, faces the most widespread and severe wetland degradation?
(a) Europe (b) Africa
(c) North America (d) Australia
- Which regions primarily face wetland threats from invasive species rather than large-scale infrastructure or urban expansion?
(a) Africa and South Asia
(b) Europe and Central Asia
(c) Latin America and the Caribbean
(d) North America and Oceania
- Which region is primarily facing wetland degradation due to droughts and water scarcity?
(a) Europe (b) Africa
(c) South America (d) Southeast Asia
- Approximately what percentage of wetlands contribute to global GDP through their ecosystem services?
(a) 3.2% (b) 5% (c) 7.5% (d) 10%

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

10. Which of the following locations was cited in the 2025 Global Wetland Outlook as a successful case where a \$300,000 wetland restoration project supported over a million people and generated \$30 million annually?

- (a) Nigeria's Niger Delta
- (b) Kenya's Tana River Basin
- (c) Uganda's Lake Kyoga wetlands
- (d) Zambia's Kafue Flats

11. Which target under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls for restoring at least 30% of degraded ecosystems?

- (a) Target 1
- (b) Target 2
- (c) Target 4
- (d) Target 6

12. By which year does Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework aim to conserve 30% of terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems?

- (a) 2030
- (b) 2040
- (c) 2025
- (d) 2050

13. In which country was the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands signed in 1971, giving the treaty its name?

- (a) Australia
- (b) France
- (c) Brazil
- (d) Iran

SOLUTIONS

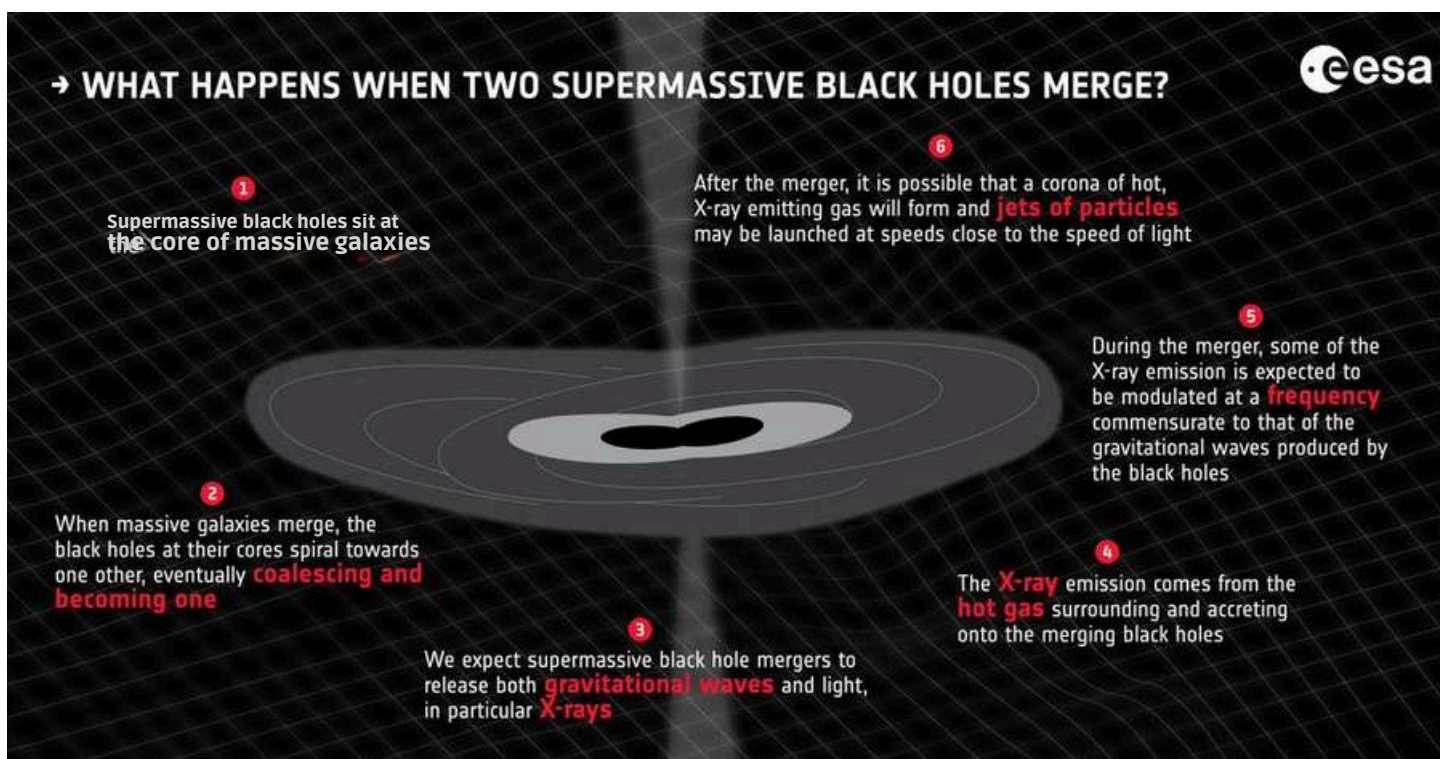
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| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (d) | 4. (c) | 5. (a) | 6. (b) | 7. (d) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (d) | 11. (b) | 12. (a) | 13. (d) | | | |

17 MASSIVE BLACKHOLE MERGER DETECTED

SCIENCE AND TECH

IN FOCUS

- On **July 10, 2025**, scientists from the **LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA (LVK) collaboration** announced the detection of the most massive black hole merger ever observed, designated **GW231123**.
- The event involved the merger of two black holes with masses of approximately **137 and 103 times the mass of the Sun**, forming a single black hole of about **225 solar masses**.
- The **gravitational waves** from this cosmic event, which occurred billions of years ago, were detected on Earth in **2025**, marking a landmark discovery in the field of astrophysics and black hole evolution.



Understanding Black Hole Mergers

- A **black hole merger** is a celestial phenomenon where **two black holes** spiral toward each other under the influence of their mutual gravitational attraction, emitting **gravitational waves** as they orbit. These waves carry away energy, causing the orbit to decay until the two black holes eventually collide and coalesce into a single, more massive black hole.
- This process releases a final, intense burst of gravitational radiation, which can be detected by terrestrial instruments. This cosmic dance can be visualised analogously to **figure skaters accelerating as they spin toward each other**, though the gravitational forces involved far exceed anything observable in the physical world.
- The final result is a **larger black hole** and a gravitational wave signature that travels through spacetime to be observed on Earth.

Significance of the GW231123 Merger

- The **GW231123** event is exceptional for multiple reasons. Firstly, the merging black holes possessed masses of around **137 and 103 solar masses**, placing them within the **pair-instability mass gap**—a theoretical range in which black holes were not expected to form via direct stellar collapse.
- This challenges conventional astrophysical models of stellar death. Secondly, both progenitor black holes were found to be **spinning at extraordinary speeds**, with one nearing the theoretical **spin limit** defined by **Einstein's General Theory of Relativity (1915)**.
- These characteristics suggest that the black holes involved in GW231123 may have themselves formed from **prior black hole mergers**, offering rare evidence in support of the **hierarchical merger hypothesis** and indicating more complex evolutionary pathways than previously considered.

Implications for Astrophysics and Cosmology

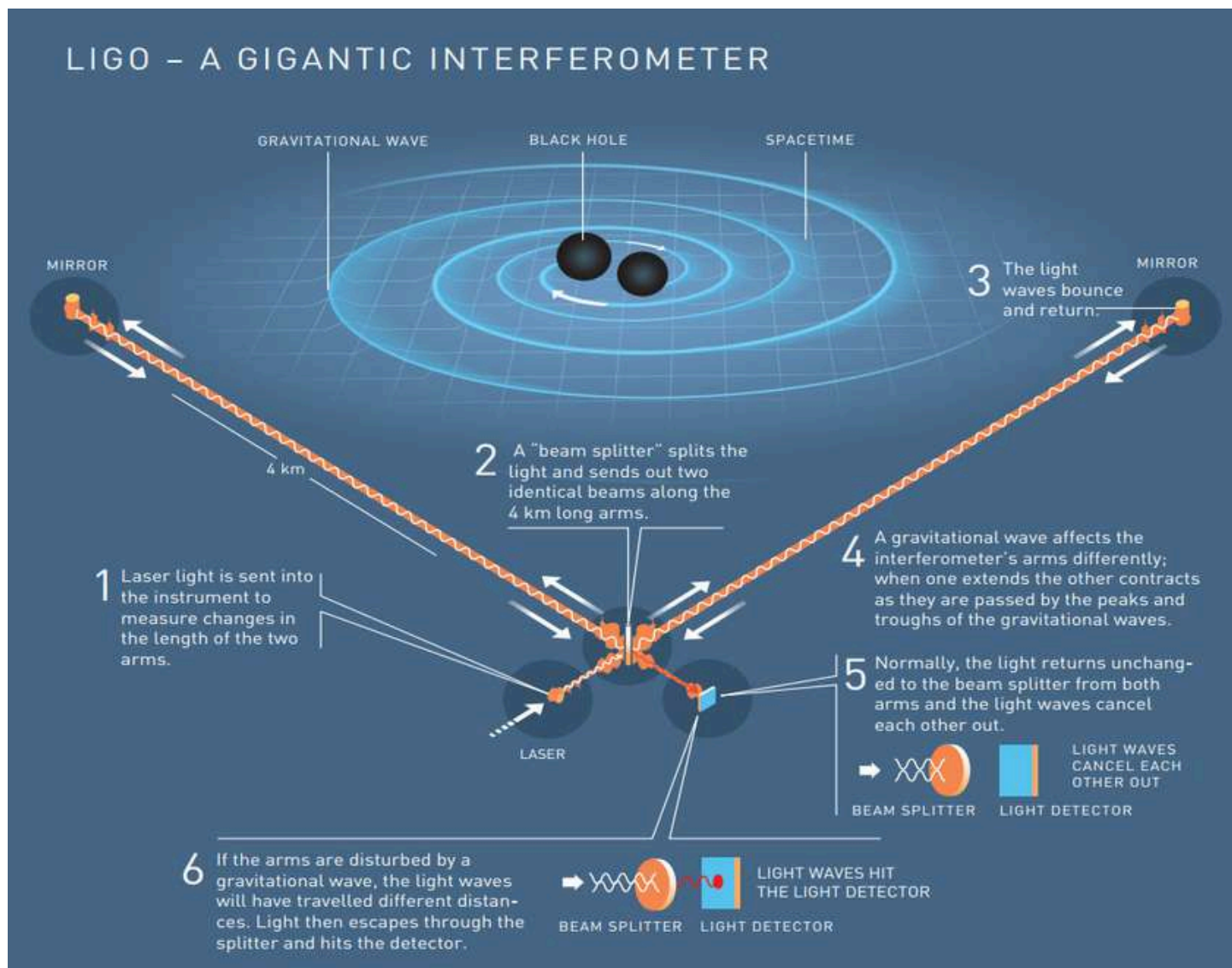
- The detection of GW231123 carries profound scientific implications. It provides strong evidence for **hierarchical mergers**, suggesting that **second-generation black holes** formed from earlier mergers—are not only possible but perhaps even common.
- This revelation has the potential to redefine our understanding of how **supermassive black holes** evolve over cosmic time. Furthermore, the event broadens our perspective on the **stellar mass spectrum**, challenging previous assumptions about which stars collapse into black holes and which explode into **supernovae** without leaving behind compact remnants.
- It prompts new models about the **final stages of massive stars**, the nature of the **mass gap**, and the potential formation routes of **intermediate-mass black holes**.

Gravitational Waves: A New Tool for Cosmic Discovery

- Until recently, **astronomical observations** relied almost exclusively on **electromagnetic radiation**—light, X-rays, gamma rays, and radio signals. However, these methods cannot penetrate certain regions of space, especially those dominated by **black holes**, **dark matter**, or the **early universe**. **Gravitational waves**, predicted by **Albert Einstein in 1916**, provide a revolutionary new channel for observing the universe.
- They allow scientists to “**listen**” to cosmic events by detecting the **ripples in spacetime** generated by massive accelerating bodies. The first confirmed detection of gravitational waves in **2015 by LIGO** earned the **2017 Nobel Prize in Physics**, fundamentally transforming astrophysics.
- While all accelerating masses produce gravitational waves, only those arising from **cataclysmic events** like black hole or neutron star mergers are strong enough to be detected from Earth.

The LVK Collaboration and Global Observatory Network

- The **GW231123** event was captured by the **LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA (LVK) collaboration**, an international alliance of gravitational wave observatories.
- The collaboration integrates data from: **LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory)** in the United States, which operates two detectors located in **Hanford (Washington)** and **Livingston (Louisiana)**. LIGO was the first to detect gravitational waves in 2015.
- **Virgo**, situated near **Pisa, Italy**, works alongside LIGO to improve the **triangulation and localisation** of gravitational wave sources. **KAGRA (Kamioka Gravitational Wave Detector)** in **Japan**, the newest member of the collaboration, is distinguished by its **underground design** and **cryogenic mirrors**, enhancing its sensitivity.
- By synchronising data across continents, the **LVK network** allows for more accurate determination of a cosmic event's **location, distance, energy output, and astrophysical origin**.



How Does LIGO Works?

LIGO-India: Expanding India's Role in Gravitational Astronomy

- India is poised to make a major contribution to global gravitational wave science through **LIGO-India**, a joint initiative between the **Government of India** and **LIGO-USA**.
- Originally targeted for operational readiness by **2024**, the project experienced delays but received **final cabinet approval and funding of ₹2,600 crore in 2023**. The observatory will be built in **Hingoli district, Maharashtra**, and managed by the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.
- Once operational, **LIGO-India** will significantly: Enhance the **global sensitivity** of the gravitational wave network.
- Improve **event localisation**, especially for signals originating in the **Southern Hemisphere**. Solidify **India's leadership** in cutting-edge scientific domains and create avenues for **collaborative international research** in fundamental physics and cosmology.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- In which country was the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands signed in 1971, giving the treaty its name?
(a) Australia (b) France (c) Brazil (d) Iran
- Which scientific collaboration announced the detection of the most massive black hole merger ever observed on July 10, 2025?
(a) CERN-ATLAS (b) NASA-ESA
(c) ISRO-JAXA (d) LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA
- What is the designation given to the most massive black hole merger ever observed, as announced by the LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA collaboration on July 10, 2025?
(a) GW231123 (b) BX204219
(c) GRB250710 (d) ZW112020
- What was the approximate final mass of the newly formed black hole resulting from the GW231123 event observed in 2025?
(a) 210 solar masses (b) 225 solar masses
(c) 240 solar masses (d) 260 solar masses
- Which phenomenon, predicted by Albert Einstein in 1916, has recently emerged as a revolutionary new way to observe the universe beyond the limitations of electromagnetic radiation?
(a) Gravitational waves (b) Neutrino pulses
(c) Cosmic ray bursts (d) Magnetic field reversals
- In which year was the Nobel Prize in Physics awarded for the first confirmed detection of gravitational waves by LIGO?
(a) 2015 (b) 2017 (c) 2016 (d) 2019
- What is the full form of LIGO, the U.S.-based component of the international LVK gravitational wave observatory network?
(a) Linear Imaging Gravitational Oscillator
(b) Large Interferometric Gravity Organization
(c) Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory
(d) Luminous Intergalactic Gravitational Operator
- In which of the following places the two LIGO detectors in the United States that contributed to the detection of the GW231123 event are located?
(a) Austin and Boston (b) Pasadena and Princeton
(c) Chicago and Baltimore (d) Hanford and Livingston
- Where is the Virgo gravitational wave observatory, which collaborates with LIGO and KAGRA, located?
(a) Pisa, Italy (b) Geneva, Switzerland
(c) Lyon, France (d) Madrid, Spain
- Which country hosts the KAGRA observatory, a key facility in the global gravitational wave detection network that employs cryogenic mirrors and underground construction?
(a) India (b) Indonesia (c) Japan (d) Malaysia
- What is the name of India's upcoming gravitational wave observatory that is part of a collaboration with LIGO-USA?
(a) INDIGO (b) Bharat-Wave
(c) GravIndia (d) LIGO-India
- In which Indian state is the LIGO-India observatory planned to be constructed?
(a) Karnataka (b) Maharashtra
(c) Gujarat (d) Tamil Nadu

SOLUTIONS

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

18

RUSSIA'S KAMCHATKA HIT BY 8.8
EARTHQUAKE

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- On **July 30, 2025**, a massive **8.8 magnitude earthquake** struck the **Kamchatka Peninsula** in Russia's Far East, becoming one of the **strongest global earthquakes in recent decades**.
- The **epicentre** was located **119 km southeast of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky** at a **depth of 19.3 km**, triggering a **tsunami** with waves reaching **3–4 metres in Kamchatka** and over **five feet in Hawaii**.
- Despite its intensity, **no fatalities** were reported due to Kamchatka's **sparse population**. This is the **strongest global earthquake** since the **2011 Japan quake** that caused the **Fukushima nuclear disaster**.

Understanding Earthquakes

An earthquake is **the sudden shaking of the ground caused by a rapid release of energy inside the Earth**. That energy starts at a point on a fault (a fracture where rocks can slip) called the **hypocenter** or **focus** (the white glow in the image). The spot directly above it at the surface is the **epicenter** (the red dot). From the hypocenter, energy travels outward as seismic waves, which make the ground (and buildings) shake.

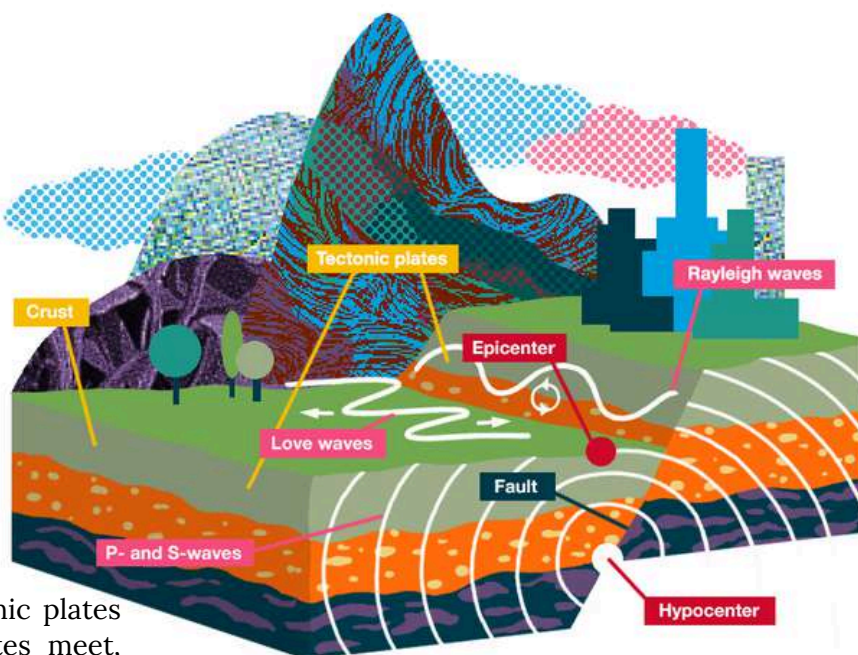
How it happens

Tectonic stress builds up: Earth's tectonic plates are constantly moving. Where two plates meet, they lock along a fault in the crust. Over years to centuries, stress accumulates as the plates try to move but are held by friction.

Sudden slip (elastic rebound): When the stored stress exceeds friction, the fault snaps and slips—sometimes by centimeters, sometimes by many meters. The surrounding rock springs back (elastic rebound), releasing energy.

Waves radiate from the hypocenter:

- **P-waves (primary/compressional)** are the fastest. They push-pull the ground in the direction they travel and are the first to arrive.
- **S-waves (secondary/shear)** come next. They shake the ground side-to-side or up-down and do not travel through liquids.
- Near the surface, energy also travels as surface waves:
 - Love waves move the ground horizontally, like a snake's motion.
 - Rayleigh waves roll the ground in a vertical, ocean-wave-like motion.
- Surface waves usually cause the strongest, longest-lasting shaking and most damage, especially in soft soils.



Shaking pattern at the surface: The strongest shaking is often near the epicenter, but it can be amplified far away by soft sediments, valley shapes, and man-made fills. That's why two places at the same distance can feel very different shaking.

Tectonic Setting of Kamchatka Peninsula

The **Kamchatka Peninsula** is situated within the **Circum-Pacific Seismic Belt**, widely known as the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, which is the **most geologically active region** on Earth, stretching across **40,000 kilometres**. The peninsula marks the **subduction zone** where the **Pacific Plate** dives beneath the **Okhotsk microplate**, forming the **Kuril-Kamchatka Trench**, a **deep-sea trench** that descends nearly **10 kilometres** below sea level. Subduction in this region is highly active, with the **Pacific Plate** descending at an average rate of **86 mm per year**, generating **megathrust fault lines** capable of producing enormous earthquakes. Historically, this region has witnessed multiple high-magnitude seismic events,

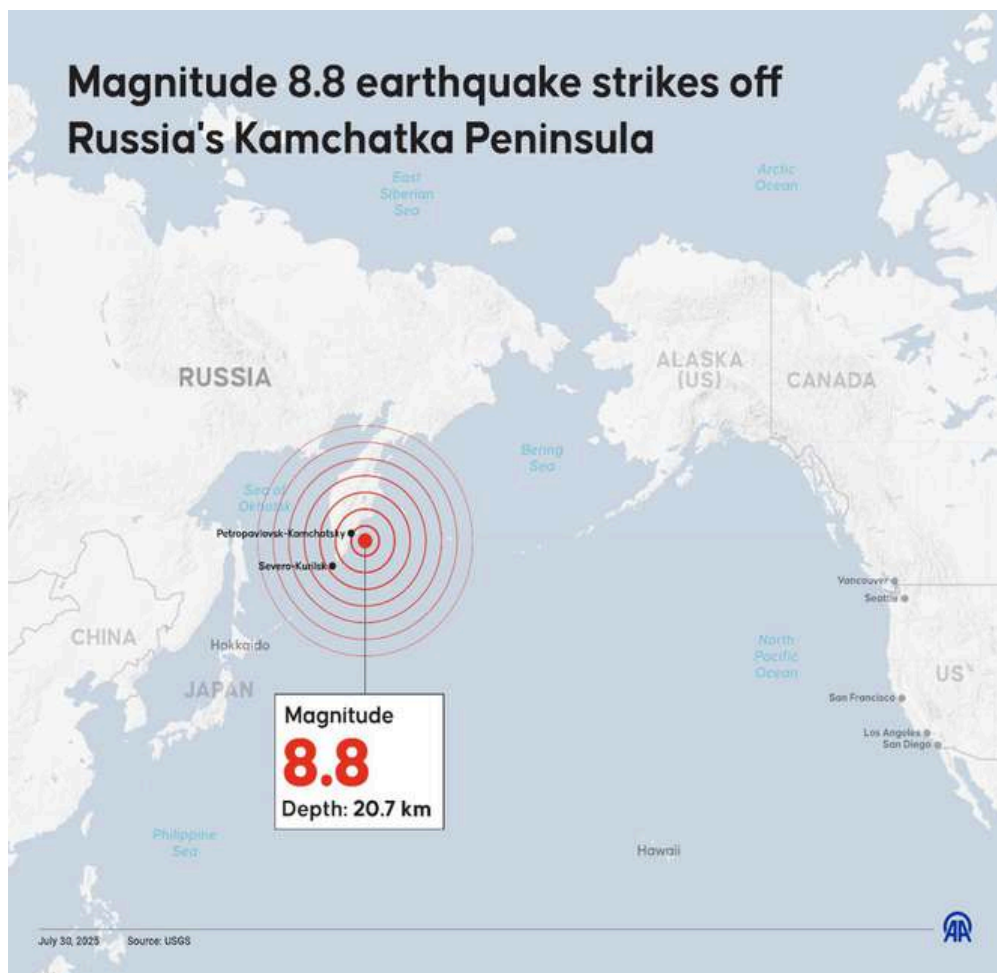
including the **1952 (9.0 Mw)**, **2006**, **2020**, **1841**, and **1737** earthquakes. The **July 2025 quake** was followed by a **6.9 magnitude aftershock**, further indicating persistent **seismic stress** in the area.

The Geology of Subduction and Earthquake Genesis

Subduction is a geological mechanism where a denser tectonic plate moves beneath another, creating **friction**, **pressure**, and **strain accumulation** at the plate interface. This stress eventually releases as an **earthquake** when the fault slips. The **Pacific Ring of Fire** is characterised by multiple such **subduction zones**, making it a global hub for **earthquakes**, **volcanic eruptions**, and **tsunamis**. In Kamchatka, these dynamics not only generate seismic events but also lead to frequent **volcanic activity**, with volcanoes like **Klyuchevskoy**—one of the world's tallest active volcanoes—being powered by the same tectonic forces. This interplay of **volcanism** and **seismicity** defines the peninsula's complex geotectonic character.

Why the Kamchatka Quake Was Rare but Not Unusual

Though massive, the **8.8 magnitude earthquake** is consistent with Kamchatka's tectonic history. The **Pacific Ring of Fire** has registered **23 earthquakes above magnitude 8.0** in the last two decades. The **Kamchatka-Kuril-Japan arc**, in particular, has recorded **over 130 earthquakes exceeding 7.0 magnitude since 1900**. Globally, only **five earthquakes of magnitude 8.5 or more** have occurred in the past 20 years, making the **2025 event rare in strength but geologically expected**. The **low casualty count** can be attributed to Kamchatka



Krai's **extremely low population density** of just **0.62 persons per square kilometre** (as per 2023 data), which minimised human exposure to the disaster.

Measurement of Earthquake Magnitude and Intensity

The **magnitude** of an earthquake reflects the **total energy released** and is quantified using the **Moment Magnitude Scale (Mw)**. In contrast, **intensity** denotes the **localized effects of shaking** felt at different locations. These are recorded using **seismographs**, which measure ground motion and help determine the **epicentre**, **depth**, and **magnitude** of an earthquake. It is important to note that each **whole-number increase** on the magnitude scale represents a **31.6-fold increase in energy**. Thus, the **8.8 magnitude Kamchatka quake** released **over 30 times more energy** than the **7.7 magnitude earthquake in Myanmar** (March 2024), even though the numerical difference appears small.

The Pacific Ring of Fire: Earth's Most Seismic Region

The **Pacific Ring of Fire** forms a **horseshoe-shaped belt** of seismic and volcanic activity around the **Pacific Ocean**, where major tectonic plates like the **Pacific**, **Eurasian**, **North American**, **Indian**, and **Australian** plates interact. It accounts for more than **80% of the world's largest earthquakes** and the majority of its **active volcanoes**. Countries located along the Ring of Fire include **Russia**, **Japan**, **Indonesia**, **the Philippines**, **Chile**, **Peru**, **Mexico**, **the United States**, and



New Zealand. Historic events such as the **2011 Tōhoku Earthquake in Japan (9.1 Mw)** and the **1960 Chile Earthquake (9.5 Mw)**—the **strongest recorded quake globally**—originated here. The continuous **subduction**, **collision**, and **transform motion** of tectonic plates make this belt uniquely prone to mega-earthquakes and related disasters.

Other Global Earthquake Belts and Their Risks

Apart from the Ring of Fire, Earth features two other major seismic zones. The first is the **Alpide Belt**, stretching from **Indonesia** through the **Himalayas** to **Turkey**, and accounting for **15–17% of global earthquakes**. Though less seismically active, it crosses **densely populated areas**, making its quakes particularly deadly. For example, the **2015 Nepal earthquake (7.6 Mw)** caused **over 15,000 deaths**, despite being much weaker than the Kamchatka quake. The second is the **Mid-Atlantic Ridge**, a **submarine mountain range** extending from the **Arctic to the Antarctic**. Earthquakes here are typically **moderate** and cause **minimal damage** due to their **remote oceanic location**, far from population centres.

Limits of Earthquake Magnitude: Can There Be a Magnitude 10?

The **maximum potential magnitude** of an earthquake is determined by the **length and strength of the fault line** involved. The **1960 Chile earthquake (9.5 Mw)** remains the **largest ever recorded**, and is widely considered the **theoretical upper limit** for seismic activity on Earth. To generate a **magnitude 10 earthquake**, a **global-scale fault line**—stretching nearly the circumference of the Earth—would be required, which is **geologically impossible**. Thus, while the **8.8 magnitude Kamchatka quake** is among the strongest events in

history, it remains **within the limits of natural tectonic dynamics**.

A few exam-useful add-ons

- **Depth matters:** Shallow quakes (<70 km) usually cause stronger surface damage than deeper ones at the same magnitude.
- **Magnitude vs intensity (with instruments & scales):**
 - **Magnitude** is the energy released at the source. It is calculated from seismograms recorded by seismometers/seismographs (for very strong, near-field shaking we also use strong-motion instruments/accelerographs). Today the standard is Moment Magnitude (M_w); you may still see Richter/Local Magnitude (M_L) and Body-/Surface-wave magnitudes (M_b/M_s).
 - **Intensity** describes how strong the shaking felt/was observed at a location. It is not measured by one instrument; it is assigned from effects on people, objects, and buildings using scales such as the Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI I–XII) or EMS-98. In modern practice, dense accelerometer networks (strong-motion seismographs) provide PGA/PGV data that agencies convert into “instrumental intensity” and ShakeMaps for quick situational awareness.
- **Foreshocks and aftershocks:** Small quakes may precede a mainshock; many aftershocks follow as the fault readjusts.
- **Early warning:** Arrays of seismometers detect the first-arriving P-waves and can issue seconds of warning before the stronger S and surface waves arrive.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What was the height of the tsunami waves during the 2025 Kamchatka earthquake that struck the region?
 - 1–2 metres
 - 3–4 metres
 - 5–6 metres
 - Over 7 metres
- Which major disaster linked to a 2011 earthquake in Japan is referenced as the last event of comparable magnitude to the 2025 Kamchatka earthquake?
 - Fukushima nuclear disaster
 - Kobe port collapse
 - Mount Fuji landslide
 - Tokyo subway flooding
- Which of the following refers to the 40,000-kilometre-long seismically active zone that includes the Kamchatka Peninsula?
 - Atlantic Seismic Arc
 - Mediterranean Fault Line
 - Indian Ocean Ridge
 - Pacific Ring of Fire
- Which deep-sea trench, nearly 10 kilometres below sea level, is formed at the subduction zone where the Pacific Plate dives beneath the Okhotsk microplate?
 - Mariana Trench
 - Sunda Trench
 - Kuril-Kamchatka Trench
 - Japan Trench
- Which of the following best defines the word Subduction?
 - The process where a denser tectonic plate moves beneath another, causing friction and pressure at their boundary
 - The upward movement of magma through cracks in the Earth's crust
 - The lateral sliding of tectonic plates past one another without vertical displacement
 - The weathering of rock due to wind and water erosion over time
- Which active volcano in the Kamchatka Peninsula is among the tallest in the world and is powered by tectonic subduction forces?
 - Mount Etna
 - Klyuchevskoy
 - Mount Pinatubo
 - Mauna Loa
- How many earthquakes above magnitude 8.0 have been recorded in the Pacific Ring of Fire over the last two decades?
 - 15 earthquakes
 - 18 earthquakes
 - 20 earthquakes
 - 23 earthquakes
- How many earthquakes above magnitude 7.0 since 1900, have been recorded along the Kamchatka–Kuril–Japan arc?
 - 130 earthquakes
 - 85 earthquakes
 - 110 earthquakes
 - 97 earthquakes
- How many earthquakes of magnitude 8.5 or greater have occurred globally in the past 20 years,?
 - Seven earthquakes
 - Nine earthquakes
 - Five earthquakes
 - Eleven earthquakes

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

10. Around which ocean does the Pacific Ring of Fire, known for its high frequency of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, extend in a horseshoe shape?

- (a) Southern Ocean (b) Atlantic Ocean
(c) Arctic Ocean (d) Pacific Ocean

11. Which of the following is not among the countries located along the Pacific Ring of Fire?

- (a) Japan (b) Egypt
(c) Chile (d) Indonesia

12. Across which of the following regions The Alpine Belt, one of the world's major seismic zones apart from the Ring of Fire, stretches?

- (a) Himalayas to Turkey
(b) Andes to Patagonia
(c) Rockies to Alaska
(d) Siberia to Scandinavia

13. Which of the following is a submarine mountain range that stretches from the Arctic Ocean to the Antarctic Ocean?

- a) Andes Mountains
b) Mariana Trench
c) Himalayan Range
d) Mid-Atlantic Ridge

14. Which of the following holds the record for the strongest earthquake ever recorded in modern history?

- a) Sumatra earthquake (2004)
b) Alaska earthquake (1964)
c) Chile earthquake (1960)
d) Japan earthquake (2011)

SOLUTIONS

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

19 ICJ CLIMATE CHANGE RULING

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- On **July 23, 2025**, the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** delivered a landmark **advisory opinion** affirming that **nations have binding obligations under international law to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and protect the climate system**.
- While **non-binding**, the opinion affirms that states may face **legal consequences**, including **reparations**, for failure to meet these obligations.
- The case was initiated by **Pacific Island nations**, led by **Vanuatu**, and supported by **over 100 UN member states**, and is expected to profoundly impact **climate litigation, diplomatic processes**, and **domestic legal reforms**.

Origin and Legal Background of the Advisory Opinion

- The ICJ's opinion originated from a **2023 UN General Assembly resolution** that received sponsorship from **105 countries**, seeking clarity on two foundational legal questions: What are states' obligations under international law regarding **climate system protection**? AND What are the **legal consequences** for failure to fulfil those obligations, whether by **acts or omissions**?
- The initiative was led by the **Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC)** and **World's Youth for Climate Justice**, with **Vanuatu** spearheading the diplomatic effort. The proceedings saw **91 written submissions** and **107 oral interventions**, making this the **most participatory case** in the history of the ICJ.

Key Legal Frameworks Considered by the ICJ

- The ICJ grounded its opinion in a diverse body of **binding treaties** and **customary international law**, including the: **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, 1992, **Kyoto Protocol**, 1997, **Paris Agreement**, 2015, **Convention on Biological Diversity**, 1992, **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, 1982, **Montreal Protocol**, 1987, and **Convention to Combat Desertification**, 1994.
- The court clarified that climate obligations arise not only from these instruments but also from **customary international law, general environmental protection principles**, and **international human rights law**, thereby broadening the legal basis for climate responsibility.

Legal Obligations of States under International Climate Law

- The ICJ held that **climate change is an urgent and existential threat**, imposing clear **legal duties on all nations**. States are required to **reduce GHG emissions** according to the **precautionary principle** and standards of **due diligence**.
- The **Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit** must now be treated as a **binding legal benchmark**, compelling nations to ensure that their **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** embody the **highest possible ambition**. Countries must **cooperate**, act **in good faith**, and implement **regulatory and legislative frameworks** for mitigation.
- The ICJ specifically highlighted that **Annex I (developed) countries under the UNFCCC** bear **heightened responsibilities** to lead global mitigation efforts and support **developing nations** with **technology and finance**. Crucially, the court rejected arguments by major emitters like the **US, UK, and China** that climate treaties are **lex specialis**, insulating them from broader legal norms—a decision that strengthens the universal applicability of international climate obligations.

ICJ ADVISORY OPINION

Timeline



Legal Consequences of Breach

- The ICJ concluded that **non-compliance with climate obligations** may constitute an **internationally wrongful act**, triggering **state responsibility**.
- Legal consequences include the obligation to **cease and not repeat** the wrongful conduct, and to provide **reparations**, which could take the form of **compensation, restitution, or satisfaction to injured states**.
- The court further recognised that **national courts** may be authorised to **revoke harmful laws**, compel **revision of inadequate NDCs**, or hold **governments accountable** for inaction.
- It also affirmed the **scientific and legal feasibility** of attributing specific **climate harms** to emissions, strengthening the prospects of **transnational climate litigation**.

Reaffirmation of Climate Justice and the Right to Environment

- For the first time, the ICJ recognised the **human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment** as foundational to the realisation of **other human rights**.
- It held that **states have duties not only to current populations but also to future generations**. Climate action must integrate the protection of **oceans, forests, rivers, and biodiversity**, reinforcing an **ecosystem-based approach** to climate governance.
- The court also clarified that **failure to regulate private actors**, such as **fossil-fuel corporations**, may lead to **state liability** if adequate oversight is lacking—a move that raises the stakes for **corporate climate accountability**.

Fossil Fuels and National Accountability

- In an unusual but crucial step, the ICJ directly addressed **fossil fuel governance**.
- It stated that **state-sanctioned exploration, extraction, or subsidies for fossil fuels** could amount to **internationally wrongful acts**. The court dismissed arguments by states seeking exemption based on **minimal contributions**, asserting that **no country is exempt from scrutiny**.
- This establishes a higher legal threshold for **fossil fuel approvals**, requiring countries to **justify such projects** under **stringent legal and scientific standards**, especially in view of their **climate obligations**.

The Paris Agreement and 1.5°C Obligation

- The ICJ clarified that the **1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement** is **not aspirational**, but a **legal obligation** grounded in **scientific consensus**. NDCs must be **progressively enhanced** and **reflect the highest possible ambition** under Articles 4 and 14 of the Agreement.
- The court limited state discretion by linking it to **due diligence** and **scientific necessity**, thereby **reviving the enforceability** of the Paris Agreement and holding countries accountable even in the absence of explicit sanction mechanisms within the treaty.

Implications for India

- India, while a **historically low per capita emitter**, is now the **third-largest overall emitter** of greenhouse gases. The ICJ opinion affirms India's advocacy for **climate equity** and **Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)**, while also emphasising its **due diligence duties**.
- India's targets—such as achieving **net-zero by 2070**, **phasing out coal**, and promoting **green hydrogen**—align with the opinion's core principles. Domestically, cases like **M.K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India** demonstrate judicial openness to climate rights. However, India may need to **curtail fossil fuel subsidies**, **tighten emissions oversight**, and **strengthen corporate accountability** to remain in compliance with emerging international legal norms.

Broader Global Reactions and Legal Impact

- The ICJ's opinion was widely celebrated as a **moral and legal milestone**. Nations like **Vanuatu**, **Micronesia**, and **Barbados** hailed it as a **victory for climate justice**. UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** called it a **"historic opinion"** that validates the efforts of **youth-led climate activism**.
- **France** and the **European Commission** issued cautious endorsements, interpreting the ruling as a **push for greater climate ambition**. **China** saw it as an affirmation of the **special responsibility of developed nations**.
- The **United States**, having re-exited the Paris Agreement under **President Trump's 2025 administration**, responded **non-committally**, reiterating a **domestic-first** policy approach.
- Globally, the opinion is expected to **strengthen the authority of international law** in climate litigation. Courts in jurisdictions like the **Netherlands**, **Canada**, and **Australia**—which already consider international law persuasive—are likely to invoke the opinion in ongoing and future lawsuits against states and corporations for **climate inaction**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who initiated the case that led to an advisory opinion stating that states may face legal consequences for not fulfilling their climate obligations?
- a) Pacific Island nations
 - b) European Union
 - c) African Union
 - d) United States

2. Which country led the initiative by Pacific Island nations in seeking the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on climate obligations?
- a) Fiji
 - b) Samoa
 - c) Vanuatu
 - d) Maldives

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

3. How many countries sponsored the 2023 UN General Assembly resolution that led to the ICJ's advisory opinion on climate obligations?

- a) 27 countries b) 56 countries
c) 83 countries d) 105 countries

4. Which of the following youth-led organizations collaborated with World's Youth for Climate Justice in driving the legal campaign that culminated in the ICJ advisory opinion on climate obligations?

- a) Global Youth for Nature
b) Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change
c) Climate Warriors Collective
d) Youth Alliance for Green Earth

5. How many written submissions were received during the ICJ proceedings on climate obligations, making it the most participatory case in ICJ history?

- a) 73 written submissions b) 84 written submissions
c) 91 written submissions d) 107 written submissions

6. Which of the following is not among the treaties or legal instruments cited by the ICJ in forming its advisory opinion on climate obligations?

- a) UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)
b) Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968)
c) Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
d) Paris Agreement (2015)

7. Which international treaty's 1.5°C limit has been affirmed as a binding legal benchmark, requiring countries to submit highly ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)?

- a) The Paris Agreement b) The Montreal Protocol
c) The UN Convention d) The Kyoto Protocol

8. Which group, identified in the UNFCCC and emphasized by the ICJ, is expected to take the lead in mitigation and provide technology and finance to support developing countries?

- a) G77 and China b) BRICS nations
c) Annex I countries d) Non-Annex II countries

argument rejected by the ICJ that climate treaties constitute *lex specialis* and thus exempt them from broader international legal norms?

- a) Brazil, Germany, and Canada
b) India, Russia, and Japan
c) Australia, France, and South Korea
d) US, UK, and China

10. What is India's current global rank in terms of total greenhouse gas emissions despite having historically low per capita emissions?

- a) Second-largest b) Third-largest
c) Fifth-largest d) Seventh-largest

11. Which of the following Indian court cases reflects judicial recognition of climate rights and environmental accountability?

- a) M.K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India
b) Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala
c) Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India
d) Shreya Singhal v. Union of India

12. Which group of nations hailed the ICJ's advisory opinion on climate obligations as a victory for climate justice?

- a) China, Russia, and India
b) France, Germany, and Canada
c) Vanuatu, Micronesia, and Barbados
d) Brazil, Argentina, and South Africa

13. Who issued cautious endorsements of the ICJ's ruling, viewing it as a prompt to increase global climate ambition?

- a) United States and China b) India and Japan
c) Brazil and South Africa d) France and the EU

14. Which group of countries, where courts already treat international law as persuasive, is likely to cite the ICJ's advisory opinion in future climate litigation?

- a) India, China, and Brazil
b) Netherlands, Canada, and Australia
c) Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Iran
d) United States, South Korea, and Japan

SOLUTIONS

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

20

MARATHA MILITARY LANDSCAPES
ADDED TO UNESCO HERITAGE LIST

MISCELLANEOUS

IN FOCUS

- **Inscription Date & Venue:** On 11 July 2025, the 47th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Paris inscribed the **Maratha Military Landscapes of India** on the World Heritage List, elevating India's tally to **44 sites**.
- **Nomination Cycle:** India's dossier, submitted in **January 2024** for the **2024-25 cycle**, successfully cleared a rigorous **ICOMOS** evaluation.
- **Scope of Property:** The inscription covers **twelve forts** across **Maharashtra** and **Tamil Nadu**, celebrating the **Maratha Empire's architectural ingenuity and military acumen**.
- **UNESCO Criteria:** The site meets **Criterion (iv)** for architectural exemplarity and **Criterion (vi)** for its association with anti-colonial resistance and indigenous empire-building.

Maratha Military Landscapes of India

Raigad (Raigad, Maharashtra) –

- Extensively rebuilt and expanded between about 1656 and 1670 under Chhatrapati Shivaji with his chief engineer Hiroji Indulkar, Raigad crowns a Sahyadri spur above Mahad in coastal Konkan and **became the Maratha capital**; its strategic eyrie accessed by roughly 1,700 steps **hosted Shivaji's 1674 coronation** and later royal mints, markets and garrisons, making it the political heart of Hindavi Swarajya.



- **Rajgad (Pune, Maharashtra)** — Captured and redeveloped by Shivaji in 1647–49 on the earlier Murumbdev hill, Rajgad sits 1,300+ m in the Sahyadris southwest of Pune and, with its great defended spurs (Padmavati, Sanjivani, Suvela), served as the first capital for ~26 years and the base for early campaigns as well as the safeguarding of wealth seized at Surat in 1664.
- **Pratapgad (Satara, Maharashtra)** — Purpose-built in 1656 on Shivaji's orders by his Peshwa Moropant Trimbak Pingle to guard the Par pass and the Nira–Koyna river valleys, this two-tier hill-forest fort west of Mahabaleshwar became the stage for the pivotal 10 November 1659 clash in which Shivaji defeated Afzal Khan, cementing Maratha ascendancy in the Ghats.
- **Shivneri (Pune, Maharashtra)** — A much older hill stronghold whose control passed through Yadava, Bahmani and Ahmadnagar hands, Shivneri came under the **Bhonsale family in 1595**; overlooking the Junnar trade route and protected by seven successive gates, **it is most significant as the birthplace of Shivaji in 1630** and as a classic example of layered Maratha-period defence.
- **Lohagad (Pune, Maharashtra)** — Originally a medieval **“Iron Fort”** with early layers attributed to Deccan dynasties, Lohagad entered Maratha history when **Shivaji captured it in 1648, lost it in 1665 under the Treaty of Purandar, and retook it in 1670**; perched near Lonavala with the signature “Vinchukata” (Scorpion's Tail) spur, it dominated passes between the Indrayani and Pavana basins and famously stored part of the Surat spoils.
- **Salher (Nashik, Maharashtra)** — A very high Sahyadri hill-fort (≈1,567 m) controlling the Baglan corridor and in Maratha hands by 1671, Salher is remembered for the open-field Battle of Salher (February 1672), when Moropant Pingle and Prataprao Gujar led a decisive Maratha victory over Mughal forces—often noted as the first pitched-battle Mughal defeat to the Marathas.
- **Khanderi / Kanhoji Angre Island (Raigad coast, Maharashtra)** — Fortified in **1679 by Shivaji's men** to command the approaches to Bombay Harbour and counter the Siddis of Janjira and European navies, this small basalt sea-fort off Alibaug—later with a lighthouse—became a vital artillery outpost in the emerging Maratha naval grid despite repeated English and Siddi attempts to dislodge it.
- **Suvarnadurg (Ratnagiri, Maharashtra)** — First established under the Adil Shahi rulers and captured and rebuilt by **Shivaji around 1660, the “Golden Fort”** lies on a rocky islet off Harnai with its complementary shore-fort Kanakadurga; as a shipbuilding and naval station later associated with admiral Kanhoji Angre, it anchored Maratha sea power along the Konkan in the late 17th–early 18th centuries.
- **Vijaydurg (Sindhudurg, Maharashtra)** — Built originally by **the Shilahara ruler Bhoja II** in the late 12th century and seized by **Shivaji in 1653 (renamed “Vijay”)**, this massive coastal redoubt with clever sea defences on the Waghota estuary became a principal Maratha naval base and later an Angre stronghold, famed for hidden passages and maritime engagements before its fall to the English in 1756.
- **Sindhudurg (Malvan, Maharashtra)** — **Commissioned by Shivaji** and engineered by Hiroji Indulkar, Sindhudurg rose on Kurte island between **1664 and 1667** as a camouflaged-gate sea-fort to check Portuguese, Siddi and other European powers; beyond its 3 km ramparts and 12-ft-thick walls it is notable for a rare temple to Shivaji within, symbolising the Maratha navy's institutional base.
- **Panhala (Kolhapur, Maharashtra)** — A large hill-plateau fort first raised by the Shilahara dynasty in the 12th century and later refashioned under Bahmani and Adil Shahi rule, Panhala entered Maratha hands in 1659 and is remembered for Siddi Johar's 1660 siege and Shivaji's dramatic escape toward Vishalgad; with extensive granaries, hidden passages and waterworks, it functioned as a self-sustaining urban fortress on a key Deccan trade pass.
- **Gingee / Senji (Villupuram, Tamil Nadu)** — A tri-citadel complex (Rajagiri, Krishnagiri, Chandrayandurg) set amid the rocky Eastern Ghats, Gingee's core structures were raised by the Vijayanagar Nayaks in the 16th century and were captured by **Shivaji during his southern campaign in 1677**; its water systems, Kalyana Mahal and interlinking ramparts made it one of peninsular India's most formidable strongholds and, later, the refuge of **Rajaram during Mughal pressure**.

UNESCO Recognition and Outstanding Universal Value

Inscription under **Criterion (iv)** acknowledges the forts as an **outstanding ensemble of military architecture** that illustrates significant technological adaptation to varied terrains. **Criterion (vi)** affirms their direct association with events of **anti-colonial resistance**, symbolising the **rise of an indigenous power** that challenged imperial hegemony. Together, these attributes establish the site's **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)** in both tangible structures and intangible narratives of sovereignty.

Nomination Process and Committee Endorsement

Following inclusion on India's **Tentative List**, the nomination dossier underwent an eighteen-month review comprising a **desk appraisal**, an **ICOMOS field mission** and expert scrutiny. India's tenure on the **World Heritage Committee (2021–2025)** provided diplomatic leverage but did not exempt the dossier from standard evaluative rigor. Final approval at the Paris session confirmed compliance with UNESCO's **ten-criterion framework** and the broader objectives of the **1972 World Heritage Convention**.

India's Enhanced World-Heritage Profile

With forty-four inscribed properties, India now ranks **sixth globally** and **second in the Asia-Pacific region**. The nation maintains **sixty-two sites** on its Tentative List, reflecting a sustained pipeline of cultural and natural nominations. The prior inscription the **Moidams of Charaideo** (Assam, 2024) and the Maratha forts underscore India's strategic utilisation of its **committee membership** to foreground diverse heritage, from megalithic funerary landscapes to martial architecture.

Global Heritage Trends at UNESCO 2025

The 2025 committee session added **twenty-six new properties**, bringing the World Heritage List to **1,248 sites** across **170 countries**. Emphasis on **community-led nominations**, **memory sites**, and **African heritage** paralleled India's success, while newly inscribed properties such as the **Megaliths of Carnac (France)** and **Bangucheon Petroglyphs (Korea)** signalled a broader safeguarding of **prehistoric and indigenous narratives**.

UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention

Established in **1945** and headquartered in **Paris**, UNESCO advances peace through **education, science, culture and communication**. The **1972 World Heritage Convention** ratified by **196 States Parties**, including India in **1977** creates a legal mechanism to identify and protect sites of **Outstanding Universal Value**. Advisory bodies **ICOMOS**, **IUCN**, and **ICCROM** conduct technical evaluations, after which the **twenty-one-member World Heritage Committee** decides on inscriptions, monitoring and, when necessary, danger listings. Through the Maratha Military Landscapes, India not only honours a pivotal epoch of **anti-colonial resilience and architectural brilliance** but also reinforces its stature as a proactive steward of **global cultural heritage** under the UNESCO framework.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Where was the 47th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held?
(a) Rome (b) Geneva (c) Paris (d) Bonn
- How many World Heritage Sites as of July 2025, following the inscription of the Maratha Military Landscapes, does India have?
(a) 44 sites (b) 42 sites (c) 45 sites (d) 40 sites
- Which expert advisory body evaluated and approved India's nomination of the Maratha Military Landscapes during the 2024–25 World Heritage cycle?
(a) IUCN Review Panel (b) ICOMOS evaluation (c) Global Heritage Consortium (d) UNESCO Historical Appraisal Board
- Which pair of states is home to the twelve forts recognised under the Maratha Military Landscapes inscription by UNESCO?
(a) Kerala and Andhra Pradesh (b) Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (c) Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (d) Bihar and Odisha
- On which of the following qualities UNESCO's Criterion (iv), under which the Maratha Military

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Landscapes were recognised, focuses?

- (a) Environmental sustainability
- (b) Political relevance
- (c) Religious significance
- (d) Architectural exemplarity

6. During which historical period were the twelve forts of the Maratha Military Landscapes primarily constructed or expanded?

- (a) Mid-fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries
- (b) Early sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries
- (c) Late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries
- (d) Late nineteenth century onwards

7. Against which of the following historical threats the Maratha Military Landscapes were developed to defend?

- (a) Persian invasions and Portuguese naval raids
- (b) Both Mughal and British incursions
- (c) Afghan raiders and French colonial forces
- (d) Mysorean campaigns and Dutch traders

8. Which of the following is not among the hill forts mentioned as part of the Maratha Military Landscapes?

- (a) Salher
- (b) Shivneri
- (c) Raigad
- (d) Pratapgad

9. Which of the following island forts extended the Maratha Empire's naval control as part of its military landscape?

- (a) Khanderi, Suvarnadurg and Sindhudurg
- (b) Janjira, Vijaydurg and Salher
- (c) Shivneri, Lohgad and Raigad
- (d) Raigad, Pratapgad and Gingee

10. How many forts within the Maratha Military Landscapes are managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as per the 2025 UNESCO listing?

- (a) Four forts
- (b) Seven forts
- (c) Nine forts
- (d) Eight forts

11. Which group of forts from the Maratha Military Landscapes is managed by the Maharashtra Directorate of Archaeology and Museums?

- (a) Raigad, Lohgad, Sindhudurg and Shivneri
- (b) Salher, Rajgad, Khanderi and Pratapgad
- (c) Suvarnadurg, Gingee, Shivneri and Rajgad
- (d) Lohgad, Gingee, Raigad and Salher

12. Which fort represents the Tamil Nadu component of the Maratha Military Landscapes, highlighting the site's pan-regional character?

- (a) Gingee
- (b) Salher
- (c) Rajgad
- (d) Suvarnadurg

13. Under which UNESCO criterion were the Maratha Military Landscapes inscribed, recognising their technological adaptation to diverse terrains?

- (a) Criterion (ii)
- (b) Criterion (vi)
- (c) Criterion (iv)
- (d) Criterion (v)

14. In which of the following historical developments under Criterion (vi), the Maratha forts have been recognised for their role?

- (a) Technological innovation in masonry
- (b) Development of urban centres
- (c) Buddhist cultural exchange
- (d) Anti-colonial resistance

15. How many States Parties have ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention, which enables global recognition and protection of cultural and natural heritage?

- (a) 186
- (b) 196
- (c) 176
- (d) 206

SOLUTIONS

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

NPLC's —————
LNAT Achievers

**University
of Oxford**



LNAT (2021 – 2022)



Surbhi Sachdeva

LNAT (2022 – 2023)



Kartikay Kataria

LNAT (2023 – 2024)



Adi Singh

LNAT (2024 – 2025)



Samyuktha Kovilakath

**The only Indian Institute to place four students in a row in the undergrad
law programme at Oxford University!**



ARUN SINGHANI ■ NEW DELHI

When your students log three out of top 10 slots in *India's Unarguably India's Most elite law entrance test*. All India Legal Entrance Test or AILET, it speaks volumes about your passion, diligence and grit. Vin Nishant Prakash, the unassuming corporate lawyer turned teacher, will simply grin on being congratulated, showing extraordinary humility.

The AILET results on Thursday saw a burst of messages and phone calls. Just days ago, Prakash had another round of interviews with a strike rate of over 90% by his students in the

Government Law Admissions Test (CLAT), for admissions to over 20 law universities across India. Out of 60 students that he provided training to, 34 ended up with a seat either in CLAT or AILET. Two of his students finished in top 10 in CLAT as well. Having from the small town of Bhaurampur in Bihar, Nishant had similar aspirations like those growing up with him. "I ended up being at the National Law University at Raipur, and immensely benefited from mentorship of legal luminaries like Kamal Jadhav and KK Verma." After this, I was fortunate to work with Luthy & Luthy Law Offices at New

Delhi with specialising in Intellectual Property Rights, Insurance and Trade Law," says Prakash.

However, despite a thriving law career, a decade ago, the pioneer of teaching took him to rather an unconventional path - of teaching.

Trailing from Bihar, such dramatic shift in his career was frowned upon, for it meant compromising with fat pay checks and working into uncertain territories. With a mild grin, I asked on, for I realised having passion should take priority at some point in life, and Prakash.

Prabhu Law Chander and in just 10 years, he has established a reputation covered by law squares nationwide, transcending the highly commercialised coaching industry to become a leader in education reforms, with significant impact on legal education. Nishant takes great pride in success of his students, and lists out the 'toppers' with extraordinary passion: in AILET Chairman Ginoth ranked 1st India in 2, Elvina Kamath at 10 in 6, Vidisha Singh at 10-12 in CLAT Aditya Guntur Anshul ranked 4, Darwish Agarwal at 76.

Among pivotal him to achieve the pivotal initiative of "Transforming Local Education in India," positioning him as a key contributor to national-level education reform. Further solidifying his role in education reform, he is part of a high-level committee implementing the National Education Policy 2020, in the state of Assam reflecting his broader impact on the national education framework. Also, recognized as the "Super 30" of low entrance testees, Sidhant's commitment to re-

Policy in Assam
Indian sprinter Hima Das, General Secretary of Assam Cricket Association Devajit Lon Saikia, and scientist Uddhab Bharali are also in the committee.



Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A petition challenging the correctness of the Board's answer key of the postgraduate Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) held on December 1 for admission to 24 national law universities has sparked a legal debate.

The Supreme Court on December 9 disposed of the petition on the ground of maintainability, orally remarking that litigation in the top court over national exams tended to set a bad example. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Saroj Kumar Chandra gave the petitioners liberty to approach the jurisdictional High Courts.

The petition, filed by Anam Khan and Ayush Chaturvedi, alleged that the provisional answer key released on December 2 contained significant errors,



The petition alleged that the provisional answer key had significant errors, including incorrect answers.

Persons associated with the legal representation of the Consortium of National Law Universities (CNLU), which conducts the test, and the final answer key came out by the time the case came up on December 9. The consortium advised the release of the answer key and results on December 7 from December 10. "The procedure

al answer key had mistakes which were not resolved even in the final answer key." Mahesh Bhushan, advocate who appeared for the petitioners before the court, said, "There are no errors in the answer key. The court has granted interim relief in petitions of interfering-pun-India exam centres. In my opinion, it becomes a duty of the court [like stay] from the apex court as relief is applicable across India. Seeking relief from High Courts may create difficulty in terms of conflicting judgments and consistency only for that state's jurisdiction."

A corporate lawyer-turned CLAT teacher, Nishant Prakash, added that the CLAT (undergraduate) was also "conducted in an equality."

of the logical reasoning section was absolutely wrong which was later retracted by the consortium. The final answers key, the provisional answer keys were charged later upon the students, strongly believe that the consortium cannot be absolved just by withdrawing these answers as the majority of students are wasting time answering these questions and did not complete the paper," he said.

Shamshukumar, Director of the Gujarat National University and vice-chancellor, CNSU Government College, said "extreme is always taken to a mistake". "In law, questions and answers are opinions in the

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



1

JUNE 2025 FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

- India recorded a **real GDP growth rate of 6.5% in 2024–25**, emerging as the **fastest growing major economy in the world**. The performance came amid a fragile global economic environment and was driven by robust domestic demand, easing inflation, strong exports, rising capital market activity, and a stable external sector.
- According to the **RBI's Financial Stability Report (June 2025)**, India's macroeconomic fundamentals and financial system remain resilient, with the banking sector well capitalised and prepared to withstand global shocks.

Strong and Sustained GDP Growth

- India's **real GDP grew by 6.5% in FY 2024–25**, matching RBI's forecast and surpassing all other major global economies.
- The United Nations expects similar performance in 2025 and 2026, estimating growth at **6.3% and 6.4%**, respectively.
- The **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** anticipates 6.40% to 6.70% growth. Driving this expansion are **revived rural and urban consumption, high public investment, and growing private sector capacity utilisation**.
- Over the past decade, India's GDP has **tripled**, rising from ₹106.57 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹331.03 lakh crore in 2024–25 (at current prices).
- Nominal GDP increased by **9.9%** over the previous year, reflecting robust economic health.

Inflation at Multi-Year Lows

- India's headline inflation dropped to **2.82% in May 2025**, the lowest since February 2019.
- The **Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI)** recorded a mere **0.99%**, indicating stabilisation in key commodities.
- The **RBI's June 2025 Financial Stability Report** forecasts that inflation will remain near or below the medium-term **4% target**, owing to **record food grain production and low global crude oil prices**.
- This environment of **price stability** supports both consumer spending and investment, reinforcing macroeconomic resilience.

Record-Breaking Export Performance

- India's total exports touched an all-time high of **USD 824.9 billion in 2024–25**, up by **6.01%** from the previous year.
- This includes **USD 387.5 billion in services exports**, registering a **13.6% increase**, and **USD 374.1 billion in non-petroleum merchandise exports**, growing by **6.0%**.
- This performance marks a **dramatic rise from 2013–14**, when total exports were USD 466.22 billion.
- Growth has been driven by sectors like **IT services, defence production, electronics, machinery, and chemicals**, reflecting increasing global competitiveness.

Foreign Direct Investment Trends

- FDI inflows rose by **14%** to **USD 81.04 billion** in FY 2024–25, from USD 71.28 billion in 2023–24.
- The services sector** led with 19% of total FDI, followed by **IT (16%)** and **trading (8%)**.
- FDI in **services** rose by **40.77%**; **manufacturing FDI** increased by **18%**.

2

NITI AAYOG'S STRATEGY TO DOUBLE
CHEMICAL EXPORTS BY 2030

POLITY

IN FOCUS

On **July 3, 2025**, NITI Aayog launched a comprehensive report titled “*Chemical Industry: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains*”, laying out an ambitious roadmap to transform India into a **global hub for chemical manufacturing**. The report emphasizes increasing India's share in **global chemical value chains (GVCs)** from **3.5% in 2023** to **5–6% by 2030** and further to **12% by 2040**. It also aims to scale the chemical sector to a valuation of **USD 1 trillion by 2040** and generate approximately **7 lakh additional skilled jobs by 2030**, with a strong focus on **boosting exports, reducing trade deficits**, and **promoting sustainable and innovative practices** in chemical production.

India's Current Chemical Sector Landscape

- India is the **6th largest chemical producer globally**, contributing **7% to GDP**, with exports of **USD 44 billion** in 2023.
- Despite this, it had a **USD 31 billion trade deficit**, due to **import dependence**, low **R&D investment (0.7%)**, and **regulatory bottlenecks**.
- The sector is **concentrated in Gujarat and Maharashtra**, covering over **80,000 products** across bulk, specialty, agrochemicals, dyes, and petrochemicals.

Major Challenges Identified

- **High dependence on imported feedstock**, limited **infrastructure**, and **high logistics costs** hamper global competitiveness.
- **Regulatory delays** and **shortage of skilled labour** (30% gap) affect industrial efficiency and innovation in **green chemistry** and **process safety**.

Key Reforms Proposed by NITI Aayog

- Establish **world-class chemical hubs** and revamp PCPIRs in **Dahej, Paradeep, and Vizag**.
- Upgrade **port infrastructure** and create **eight high-potential chemical clusters**.
- Introduce a **sales-linked Opex subsidy** to encourage production and reduce import dependence.
- Strengthen **R&D** via collaboration between **industry and academia**, and acquire foreign technologies.
- **Fast-track environmental clearances** through a dedicated audit mechanism under **DPIIT**.
- Secure **sector-specific FTAs** and improve awareness for better exporter participation.
- Expand **technical training institutes**, improve **faculty quality**, and integrate **industry-relevant curricula**.

Vision for 2030 and 2040

- By **2030**, India aims to reach a **5–6% GVC share**, **double production**, and **achieve a Net Zero trade balance**.
- It also targets an **additional USD 35–40 billion in exports** and **7 lakh new jobs**.
- By **2040**, the sector is projected to grow to **USD 1 trillion** and capture **12% of global chemical value chains**, establishing India as a **leader in specialty and green chemicals**.

3

DELHI'S FUEL BAN FOR OLD
VEHICLES

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- On **July 9, 2025**, the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** postponed the enforcement of its fuel ban on **End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs)** in **Delhi** to **November 1**, aligning it with five **high-vehicle-density (HVD) NCR districts** – **Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, and Sonipat**.
- The directive, earlier set to take effect on **July 1**, prohibits refuelling of **diesel vehicles older than 10 years** and **petrol vehicles older than 15 years**, and is part of a broader plan to curb vehicular emissions under **NGT and Supreme Court mandates**.

Rationale Behind the Fuel Ban

- The ban is rooted in **environmental concerns** and legal mandates from the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** and the **Supreme Court**, both of which declared **diesel vehicles over 10 years** and **petrol vehicles over 15 years** illegal on Delhi-NCR roads.
- Older vehicles, especially **pre-BS-VI models**, contribute significantly to air pollution. **BS-IV vehicles** emit **4.5 to 5.5 times more particulate matter** than BS-VI ones, while the **transport sector contributes 28% to PM_{2.5}, 41% to SO₂, and 78% to NO_x emissions** in Delhi.
- According to **VAHAN data**, **Delhi has 62 lakh ELVs**, including **41 lakh two-wheelers** and **18 lakh four-wheelers**.

Implementation and Technology Challenges

- The enforcement relies on the **Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)** system installed at **498 fuel stations** and **3 ISBTs** in Delhi. These scan plates and verify vehicle status against the **VAHAN database**, triggering alerts to deny fuel to ELVs.
- However, the **Delhi government flagged multiple issues**, including **non-functional sensors, misaligned cameras, faulty speakers, and inability to detect ELVs** due to **High-Security Registration Plate (HSRP)** errors.
- There is **no integration with adjoining NCR districts' databases**, enabling vehicle owners to **bypass enforcement** by refuelling in nearby districts.
- On-ground enforcement dropped rapidly, with **80 vehicles impounded on July 1**, only **7 on July 2**, and **none on July 3 and 4**, reflecting **weak operational capacity**.

Legal Mandate and Policy Framework

- The **NGT's 2015 order** banned overage diesel and petrol vehicles, which was upheld by the **Supreme Court in 2018**, mandating **impoundment** of non-compliant vehicles.
- Under the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**, registration for non-transport vehicles expires after **15 years** unless renewed. The **Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1999** declare such vehicles as **unregistered** post-expiry.
- The **Environment Protection (End-of-Life Vehicles) Rules, 2025**, effective **April 1**, mandate **scrapping within 180 days** of registration expiry.
- Delhi has also operationalized rules under the **Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF)** framework.

Effectiveness and Broader Pollution Control Strategy

- Experts, including the **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)**, support the move as a **first step**, but caution that **age-based bans are not scalable** or sufficient to reduce Delhi's chronic air pollution.
- CSE emphasizes a **multi-pronged strategy**, including: **Upgrading fuel and emission standards, Stringent PUC enforcement, and Expanding public transportation systems**.
- The fuel ban, though legally and environmentally sound, is only one component of the long-term fight against **Delhi's air quality crisis**.

4 TELANGANA FACTORY BLAST

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- On **June 30, 2025**, an explosion at the **Sigachi Industries pharmaceutical factory** in **Pashamylaram, Sangareddy district**, near **Hyderabad**, killed **46 workers** and left **8 missing**.
 - The incident, which flattened a three-storeyed facility producing **microcrystalline cellulose**, has raised alarm about **industrial safety, regulatory oversight**, and **environmental compliance** in India's rapidly growing pharmaceutical sector.
 - Investigations suggest a **dust explosion**, while the Telangana High Court and civil society have demanded stronger enforcement and compensation measures.
- The explosion occurred at **9:10 a.m.** and destroyed a multi-storeyed building at **Sigachi Industries**, listed on the stock market and engaged in the production of **microcrystalline cellulose**, a powdered excipient used in tablets.
 - Although initially suspected to be a **Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapour Explosion (BLEVE)**, forensic experts concluded it was likely a **dust explosion**, caused by fine cellulose powder igniting in the air, a known industrial hazard.
 - A **four-member scientific panel**, led by experts from **CSIR-IICT, CLRI, and NCL**, is investigating the cause. The company has denied reactor failure as the source of the explosion.

Regulatory and Safety Failures

- Emergency responders arriving on-site found **no environmental display board**—mandatory under pollution control norms—outside the factory, leaving them unaware of the materials involved or safety protocols.
- The factory reportedly operated with **outdated machinery** and **did not follow safety audit recommendations**, similar to previous accidents in **SB Organics (Sangareddy, 2024)** and **Anakapalli (Andhra Pradesh, 2024)**.
- The **lack of mandatory periodic inspections** and **non-enforcement of safety checklists** contributed to the severity of the disaster.
- Reports suggest under-reporting of the actual number of workers to bypass **Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** and **labour law thresholds**, thereby denying most workers their rightful protections.

High Court's Response and Legal Developments

- The **Telangana High Court**, hearing a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)**, sought affidavits within three weeks from state departments, demanding details on the explosion, investigations, applicable laws, and compensation status.
- The **Chief Justice** observed that regulatory breakdowns at multiple levels allowed such accidents to occur and emphasized that **enforcement of safety laws must improve across all industries**, not just Sigachi.
- The Court criticized the **lack of arrests, delays in compensation**, and **absence of clear accountability**, calling the incident a **"wake-up call"**.
- The factory reportedly showed only **10–20 workers on official records**, while over **140 were present**, violating norms under the **Employees' Compensation Act** and **EPF Act**.
- Compensation and Government Measures:** The **Telangana government** formed a **six-member committee** and an **expert group** to investigate the accident. The company paid **Rs 25 lakh each** to 29 families of deceased workers, while the government promised **Rs 10 lakh per deceased** and **Rs 5 lakh per injured worker**. Despite these payouts, concerns remain about the lack of legal penalties and support for undocumented workers and families of the missing.

5

INDIA RANKS 4TH IN GLOBAL
INCOME EQUALITY

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

According to the **World Bank's 2025 report**, India has achieved the distinction of being the **fourth most income-equal country globally**, with a **Gini Index score of 25.5**. Only the **Slovak Republic, Slovenia**, and **Belarus** rank ahead. This development reflects a sharp decline in **extreme poverty**, falling from **16.2% in 2011-12** to **2.3% in 2022-23**, with **171 million people** lifted out of poverty. India's success is credited to a decade of **inclusive welfare policies** that have balanced economic growth with targeted social protection.

Understanding the Gini Index and India's Ranking

- The **Gini Index** is a global statistical tool to measure inequality, ranging from **0 (perfect equality)** to **100 (absolute inequality)**.
- India's **Gini score of 25.5** in 2022-23 places it in the **"moderately low inequality"** category (score between 25-30), ahead of countries like **China (35.7)**, the **United States (41.8)**, and the **United Kingdom**.
- India's score has **improved from 28.8 in 2011 to 25.5 in 2022**, reflecting steady and consistent progress in narrowing income disparities.

Decline in Poverty as a Key Factor

- As per the **World Bank's poverty benchmark** of **USD 2.15 per day**, India's **extreme poverty rate** reduced from **16.2% in 2011-12** to just **2.3% in 2022-23**.
- This decade-long transformation helped **171 million Indians** exit extreme poverty, representing one of the **largest anti-poverty transitions globally**.
- The **fall in poverty** has directly contributed to **improved income distribution**, pushing India closer to the "low inequality" threshold.

Role of Inclusive Government Schemes

- India's journey toward income equality has been shaped by a **range of targeted welfare programmes** aimed at improving access to banking, health, food, and livelihoods.
- **Financial Inclusion and Transfers: Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** led to the opening of **over 55 crore bank accounts**, expanding formal financial access across rural India. **Aadhaar-linked Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)** facilitated **efficient, leak-proof subsidy delivery**, saving **₹3.48 lakh crore** by March 2023.
- **Health and Food Security: Ayushman Bharat** issued **41 crore health insurance cards**, offering **₹5 lakh cover** per beneficiary. **PMGKAY** provided **free foodgrains to 80 crore citizens**, ensuring food security during the COVID-19 period and beyond.
- **Livelihood Support and Social Mobility Stand-Up: India** empowered **SC/ST and women entrepreneurs** through access to loans and skill-building. **PM Vishwakarma Yojana** supported **traditional artisans** with **training, credit, and market linkages** to boost self-reliance.

Comparative Global Context

- Among the **167 countries** covered by the World Bank's assessment, only **30 countries** fall into the "moderately low inequality" category.
- India joins the ranks of **Nordic welfare states** like **Norway, Finland, and Belgium**, as well as **growth-driven economies** such as **Poland** and the **UAE**.
- Unlike many countries that achieved equality through decades of welfare expenditure, **India's achievement is largely driven by digital public infrastructure and targeted governance reforms**, making it a **unique success in a large democracy**.

6

'INVISIBLE HAND' IN INDIA'S
FOREIGN TRADE

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

According to recent estimates for 2024–25, India's foreign exchange earnings from “invisibles”—comprising **services exports and private remittances**—have surpassed those from physical or “visible” **goods exports**. With **gross invisible receipts totalling \$576.5 billion**, compared to **\$441.8 billion from merchandise exports**, invisibles have emerged as the **main driver of India's foreign trade balance**. This shift underscores the growing role of intangible flows like software services, business consultancy, and overseas remittances in shaping India's economic profile in the global economy.

Visible vs. Invisible Trade Trends

- India's **goods exports** increased from **\$66.3 billion in 2003–04** to **\$318.6 billion in 2013–14**, followed by a period of stagnation and volatility, peaking at **\$456.1 billion in 2022–23**, and then declining to **\$441.8 billion in 2024–25**.
- In contrast, **invisible receipts** rose steadily, from **\$53.5 billion in 2003–04** to **\$233.6 billion in 2013–14**, and further to **\$576.5 billion in 2024–25**, showing resilience to global economic shocks, financial crises, and geopolitical disruptions.
- In **2013–14**, visible exports exceeded invisibles by **\$85 billion**, whereas in **2024–25**, invisibles exceeded merchandise exports by **\$135 billion**, indicating a structural transformation in India's external trade profile.

Breakdown of Invisible Earnings

- **Services exports** contributed **\$387.5 billion** to invisible receipts in 2024–25, up from **\$26.9 billion in 2003–04** and **\$151.8 billion in 2013–14**.
- **Private remittances**—money sent home by Indian workers abroad—contributed **\$135.4 billion** in 2024–25, rising from **\$22.2 billion in 2003–04** and **\$69.6 billion in 2013–14**.
- Software services alone accounted for **\$180.6 billion**, while exports from business, financial, and communication services added another **\$118 billion**.
- India's services exports now include **software engineers, auditors, consultants, financial analysts, and data management providers**, making it a **global hub for professional services**.

Policy Blind Spot in Trade Negotiations

- Despite their rising importance, **invisibles remain outside the scope** of major trade negotiations, including current **India-US trade talks**, which focus on **tariff reduction for physical goods** like **textiles, leather, auto components, and steel**.
- Issues such as **foreign worker mobility, services market access, and visa liberalisation**—critical for sustaining India's invisibles growth—are **not on the table**, despite their growing contribution to India's balance of payments.

Current Account Stability Despite Trade Deficit

- India's **merchandise trade deficit** grew from **\$147.6 billion in 2013–14** to a record **\$287.2 billion in 2024–25**, as **goods imports** rose to **\$729 billion**, far exceeding exports.
- However, this deficit was **offset by net invisible receipts** of **\$263.8 billion**, reducing the **overall current account deficit** to **\$23.4 billion** in 2024–25—lower than **\$32.3 billion in 2013–14**.
- Thus, invisibles have provided a **cushion against India's growing dependence on imported goods**, ensuring macroeconomic stability.

7

FATF REPORT HIGHLIGHTS EVOLVING
TERRORIST FINANCING RISKS

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

On 8 July 2025, the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** released its latest report, “*Comprehensive Update on Terrorist Financing Risks*”, identifying increasingly sophisticated methods of **terrorist financing (TF)** and major gaps in countries’ abilities to investigate and prosecute such activities. Based on contributions from **over 80 jurisdictions**, including **India**, the report outlines emerging threats posed by **digital platforms**, **state-sponsored terrorism**, **gaming ecosystems**, and **decentralised terrorist cells**, while urging nations to strengthen legal, regulatory, and intelligence frameworks.

Widening Gap in Global Compliance and Enforcement

- The report finds that **69% of FATF-assessed jurisdictions** suffer from **major or structural deficiencies** in prosecuting terrorist financing cases.
- Only **16% of assessed countries** demonstrated **high or substantial effectiveness** in FATF’s **Immediate Outcome 11**, which assesses national effectiveness in combatting terrorist financing.
- FATF warns that failure to address these enforcement gaps will allow terrorist groups to continue exploiting vulnerabilities in the global financial system.

India’s Role and Recognition

- **India**, a **member of FATF since 2010**, was recognised for its **high effectiveness** under IO11 and active implementation of **risk-based AML/CFT laws** including the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002**, and **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**.
- India contributed multiple **case studies** to the report, highlighting terrorist use of **VPNs**, **e-commerce platforms**, and **online payment services** to fund **lone actor operations** within its territory.
- India’s **National Risk Assessment 2022** identifies **Pakistan’s state sponsorship of terrorism** as a major TF threat, especially in the South Asian regional context.

Evolving Terrorist Financing Trends

- Terrorist groups now use a **hybrid financing model**, blending **traditional methods** such as **cash smuggling**, **hawala**, and **abuse of NPOs** with **new-age mechanisms** like **cryptocurrencies**, **crowdfunding**, and **e-commerce platforms**.
- The report highlights the **decentralisation of terrorist networks**, with **localised, self-financing cells** increasingly active, often supported by **criminal proceeds** and **microfinancing through licit income**.
- There is growing concern over the use of **gaming platforms** to generate funds through **donations**, **streaming**, and **in-game sales**, as well as **social media campaigns** masked as charity appeals.

Emerging Digital Threat Vectors

- The misuse of **Virtual Assets**, such as **cryptocurrencies**, and **encrypted social media apps** pose a major regulatory blind spot.
- The report confirms increasing use of **mobile money**, **online payment platforms**, and **blockchain anonymity features** for fundraising and international money movement.
- India’s case study demonstrated how **VPNs and cross-border online transactions** enabled funding for a domestic terrorist attack without detection through formal banking channels.

State-Sponsored and Conflict-Zone Financing

- The FATF explicitly acknowledges **state-sponsored terrorism** as a persistent threat to **international peace and financial stability**, including **direct funding**, **logistical support**, and **training** by sovereign states. The report notes increased TF activity by groups operating in or near **armed conflict zones**, who

adapt financing tactics to exploit **humanitarian aid channels**, often under the guise of **NPOs and relief work**.

Key Recommendations from FATF Report

- **Strengthen international cooperation**, intelligence sharing, and regional coordination through the **FATF Global Network**.
- Improve **public-private partnerships** and standardise **risk indicators** for financial institutions to detect suspicious patterns in **payments, travel, and online activities**.
- Enhance **regulatory frameworks** for new technologies, especially **virtual assets, gaming, and social media platforms**.
- Protect **humanitarian aid operations** by applying **proportionate, risk-based safeguards** to prevent misuse without obstructing legitimate relief efforts.
- Conduct periodic **national risk assessments** and integrate findings into real-time enforcement and compliance protocols.

8

BULGARIA TO JOIN EUROZONE AS 21ST MEMBER

ECONOMY

IN FOCUS

On July 8, 2025, European Union finance ministers officially approved Bulgaria's adoption of the euro, making it the 21st member of the eurozone. The country will replace its national currency, the lev, with the euro starting January 1, 2026, at a fixed exchange rate of 1.95583 lev per euro. This marks a significant step in Bulgaria's deeper integration into the EU's monetary and economic architecture, nearly 19 years after it joined the EU in 2007.

Strategic and Political Significance

- Bulgaria's entry into the eurozone **reinforces its economic alignment with the EU and NATO bloc**, amid growing concerns over **Russian geopolitical influence** in Southeast Europe.
- EU leaders, including **ECB President Christine Lagarde** and **European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen**, hailed the move as a milestone that will **boost investor confidence, reduce transaction costs, and enhance Bulgaria's financial stability**.
- **Bulgaria's Prime Minister Rossen Jeliazkov** celebrated the transition as a national achievement, while **EU Economy Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis** stated it marked "a more prosperous future at the heart of Europe."

Economic and Currency Transition Framework

- The **European Commission** and the **European Central Bank (ECB)** determined that Bulgaria fulfilled the **Maastricht criteria** for euro adoption, including **price stability, sound fiscal indicators, exchange rate stability, and long-term interest rate alignment**.
- The fixed **conversion rate of 1.95583 lev/euro** mirrors the rate at which the lev has been pegged to the euro since Bulgaria joined the **Exchange Rate Mechanism II (ERM II)** in 2020.
- Bulgaria's entry follows earlier eurozone expansions by **Croatia (2023), Lithuania (2015), Latvia (2014), Estonia (2011)**, and others since the euro's launch in 2002.

About the Eurozone and Expansion

- The **eurozone** comprises EU countries that have adopted the **euro (€)** as their official currency and coordinate monetary policy under the **European Central Bank**.
- The original 12 founding eurozone members adopted the currency in 2002. Since then, **9 more countries**, including **Slovenia, Malta, Slovakia, and Croatia**, have joined.
- To join, countries must meet **strict convergence criteria**, including limits on **inflation, budget deficit, government debt, and interest rates**.

Bulgaria's Regional Profile and EU Trajectory

- **Bulgaria** is a **Southeast European nation** bordered by **Romania, Turkey, Greece, Serbia, and North Macedonia**, with a **Black Sea coastline** on its east.
- It has been a **member of NATO since 2004** and **of the European Union since 2007**.
- With a population of **6.4 million**, Bulgaria has a **continental to Mediterranean climate**, and features geographic landmarks such as the **Danube River** and **Musala Peak**—the highest in the Balkans.
- Bulgaria has attracted **over \$1.49 billion** in foreign investments in its **life sciences, tourism, and energy sectors** in the past four years.

9

EIA STUDY FOR GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT DOWNPLAYS RISK

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

The **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** for the ₹72,000-crore **Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project (GNIP)** has come under sharp criticism for **downplaying the seismic vulnerability** of the region. Despite past warnings by experts from **IIT-Kanpur** and other geoscientists about the **potential for future mega-earthquakes**, the EIA report concludes that the probability of a repeat of the 2004 tsunami-scale event is “low.” Scientists have called for **site-specific seismic studies** before executing such a massive infrastructure project in a **geo-dynamic and earthquake-prone zone**.

Key Seismic Concerns Ignored in the EIA Report

- The EIA relies on a **2019 IIT-Kanpur study** estimating a **420–750 year return period** for **mega-earthquakes (≥9 magnitude)** and **80–120 years** for **large earthquakes (>7.5 magnitude)** but omits critical warnings about strain accumulation and rupture unpredictability.
- The IIT study found **geological evidence of seven large tsunamis over the last 8,000 years**, based on sediment analysis at Badabalu Beach, indicating high long-term seismicity in the region.
- Experts including **Prof. Javed Malik** (IIT-Kanpur) and **Prof. C.P. Rajendran** (NIAS, Bengaluru) have raised alarm over the lack of **site-specific risk assessments** for key areas like **Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay**.
- The **Andaman-Sumatra subduction zone**, where the Indian Plate dives beneath the Burmese Microplate, is **seismologically active** and capable of unpredictable and nonlinear earthquake behaviour.
- According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences, **no site-specific studies** were commissioned for GNIP, and the project proceeds on a **“calculated risk” basis**.

Overview of the Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project (GNIP)

- The **GNIP**, launched in **2021** and spearheaded by **NITI Aayog**, proposes a **transshipment port**, a **greenfield airport**, a **450 MVA gas and solar power plant**, and an **eco-tourism township** on **Great Nicobar Island (GNI)**.
- The project is being executed by the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)**, and has received **environmental and preliminary forest clearances**.
- Located near the **Malacca Strait**, the island serves as a critical node for **India’s maritime security and trade strategy**, aligning with the **Act East Policy** and **Indo-Pacific goals under the QUAD**.

Environmental and Ecological Concerns

- The project involves clearing approximately **130 sq. km of primary tropical rainforest**, risking the loss of over **10 million trees**, significantly higher than earlier estimates.
- The **Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary**, which was notified in 1997 for the protection of **leatherback sea turtles**, was **denotified in 2021** to accommodate the port, contradicting India’s own **Marine Turtle Action Plan (2021)**.
- The region falls under **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 1A**, which prohibits high-impact industrial activities, yet the EIA permits **ship repair yards** and related infrastructure.
- The **compensatory afforestation** plan controversially proposes replanting in **Haryana and Madhya Pradesh**, which fails to replicate the **ecological value of Nicobar’s tropical biodiversity**.

Legal and Tribal Rights Issues

- The **Shekhar Singh Commission (2002)** had recommended a **total ban on tree-felling in tribal reserves and national parks**, along with mandatory **afforestation before deforestation**, which is not being followed.

- The project's environmental clearance, reportedly justified on **national security grounds**, lacks **proper consultation with tribal communities** like the **Shompen**, who risk **losing forest-based livelihoods**.
- The **Supreme Court's directions on protecting tribal habitats and ecological zones** are being challenged by the **opaque process** followed in the project's approval.

About Great Nicobar Island

- **Great Nicobar** is the **southernmost island of India**, located in the **Bay of Bengal**, part of the **Nicobar group** within the **Andaman and Nicobar archipelago**
- It hosts two national parks—**Campbell Bay** and **Galathea**—and is part of the **Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve**, a hotspot of **unique flora and fauna**.
- It is inhabited by **indigenous tribes**, including the **Shompen, Onge, Andamanese**, and **Nicobarese**, many of whom live in isolated forest areas. The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** consist of **836 islands**, divided between **Andaman (north)** and **Nicobar (south)**, separated by the **10° Channel**.

10

2ND EDITION OF THE NER DISTRICT
SDG INDEX

INDICES

IN FOCUS

On 7 July 2025, NITI Aayog released the **second edition of the North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index (2023–24)**, developed in collaboration with the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDoNER)** and with technical support from the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**. The Index measures district-level performance across **eight North-Eastern States** using a **composite score methodology** based on the national SDG Index framework. The 2023–24 edition marks a **significant improvement** in district-level development outcomes, with **85% of districts** falling into the **Front Runner** category.

Purpose and Methodology of the NER District SDG Index

- The **NER District SDG Index** is designed to enable **district-level monitoring** of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, thereby promoting **evidence-based planning, resource allocation, and gap identification**.
- It follows **NITI Aayog's national SDG Index methodology**, categorising districts as:
 - **Achiever** (score = 100),
 - **Front Runner** (score between 65–99),
 - **Performer** (score between 50–64), and
 - **Aspirant** (score < 50).
- The index covers **121 out of 131 districts (92%)** across the NER, providing a comprehensive view of **regional development challenges and progress**.

Key Findings from the 2023–24 Report

- **85% of the districts** fall in the **Front Runner** category, up from **62%** in the first edition (2021), reflecting significant regional improvement.
- **All districts of Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura** achieved **Front Runner** status, with **no district classified as Aspirant or Achiever**.
- **Hnahthial district in Mizoram** is the **best-performing district** (score: 81.43), while **Longding district in Arunachal Pradesh** recorded the **lowest score** (58.71).
- **Nagaland** saw **three districts** enter the **top 10 performers** list for the first time.
- **Good Health & Well-being** indicators improved across **93 districts**.
- **Assam's districts** showed progress in **Zero Hunger, Quality Education, Clean Water and Sanitation, and Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

State-Wise Performance Consistency

- **Sikkim** displayed the **most consistent performance** with a narrow score range of **5.5 points** between its best and worst-performing districts.
- **Tripura** also exhibited minimal intra-state variation (**6.5 points**), while **Mizoram and Nagaland** showed strong performers but greater internal disparity.
- The **lowest and highest district scores** by state include:
 - **Arunachal Pradesh:** Lower Dibang Valley (73.36) to Longding (58.71)
 - **Assam:** Dibrugarh (74.29) to South Salmara-Mankachar (59.71)
 - **Manipur:** Imphal West (73.21) to Pherzawl (59.71)
 - **Meghalaya:** East Khasi Hills (73.00) to East Jaintia Hills (63.00)
 - **Mizoram:** Hnahthial (81.43) to Lawngtlai (67.71)
 - **Nagaland:** Mokokchung (78.43) to Zunheboto (63.36)

- **Sikkim:** Gangtok (76.64) to Gyalshing (71.14)
- **Tripura:** Gomati (78.79) to Dhalai (72.29)

Significance and Developmental Implications

- The **NER District SDG Index** serves as a **critical policy tool** for promoting **SDG localisation**, especially through **cooperative federalism** among NITI Aayog, MoDoNER, and the state governments.
- It aids in aligning **national flagship programmes**—such as the **Aspirational Districts Programme**—with **regional priorities**.
- The index also strengthens India's progress towards **Viksit Bharat @2047**, with 2030 as the critical SDG milestone.
- As emphasised by key dignitaries including **NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery** and **CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam**, this initiative reaffirms the "**Ashta Lakshmi**" **vision** for holistic development in the Northeast.

Context: India's National SDG Index 2023–24

- The **National SDG Index** measures state/UT performance across **16 out of 17 SDGs**, excluding **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)**, which pertains only to coastal states.
- **India's national score** improved from **57 (2018)** to **71 (2023–24)**, driven by gains in **poverty reduction**, **economic growth**, and **climate action**.
- **Top performers** were **Kerala** and **Uttarakhand** (score: 79), while **Bihar (57)** and **Jharkhand (62)** ranked lowest.
- High-performing goals include: **Goal 1 (No Poverty)**: score improved from 60 to 72; **Goal 13 (Climate Action)**: score increased from 54 to 67; **Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)** also entered the **Front Runner** category

11

ICC ISSUES ARREST WARRANT
AGAINST LEADERS OF THE TALIBAN

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

On July 8, 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Haibatullah Akhundzada, the Supreme Leader of the Taliban, and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, the Chief Justice of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, for committing the crime against humanity of persecution on gender and political grounds. This landmark legal move marks the first time the Taliban's top leadership has been formally indicted before an international tribunal for systemic gender-based persecution and repression of civilians in Afghanistan.

Basis of the ICC Arrest Warrants

- The ICC warrants allege that Akhundzada and Haqqani committed the crime of persecution on gender and political grounds, by ordering, inducing, or soliciting systemic attacks against women, girls, and those non-conforming with the Taliban's gender ideology, as well as those perceived as their allies.
- The persecution has occurred continuously since August 15, 2021, when the Taliban seized power in Kabul, and has involved deprivation of fundamental human rights including education, privacy, freedom of movement, thought, religion, and expression.
- Evidence submitted by the ICC Prosecutor includes testimonies, official decrees, forensic reports, Taliban statements, and audio-visual material that demonstrate a methodical pattern of oppression.

Legal Framework and ICC Jurisdiction

- The ICC is governed by the Rome Statute (1998) and has jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.
- Afghanistan acceded to the Rome Statute on February 10, 2003, giving the ICC legal authority over crimes committed on Afghan soil or by its nationals from May 1, 2003, onward.
- Under Article 7(1)(h) of the Statute, persecution based on gender or political belief, when part of a widespread or systematic attack, constitutes a crime against humanity.

Systemic Persecution of Women and Girls Under Taliban Rule

- Since 2021, the Taliban regime has imposed severe gender-based restrictions, including bans on secondary and higher education for girls, prohibition of women's employment, and denial of access to public spaces like parks and beauty salons.
- In August 2024, the regime formalised a 144-page "morality law", mandating complete bodily coverage for women, forbidding public speech or singing, and banning interaction between men and women in public.
- LGBTQIA+ persons have also faced persecution under this law, which the United Nations has labelled as "gender apartheid".

Taliban's Response and Limitations of Enforcement

- Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's chief spokesperson, dismissed the ICC's authority, stating that the Taliban does not recognise the International Criminal Court.
- Haibatullah Akhundzada, known for his secrecy and reclusiveness, has rarely been seen in public, making any enforcement of the warrant unlikely in the immediate future.
- No member state of the ICC currently recognises the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, although Russia does maintain diplomatic contact with the regime.

12

THE RESISTANCE FRONT DESIGNATED FTO BY US

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

On **July 18, 2025**, the **United States** officially designated **The Resistance Front (TRF)** as a **Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)** and a **Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT)** outfit. India welcomed the decision, calling it a “**strong affirmation**” of **India-U.S. counter-terrorism cooperation**, particularly after TRF's involvement in the **Pahalgam terror attack** and its continued proxy operations from **Pakistani soil**.

Background of the TRF and Its Links to Lashkar-e-Taiba

- The **Resistance Front (TRF)** emerged in **2019**, shortly after the **abrogation of Article 370** in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is widely seen as a **proxy outfit of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)**, created to provide militancy in Kashmir an “**indigenous**” appearance and to deflect **international scrutiny**, especially from bodies like the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**.
- The group has been active in **terror propaganda, recruitment, infiltration, and smuggling of arms and narcotics** from Pakistan into Indian territory, particularly Jammu and Kashmir.

India's Domestic Designation of TRF and Legal Framework

- In **2023**, India's **Ministry of Home Affairs** designated the **TRF as a terrorist organization** under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967**.
- The **UAPA** criminalizes terrorism, empowers the government to **ban terror groups and individuals**, and facilitates prosecution for acts involving **terror funding, recruitment, and cross-border infiltration**.

Triggering Event: Pahalgam Terror Attack and Diplomatic Fallout

- The TRF **claimed responsibility** twice for the **Pahalgam terror attack** on **April 22, 2025**, which targeted civilians in Jammu and Kashmir.
- In response, India launched **Operation Sindoor**, a **counter-terrorism military operation** targeting terrorist bases in **Pakistan**.
- India followed this with a **diplomatic campaign** at the **United Nations**, urging **global sanctions** on TRF. Though the **UN Security Council** condemned the Pahalgam attack in its **April 25 resolution**, it **did not name the TRF directly**.

U.S. Designation and India's Reaction

- **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio** announced the inclusion of TRF on the FTO and SDGT lists, citing its role in the Pahalgam attack and ongoing threat to national and global security
- The designation reinforces the **Trump administration's commitment** to counter-terrorism and its call for **justice in response to the Pahalgam attack**.
- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** welcomed the move, calling it a “**timely and important step**” and a reflection of deepening India-U.S. strategic cooperation on terrorism.

India's Broader Counter-Terrorism Diplomacy

- India reiterated its **zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism** and emphasized the importance of **international cooperation to dismantle terror networks** and hold **proxies like the TRF accountable**.
- The issue was also raised in the **Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting** on **July 2, 2025**, in **Washington D.C.**, where all member nations **strongly condemned the Pahalgam attack** and reaffirmed their commitment to a **free and secure Indo-Pacific**

13

AAIB PRELIMINARY REPORT ON AIR
INDIA CRASH

NATIONAL

IN FOCUS

Following the catastrophic **Air India AI 171 crash** on **June 12, 2025**, India's **Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)** released a **preliminary report** indicating that **fuel to both engines cut off shortly after takeoff**, causing the aircraft to crash into **Ahmedabad's B.J. Medical College**, killing **241 onboard** and **19 on the ground**. As grieving families await answers, especially in the **United Kingdom**, concerns are mounting over **report transparency**, **mislabelled remains**, and the **investigation's global credibility**.

The Worst Indian Aviation Disaster in Four Decades

- The Boeing 787 Dreamliner flight **AI 171** from **Ahmedabad to London Gatwick** crashed moments after takeoff on **June 12, 2025**.
- With **241 deaths**, this is **India's deadliest air disaster** in over 40 years, and the **first-ever fatal crash** involving the **Boeing 787 Dreamliner** globally.
- The AAIB's probe is under **intense international scrutiny**, given over **1,100 Dreamliners** operate worldwide.

AAIB Preliminary Report Findings and Limitations

- The **preliminary report**, released on **July 12**, revealed **fuel supply to both engines failed**, possibly due to **manual cutoff**, triggering a restart attempt that came too late.
- No **primary mechanical fault** or **single trigger** has yet been identified; aircraft accidents typically involve **multiple cascading failures**.
- Past AAIB preliminary reports, usually **4–5 pages long**, are limited to factual summaries—aircraft specs, weather data, pilot credentials, accident sequence, wreckage analysis, and evidence-gathering steps.
- The AAIB has not provided **clarity on cockpit audio** or the **transitioning of fuel cutoff switches**, leaving critical questions unanswered.

Global Protocols and India's Legal Position

- While **ICAO** recommends release of preliminary reports within **30 days**, Indian rules **do not mandate** this timeline.
- The AAIB aims to release the **final report within a year**, but stakeholders demand more **transparent interim communication**, especially given the scale of the tragedy.

Misidentification of Victims and U.K. Families' Concerns

- **52 British nationals** died in the crash; **2 of 12 caskets** repatriated to the **U.K.** were found to be **mislabelled or mishandled**, raising fears of widespread errors.
- **Keystone Law**, representing U.K. families, said an error rate of **15%** could imply **up to 40 sets of remains** were mishandled.
- During **PM Modi's U.K. visit**, **PM Keir Starmer** raised concerns, leading to **high-level India-U.K. talks**.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** defended the handling of remains, assuring cooperation with **U.K. authorities**.

U.K. and U.S. Investigative Involvement

- The **U.K. Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB)** holds **expert status** in the Indian probe and is currently reviewing the **preliminary findings**.
- **U.S. firms**, including **Golden Chassis**, assisted with **black box data recovery**, reflecting the **global nature of the investigation** and the **multi-national profile of victims**.

14

MAHARASHTRA'S URBAN MAOISM BILL 2024

LEGAL UPDATE

IN FOCUS

On July 11, 2025, the **Maharashtra Legislative Assembly** passed the **Maharashtra Special Public Security (MSPS) Bill, 2024** by voice vote, targeting the unlawful activities of **Left Wing Extremist (LWE)** groups and their alleged urban affiliates. Introduced by Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis**, the Bill empowers the state to declare organisations as *unlawful*, criminalises indirect support to such groups, and allows for *property forfeiture* even before conviction. The Bill has generated intense debate due to its broad definitions and potential implications for civil liberties.

Background and Legislative Journey

- The Bill was initially introduced during the **Monsoon Session of 2024**, but lapsed following the prorogation of the Assembly.
- It was reintroduced in **December 2024** after the Assembly elections and was referred to a **Joint Select Committee** following widespread objections.
- The Committee, chaired by Revenue Minister **Chandrashekhar Bawankule**, held five meetings and reviewed over **1,200 suggestions** from stakeholders including **NGOs, opposition parties, and citizens**.
- Based on this feedback, the Bill underwent **three major amendments** before its passage on **July 11, 2025**.

Key Provisions of the MSPS Bill, 2024

- The Bill grants the Maharashtra government authority to **designate any organisation as “unlawful”** if it is suspected of supporting or promoting extremist ideology.
- It defines **“unlawful activity”** to include actions that threaten *public order*, interfere with *law enforcement*, or seek to *intimidate public servants* by criminal force or incitement.
- Individuals can be penalised for **membership, fundraising, managing, or assisting** an unlawful organisation, even if they are not direct members.
- Penalties range from **two to seven years’ imprisonment** and **fines from ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh**, with the **most severe punishment for committing an unlawful activity**.
- All offences under the Bill are classified as **cognizable and non-bailable**, allowing arrests without warrant and limiting judicial discretion in granting bail.
- The government may initiate **forfeiture of properties** linked to such organisations **before trial**, with a **15-day notice** provided to affected individuals.
- Those affected by forfeiture can **challenge the action before the High Court** within **30 days** of notice issuance.
- An **Advisory Board**, comprising a **retired High Court judge as Chairperson**, a **retired judge**, and a **government pleader**, will be constituted to vet and confirm the “unlawful” status of organisations.

Legal and Constitutional Concerns

- Critics argue that the Bill's **open-ended definitions**, such as *“disobedience to law”* or *“disrupting communication”*, could be used to suppress **legitimate dissent** or **peaceful protests**.
- Unlike national laws such as the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)** and **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**, the MSPS Bill allows **pre-trial property seizure** without needing to prove terror financing or crime proceeds.
- Civil society groups, including the **People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)**, have demanded the **withdrawal of the Bill**, citing concerns about **constitutional safeguards, freedom of speech**, and the **presumption of innocence**.

Concept of 'Urban Maoism' and State Rationale

- The government claims the Bill responds to a growing **urban front of Naxalism**, where sympathisers allegedly operate under the guise of **NGOs, academia, and civil society groups**.
- According to the Bill's Statement of Objects and Reasons, these groups **support Naxal outfits** by offering **logistical aid, propaganda, recruitment channels, and safe havens**.
- The strategy draws from a 2004 Maoist document titled "**Strategies and Tactics of Indian Revolution (STIR)**", which outlines a plan to build urban support networks to strengthen rural armed struggle.
- Real-world incidents such as the **2018 Elgar Parishad case** and alleged Maoist links with banned organisations like **Popular Front of India (PFI)** are cited as justification.
- Authorities argue that **Left Wing Extremism** is no longer limited to rural strongholds but is now seeking to **undermine the state from within**, using tools of **propaganda, intellectual support, and judicial activism**.

Amendments Made by the Joint Select Committee

- The **title and preamble** of the Bill were amended to explicitly mention "**Left Wing Extremist organisations or similar organisations**", replacing the vague term "unlawful activities".
- Clause 5(2) was amended to modify the **composition of the Advisory Board**, mandating that one of the members must be a **government pleader of the High Court**, alongside **judicial personnel**.
- Clause 15(2) was revised to raise the **minimum rank of police officers** authorised to investigate cases under the Act from **Sub-Inspector** to **Deputy Superintendent of Police**, thereby introducing a higher threshold for investigative authority.

15

NISAR SATELLITE LAUNCH - ISRO NASA JOINT VENTURE

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

On **July 30, 2025**, India successfully launched the **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR)** satellite from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre** in Sriharikota. This marks the **first joint Earth-observation satellite mission** by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the **U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**, with broad applications in disaster monitoring, agricultural mapping, and environmental studies.

- The **GSLV-F16 rocket** lifted off at **5:40 p.m. IST** and successfully placed the **2,392 kg NISAR satellite** into a **sun-synchronous orbit** within 18 minutes.
- This was the **first time a GSLV** has inserted a satellite into a sun-synchronous polar orbit, marking a key milestone for ISRO.
- The launch restored confidence in ISRO's heavy-lift capabilities after recent setbacks, including the **PSLV-C61/EOS-09 failure in May 2025** and the **GSLV-launched NVS-02 malfunction in January 2025**.

About the NISAR Satellite

- NISAR is the **first Earth-observation satellite with dual-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** capabilities, combining **NASA's L-band** and **ISRO's S-band** systems.
- The satellite is equipped with a **12-metre unfurlable mesh reflector antenna**, designed by **NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)** and integrated with **ISRO's I3K satellite bus**.
- It will orbit the Earth with a **242 km swath** and **high spatial resolution**, employing **SweepSAR technology** to enhance surface observation.

Mission Objectives and Scientific Applications

- NISAR will provide **all-weather, day-and-night radar data** at **12-day intervals**, enabling continuous monitoring of dynamic Earth processes.
- ISRO has stated that the satellite will help **detect minor surface changes**, including **ground deformation, vegetation dynamics, and ice sheet movements**.
- Additional applications include shoreline monitoring, soil moisture analysis, mapping of surface water bodies, ship detection, and storm characterisation.
- NASA noted that NISAR will support early disaster response, monitor critical infrastructure, and assist in farmland mapping to improve agricultural productivity.

Collaborative Development and Responsibilities

- The **radar antenna reflector, antenna boom, L-band SAR**, and engineering payload were developed by **NASA-JPL**, while **ISRO** contributed the **satellite bus, solar array, S-band SAR**, and the **GSLV launch vehicle**.
- The mission exemplifies the **strategic partnership between India and the United States** in space science and disaster mitigation.

Mission Lifecycle and Operational Phases

- The mission is structured into four phases: **Launch, Deployment, Commissioning, and Science Operations**, with a total **mission life of five years**.
- During the **deployment phase**, a **12-metre reflector antenna** will be deployed **9 metres away** from the main satellite body starting on the **10th day after launch**.
- The **commissioning phase** will span **90 days**, involving system checkouts, calibration of instruments, and validation of operational protocols.

16

STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND
NUTRITION IN THE WORLD REPORT

REPORT

IN FOCUS

The **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2025** report, released on **July 28, 2025** by five UN agencies including **FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO**, revealed that **8.2% of the global population** (about **673 million people**) experienced hunger in 2024. While this marks a modest improvement from 8.5% in 2023, global hunger levels remain well above **pre-pandemic** and **2015 baselines**, indicating slow progress towards achieving **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger**.

Global Hunger and Food Insecurity Trends

- In 2024, approximately **2.3 billion people** were moderately or severely **food insecure**, reflecting the persistent impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, geopolitical conflicts, and inflationary pressures on global food systems.
- **Asia** remained the region with the **highest number of undernourished people** at **323 million**, followed by **Africa** with **307 million**, and **Latin America and the Caribbean** with **34 million**.
- Hunger levels declined in **Southeast Asia, Southern Asia, and South America**, but remained **stubbornly high or worsening** in parts of **Africa**, where over **20% of the population** faces chronic hunger.
- Compared to **2015**, the number of people suffering from chronic hunger has increased by **96 million**, demonstrating the challenges in reversing long-term undernutrition trends.

Projected Trends Towards 2030

- The report estimates that by **2030**, nearly **512 million people**—or **6% of the global population**—could remain **chronically undernourished**, if current trajectories continue.
- **Africa** is projected to account for **60% of the global undernourished population** by 2030, with **17.6% of its population** likely to face chronic hunger.
- In contrast, **Asia** and **Latin America** are expected to reduce undernourishment to **below 5%**, assuming moderate progress in policy implementation and food system transformation.
- The overall decline from **577 million undernourished in 2015** to **512 million in 2030** would represent a **reduction of only 65 million people**, falling significantly short of the Zero Hunger target.

India's Nutrition Paradox: Dual Burden of Malnutrition

- As of 2024, **approximately 12% of India's population**—or **172 million people**—is undernourished, though this represents an improvement from **243 million in 2006**.
- Despite rising incomes, **42.9% of India's population** cannot afford a **healthy diet**, as food costs have increased from **USD 2.77 in 2017** to **USD 4.07 in 2024** in **PPP terms**.
- India continues to suffer from a **double burden of malnutrition**, with the number of **overweight children** rising from **2.7 million (2012)** to **4.2 million (2024)** and **adult obesity** increasing from **33.6 million** to **71.4 million**.
- India has the **world's highest child wasting rate** at **18.7%**, affecting **over 21 million children**, and **37.4 million children under five** remain **stunted**, indicating chronic undernutrition.
- **Anaemia among women aged 15–49** affects **53.7%**, or approximately **203 million women**, placing India **fourth globally** in anaemia prevalence after **Gabon, Mali, and Mauritania**.

17

CHINA'S MEGA DAM ON BRAHMAPUTRA

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

On **December 25, 2024**, China formally approved a **60,000 MW hydropower project** on the **Yarlung Zangbo River** (Brahmaputra in India), located at the **Great Bend in Medog County, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)**. This project—**part of China's 14th Five-Year Plan**—will be the world's largest hydropower facility, triple the capacity of the **Three Gorges Dam**. The development has escalated **geopolitical, ecological, and water-security concerns** across downstream countries—**India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh**—which depend heavily on the Brahmaputra for **agriculture, biodiversity, and livelihoods**.

Project Location and Strategic Context

- The **Brahmaputra River** originates from the **Chemayungdung Glacier** in Tibet and flows through **India and Bangladesh**, draining into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- Known as **Yarlung Zangbo** in Tibet, the river makes a sharp turn at the **Great Bend** near the India-China border in **Arunachal Pradesh**, where China is constructing the dam.
- The dam is part of a **five-cascade system**, scheduled for completion by the **2030s**, and is expected to significantly alter river flow dynamics in **India and Bangladesh**.

China's Water Dominance and Geopolitical Posturing

- China, as the **uppermost riparian state**, has **complete hydrological control** over rivers originating in **Tibet**, the "**water tower of Asia**."
- Dams like **Zangmu (2015)** and the proposed **Medog hyper-dam** serve as **sovereignty symbols** and instruments of **hydro-hegemony**.
- The Brahmaputra basin is increasingly **securitised**, with **no binding transboundary water treaty** between China and India despite a 2006 **Expert Level Mechanism (ELM)** on hydrological data-sharing.

Ecological and Seismic Risks

- The dam site lies in a **highly seismically active zone**, with historical events like the **1950 Assam-Tibet Earthquake** that devastated downstream regions in **Assam and Bangladesh**.
- The Himalayas are also prone to **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)** and climate-induced hazards, such as the **Chungthang Dam collapse in Sikkim (2023)**.
- Dam-induced regulation could severely affect **natural flow cycles, wetlands, glaciers, and biodiversity corridors** in the Himalayan **cryosphere** and **bioregion**.

Unique Hydrological and Ecological Importance of the Brahmaputra

- **Length** is 2,900 km (only 916 km in India).
- **Major Tributaries: Right Bank:** Lohit, Dibang, Subansiri, Jiabharali, Manas, Sankosh, Teesta, **AND Left Bank:** Burhidihing, Desang, Dikhow, Dhansiri, Kopili
- **Basin States in India:** Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, and West Bengal.
- Home to **Majuli (world's largest river island)** and **Umananda (smallest river island)** in Assam.
- Supports biodiversity hotspots like **Kaziranga** and **Manas National Parks**, with **30% of India's water resources** and **41% of hydropower potential** concentrated in the basin.

18

INDIA HOSTS 2ND BIMSTEC PORTS CONCLAVE

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- India hosted the **2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave** in **Visakhapatnam** on **14–15 July 2025**, with the vision of transforming the **Bay of Bengal** into a **global maritime trade and tourism hub**.
- Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** called for **expedited implementation of the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation (AMTC)** and announced the establishment of a **Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre** in **Mumbai**.
- The conclave focused on public-private partnerships (PPP), cruise tourism, skill development, and regional port connectivity under the theme **“Navigating the Future: Blue Economy, Innovation and Sustainable Partnerships.”**

Key Objectives and Strategic Vision

- The conclave aimed to **operationalise the AMTC Agreement**, promote **port-led growth**, and enhance **regional integration** in maritime trade, logistics, and cruise tourism.
- Minister Sonowal emphasized the **“Neighbourhood First”** and **“Act East”** policies of India, highlighting BIMSTEC’s role in fostering **regional prosperity**, digital integration, and skill enhancement.
- A blueprint was laid for **joint feasibility studies**, **PPP facilitation**, and the development of **coastal economic zones** to harness the **Blue Economy** potential of BIMSTEC nations.

BIMSTEC Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre

- A **BIMSTEC Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre** will be set up in **Powai, Mumbai**, under the **Indian Ocean Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (IOCE-SMarT)**.
- The centre will drive **policy harmonisation**, **digital transformation**, and **green shipping innovation** across BIMSTEC, facilitating the implementation of the **AMTC** agreement.
- It will also focus on upskilling the maritime workforce, reducing trade costs, and creating a resilient regional logistics ecosystem.

Cruise Tourism, Port Infrastructure & Private Sector Investment

- The conclave emphasized **eco-sensitive cruise tourism**, proposing PPP-led **cruise terminals** and **joint regional branding** to position the Bay of Bengal as a premium destination.
- A dedicated session highlighted the need for **private sector participation** and **regional PPP platforms** to overcome **outdated port infrastructure** and limited coordination.
- Opportunities from **global supply chain realignments** were discussed, including potential investment in **shipbuilding**, **logistics**, **electronics**, and **renewable energy** sectors.

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP)

- The **Kaladan project** was spotlighted as a **strategic corridor** linking **India’s Northeast** with the **Bay of Bengal**, bypassing the **Siliguri Corridor** and reducing transit costs.
- Developed by **India and Myanmar**, the KMTTP includes a **waterway on the Kaladan River** and **road connectivity** to Mizoram via Paletwa–Zorinpui.
- Sonowal described Kaladan as a **model of seamless regional integration** that can deepen **economic ties within BIMSTEC**.

India’s Strategic and Leadership Role

- India’s **Sagarmala initiative**, its lead role in **BIMSTEC’s Security Pillar**, and its push for a **green and digital maritime future** were reinforced during the conclave.

- The conclave demonstrated India's proactive role in shaping **Indo-Pacific maritime architecture** through sustainable, inclusive, and tech-driven partnerships.

About BIMSTEC

- **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) was established in **1997** via the **Bangkok Declaration**.
- Comprising **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand**, BIMSTEC promotes **economic and technical cooperation**.
- India leads the **Security pillar**, covering **counter-terrorism, transnational crimes, disaster management, and energy cooperation**.
- The **BIMSTEC Secretariat** was established in **Dhaka** in **2014**. The grouping has progressively expanded its **sectoral mandate** and **institutional structures**.

19

INDIA ACHIEVES 20% ETHANOL BLENDING IN PETROL

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- In 2025, India successfully achieved **20% ethanol blending in petrol** under its **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme**, advancing its clean energy targets **five years ahead of the original 2030 goal**.
- This milestone was announced by **Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri**, marking a thirteenfold increase from **1.5% blending in 2014**.
- The achievement reflects India's progress in promoting **energy security, climate resilience, and farmer welfare**, while also significantly reducing dependence on imported crude oil.

Key Drivers of India's Ethanol Blending Success

- The **National Policy on Biofuels (2018, amended in 2022)** advanced the 20% blending target from 2030 to **2025-26**, enabling proactive investments.
- The policy allows **flexible feedstocks**—including **sugarcane, corn, molasses, damaged grains, and biomass**—to ensure sustained ethanol supply without harming food security.
- The **National Biofuel Coordination Committee (NBCC)** oversees feedstock prioritisation based on surplus declarations.
- The **Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana** supports **advanced biofuels** from crop residues, forestry waste, and algae.
- Financial incentives under **Ethanol Interest Subvention Schemes (EISS)** enabled the establishment of grain- and molasses-based ethanol units between **2018-2022**.
- **Long-Term Offtake Agreements (LTOAs)** between **Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)** and Dedicated Ethanol Plants ensured predictable pricing and market stability.
- Reduction of **GST on ethanol from 18% to 5%** lowered production costs.
- Amendments to the **Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1953** eased ethanol movement across states.

Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts

- **Farmer income rose by ₹1.18 lakh crore**, while **distilleries earned ₹1.96 lakh crore**, supporting rural growth in **Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Bihar**.
- **Foreign exchange savings of ₹1.36 lakh crore** were achieved by reducing crude oil imports, enhancing energy sovereignty.
- The programme supports **Atmanirbhar Bharat** by fostering a **self-reliant bio-economy** and stabilising **farmgate prices** of sugarcane, maize, and broken rice.
- It incentivises **crop diversification** towards low-input alternatives like **sorghum and sweet corn**.
- India has reduced **approximately 698 lakh tonnes of CO₂ emissions**, contributing to its **Paris Agreement goals**.
- **Air quality improvements** were recorded in polluted cities due to reduced vehicular emissions with **E10-E20 blends**.
- Waste-to-fuel conversion using molasses, damaged grains, and agricultural residues aligns with circular economy goals and reduces methane from landfills.

Challenges to Deeper Ethanol Integration

- **Feedstock pressure** is rising; India became a **net maize importer in 2024-25** to meet ethanol demand, raising **food security concerns**.
- Ethanol production is **water-intensive**, with grain-based units consuming **8-12 litres per litre of ethanol** and releasing **vinasse**, a hazardous byproduct.

20

1,000 YEARS OF RAJENDRA CHOLA I'S MARITIME EXPEDITION

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- On July 27, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Gangaikonda Cholapuram Shiva temple in Tamil Nadu, offering prayers and unveiling a **commemorative coin** in honour of **Emperor Rajendra Chola I** during the **Aadi Thiruvathirai Festival**.
- The visit marks **1,000 years since Rajendra Chola's Gangetic and Southeast Asian expeditions**, highlighting not only India's maritime history but also invoking **political narratives of Hindu and Dravidian pride** ahead of the **Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections in 2026**.

Historical and Cultural Legacy of Rajendra Chola I

- Rajendra Chola I reigned from **1014–1044 CE** and was a prominent **naval emperor** who extended the **Chola empire's influence** from **North India to Southeast Asia**, including modern-day **Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Myanmar**.
- He established **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** as the new Chola capital after his victorious expedition to the **Ganges** and built the **Brihadeeswara temple** there, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, modeled on the earlier Tanjore temple built by his father **Rajaraja Chola I**.
- The temple's architecture, featuring **curved vimanas** and a **majestic layout**, symbolised the affluence and grace of the later Chola era, showcasing an evolution from the rigid grandeur of Tanjore.
- The **Cholagangam tank**, constructed using Ganges water brought from the north, acted as a **"liquid pillar of victory"**, reflecting Rajendra's claim as the **"Chola who brought the Ganga"**.

Maritime Prowess and Overseas Campaigns

- Rajendra's military campaigns included the **annexation of Sri Lanka** (Eelamandalam) in **1017 CE**, completing his father's unfinished conquest by capturing **Mahinda V**, the Sinhalese king.
- The captured royal regalia and extensive temple-building in **Polonnaruwa** demonstrated comprehensive Chola rule, though **local resistance re-emerged in 1029 CE** under **Vikkamabahu I**.
- In **1025 CE**, Rajendra launched a swift naval strike on **Srivijaya**, targeting **Kadaram** (modern Kedah in Malaysia), earning the title **Kadaram Kondan (Conqueror of Kadaram)**.
- These expeditions reflected both **commercial interests** and **strategic ambitions**, seeking control over **maritime trade routes to China** and the **Malacca Straits**.
- Despite temporary territorial gains, the Cholas did not seek direct rule but installed **tribute-paying local rulers**, projecting **imperial superiority without full annexation**.
- Diplomatic ties extended beyond conquest. The **Karandai copper plates** mention **Suryavarman I of Angkor** sending a war chariot to Rajendra as a mark of friendship, revealing a vast **diplomatic arc spanning Southeast Asia**.

Aadi Thiruvathirai Festival and Cultural Revivalism

- The **Aadi Thiruvathirai Festival**, associated with Lord Shiva and Rajendra's birth star, is annually celebrated at the temple with **therukoothu performances**, reenacting his conquests.
- During the festival, Rajendra's **statue is adorned with new silk robes**, reflecting reverence toward him as a **divine-heroic figure**.
- The **1,000-year commemoration** of Rajendra's overseas campaign was strategically linked to this year's celebrations to reinforce **historical consciousness** and **civilisational pride**.
- Political Symbolism and Electoral Messaging**: PM Modi's speech during the visit invoked the Cholas as **symbols of India's identity and pride**, announcing **grand statues for Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola** to be erected in Tamil Nadu.

21 INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY 2025

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- **Global Tiger Day 2025** was observed on **July 29**, with a renewed global call for **tiger conservation**, habitat protection, and public awareness.
- While the **official theme** for 2025 is yet to be announced, the observance continues to mark the world's commitment under the **Tx2 initiative** to **double the wild tiger population**.

Historical Origins of International Tiger Day

- **International Tiger Day** (also known as Global Tiger Day) was first established at the **Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010**, attended by **13 tiger-range countries** including India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Malaysia, and Russia.
- The summit launched the global "**Tx2**" initiative, aiming to **double the wild tiger population by 2022**, in response to a catastrophic decline in tiger numbers worldwide.
- Global Tiger Day now serves as an annual reminder of the urgent need to protect **tiger habitats**, fight **poaching**, and reduce **human-wildlife conflict**.

The Status of Tigers Worldwide and the Amur Tiger's Significance

- A century ago, there were an estimated 100,000 wild tigers. Today, only ~4,000 remain, and the population continues to be under threat.
- The day also highlights **the Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*)**, the largest tiger subspecies and biggest wild cat on Earth, native to **Russia's Far East**.
- Indigenous communities like the Udeghe and Nanai revere the Amur tiger as a guardian of the forest, reflecting similar beliefs in South Asia, such as Bon Bibi in the Sundarbans.

India's Role in Tiger Conservation

- India once had around **1 lakh tigers in the early 1900s**, but this dropped to **1,827 by 1972**.
- In response, the Government of India launched **Project Tiger in 1973**, a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** designed to protect **Bengal tigers** and their ecosystems.
- Under Project Tiger, States receive **60% central funding for non-recurring** and **50% for recurring costs**.
- Under Project Tiger a **core-buffer zone strategy** was adopted to protect breeding zones while supporting human use in surrounding areas.
- Under Project Tiger, the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, established under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, conducts a **tiger census every four years**.
- As of **2022**, tiger population estimates in India stood at **3,682 (average)**, with an **upper limit of 3,925**—up from 1,827 in 1973.
- India now holds **approximately 75% of the global tiger population**, with a **6.1% annual growth rate** in recent decades.
- The number of **tiger reserves** has expanded from **9 in 1973 to over 50 across 18 states**, covering **~2.2% of India's land**.

Key Tiger Reserves and Figures

- Leading tiger states: **Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, and Maharashtra**.
- Prominent reserves: **Corbett (Uttarakhand), Bandipur and Nagarhole (Karnataka), Bandhavgarh (Madhya Pradesh)**.
- **Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem** in Andhra Pradesh is the **largest tiger reserve in India**.
- **Machhli (T-16)** of Ranthambore became the symbolic face of Project Tiger and was famously dubbed the

- **“Tigress Queen of Ranthambore”**. **Kailash Sankhala**, the first Director of Project Tiger, is remembered as the **“Tiger Man of India”**.

Recent Developments and Programmes

- In **2023–24**, **Project Tiger** and **Project Elephant** were merged into a combined **“Project Tiger & Elephant”** for synergised conservation efforts.
- The Royal Bengal Tiger, a cultural and ecological icon, is also **India’s National Animal**, reflecting its symbolic and biological significance in Indian ethos.

22 2025 HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX Q2

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

India has improved its global mobility score in the **Henley Passport Index 2025 (Q2)**, rising from the **85th rank in January 2025 (Q1)** to the **77th rank**, despite only a minor increase in the number of visa-free destinations. The index highlights the growing global recognition of the Indian passport amidst shifting geopolitical dynamics.

- The **Henley Passport Index** ranks 199 passports globally based on the number of destinations their holders can access **visa-free or with visa-on-arrival**, using data from the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- The index is updated quarterly and covers access to **227 global destinations**.
- The **IATA**, headquartered in **Montreal, Canada**, is the global trade association for **over 300 airlines**, representing approximately **83% of international air traffic**.

Global Rankings in 2025

- The **Singaporean passport** retained its top position in 2025, offering **visa-free access to 193 destinations**.
- **Japan and South Korea** secured the **second rank**, with access to **190 destinations** without a visa.
- **Seven European Union countries—Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Spain—**shared the **third position**, each granting visa-free entry to **189 destinations**.
- The **United States** saw a decline in passport strength, slipping from **9th to 10th position**, with access to **182 destinations**, while the **United Kingdom** fell from **5th to 6th place**, with **186 visa-free destinations**.

India's 2025 Performance

- India's passport climbed **eight places** from its previous rank of **85th in early 2025** to **77th**, marking a modest but noteworthy gain in **global mobility**.
- The number of destinations that Indian passport holders can access **visa-free or with visa-on-arrival** has increased from **57 in 2024 to 59 in 2025**.
- **The Philippines and Sri Lanka** were the two new countries added to India's list of visa-free destinations this year.

Visa-Free and Visa-on-Arrival Access for Indian Passport Holders

- As of 2025, **Indian passport holders can travel to 59 countries** without needing a visa beforehand. These include **Bhutan, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Thailand**, and several **African, Oceanic, and Caribbean nations**.
- The list spans countries across continents such as **Africa (e.g., Ethiopia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe)**, **Oceania (e.g., Fiji, Vanuatu, Micronesia)**, **Asia (e.g., Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Qatar)**, and the **Caribbean (e.g., Jamaica, St. Lucia, Barbados)**.
- These travel privileges represent both **diplomatic achievements** and **bilateral agreements** aimed at enhancing India's **global mobility footprint**.

23 US TO QUIT UNESCO

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

On **July 22, 2025**, the United States announced its decision to withdraw from the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** for the third time, alleging a continued **anti-Israel bias** and ideological incompatibility with domestic policy objectives. This marks the **second such exit under Donald Trump's presidency**, with the decision set to take effect in **December 2026**.

About UNESCO

- UNESCO is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** that aims to promote global peace and development through international collaboration in **education, science, and culture**.
- The organization, founded on **16 November 1945**, is headquartered in **Paris**, and currently has **194 Member States and 12 Associate Members**.
- Its core mandates include safeguarding **tangible and intangible cultural heritage**, advancing **inclusive and equitable education** (aligned with **SDG 4**), promoting **scientific cooperation**, and strengthening **mutual understanding** across nations. **India** is a **founding member** of UNESCO and actively contributes to its global programmes.

History of U.S. Withdrawals from UNESCO

- The **first U.S. withdrawal** occurred in **1984 under President Ronald Reagan**, who cited UNESCO's alleged mismanagement, corruption, and alignment with **Soviet interests** during the Cold War. The U.S. rejoined in 2003 under **George W. Bush**.
- The **second withdrawal** happened in **2017 during Trump's first term**, in response to UNESCO's 2011 decision to admit **Palestine as a full member**, which led both the U.S. and **Israel** to stop their financial contributions.
- The **third and latest withdrawal**, announced in **2025**, is based on similar allegations of anti-Israel bias and opposition to what the Trump administration calls "**woke and divisive cultural causes**." The U.S. had only rejoined UNESCO in **2023**, under President **Joe Biden**, after a five-year absence.

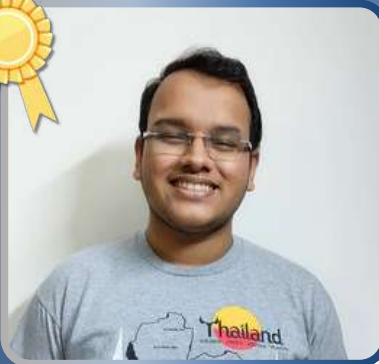
Global Implications of the U.S. Exit

- The **U.S. withdrawal** is expected to cause a **severe budgetary shortfall** at UNESCO, as American contributions constituted a major share of its operational funding. This could disrupt **education initiatives, cultural heritage preservation, and climate science programs**.
- The departure could lead to an **increased geopolitical vacuum** at UNESCO, possibly allowing **China** to expand its influence and promote its own cultural and technological narratives.
- The withdrawal undermines **multilateralism**, as repeated U.S. disengagements weaken the credibility and effectiveness of global institutions and erode trust among **developing countries**.
- U.S. absence could negatively affect programs like **AI ethics frameworks, girls' STEM education, and climate resilience research** which the U.S. had previously supported.

Implications for India

- The U.S. exit presents **strategic opportunities for India** to enhance its **soft power and diplomatic leadership** within UNESCO by shaping global discourse on issues such as **cultural preservation, digital ethics, and South-South cooperation**.
- India can also push for the inclusion of more sites on the **World Heritage List** and advance indigenous knowledge systems within UNESCO's frameworks.
- However, **budgetary shortfalls** caused by the U.S. exit may jeopardize UNESCO-supported Indian projects, including conservation work at **Nalanda, Sundarbans**, and educational outreach programs.

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 150 multiple-choice questions for a total of 150 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.
14. Detach and keep the carbon-copy OMR response sheet that comes with the question booklet; this is your only answer sheet.
15. 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.
16. Only one blank OMR sheet will be provided under any circumstance, so treat it carefully and avoid damage.
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19. Any attempt at using unfair means will lead to cancellation of your exam.
20. Impersonation is a serious offense: it results in disqualification and possible legal action.

SECTION-A: ENGLISH LANGUAGE**Passage 1:**

I retired from police service six months ago, after serving for nearly 38 years. With the happy realisation of having become my own master after half a lifetime, I decided to get into farming in Kodagu. Right now, I am planting coffee, pepper, areca nut, banana, avocado, forest trees and so on with an almost maniacal frenzy. I am even in the process of acquiring rhododendron saplings from the Himalayas to be planted around an irrigation pond.

In the process, my respect for the Indian farmer has gone up many notches. The adversities he has to battle are profound. He has to cope with the vagaries of the weather, pest infestation, labour shortage, high input costs, market fluctuations, crop-raiding animals and so much more. But there is something to working the land: it is primordial, perhaps a throwback to our evolutionary imprint and hence, deeply satisfying. Also nature seems to conspire in mysterious ways to reward your good intentions. My main worry are two herds of crop-raiding elephants. Their depredations are regular and they destroy more than what they eat. I am perhaps the most persistent caller for the services of the local Elephant Task Force. There is a certain edge to the voice of the ETF commander when I call him nowadays, but he sends his team nevertheless, and its staff gallantly chase away the herds. But the elephants promptly return in a couple of days.

Marauding elephants have become a serious threat to life and property in my part of the world. There seems to be no durable solutions in sight. So, I asked the young man in charge of the ETF, "Why don't you tranquillise the matriarch and a few herd members and tie big brass bells on their necks with steel chains? That way, people will be forewarned of their presence and can take precautionary measures." To my surprise, he did not dismiss my idea as too outlandish, and said he would take up the matter with the government.

But having worked in the government for long years, with a lazy eye, I could clearly visualise that such a proposal is unlikely to go through. When not running the gauntlet of recalcitrant elephants or crop infestation, I keep a keen eye on the happenings in the village. It is a lovely place in the heart of Western Ghats, the northern boundary marked by a hillock, Kunda Betta, and the southern by a perennial river, Kuthnad Pole. The latter is taken to mood swings and right now, she is foaming and frothing.

[Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/in-the-abode-of-lovely-nature/article68725241.ece>]

1. The overall tone of the passage suggests that the author feels

- A. a deep admiration for the resilience and challenges of the Indian farmer
- B. frustration with the inefficiency of the local Elephant Task Force
- C. indifference toward the hardships of rural life
- D. skepticism about nature's role in agriculture

2. In the context of the passage, the word "depredations" most nearly means

- A. celebrations and festivities
- B. explorations and adventures
- C. destructive attacks and plundering
- D. subtle harassments.

3. Which word is closest in meaning to "recalcitrant" as used in the passage ("recalcitrant elephants")?

- A. submissive
- B. cooperative
- C. docile
- D. unmanageable

4. Which word is most nearly the opposite of "vagaries" in the context of "the vagaries of the weather"?

- A. irregularities
- B. predictability
- C. caprices
- D. fluctuations

5. Analogy: "Tranquillise : sedate" is most nearly analogous to which of the following pairs?

- A. "Enervate : weaken"
- B. "Elevate : stimulate"
- C. "Aggravate : worsen"
- D. "Mitigate : intensify"

6. Identify the part of speech error (if any) in the following sentence from the passage:

"I am perhaps the most persistent caller for the services of the local Elephant Task Force."

- A. "perhaps" should be "maybe"
- C. "persistent" should be "persistently"
- B. "caller" should be "calling"
- D. No error

7. The line "nature seems to conspire in mysterious ways to reward your good intentions" most strongly implies that the author believes

- A. farmers must follow strict schedules to succeed
- B. the government actively supports every farming initiative
- C. benevolent actions toward the land often yield positive, sometimes unexpected, results
- D. elephants are deterred when farmers act with goodwill

Passage 2:

The small boys rushed in again. Closing, they saw, was their best chance, and Flashman was wilder and more flurried than ever. He caught East by the throat and tried to force him back on the iron-bound table. Tom grasped his waist and, remembering the old throw he had learned in the Vale from Harry Winburn, crooked his leg inside Flashman's and threw his whole weight forward. The three tottered for a moment and then over they went on to the floor, Flashman striking his head against a form in the hall.

The two youngsters sprang to their legs, but he lay there still. They began to be frightened. Tom stooped down and then cried out, scared out of his wits, "He's bleeding awfully. Come here, East! Diggs, he's dying!"

"Not he," said Diggs, getting leisurely off the table. "It's all sham; he's only afraid to fight it out."

East was as frightened as Tom. Diggs lifted Flashman's head and he groaned.

"What's the matter?" shouted Diggs.

"My skull's fractured," sobbed Flashman.

"Oh, let me run for the housekeeper!" cried Tom. "What shall we do?"

"Fiddlesticks! It's nothing but the skin broken," said the relentless Diggs, feeling his head. "Cold water and a bit of rag's all he'll want."

"Let me go," said Flashman surlily, sitting up. "I don't want your help."

"We're really very sorry—" began East.

"Hang your sorrow!" answered Flashman, holding his handkerchief to the place. "You shall pay for this, I can tell you, both of you." And he walked out of the hall.

"He can't be very bad," said Tom, with a deep sigh, much relieved to see his enemy march so well.

"Not he," said Diggs, "and you'll see you won't be troubled with him anymore, but, I say, your head's broken too; your collar is covered with blood."

"Is it though?" said Tom, putting up his hand. "I didn't know it."

"Well, mop it up or you'll have your jacket spoilt. And you have got a nasty eye, scud. You'd better go and bathe it well in cold water."

"Cheap enough too, if we're done with our old friend Flashey," said East, as they made off upstairs to bathe their wounds. They had done with Flashman in one sense, for he never laid finger on either of them again, but whatever harm a spiteful heart and venomous tongue could do them, he took care should be done. Only throw dirt enough and some of it is sure to stick, and so it was with the fifth form and the bigger boys in general, with whom he associated more or less, and they not at all. Flashman managed to get Tom and East into disfavor, which did not wear off for some time after the author of it had disappeared from the school world. This event, much prayed for by the small fry in general, took place a few months after the above encounter.

[Source: This excerpt is from Tom Brown's Schooldays by Thomas Hughes]

8. Soon after Flashman strikes his head against the form and lies still, Tom exclaims “He’s bleeding awfully. Come here, East!

Diggs, he’s dying!” which most accurately reveals that the narrator intends to convey

- A. Tom’s eagerness to exploit Flashman’s vulnerability
- B. Diggs’s indifference toward Flashman’s well-being
- C. the boys’ initial panic and dramatic response to perceived danger
- D. Flashman’s habitual exaggeration of injuries

9. In the phrase “the relentless Diggs,” the word “relentless” most nearly means

- A. regretful and apologetic
- B. sudden and unexpected
- C. calm and composed
- D. persistent and unyielding

10. Analogy: “sprang to their legs : stood up” is most nearly analogous to which of the following pairs?

- A. “crooked his leg : grappled”
- B. “bathe their wounds : wash injuries”
- C. “caught by the throat : choked”
- D. “made off upstairs : descended”

11. Which word is closest in meaning to “surly” as Flashman spoke “surly, sitting up”?

- A. ill-tempered and gruff
- B. jovial and friendly
- C. hesitant and unsure
- D. sorrowful and regretful

12. Identify the grammatical issue, if any, in the sentence: “Cheap enough too, if we’re done with our old friend Flashey.”

- A. “Cheap enough too,” should be “Cheap enough as well,”
- B. “if we’re done with” should be “if we had finished with”
- C. “we’re done with” should be “we’re through with”
- D. No grammatical issue

13. Which statement best reflects the author’s stance on Flashman’s subsequent actions toward Tom and East?

- A. Approval of Flashman’s decision to leave
- B. Indifference to Flashman’s spiteful behavior
- C. Admiration for Flashman’s cunning
- D. Disapproval of the vindictive use of rumor-mongering

14. The question “Is it though?” after Diggs points out that Tom’s collar is covered with blood most likely indicates that Tom is

- A. alarmed at the severity of his wound
- B. unaware of his own bleeding until prompted
- C. resentful of Diggs’s focus on minor injuries
- D. eager to return to play despite the injury

Passage 3:

Back when I was in school, college, or even newly married, Onam was just a festival celebrated down south. At that time, I was not fully aware of the differences in the traditions, culture, and festivals of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh – it was all simply “South India” to me then.

Born into a Bengali family and raised in Ranchi, Jharkhand, my earliest childhood memory of anything Malayali was my next-door neighbour. Growing up in a township with people from all States, I had a limited understanding of Kerala. I remember my neighbour’s family used to perform the Ayyapan Puja, and she would bring us a dark brown, sweet, and sticky prasad (prasadam, as I now call it) made with rice. My family loved it, and we eagerly awaited it every year. After my schooling in Ranchi, I spent the next few years pursuing higher studies in Kolkata, and I have been based in Bangalore for the past 15 years. It was only later that I realised that the prasadam we enjoyed was called Neipayasam, which I have been lucky to have again from friends who visit Sabarimala annually. As a teacher in a Bangalore school for over a decade, I have been part of grand Onam celebrations each year.

We have dance performances by teachers, skits by students, and traditional snacks such as pazham pori, unniappam, and banana chips shared by our Malayali colleagues. A large pookalam decorates our school reception every year. Over time, I have made several friends from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. I have even come to understand what it means to be from the Palakkad region, things I was completely ignorant of before. My horizons have expanded beyond idli-sambar, masala dosa, upma, and uttapam to include appam and stew, puttlu and kadala curry, bisibele bath, chow chow bath, sundal, and more – not to mention the famous filter kaapi! Onam has become an annual holiday tradition for me, complete with cooking the traditional sadya at home.

However, during the pandemic, when stepping out was not an option, I started preparing sadya at home. Thanks to YouTube, I now know how to make porial, avial, inji pulli, pineapple pachadi, beetroot pachadi, kaalan, and of course, sambar. I have also learned how to make parippu payasam, palada payasam, and even ada payasam. Payasam, as I discovered, is like kheer in northern India, and in Bengali, we call it payesh, so payasam felt familiar! My family loves the red rice with a drizzle of golden ghee. The appalam (what I used to call papad) and sweet and salted banana chips are store-bought. All this, served on a plantain leaf, and voila – my Onam sadya is ready! Sometimes I wonder what made me do this? Was it my friends, my geographic location (living in Bangalore), or simply my love for food? I think the last point trumps the other two. Food and festivals go together, and festivals and bonding go hand in hand. So, whether I bonded with my Malayali friends first and thus started celebrating their festival, or if it is my love for their food that led me to celebrate the festival, is really immaterial. I am just happy to celebrate Onam each year, cook to my heart's content, and sleep with a full tummy.

[Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/united-by-food-and-festival/article68730284.ece>]

15. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - A. celebrate the author's growing appreciation for Kerala's Onam traditions and cuisine
 - B. critique the authenticity of regional festivals in South India
 - C. analyze the historical origins of Onam and its religious significance
 - D. compare various South Indian cuisines and rank them by popularity
16. In the context of the passage, the word "immaterial" most nearly means
 - A. irrelevant or unimportant in determining the outcome
 - B. composed of fine, ethereal substance
 - C. limiting or restrictive in its effect
 - D. carrying strong influence over related matters
17. Sadya is to Onam as turkey is to
 - A. Christmas celebrations
 - B. Easter meals
 - C. Thanksgiving feasts
 - D. Valentine's Day gifts
18. Which of the following best corrects any grammatical error in the sentence:
"I think the last point trumps the other two."
 - A. change "trumps" to "had trumped"
 - C. change "trumps" to "trumps on"
 - B. change "trumps" to "trumps over"
 - D. no correction needed
19. The statement "Food and festivals go together, and festivals and bonding go hand in hand" most strongly implies that
 - A. sharing a festive meal fosters closer relationships among participants
 - B. food is the sole defining element of any festival
 - C. personal bonding is more important than the celebration itself
 - D. festivals lose their meaning without large crowds
20. Which of the following dishes did the author originally recall as a dark brown, sweet, and sticky prasadam from the Ayyappan Puja?
 - A. unniappam, made from fried rice batter in small lumps
 - B. pazham pori, ripe banana fritters coated in batter
 - C. Neipayasam, a rice-based sweet pudding served as prasadam
 - D. avial, a mixed-vegetable coconut curry
21. The author's overall attitude toward celebrating Onam and preparing sadya at home can best be described as
 - A. apathetic, viewing it as just another holiday
 - B. skeptical, unsure of South Indian traditions
 - C. annoyed by the elaborate preparations required
 - D. enthusiastic, relishing both the cooking process and the feast

Passage 4:

Peyton Farquhar was a well to do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a planter and like other planters a politician, he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with that gallant army which had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction.

That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in wartime. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in the aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war. One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was fetching the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

"The Yanks are repairing the railroads," said the man, "and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in order and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels, or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order."

"How far is it to the Owl Creek bridge?" Farquhar asked.

"About thirty miles."

"Is there no force on this side of the creek?"

"Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge."

"Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel," said Farquhar, smiling, "what could he accomplish?"

The soldier reflected. "I was there a month ago," he replied. "I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tinder." The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he repassed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

[This excerpt is from "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bierce]

22. Peyton Farquhar's chief motivation for risking dangerous exploits on behalf of the South is that he

- A. resents the planter class for excluding him from military service
- B. wishes to undermine the Confederate cause through daring acts
- C. seeks to protect his Alabama family's economic interests
- D. yearns for the "larger life of the soldier" and an opportunity for personal distinction

23. The word "imperious" in the phrase "circumstances of an imperious nature" most nearly means

- A. timid and unassertive in character and effect
- B. humble and deferential in force and tone
- C. commanding and urgent in character and effect
- D. uncertain and hesitant in nature

24. Which word is closest in meaning to "inglorious" as used in "he chafed under the inglorious restraint"?

- A. shameful and dishonourable
- B. dishonorable but accompanied by a desire for distinction
- C. excellent and commendable
- D. ostentatious and showy

25. The final revelation that the gray-clad soldier was "a Federal scout" most strongly implies that

- A. Mrs. Farquhar's hospitality unwittingly betrayed her husband's whereabouts to his own cause's enemies
- B. the soldier's account of Yankee movements was deliberately exaggerated to mislead Farquhar
- C. plantation residents were complicit in espionage against the South
- D. Farquhar's eagerness to serve allowed him to be deceived by the enemy's cunning use of civilian guise

26. The author's tone toward Farquhar's secessionist zeal and subsequent eagerness for military action is best described as

- A. approving, celebrating his patriotic fervor without reservation
- B. subtly ironic, depicting his grand ambitions alongside his gullibility
- C. neutral, presenting facts without any evaluative language
- D. condemnatory, criticizing his support for a cause deemed immoral

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- C. neutral, presenting facts without any evaluative language
- D. condemnatory, criticizing his support for a cause deemed immoral

28. The line "That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in wartime" serves primarily to

- A. emphasize the inevitability of every able man finding a role in conflict
- B. highlight Farquhar's singular impatience compared to other civilians
- C. underscore the universal allure of wartime glory for those yearning for distinction
- D. suggest that the soldier's life is more secure than civilian existence

Passage 5:

India's resounding 8.2% GDP growth in 2023-24 came with two worrying portents. The farm sector lost momentum due to an unhelpful monsoon, and private consumption spends rose at less than half the economy's pace. In fact, the 4% growth in private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) was the weakest since 2002-03, if one excludes 2020-21, when COVID-19 first hit the world. Of course, some of this stemmed from the farm sector's rain woes that weighed down rural demand, while economists flagged a K-shaped consumption pattern of higher-end goods and services seeing greater offtake than the rest. A normal monsoon this year, it was hoped, would help the farm sector and rural demand rebound, and shore up overall consumption to levels that spur growth as well as hasten an uptick in industrial capacity utilisation rates to thresholds that compel private investors to ramp up. This much-awaited outcome is vital for the virtuous cycle of more investments leading to more jobs and higher consumption to kick in. Growth numbers for the first quarter suggested this story was playing out, with the PFCE rising at a seven-quarter high of 7.4%, outpacing the 6.8% GDP uptick.

Rural demand signals such as two-wheeler sales also perked up. India Ratings reckons that real rural wage growth turned positive in July and is expected to stay positive, aided by cooling inflation. This bodes well for consumption. However, a twist in this tale may be imminent, with urban demand beginning to show some fatigue. Last Tuesday, S&P Global Ratings, which expects India to grow 6.8% this year (lower than the 7.2% rise penned in by the Reserve Bank of India), said high interest rates are tempering urban demand. The RBI's consumer confidence survey for July shows a turn in the tide, with current and future confidence levels of urban buyers dropping. The Finance Ministry has taken note too, pointing to a dip in passenger vehicle sales through April to August as a barometer of stuttering urban demand.

The trend warrants monitoring, it said, while expressing hope that festive fervour could trigger a course reversal. With wallets crimped by persistently high food inflation (that also clouds rate cut hopes), the ability of urban Indians to create room for discretionary spends through the festive season and beyond would be critical for growth as well as the virtuous private investment cycle. With global oil prices turning benign, the Centre must consider passing through the reduced costs to consumers, and cut levies embedded into retail fuel prices. A substantive fuel price cut, as opposed to the token two rupees of relief per litre unveiled this March, can support demand in the economy.

[Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/%E2%80%8Bdemand-flux-on-growth-dynamics/article68698054.ece>]

29. Despite India's impressive 8.2% GDP growth in 2023–24, the passage highlights two main concerns. Which of the following best captures these worries?

- A. A slowdown in farm-sector growth due to an unfavourable monsoon and a sharp deceleration in private consumption spending, which rose at less than half the economy's pace
- B. A decline in government infrastructure investment and a fall in foreign direct investment inflows
- C. Rising fiscal deficit pressures combined with widening trade deficits due to elevated oil imports
- D. A surge in non-performing assets in the banking sector and a subsequent credit crunch

30. In the context of the passage, the word "virtues" appears within "virtuous cycle." Which of the following is closest in

meaning to "virtuous" as used here?

- A. morally upright and ethically driven in a religious sense
- B. beneficial and self-reinforcing, producing positive outcomes that encourage further gains
- C. rare and difficult to achieve, often only found in idealistic theories
- D. superficial and symbolic, lacking real substance

31. The "K-shaped consumption pattern" mentioned in the second sentence of the first paragraph most likely implies that

- A. different segments of consumption are diverging, with higher-end goods and services growing faster than the rest, creating a bifurcated demand recovery
- B. consumption growth across all segments follows a uniform "K" trajectory of sharp rise followed by stabilization
- C. consumption has fallen in rural areas while urban areas have seen an equivalent rise, thus mirroring each other
- D. consumption growth is cyclical, with alternating periods of rapid increase and decline

32. The passage notes that "urban demand beginning to show some fatigue." Which of the following is the best antonym for "fatigue" as used here?

- A. stagnation B. moderation C. persistence D. vigor

33. Monsoon : farm sector :: high interest rates :

- A. urban demand, since just as a poor monsoon weakens rural consumption, elevated interest rates are tempering spending by city consumers
- B. private investment, because high borrowing costs discourage capital expenditure by enterprises
- C. global oil prices, given that both move in divergent cycles affecting different parts of the economy
- D. industrial capacity utilisation, since interest rates directly affect the pace of factory output

34. Which correction, if any, is necessary in the sentence "With global oil prices turning benign, the Centre must consider passing through the reduced costs to consumers, and cut levies embedded into retail fuel prices."?

- A. No correction needed.
- B. Replace "into" with "in" to read "embedded in retail fuel prices."
- C. Add "the" before "reduced costs" to read "the reduced costs."
- D. Replace "passing through" with "pass through" for consistency with parallel structure

35. The author's concluding recommendation that the Centre enact a substantive fuel-price cut most nearly implies that

- A. a significant reduction in retail fuel levies would help revive both urban and rural consumption by easing household budgets
- B. only rural consumers stand to gain from lower fuel prices since urban consumers are less sensitive to energy costs
- C. a token cut, such as two rupees per litre, is preferable because it signals policy intent without risking fiscal imbalance
- D. fuel-price relief should be broader and more meaningful than token measures to meaningfully support aggregate demand

Passage 6:

There was a great bustle in Bishopsgate Street Within, as they drew up, and (it being a windy day) half-a-dozen men were tacking across the road under a press of paper, bearing gigantic announcements that a Public Meeting would be held at one o'clock precisely, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning Parliament in favour of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company, capital five millions, in five hundred thousand shares of ten pounds each; which sums were duly set forth in fat black figures of considerable size.

Mr. Bonney elbowed his way briskly upstairs, receiving in his progress many low bows from the waiters who stood on the landings to show the way; and, followed by Mr. Nickleby, dived into a suite of apartments behind the great public room: in the second of which was a business-looking table, and several business-looking people. "Hear!" cried a gentleman with a double chin, as Mr. Bonney presented himself. "Chair, gentlemen, chair!"

The new-comers were received with universal approbation, and Mr. Bonney bustled up to the top of the table, took off his hat, ran his fingers through his hair, and knocked a hackney-coachman's knock on the table with a little hammer: whereat several gentlemen cried "Hear!" and nodded slightly to each other, as much as to say what spirited conduct that was. Just at this moment, a waiter, feverish with agitation, tore into the room, and throwing the door open with a crash, shouted "Sir Matthew Pupker!"

The committee stood up and clapped their hands for joy, and while they were clapping them, in came Sir Matthew Pupker, attended by two live members of Parliament, one Irish and one Scotch, all smiling and bowing, and looking so pleasant that it seemed a perfect marvel how any man could have the heart to vote against them. Sir Matthew Pupker especially, who had a little round head with a flaxen wig on the top of it, fell into such a paroxysm of bows, that the wig threatened to be jerked off, every instant. When these symptoms had in some degree subsided, the gentlemen who were on speaking terms with Sir Matthew Pupker, or the two other members, crowded round them in three little groups, near one or other of which the gentlemen who were NOT on speaking terms with Sir Matthew Pupker or the two other members, stood lingering, and smiling, and rubbing their hands, in the desperate hope of something turning up which might bring them into notice. All this time, Sir Matthew Pupker and the two other members were relating to their separate circles what the intentions of government were, about taking up the bill; with a full account of what the government had said in a whisper the last time they dined with it, and how the government had been observed to wink when it said so; from which premises they were at no loss to draw the conclusion, that if the government had one object more at heart than another, that one object was the welfare and advantage of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company.

[This excerpt is adapted from *Nicholas Nickleby* by Charles Dickens]

36. The author's primary satirical target in this excerpt is

- A. the ostentatious marketing of baked goods through oversized billboards
- B. the efficiency of Victorian-era public meeting protocols
- C. the sycophantic and self-serving behavior of politicians and businessmen when seeking government favor
- D. the architectural design of Bishopsgate Street public rooms

37. In the phrase "to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning Parliament," the word "propriety" most nearly means

- A. legality or compliance with statutory requirements
- B. timeliness and urgency of action
- C. popularity among the populace
- D. suitability or appropriateness for the occasion

38. Which word is closest in meaning to "approbation" as used in "The new-comers were received with universal approbation"?

- A. reproach and criticism
- B. approval and praise
- C. indifference and neutrality
- D. surprise and bewilderment

39. Knock : attention :: whistle :

- A. signal the start of an event
- C. honor distinguished guests
- B. bring people together
- D. conceal confidential information

40. The detail that the government "had been observed to wink when it said so" most strongly implies that

- A. official endorsements were uniformly transparent and aboveboard
- B. there was clandestine complicity between the government and the baking company's backers
- C. parliamentary procedures required a literal wink as a form of consent
- D. ministers were reluctant to express their true intentions aloud

41. Which correction, if any, is necessary in the phrase "tacking across the road under a press of paper, bearing gigantic announcements"?

- A. Change "paper" to "papers" to accurately reflect multiple sheets being carried
- B. Change "tacking" to "tackling" to convey the act of handling the load
- C. Insert "the" before "road" to read "across the road" correctly
- D. No correction needed

42. The behavior of the committee members as described (“lingering, and smiling, and rubbing their hands, in the desperate

hope of something turning up which might bring them into notice”) can best be characterized as

- A. genuinely enthusiastic about public service
- B. methodically debating the merits of the proposal
- C. earnestly concerned with the public good
- D. obsequiously sycophantic in anticipation of personal gain

Passage 7:

The killing of Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary-General of Hezbollah, was one of the most consequential acts by Israel since the war in West Asia broke out on October 7, 2023. Hezbollah, which, under Nasrallah’s three-decade long leadership, emerged as a parallel state in Lebanon, has been seen by the Israelis as their most powerful non-state enemy. Viewed by the U.S. as a terror group, it is also a central constituent in Iran’s “axis of resistance”, through which Iran projects its influence across the region. By killing Nasrallah, Israel has dealt Hezbollah a heavy blow and dented Iran’s influence, but its cross-border attacks have killed and displaced thousands and crossed the brightest of Iran’s red lines. The region has never been this close to an open war between Israel and Iran. When Israel launched its retaliatory war on Gaza after Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, Nasrallah opened a second front by firing rockets into northern Israel. He wanted to keep some military pressure on the Israeli Defense Forces when the war on Gaza was killing tens of thousands of Palestinians. Israel played along with limited exchange of fire in return for Hezbollah’s rockets when its focus was on Gaza. But after destroying much of Gaza, Israel turned its attention towards Lebanon, and then dramatically escalated the conflict, targeting Hezbollah’s ground functionaries, its commanders and then Nasrallah.

Israel’s declared objective in the north is to enable the over 60,000 people who were displaced by Hezbollah’s rockets to return to their homes. Its strikes have weakened Hezbollah but not destroyed its missile capabilities. This means Israel could launch a ground offensive into Lebanon, seeking to push Hezbollah to the north of the Litani river and carve a buffer on the border. A ground offensive would displace and kill tens of thousands of people in Lebanon, which is reeling under deep economic pains. Israel’s invasion of Gaza is yet to meet its declared objectives of destroying Hamas and securing the release of hostages. There is no guarantee that Israel would quickly meet its objectives in Lebanon. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sees the crisis as an opportunity for Israel to degrade its non-state rivals even at the cost of triggering an all-out war with Iran. The U.S. publicly calls for ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon, but these words do not carry any weight as the Biden administration continues to arm Israel. Iran, repeatedly provoked and pushed to the corner, has so far exercised relative restraint while Israel has gone on a blood-thirsty rampage. Iran might be tempted to respond to the Nasrallah killing with force. But Tehran should not give Mr. Netanyahu what he wants — an excuse to start a wider war in West Asia.

[Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/%E2%80%8Bthe-edge-of-war-the-hindu-editorial-on-the-west-asia-situation/article68702064.ece>]

43. What is the primary purpose of the passage?

- A. To argue that Iran should provoke Israel into a larger conflict
- B. To analyse the strategic implications of Israel’s killing of Nasrallah and the possible regional fallout
- C. To praise Iran’s restraint in the face of Israeli actions
- D. To propose ceasefire terms in Gaza and Lebanon

44. Which option is the closest antonym of the word “consequential” as used in the passage?

- A. Instrumental in determining outcomes
- B. High in significance and impact
- C. Resulting in far-reaching effects
- D. Trivial and insignificant

45. Based on the passage, which inference is most justified?

- A. Israel's campaign in Gaza has already achieved all its declared objectives
- B. Hezbollah's missile capabilities have been entirely neutralised
- C. A ground offensive into Lebanon would risk massive civilian displacement and economic strain
- D. Iran has already responded militarily to Nasrallah's killing

46. Which of the following sentences correctly paraphrases the underlined portion of this sentence with no change in meaning?

"Israel's declared objective in the north is to enable the over 60,000 people who were displaced by Hezbollah's rockets to return to their homes."

- A. Israel says its goal in the north is helping the more than 60,000 displaced by Hezbollah rockets go back to their residences.
- B. Israel's northward aim is to prevent 60,000 people from ever returning to their homes after Hezbollah's rockets.
- C. Israel's stated aim in the north compels more than 60,000 displaced individuals to remain away from their homes.
- D. Israel's plan in the north requires that only a small fraction of the displaced be allowed to come back.

47. What is the most appropriate meaning of "parallel state" as used in the passage?

- A. A subordinate administrative branch within the Lebanese government
- B. A de facto governing entity operating alongside official state structures
- C. A temporary administrative body set up during emergencies
- D. An entirely underground organisation with no public presence

48. Hezbollah is to non-state actor as Hamas is to:

- A. Militant organisation primarily based in Gaza that threatens Israel's security
- B. International peacekeeping force operating in West Asia
- C. Traditional political party in Lebanon with no military wing
- D. State-sponsored diplomatic mission in Tehran

49. What stance does the author take regarding Iran's potential reaction to Nasrallah's killing?

- A. That Iran should immediately escalate militarily to retaliate and deter future Israeli actions
- B. That Iran's red lines have already been crossed, making any further response pointless
- C. That Iran must exercise restraint to avoid giving Netanyahu an excuse for a wider war
- D. That Iran's best option is to call for a global economic boycott of Israel

50. According to the passage, which of the following is a fact?

- A. Iran has officially declared war on Israel following Nasrallah's death.
- B. Israel has successfully pushed Hezbollah forces north of the Litani river.
- C. The Biden administration has ceased all arms shipments to Israel.
- D. Israel's invasion of Gaza has not yet met its declared objectives of destroying Hamas and releasing hostages.

SECTION-B : CURRENT AFFAIRS, INCLUDING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

51. In July 2025, the United States imposed a 50 % tariff on Brazilian imports over the prosecution of former President Jair Bolsonaro. How did Brazil officially respond?

- A. President Lula da Silva publicly rejected the tariffs, defended Brazil's judicial independence, and warned he would consider reciprocal measures.
- B. Brazil quietly asked the World Trade Organization to mediate, while privately seeking tariff relief in off-record talks.
- C. Major Brazilian exporters praised the U.S. move as necessary to curb Bolsonaro's influence, urging the government to stand down.
- D. Brazil immediately halted all soy and iron-ore exports to the U.S., then reversed the decision under corporate pressure.

52. On June 13, 2025, India was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for a three-year term (2025–27). Which of the following is true?

- A. India secured 143 votes, filling one of the vacancies for Western European and Others Group.
- B. India was elected unopposed as a permanent member of the Council.
- C. India won 184 out of 193 votes, marking its third term on the Council.
- D. India failed to achieve the required two-thirds majority and was not elected.

53. Who won the 2025 UEFA Champions League final held on May 31 at Munich's Allianz Arena, and what was the score?

- A. Manchester City, 2–1 over Real Madrid in a defensive contest.
- B. Paris Saint-Germain, 5–0 over Internazionale Milan in the most lopsided final since 1960.
- C. Real Madrid, 4–0 over Liverpool with a commanding second-half performance.
- D. Internazionale Milan, 3–2 over Bayern Munich in extra time with an injury-time winner.

54. At the 2025 Copa América final on July 25 at MetLife Stadium, which team triumphed and what was the scoreline?

- A. Argentina defeated Brazil 1–0 with a late Messi goal.
- B. Colombia beat Argentina on penalties after a 2–2 draw.
- C. Uruguay overcame Chile 2–1 through a second-half comeback.
- D. Brazil defeated Argentina 2–0 with clinical strikes in each half.

55. When was the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) established?

- A. 15 March 2006, replacing the former Commission on Human Rights with a new inter-governmental body focused on strengthening human rights promotion and protection worldwide
- B. 15 March 2007, following a year of preparatory sessions and consensus-building among UN member states
- C. 15 March 2008, coinciding with the UN General Assembly's adoption of major procedural reforms
- D. 15 March 2009, as part of the UN's broader institutional restructuring to streamline its human rights mechanisms

56. Which part of the constitution was adopted on 26th November 1949?

- A. Article 368, relating to the procedure for amendment of the Constitution.
- B. The Preamble to the Constitution, summarizing its core philosophy.
- C. Article 51A, listing Fundamental Duties of citizens.
- D. Article 14, guaranteeing equality before the law.

57. Who was the first Law Minister of independent India?

- A. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, appointed to draft the Constitution and oversee legal affairs from 1947
- B. S. P. Mukherjee, a senior barrister known for his work on civil liberties post-Independence
- C. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, who later served as Home Minister and drafted key security laws
- D. K. M. Munshi, instrumental in the Zakir Husain scholarship and later education reforms

58. Which of the following is the tallest mountain located in India?

- A. Kangchenjunga
- B. Nanda Devi
- C. K2
- D. Mount Everest

59. Which of the following is the largest lake in India by surface area?

- A. Chilika Lake, a brackish water lagoon in Odisha covering over 1,100 km²
- B. Vembanad Lake, a freshwater lagoon in Kerala covering approximately 2,033 km²
- C. Kolleru Lake, a shallow freshwater lake in Andhra Pradesh covering about 245 km²
- D. Sambhar Salt Lake, an inland saline lake in Rajasthan covering around 190 km²

60. Who won the 2025 Tour de France, securing back-to-back victories?

- A. Tadej Pogačar, riding for UAE Team Emirates.
- B. Primož Roglič, leading Team Jumbo-Visma.
- C. Christophe Laporte, in a surprise overall performance for Arkéa-Samsic.
- D. Jonas Vingegaard, extending his dominance with a strong mountain-stage campaign.

61. At the 78th Cannes Film Festival (May 13–24, 2025), which film and director won the Palme d'Or?

- A. "Sentimental Value" directed by Joachim Trier, a Norwegian drama exploring intergenerational memory and trauma.
- B. "It Was Just an Accident" by Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi, a political drama secretly shot under restrictions and spotlighting human rights.
- C. "The Secret Agent" by Brazilian director Kleber Mendonça Filho, a spy thriller set during Cold War espionage in Latin America.
- D. "Young Mothers" by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, a Belgian social-realist film following new parenthood in post-industrial Europe.

62. On May 31, 2025, who won the UEFA Champions League final at Munich's Allianz Arena, and what was the score?

- A. Manchester City, 2–1 over Real Madrid in a tactical defensive contest.
- B. Paris Saint-Germain, 5–0 over Internazionale Milan in the most lopsided final since 1960.
- C. Real Madrid, 4–0 over Liverpool with a commanding second-half performance.
- D. Internazionale Milan, 3–2 over Bayern Munich in extra time with an injury-time winner.

63. On June 6, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee cut the repo rate by 50 basis points. To what level was it reduced?

- A. 5.50% per annum.
- B. 6.25% per annum.
- C. 6.75% per annum.
- D. 7.00% per annum.

64. Which organization won the 2025 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, announced on May 6, 2025?

- A. ProPublica, for reporting on delays in urgent maternal care driven by restrictive abortion-law interpretations.
- B. The Washington Post, for its on-the-ground coverage of an assassination attempt on a former U.S. president.
- C. The New York Times, for an exposé on climate-related economic risks facing coastal communities.
- D. The Wall Street Journal, for its investigation into a tech billionaire's political influence campaigns.

65. In June 2025, India's gross Goods and Services Tax collection stood at approximately how much, marking a 6.2% year-on-year increase?

- A. ₹1.85 lakh crore, even as monthly collections moderated from earlier highs.
- B. ₹2.37 lakh crore, setting a new monthly record since GST's rollout.
- C. ₹2.01 lakh crore, reflecting a sequential rise from April's figure.
- D. ₹1.59 lakh crore, representing net GST revenue after accounting for refunds.

66. Which Article of the Indian Constitution empowers the Supreme Court to issue writs for enforcement of Fundamental Rights?

- A. Article 14 – Guarantee of equality before the law.
- B. Article 32 – Right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for enforcement of rights.
- C. Article 226 – Power of High Courts to issue certain writs.
- D. Article 368 – Special procedure for amendment of the Constitution.

67. Which of the following is not a component of the Parliament of India?

- A. The Lok Sabha (House of the People).
- B. The Rajya Sabha (Council of States).
- C. The President of India, as an integral part of Parliament.
- D. The Supreme Court of India, as the apex judicial body.

68. The International Criminal Court (ICC), which prosecutes individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, is headquartered in which city?

- A. Geneva, Switzerland.
- B. Vienna, Austria.
- C. The Hague, Netherlands.
- D. New York, United States.

69. Which ocean is the largest on Earth by surface area?

- A. Pacific Ocean
- B. Indian Ocean
- C. Atlantic Ocean
- D. Arctic Ocean

70. Who is traditionally credited as the author of the Indian epic Mahabharata?

- A. Ved Vyasa, the sage said to have compiled and composed the epic.
- B. Valmiki, the poet-ascetic known for writing the Ramayana.
- C. Tulsidas, the saint-poet of the 16th century who wrote the Ramcharitmanas.
- D. Kalidasa, the classical Sanskrit playwright and poet.

71. What was the official theme of the Raisina Dialogue 2025, held in New Delhi?
A. "Kālachakra – People, Peace and Planet"
D. New York, United States.
B. "Navigating the New Cold War in the 21st Century"
C. "Digital Innovation and Global Governance"
D. "Climate Finance and Sustainable Development"
72. The 19th G20 Summit, convened on 28 May 2025, took place at which location?
A. Tokyo International Forum, Japan
B. Itamaraty Palace, Brasília, Brazil
C. Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, India
D. Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa
73. Who won the men's singles title at the 2025 French Open?
A. Novak Djokovic B. Carlos Alcaraz
C. Jannik Sinner D. Rafael Nadal
74. Which film received the Best Picture award at the 97th Academy Awards in 2025?
A. The Substance B. Dune: Part Two
C. Emilia Pérez D. Anora
75. During his official working visit to Washington, DC, on 13 February 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was hosted by which U.S. President?
A. Donald J. Trump B. Joe Biden
C. Barack Obama D. George W. Bush
76. As of July 2025, how many UNESCO World Heritage Sites are there in India?
A. 36 B. 44 C. 49 D. 54
77. Who was the first woman to be appointed as Chief Justice of a High Court in India?
A. Justice Fathima Beevi B. Justice Ruma Pal
C. Justice Indu Malhotra D. Justice Leila Seth
78. Where is the headquarters of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) located?
A. New Delhi B. Chennai
C. Mumbai D. Kolkata
79. The drafting of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was undertaken by the First Law Commission under the chairmanship of which individual?
A. Thomas Babington Macaulay B. 1858
C. Lord William Bentinck D. Sir Barnes Peacock
80. In which year did the Indian Penal Code formally come into force across British India?
A. 1856
C. 1860
D. 1862

SECTION - C: LOGICAL REASONING

Directions:- Answer the following questions and choose the correct option to the answer:

81. Premises:

1. Some teachers are mentors.
2. All mentors are guides.
3. No guide is a student.
4. Some students are researchers.

Conclusions:

- A. Some teachers are guides.
- B. No researchers are mentors.
- C. Some guides are researchers.
- D. All students are guides.

82. Premises:

1. No birds are mammals.
2. Some eagles are birds.
3. All eagles are predators.

Conclusions:

- A. Some predators are mammals.
- B. No predators are mammals.
- C. Some predators are birds.
- D. All birds are predators.

83. Premises:

1. All roses are flowers.
2. Some flowers are gifts.
3. No gift is cheap.

Conclusions:

- A. Some gifts are roses.
- B. No roses are gifts.
- C. Some flowers are cheap.
- D. None of the above

84. Premises:

1. All fruits are edible.
2. Some edible things are exotic.
3. No exotic thing is local.
4. Some local things are organic.

Conclusions:

- A. Some edible things are not local.
- B. No edible thing is local.
- C. All local things are organic.
- D. No organic thing is exotic

85. Premises:

1. No writer is uneducated.
2. Some educated people are scholars.
3. All scholars are respected.
4. Some respected people are generous.

Conclusions:

- A. Some writers are respected.
- B. No generous person is uneducated.
- C. Some scholars are generous.
- D. None of the above

86. Statements:

- (A) All poets are writers.
- (B) Some writers are authors.

Conclusions:

- I. Some poets are authors.
- II. All authors are writers.
- A. Only I follows
- B. Only II follows
- C. Both follow
- D. Neither follows

87. Statements:

- (A) No dog is a cat.
- (B) All cats are mammals.

Conclusions:

- I. No dog is a mammal.
- II. Some mammals are cats.
- A. Only I follows
- B. Only II follows
- C. Both follow
- D. Neither follows

88. Statements:

- (A) All flowers are plants.
- (B) No plant is a mineral.

Conclusions:

- I. No flower is a mineral.
- II. Some minerals are plants.
- A. Only I follows
- B. Only II follows
- C. Both follow
- D. Neither follows

89. Statements:

- (A) Some cars are electric.
- (B) All electric things are modern.

Conclusions:

- I. Some cars are modern.
- II. Some modern things are electric.
- A. Only I follows
- B. Only II follows
- C. Both follow
- D. Neither follows

Direction:- The following questions consist of five/six statements, each followed by options consisting of three statements put together in a specific order. Choose the best option which indicates a valid argument, that is, where the third statement is a conclusion drawn from the preceding two statements:

90. Statements:

- (A) All cats are mammals.
- (B) Some mammals are aquatic.
- (C) Some cats are aquatic.
- (D) No mammal is a plant.
- (E) No cat is a plant.
- (F) Some aquatic creatures are cats.

Options:

- (a) BCF (b) CAF (c) DAE (d) EDB

91. Statements:

- (A) Some fruits are berries.
- (B) All berries are sweet.
- (C) Some fruits are sweet.
- (D) No sweet thing is sour.
- (E) No berry is sour.
- (F) Some sour things are fruits.

Options:

- (a) BDE (b) ABE (c) CAF (d) DBC

92. Statements:

- 1. Some painters are sculptors.
- 2. All sculptors are artists.
- 3. No artist is unskilled.

Conclusions:

- I. Some painters are artists.
- II. No unskilled person is a painter.
- A) Only conclusion I follows
- B) Only conclusion II follows
- C) Both conclusions I and II follow
- D) Neither conclusion I nor II follows

93. **Statements:** A recent survey finds that 80% of urban commuters use personal cars for trips under 5 km, despite average traffic speeds below 15 km/h during peak hours. Public buses, which run dedicated lanes on 40% of city roads, carry only 15% of these short-distance commuters. Taxis and ride-sharing together account for 5%. Commuters thus strongly prefer private cars over public transit for short urban trips.

Question: Which one of the following inferences is most strongly supported by the above information?

- A. Congestion pricing on private cars would shift at least half of short-distance commuters to buses.
- B. The availability of bus lanes on 40% of roads has not significantly increased bus ridership for short trips.
- C. Taxi and ride-sharing services are underutilized due to higher costs than private car ownership.
- D. Expanding bus lanes to 100% of roads would eliminate traffic congestion.

94. **Argument:** The municipality proposes to replace all gasoline-powered streetlights with solar LED units, claiming that the higher upfront cost will be recouped within five years through energy savings and reduced maintenance. Which one of the following is an assumption required by the municipality's argument to justify the viability of the replacement in question?

- A. LED streetlights produce the same luminosity as gasoline lamps.
- B. Future energy prices will remain constant.
- C. Maintenance costs for solar units will not exceed current lamp maintenance.
- D. Citizens prefer environmentally friendly lighting solutions.

95. A new smartphone app launched in April saw 100,000 downloads in the first month, but only 5% of those users remained active after three months. The developers argue that introducing a loyalty-points system tied to continued app usage will materially increase long-term engagement rates. Which one of the following, if true, would most strengthen the developers' claim?

- A. In a controlled trial, implementing a similar loyalty-points system in another app raised three-month user retention from 5% to 25%.
- B. Surveys reveal that 80% of potential users cite lack of features—not rewards—as their main reason for abandoning new apps.
- C. The company's marketing spend has doubled since launch, yet active users continue to decline.
- D. A competitor's rewards program led to a temporary spike in engagement but no difference at six months.

96. **Premises:** A regional airline claims its new fuel-efficient planes will reduce per-flight fuel costs by 30% and thus lower ticket prices by 20%. Fare cuts will boost passenger numbers by 25%. Which one of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the airline's prediction?

- A. Fuel prices are projected to drop by 10% industry-wide next year.
- B. The airline's passengers value reliability over ticket price.
- C. Airport taxes account for 40% of the ticket price.
- D. Competitor airlines are introducing fuel-efficient models concurrently.

97. **Observation:** Over the past decade, coffee consumption per capita in Country X rose by 50%, yet domestic coffee bean imports declined by 30%. Which one of the following, if true, best resolves the apparent paradox?

- A. Country X began growing high-quality coffee domestically five years ago.
- B. Coffee prices on the world market tripled last decade.
- C. Tea sales in Country X have fallen by 25%.
- D. Instant coffee consumption counts toward per-capita coffee statistics.

98. **Premises:** A study shows that municipalities with extensive bicycle-lane networks have 25% fewer road accidents per capita. Additional analysis reveals that these cities also have 15% lower average vehicle speeds. Which one of the following conclusions is best supported?

- A. Installing bike lanes causes drivers to slow down, reducing accidents.
- B. Drivers in bike-lane cities are more law-abiding.
- C. Lower vehicle speeds correlate with fewer road accidents.
- D. Removing bike lanes would increase accident rates.

99. **Argument:** Since surveys show that 90% of students who use on-campus study pods score above the national average, the availability of study pods improves academic performance. Which one of the following, if true, most seriously calls the argument's conclusion into question?

- A. Students who choose pods tend to have higher pre-existing GPAs.
- B. National average scores have risen by 5% in the past year.
- C. Off-campus study groups achieve similar high scores.
- D. The university plans to add more study pods next year.

100. **Argument:** A rural electrification program claims that providing solar panels to remote villages will increase evening study hours by 30%, thereby boosting literacy rates. Which one of the following is an assumption required by the argument?

- A. Villagers will use the extra evening hours exclusively for study.
- B. Literacy rate improvements can be measured within one year.
- C. Solar panels will function reliably in remote conditions.
- D. Evening study is the primary bottleneck to literacy in these villages.

101. **Principle** When an unforeseen event after contract formation makes performance impossible or illegal, the contract is “frustrated” and both sides are excused. However, normal hardship or increased cost does not frustrate unless performance is strictly impossible (e.g. illegal).

Facts: Rural artisan Ravi agrees on January 1 to supply 500 handcrafted clay lamps to Urban Decor Ltd. (“UDL”) at ₹200 a lamp for its spring festival orders. UDL plans to sell them in Delhi from March 10. Ravi begins making 300 lamps by February, buys special dyes, and hires two assistants at his small village studio. On February 20, the local municipality unexpectedly bans sale and transfer

of all earthenware as a precaution against an environmental hazard—pending a 60-day scientific study. Ravi informs UDL that shipping would break the ban; UDL insists it must receive lamps for its marketing campaign regardless of legality. Meanwhile, Ravi’s assistants cannot be paid and his clay stock is wasted. UDL sues for breach; Ravi counters that the municipal order has made the contract impossible and illegal to perform. Which rule applies?

Under Indian law of frustration, what outcome follows?

- A. Ravi is excused—municipal ban makes export illegal and impossible, frustrating the contract entirely.
- B. Ravi remains liable—ban is local, UDL could arrange pick-up elsewhere, so performance wasn’t absolutely impossible.
- C. UDL must pay for the 300 completed lamps and recover rest from Ravi for partial performance.
- D. Both must renegotiate—court will order modification, not discharge, to preserve commercial purpose.

102. **Principle:** In a registered partnership, a new partner admitted with consent becomes bound by past liabilities only if the deed so provides or old partners expressly agree; otherwise, they share only future profits and debts.

Facts: “Chai & Chat” is a rapidly growing café partnership run by Alia and Bhaskar in Mumbai. Their partnership deed (registered in June 2024) silently omits any clause about future admissions. In December, they decide to admit Charu for ₹10 lakhs capital, promising her 25% share of profits and an equal vote in management. Without revising the deed, they orally agree among themselves that Charu will not assume any debts incurred before January 1. Unbeknownst to Charu, on December 20 a supplier delivered ₹3 lakhs of premium coffee beans to Chai & Chat on 30-day credit. The invoice is unpaid on January 25; the supplier sues Charu alongside Alia and Bhaskar. Charu insists she never consented to be liable for past debts.

On what basis will a court determine Charu’s liability for the December 20 debt?

- A. Charu is not liable—no deed amendment or express written consent bound her to past liabilities.
- B. Charu is fully liable—her admission and equal management vote implied acceptance of all partnership debts.
- C. Charu is liable only if the court finds she had actual knowledge of that specific ₹3 lakhs debt.
- D. Charu shares liabilities proportionally for any debts discoverable in a reasonable due-diligence before admission.

103. Principle: If one party in a stronger position (e.g., spiritual leader and devotee) abuses that influence to extract an agreement, the contract is voidable—meaning the weaker party can set it aside.

Facts: In rural Kerala, Devdas is a respected temple priest whose recommendations can secure land-grant approvals. Farmer Farah approaches him for help obtaining government permission to develop a kasavu-silk showroom on her family's ancestral plot. Over three meetings at the temple, Devdas suggests that "a token of my guidance"—a ₹50 lakhs loan agreement secured by the property—would demonstrate Farah's sincere devotion. Feeling morally obliged, Farah signs an agreement promising 12% interest and an absolute power of sale if she defaults. Two months later, when Farah has raised only ₹30 lakhs externally, Devdas threatens foreclosure unless she pays the full ₹50 lakhs at once. Farah claims the loan agreement is procured by undue influence.

Which result aligns with the doctrine of undue influence?

- A. The court will rescind the loan agreement entirely, restoring Farah's property and requiring Devdas to refund any payments.
- B. The court enforces the principal sum but reduces the interest rate, finding only the rate unconscionable, not the loan itself.
- C. The court upholds the agreement—religious guidance isn't "influence" under secular contract law.
- D. The court voids only the power-of-sale clause, preserving Farah's debt obligation but striking down the collateral term.

104. Principle: Partners owe each other highest good faith ("uberrimae fidei"); they must disclose material information affecting partnership business and cannot compete without consent. In the event they breach the same, a prohibitory injunction restraining further involvement from the activity in question is an appropriate remedy.

Facts: In Bengaluru, software engineers Ankit and Bina form "CodeStream LLP" in April 2024 to develop fintech apps. Their LLP agreement requires unanimous consent for any side business. In July, Bina quietly invests ₹20 lakhs in a rival start-up "PayWave" and signs a non-disclosure agreement to deliver fintech modules—directly competing with CodeStream. She neither tells Ankit nor obtains his consent. In November, CodeStream files a patent for their top-selling payments algorithm; Bina transfers critical code snippets from CodeStream's internal repo to PayWave under her NDA, allegedly to "help a friend." CodeStream discovers the breach and sues for injunction and damages.

What relief is most appropriate under partnership fiduciary principles?

- A. Rescission of the LLP agreement because Bina's breach voids the entire partnership for all partners.
- B. Specific performance compelling Bina to transfer her PayWave shares and reinvest them into CodeStream LLP.
- C. Injunction preventing Bina from further involvement with PayWave and accounting for all profits she gained from that venture.
- D. Limited damages for lost CodeStream sales only, without injunctive relief, as monetary compensation suffices.

105. Principle: In non-bailable offences, grant of bail lies in judicial discretion, guided by factors like prima facie evidence, seriousness of the offence, likelihood of tampering with evidence, and the accused's ties to the community.

Facts: Rohit Singh, a 28-year-old schoolteacher from rural Uttar Pradesh, is accused of grievous hurt under Section 325 IPC after an altercation with a local politician's driver. Late one evening, Rohit was returning home on his cycle when the driver's speeding SUV forced him off the road. Enraged, Rohit picked up a heavy rock and struck the SUV's windshield, causing glass shards to injure the driver. The driver waited in an adjoining village before filing an FIR at the nearest police outpost two days later, alleging Rohit intended to kill him. Meanwhile, Rohit's neighbours claim he's a respected teacher with no history of violence and has strong family responsibilities, including caring for an ailing mother. The local magistrate remanded him to jail without granting bail, citing the driver's serious head injuries and Rohit's alleged "violent propensity." Rohit applied for bail before the Sessions Court, emphasizing that the prima facie materials show self-defence and that he is unlikely to abscond. The Sessions Judge must decide whether to grant bail, balancing the offence's gravity against Rohit's community ties and the possibility he may tamper with evidence.

In light of Section 437 CrPC and the facts above, which is the most appropriate bail order?

- A. Grant bail on stringent conditions—Rohit must surrender his passport, report weekly to police, and not contact the driver.
- B. Deny bail—injuries are grievous, and prima facie case shows violent intention.
- C. Grant bail unconditionally—Rohit's community ties and lack of prior record outweigh offence seriousness.
- D. Grant bail on moderate conditions—Rohit to furnish personal bond with two sureties and avoid intimidation.

106. Principle: An act is “murder” if the offender intends to cause death or knows the act is so imminently dangerous that it must cause death or such bodily injury as likely to cause death.

Facts: In suburban Mumbai, Kavita Sharma, a single mother, learns her estranged husband, Vikram, intends to abduct their ten-year-old son to take him abroad. Late at night, Kavita confronts Vikram outside the apartment, brandishing a kitchen knife. A heated scuffle ensues when Vikram lunges to seize the child’s backpack. Kavita, in panic, stabs him twice in the abdomen. Vikram staggers toward the stairwell, bleeding heavily, and dies before reaching the ground floor. Witnesses dispute whether Kavita aimed at Vikram’s torso deliberately or merely sought to frighten him. Kavita surrenders herself immediately, claiming she intended only to scare him, not kill. The police record shows Kavita’s statements vary: at the scene she says “I wanted him to stay away,” later she admits “I saw red.” The Investigating Officer charges her under Section 300 IPC for murder. Kavita’s counsel argues she lacked the intent or knowledge necessary for murder and should face culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 299 IPC.

Which offence does Kavita most properly attract?

- A. Murder, since she used a lethal weapon knowing it likely to cause death.
- B. Culpable homicide not amounting to murder, because absence of intent to kill mitigates liability.
- C. House trespass with intent to commit offence, as she entered common area with a knife.
- D. Voluntarily causing hurt, because victim’s death was unintended.

107. Principle: Police may search premises without a warrant only if urgent circumstances make obtaining one impracticable; otherwise, searches require a magistrate’s warrant.

Facts: Delhi Police receive an anonymous tip that Meera Gupta, an IT professional, is storing large quantities of illegal prescription drugs in her urban apartment. An officer arrives late at night, sees Meera leaving her building carrying a box. Believing drugs may be inside, the officer forces entry into Meera’s apartment without a warrant, conducts a room-by-room search in her absence, and seizes several blister packs of controlled substances not in Meera’s name. Meera, on returning, demands to see any warrant; the officer refuses, claiming exigency to prevent danger to public. At trial, Meera moves to exclude the seized evidence, arguing that no imminent emergency existed, and the police could easily have sought a warrant from the magistrate within hours. The prosecution contends that the drugs’ potential harm justified immediate action.

Which is the correct legal position on admissibility of the seized drugs?

- A. Admissible, as public safety exigency justified the warrantless search to prevent imminent harm.
- B. Inadmissible, because no genuine emergency existed and police had time to obtain a warrant.
- C. Admissible, since drugs are inherently dangerous and exception applies regardless of timing.
- D. Inadmissible, unless Meera’s consent is later obtained in writing.

108. Principle: An act committed by a person incapable of understanding the nature of the act, or distinguishing right from wrong, due to involuntary intoxication, may excuse criminal liability if the intoxication was not self-induced.

Facts: In a remote Himachal Pradesh village, Rajan, a 55-year-old school principal with no prior criminal history, attends a traditional harvest festival where local brew (“chhang”) is served. Unbeknownst to him, an unscrupulous host spikes Rajan’s drink with a potent sedative. Later that evening, Rajan, in a stupor, wanders into the neighboring property and sets fire to a dry haystack, causing significant damage. Villagers awaken to flames and subdue Rajan before the blaze spreads. At trial, Rajan pleads that he was severely disoriented by involuntary intoxication and had no knowledge of his actions. The prosecution submits that he knowingly consumed local brew customary at festivals and must foresee potential risk.

Is Rajan criminally liable for arson?

- A. Yes, because he voluntarily drank the local brew and is responsible for consequences.
- B. No, because intoxication always exempts from liability under Indian law.
- C. Yes, but only for negligent damage, not arson, due to lack of intent.
- D. No, if he proves the sedative was involuntarily administered, meeting Section 85 IPC.

109. Principle: A private nuisance arises when a defendant intentionally or negligently creates a condition that unreasonably interferes with another’s use or enjoyment of land, taking into account the character of the locality, the nature and frequency of the interference, and any social utility of the defendant’s conduct.

Facts: Surjanpur’s farmland has relied on the Ganga canal for generations, but when UrbanTech Ltd. acquired its century-old tannery site in 2023, the company began nightly discharges of untreated chemical effluent into the canal. Although UrbanTech installed a free water-purification

unit downstream and touted its corporate-social-responsibility budget, farmers A and B awakened each morning to dead fish floating in irrigation channels, crops streaked with unnatural hues, and a pervasive, acrid stench. The village panchayat formally demanded cessation of the discharge, but UrbanTech insisted that the canal is a navigable waterway beyond local authority and continued dumping waste after midnight.

Can A and B obtain an injunction and damages for private nuisance?

- A. No—because UrbanTech’s CSR purifier downstream and nighttime schedule render the interference reasonable in an industrial context.
- B. No—unless statutory pollution thresholds are proven breached, mere odors and crop discoloration are insufficient for nuisance.
- C. Yes—UrbanTech’s persistent effluent release constitutes unreasonable interference with the farmers’ enjoyment of their land despite any CSR measures.
- D. Yes—but only if the court reclassifies the canal as a non-public watercourse to bring it under local jurisdiction.

110. Principle: An employer is vicariously liable for torts committed by employees acting in the course of their employment when the wrongful act is sufficiently connected to authorized duties, including minor deviations (“detours”) that further the employer’s business.

Facts: MetroRide, a Mumbai ride-hailing platform, recruits drivers as “gig workers” but mandates fares, routes, and insurance via its app. One evening, driver D, still logged into the app despite a brief GPS dropout, deviated from the digitally prescribed route to avoid traffic by taking a narrow alley not shown on the map. In that alley, D struck pedestrian P, causing serious injuries. MetroRide’s policy forbade detours, and the company argues it lost control once the app went dormant. Yet MetroRide continues collecting its commission on every journey and requires drivers to remain “available and insured” whenever logged in.

Is MetroRide vicariously liable for P’s injuries?

- A. Yes—because D’s shortcut, though off-map, furthered MetroRide’s business and remained within the scope of his gig-driving duties.
- B. No—D’s unauthorized alley detour was a frolic outside his employment, severing MetroRide’s vicarious liability.
- C. Yes—but only if evidence shows MetroRide tacitly endorsed unmonitored route changes to speed rides.
- D. No—labeling drivers “independent contractors” precludes employer liability for their on-duty torts.

111. Principle: The right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 encompasses a reasonable expectation of privacy; any state surveillance must be authorized by law, pursue a legitimate aim, and be proportionate and minimally intrusive.

Facts: The Delhi government’s “SafeCity” initiative installed facial-recognition cameras at every metro station gate, automatically matching commuter faces against a database of petty-crime suspects and tagging alerts for seven days. Student X, carrying a confidential LSAT draft, was flagged and tracked without notice or warrant. The scheme operates without any statutory framework, data-retention limits, independent oversight, or appeals mechanism. The High Court denied X interim relief, ruling that public transit areas carry no “intimate zone” of privacy. X now petitions the Supreme Court under Article 32 for an injunction and damages.

Should the Supreme Court grant X relief against the surveillance scheme?

- A. Yes—because mass facial recognition without legal authorization, retention safeguards, or oversight violates her reasonable privacy expectations.
- B. Yes—but only to impose data-retention limits; the general surveillance may continue for security.
- C. No—public metro hubs lack any privacy expectation, making CCTV monitoring lawful.
- D. No—X’s claimed academic harm is speculative and does not warrant injunctive relief.

112. Principle: Article 14 prohibits arbitrary state action by requiring that any legislative classification must be based on an intelligible differentia and bear a rational nexus to the statute’s objective.

Facts: Karnataka’s “Urban Artisan Act” reserves forty percent of street-vending permits in Bengaluru for artisans whose families have resided locally for at least five generations, while the remaining permits are distributed by lottery among all other skilled craftsmen, including recent migrants. M, born and trained in Bengaluru with top craftsmanship awards, is excluded solely because her parents migrated two decades ago. The state defends the rule as necessary to preserve local cultural heritage and prevent overcrowding. The High Court upheld the ancestry requirement; M appeals to the Supreme Court under Article 14.

Does the five-generation residency requirement violate the equality guarantee?

- A. Yes—ancestral lineage lacks any logical connection to individual artisan skill or cultural contribution, making the classification arbitrary.

B. No—the legislature may rationally prioritize deep-rooted local identity to protect heritage, so the law is valid.

C. Yes—but only the lottery scheme for non-locals, not the ancestry test, is arbitrary.

D. No—M qualifies as local by birthright, fulfilling the act's local-origin requirement.

113. **Principle:** Under the Trade Marks Act, 1999, infringement occurs when a later mark is deceptively similar to an earlier registered mark and is used in the course of trade in relation to goods or services identical or similar to those for which the earlier mark is registered, thereby causing a likelihood of confusion or association.

Facts: SweetHome Bakers, a family-run bakery in Kochi, registered its “SweetHome” word mark and a stylized house-shaped logo in 2015 for baked goods. Last year, national food conglomerate Golden Crust Ltd. launched a new product line under the mark “Sweet Home Foods” using a nearly identical house-logo and similar turquoise-and-white color scheme on packaging sold in Kerala supermarkets. Within months, SweetHome Bakers began receiving customer complaints that their artisanal loaves were being mistaken for Golden Crust's mass-produced breads. Despite SweetHome's objections, Golden Crust refused to change its mark, insisting there was no real confusion given the difference in font weight and that “sweet home” is a common phrase. SweetHome concerns that continued use of “Sweet Home Foods” will dilute its goodwill and intends to sue for infringement.

On these facts, can SweetHome Bakers successfully restrain Golden Crust Ltd. from using “Sweet Home Foods”?

A. Yes—because the marks are deceptively similar in appearance, sound, and idea, creating a likelihood of confusion among ordinary consumers.

B. No—because “sweet home” is a non-distinctive phrase and Golden Crust's thicker font distinguishes its packaging sufficiently.

C. Yes—but only if SweetHome proves actual instances of confusion leading to quantifiable loss of sales.

D. No—because Golden Crust's broader corporate reputation outweighs any local bakery's registered goodwill.

114. **Principle:** Under the Limitation Act, 1963, a person claiming adverse possession must prove that their possession of another's land was continuous, open, hostile (without the owner's consent), exclusive, and under a claim of right for at least twelve years.

Facts: On the outskirts of Jaipur, retired engineer Mr. Rao fenced in a two-meter-wide strip of unused municipal land adjacent to his backyard in 2009, built a paved pathway and a flowerbed there, and has since maintained it privately. Although the municipality cleared weeds twice—in 2012 and 2018—it never removed the fence or pathway. Neighbouring homeowners assumed the land belonged to Rao. Last month, the municipality notified Rao that the strip is public land slated for a bike path and demanded immediate removal of his installations. Rao asserts he has acquired title by adverse possession, pointing to uninterrupted maintenance and exclusion of others for over fourteen years. The municipality counters that its periodic clearance efforts show non-hostile use and that Rao never registered a formal claim.

Is Mr. Rao's adverse-possession claim likely to succeed?

A. Yes—because his uninterrupted, exclusive, and hostile possession for over twelve years meets all statutory requirements despite occasional municipal clearings.

B. No—because periodic clearances by the municipality break the continuity and indicate permissive tolerance rather than hostility.

C. Yes—but only if Rao can show formal notice to the municipality of his claim before the limitation period expired.

D. No—because adverse possession cannot be claimed against public (municipal) land under any circumstances.

115. **Principle:** Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, unfair trade practices include making false or misleading representations about the standard, quality, or performance of goods, and consumers are entitled to remedies such as replacement, refund, and compensation for deficiency in service or defective goods.

Facts: Nationwide e-retailer ShopEase advertised its new “AquaPure Ultra” water purifiers with a “30-day full-refund guarantee” prominently on its website. Customer Ms. Gupta ordered the unit, paid ₹15,000, and installed it. After 25 days, the purifier malfunctioned, producing discolored water. When Ms. Gupta requested a refund per the guarantee, ShopEase's customer-service team acknowledged the policy but then demanded a “diagnostic fee” of ₹2,500 before processing any return. Ms. Gupta refused to pay extra, so ShopEase canceled her refund request and offered only a paid repair. Ms. Gupta now files a complaint with the Consumer Forum seeking refund plus compensation for mental agony and litigation expenses.

What relief is Ms. Gupta entitled to under the Consumer Protection Act?

- A. A full refund of ₹15,000, compensation for mental agony, and reimbursement of any litigation costs, because the diagnostic-fee demand violates the advertised guarantee.
- B. Only a free repair under the original warranty, since ShopEase's internal policy overrides promotional guarantees.
- C. No relief—ShopEase's request for a diagnostic fee is a reasonable condition to verify the defect before issuing a refund.
- D. A partial refund after deduction of ₹2,500 for diagnostic services, as the offer was "subject to standard checks."

116. A startup's eight founding members—Anita (A), Bala (B), Chitra (C), Deepak (D), Ehsaan (E), Farida (F), Govind (G), and Harini (H)—sit around a round table facing the center. Seats are numbered 1–8 clockwise. The following conditions apply:

- 1. Anita sits at seat 1.
- 2. Bala and Chitra are consecutive, with Bala immediately clockwise of Chitra.
- 3. Deepak sits directly opposite Farida.
- 4. Ehsaan is two seats clockwise from Govind.
- 5. Harini sits between Anita and Ehsaan when going counter clockwise.
- 6. Neither Govind nor Bala sits adjacent to Deepak.
- 7. Farida occupies an even-numbered seat.

According to the seating arrangement, which founding member sits directly opposite Anita?

- A. Bala sits directly opposite Anita.
- B. Farida sits directly opposite Anita.
- C. Govind sits directly opposite Anita.
- D. Ehsaan sits directly opposite Anita.

117. Eight panelists—Leela (L), Manoj (M), Nisha (N), Omar (O), Priya (P), Qadir (Q), Rina (R), and Sameer (S)—are arranged around a circular stage facing inward. Positions are labeled A–H in clockwise order. The following rules apply:

- 1. Manoj sits at position A.
- 2. Rina sits three seats clockwise from Manoj.
- 3. Priya sits immediately counter clockwise of Rina.
- 4. Qadir sits directly opposite Manoj.
- 5. Qadir does not sit next to Manoj or Omar.
- 6. Nisha and Omar sit in consecutive seats.
- 7. Leela sits directly opposite Sameer.

Which panelist occupies position C?

- A. Nisha
- B. Omar
- C. Priya
- D. Sameer

118. A round-robin tournament's eight captains—Arun (A), Bhavna (B), Cyrus (C), Divya (D), Ebrahim (E), Fazal (F), Greta (G), and Hari (H)—sit around a circle facing the center. Chairs are marked 1–8 clockwise. The following conditions apply:

- 1. Arun sits at seat 1.
- 2. Divya sits two seats counter clockwise from Arun.
- 3. Bhavna and Cyrus sit adjacent, with Cyrus immediately counter clockwise of Bhavna.
- 4. Ebrahim sits directly opposite Greta.
- 5. Fazal sits immediately clockwise of Ebrahim.
- 6. Hari sits at seat 8.
- 7. Bhavna's seat number is odd.

Which captain occupies seat 4?

- A. Bhavna
- B. Cyrus
- C. Ebrahim
- D. Fazal

120. Eight researchers—Karthik (K), Leena (L), Manish (M), Nidhi (N), Ojas (O), Pallavi (P), Qasim (Q), and Ritu (R)—stand in a row facing a whiteboard. Seats are numbered 1–8 from left to right.

- 1. Manish stands immediately to the right of Karthik.
- 2. Nidhi occupies an even-numbered seat but not seat 8.
- 3. Ojas stands three seats to the right of Leena.
- 4. Ritu stands immediately to the left of Nidhi.
- 5. Pallavi sits between Qasim and Ritu (in either order).
- 6. Qasim does not stand next to Manish.
- 7. Karthik does not occupy seat 1 or seat 8.

Which researcher occupies seat 6?

- A. Qasim occupies seat 6.
- B. Ritu occupies seat 6.
- C. Karthik occupies seat 6.
- D. Nidhi occupies seat 6.

121. Six guests—Ayesha (A), Bilal (B), Chetan (C), Divya (D), Ethan (E), and Farah (F)—stand facing south in a single line for a group photo. B, C and E are the male individuals in this line. Positions are 1 (front) to 6 (back). Conditions:

- 1. Foreign-guest Ethan stands immediately behind Chetan.
- 2. Ayesha is not at either end.
- 3. Bilal stands somewhere in front of Divya.
- 4. Exactly two people stand between Divya and Farah.
- 5. Chetan does not stand next to Ayesha.
- 6. The frontmost and rearmost positions are occupied by one male (M) and one female (F), respectively

Which pair of guests must stand immediately next to each other in every valid lineup satisfying the given conditions?

- A. Ayesha and Bilal
- B. Bilal and Ethan
- C. Divya and Farah
- D. Chetan and Ayesha

122. Five startups—X, Y, Z, P, Q—are each assigned a unique investor (Apex, Bridge, Crest, Delta, Edge) and a distinct funding round (Seed → Series A → Series B → Series C → IPO) in a 5×5 grid. The following clues apply:

1. X received Series C from Apex.
2. P is funded by Bridge at the Seed round.
3. Y's investment round is immediately after P's round, and Y is funded by Crest.
4. Edge's investment occurs exactly two stages before IPO.
5. Delta funds Q at the IPO round.
6. Bridge does not invest at IPO (already at Seed) and invests only in P.
7. No investor handles more than one startup.

Which investor provides funding for startup P, and what is P's funding round?

- A. Apex funds P at the Seed round.
- B. Bridge funds P at the Seed round.
- C. Crest funds P at the Seed round.
- D. Delta funds P at the Seed round.

123. Six offices—Alpha (AL), Beta (BE), Gamma (GA), Delta (DE), Epsilon (EP), Zeta (ZE)—each handle a distinct product category (Electronics, Apparel, Cosmetics, Toys, Books, Sports) and a unique shift (Morning, Midday, Afternoon, Evening, Night, Rotational).

Clues:

1. Beta handles Electronics on the Afternoon shift.
2. The Toys office works one shift after Apparel's office.
3. Gamma's shift is three steps before the Night shift.
4. Epsilon handles Books but not at Morning or Night.
5. Rotational shift is managed by the office that handles Cosmetics.
6. Alpha's shift is earlier than Delta's but later than Zeta's.
7. The Sports office works at the Midday shift.

Which office cannot possibly handle Apparel?

- A. Delta
- B. Beta
- C. Gamma
- D. Epsilon

124. Five professors—Adams (A), Brown (B), Clarke (C), Davies (D), and Evans (E)—each teach a different subject (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Literature, and History) in one of five consecutive hourly slots (9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 12 PM, 1 PM).

1. The Biology lecture is at 9 AM.
2. Adams teaches at 11 AM.
3. Brown teaches Physics and does so immediately before the Chemistry lecture.
4. The Literature class is scheduled immediately after the Chemistry class.
5. Evans does not teach Biology or Physics.
6. History is scheduled at 1 PM.

Which professor teaches Chemistry?

- A. Adams
- B. Brown
- C. Clarke
- D. Evans

125. Darshan is planning a 6-day study schedule using subjects M, N, O, P, Q, and R, one per day (Day 1→Day 6).

1. M and O must not be on consecutive days.
2. N must be scheduled exactly two days after P.
3. Q cannot occupy Day 1 or Day 6.
4. R must immediately follow M.
5. The schedule must begin with P.

Which of the following is a valid 6-day schedule?

- A. P, Q, N, M, R, O
- B. P, O, N, M, R, Q
- C. P, Q, N, O, M, R
- D. P, Q, N, R, M, O

126. Eisha must assign five tasks—T, U, V, W, X—to time slots 1–5 in her day.

1. T must occupy slot 3.
2. V must immediately precede X.
3. Either U or V must occupy slot 1.
4. W must not occupy slot 5.
5. U and X cannot occupy consecutive slots.

Which of the following complete task-slot orders is valid?

- A. V, X, T, W, U
- B. V, X, T, U, W
- C. U, V, T, W, X
- D. U, V, T, X, W

127. A chef plans a 5-day menu using five distinct dishes—Salad (S), Soup (U), Pasta (P), Curry (C), and Dessert (D)—one per day.

These rules apply:

1. D must come immediately after S.
2. P and C cannot be served on consecutive days.
3. U cannot be served on Day 1 or Day 5.
4. S must be served on Day 1 or Day 2.
5. C must be served on Day 3.

Which of the following full five-day menus is valid?

- A. S – U – C – P – D
- B. U – S – C – D – P
- C. S – P – C – U – D
- D. S – D – C – U – P

128. Statements:

Young adults spend most of their free time on social media platforms, averaging four hours daily. Surveys indicate rising rates of reported loneliness and anxiety among the same demographic over the past five years.

Conclusions:

- I. If young adults stop using social media, their loneliness will disappear.
- II. Increased social media usage correlates with higher loneliness rates among young adults.

Which conclusion(s) can be properly inferred?

- a) Only I follows
- b) Only II follows
- c) Both I and II follow
- d) Neither I nor II follows

129. Electric vehicle (EV) registrations in City A rose by 200% last year, from 10,000 to 30,000. Over the same period, public charging stations increased by only 20%, from 50 to 60 stations.

Conclusions:

- I. The demand for home charging solutions has surged.
- II. Public charging infrastructure failed to keep pace with EV growth.

Which conclusion(s) can be properly inferred?

- a) Only I follows
- b) Only II follows
- c) Both I and II follow
- d) Neither I nor II follows

130. A health survey in Village X reports that 70% of residents drink untreated well water, yet only 15% report waterborne illnesses annually.

Conclusions:

- I. Untreated well water is safe for most villagers.
- II. The majority of villagers avoid waterborne illnesses despite drinking untreated water.

Which conclusion(s) can be properly inferred?

- a) Only I follows
- b) Only II follows
- c) Both I and II follow
- d) Neither I nor II follows

131. **Statements:** Company A's sales volume fell 10% after a price increase. Simultaneously, Company B's market share rose by 5%.

Conclusions:

- I. Price-sensitive customers switched from Company A to Company B.
- II. Price increases always lead to lower sales volume.

Which conclusion(s) can be properly inferred?

- a) Only I follows b) Only II follows
- c) Both I and II follow d) Neither I nor II follows

132. Remote workers in Survey X log 20% more work hours than office-based staff and report 15% higher job satisfaction scores.

Conclusions:

- I. Working remotely causes higher job satisfaction.
- II. Higher job satisfaction motivates remote employees to work longer hours.

Which conclusion(s) can be properly inferred?

- a) Only I follows b) Only II follows
- c) Both I and II follow d) Neither I nor II follows

133. A national park capped daily visitor permits at 2,000, down from an average 3,500 per day. Six months later, measured trail erosion incidents fell by 60%, from 50 to 20 per month, and average trail congestion dropped from 50 to 20 people per kilometer. No other conservation measures were introduced in that interval. Which conclusion is best supported?

- A. The permit system reduced both visitor numbers and trail erosion.
- B. Trail erosion would have decreased even without visitor limits.
- C. Visitor satisfaction is higher because of fewer people on trails.
- D. Removing the permit system would increase congestion but not erosion.

134. **Premises:** The city's Department of Transportation (DOT) reports that, despite a recent campaign promoting cycling, its bike-share program averages only two check-outs per station per day. A commuter survey reveals that 75% of respondents live within 500 m of an existing station yet cite "lack of convenient station access" as the greatest obstacle to using bike-share. The DOT proposes installing new stations so that no resident is farther than 250 m from a dock. The analysis does not address bike-pricing, helmet availability, or traffic-safety concerns. Which one of the following is an assumption required by the DOT's proposal to increase ridership through denser station placement?

- A. Station proximity has a greater impact on ridership than the number of available bikes per station
- B. The DOT has sufficient budget to install and maintain the additional stations.
- C. Commuters will choose bike-share primarily based on station proximity rather than factors including cost or safety.
- D. All commuters currently interested in cycling live within 250 m of a station after expansion.

135. **Premises:** A streaming service plans to add interactive polls mid-episode, expecting a 20% increase in watch time from the current 25 minutes average. A small internal test showed a rise to 26 minutes among 1% of viewers. Which fact would most strengthen the service's projection?

- A. A three-month pilot across 15% of users produced a 22% watch-time increase with polls.
- B. Competing platforms without interactivity saw a 10% watch-time decline.
- C. Production costs for interactive content are 20% higher than standard content.
- D. User surveys rank content quality above interactive features as the primary viewing factor.

136. **Premises:** An airline claims its new fuel-efficient fleet will cut per-flight fuel costs by 30%, enabling a 20% fare reduction and thereby boosting passenger loads by 25%.

Which fact most seriously weakens the airline's forecast?

- A. Fuel costs constitute only 15% of total operating expenses.
- B. Fuel prices are expected to drop by 5% next year.
- C. Competitors will introduce similar fuel-efficient planes simultaneously.
- D. Passenger surveys rank schedule convenience above fare price.

137. **Observation:** A luxury resort's occupancy dropped 30% during a season when regional tourism increased 15% and average hotel rates rose 10%.

Which explanation best resolves this paradox?

- A. The resort raised its room rates by 40% to maintain exclusivity.
- B. A new budget hotel opened nearby offering rates 50% lower.
- C. Transportation strikes limited access to the resort.
- D. Tourists shifted toward shorter stays at boutique Airbnbs.

138. **Premises:** A five-year observational study of 100 towns controlled for population size and income level: towns with comprehensive curbside recycling programs had 40% lower residential landfill waste per household than towns without such programs. No other waste policies differed significantly between the two groups.

Which conclusion is best supported?

- A. Recycling programs cause a 40% reduction in household waste.
- B. Towns choosing recycling programs are inherently more eco-friendly.
- C. There is a strong association between recycling programs and lower waste.
- D. Implementing recycling will always yield the same reduction in any town.

139. A school district proposes adding one hour to the school day, arguing that more instructional time will improve student test scores, which have plateaued over the past five years.

Which assumption underlies the district's argument?

- A. Teachers can effectively use the extra hour for academic instruction.
- B. Parental involvement will increase to support longer days.
- C. All students need more time rather than improved teaching methods.
- D. Standardized tests reflect student learning gains accurately.

140. A nonprofit asserts that installing free high-speed internet in rural communities will foster new small-business startups and economic growth.

Which fact would most strengthen this assertion?

- A. In regions with new internet access, registered small businesses increased by 50% in three years.
- B. Internet equipment costs are fully subsidized by the government.
- C. Urban areas with high-speed internet also have high startup rates.
- D. Some rural communities lack reliable electricity.

141. A coffee chain argues that its "single-origin beans" justify a 25% price premium, asserting customers pay for bean provenance more than brand or convenience.

Which fact most seriously weakens this argument?

- A. Single-origin beans cost only 5% more at the wholesale level
- B. Surveys show 70% of customers rank convenience and price above provenance.
- C. Competitor chains' single-origin blends sell at identical prices.
- D. The chain's loyalty program offers free drinks after ten purchases.

142. After opening a new express bypass, City Z's average commute time fell by 12 minutes, yet total vehicle miles traveled within city limits rose by 15%.

Which explanation best resolves the paradox?

- A. Public transit usage doubled, offsetting longer suburban commutes.
- B. Rising fuel prices forced commuters to combine multiple errands per trip.
- C. Many commuters shifted to the bypass for through-traffic, reducing inner-city congestion and enabling more local trips.
- D. City-wide speed limits were increased across all roads.

143. A longitudinal study across 120 firms found those that instituted flexible work schedules experienced 30% lower annual employee turnover compared to those with fixed schedules, after controlling for company size and industry.

Which conclusion is most defensible?

- A. Flexible schedules cause lower turnover.
- B. Lower turnover leads companies to adopt flexible schedules.
- C. There is a strong association between flexible schedules and reduced turnover.
- D. Flexible schedules increase job satisfaction in all cases.

144. In the series 3, 12, 60, 360, 2520, ... what is the 7th term of this series?

- A. 18,144
- B. 181,440
- C. 1,814,400
- D. 18,144,000

145. Consider the following movements starting from point P:

- Line 1: From P, A walks 5 km north to point Q.
- Line 2: At Q, he turns right and walks 3 km to point R.
- Line 3: At R, he turns right and walks 2 km to point S.
- Line 4: At S, he turns left and walks 4 km to point T.

In which direction is T from P?

- A. North
- B. South
- C. East
- D. North-East

146. While looking at old photographs, Rahul came across a photo and pointing towards a boy in it, Rahul said, "He is the only son of the only daughter of my father." How is Rahul related to that boy?

- A. Mother
- B. Sister
- C. Uncle
- D. Grandfather

147. Consider the following conditions and answer the following questions:

- Line 1: M is the brother of N.
- Line 2: N is married to O.
- Line 3: O is the mother of P.
- Line 4: Q is the sister of M.
- Line 5: P has a daughter R.

How is R related to N?

- A. R is N's granddaughter.
- B. R is N's niece.
- C. R is N's daughter.
- D. R is N's great-granddaughter.

148. If EASY corresponds to FBTZ, which original word corresponds to the code 'UJNF'?

- A. The code 'UJNF' represents the word TIDE.
- B. The code 'UJNF' represents the word TINE.
- C. The code 'UJNF' represents the word TIME.
- D. The code 'UJNF' represents the word TILE.

149. If PLAY corresponds to NJYW, which original word corresponds to the code 'FMSP'?

- A. The code 'FMSP' represents the word TOUR.
- B. The code 'FMSP' represents the word HOUR.
- C. The code 'FMSP' represents the word SOUR.
- D. The code 'FMSP' represents the word YOUR.

150. If HELLO corresponds to SVOOL, which original word corresponds to the code 'XWLV'?

- A. The code 'XWLV' represents the word CORD.
- B. The code 'XWLV' represents the word CORE.
- C. The code 'XWLV' represents the word COVE.
- D. The code 'XWLV' represents the word CODE.

ENGLISH

Passage 1:

1. Answer: A (Difficulty: Medium)

The passage repeatedly emphasises the author's newfound respect and admiration for farmers after taking up farming himself: phrases like "my respect for the Indian farmer has gone up many notches" and recounting the manifold challenges—weather, pests, labour shortages—convey deep appreciation.

Option A directly captures this sentiment.

B (frustration with the ETF) is too narrow; while the author mentions frustration, it's in the context of recurring elephant raids, not the overall tone.

C (indifference) contradicts the author's active engagement and emotional investment in farming hardships.

D (skepticism about nature's role) runs counter to the author's assertion that "nature seems to conspire in mysterious ways to reward your good intentions," which is an expression of belief in positive natural reciprocation rather than skepticism.

2. Answer: C (Difficulty: Medium)

"Depredations" refers to the violent destruction or plundering committed by the elephants.

A (celebrations and festivities) is the opposite of damage.

B (explorations and adventures) suggests a benign journey, not harmful incursions.

D (subtle harassments) understates the level of damage ("destroy more than what they eat") described.

3. Answer: D (Difficulty: Easy)

"Recalcitrant" describes elephants that refuse to obey or be controlled—i.e., unmanageable.

A (submissive) and B (cooperative) both imply willing compliance, which is contrary to the text.

C (docile) means easily managed, the exact opposite of "recalcitrant."

4. Answer: B (Difficulty: Easy)

"Vagaries" are unpredictable or erratic changes (in weather). Its antonym is "predictability."

A (irregularities), C (caprices), and D (fluctuations) are all synonyms or closely related to "vagaries," not opposites.

5. Answer: A (Difficulty: Hard)

The relationship "tranquillise : sedate" is that tranquillising someone is to sedate them. Similarly, "enervate : weaken" is the action-to-result relationship—enervate means to weaken.

B (elevate : stimulate) pairs elevation with stimulation, a different nuance (uplift vs. energise).

C (aggravate : worsen) is close but "aggravate" often means to irritate rather than directly worsen a condition.

D (mitigate : intensify) is the reverse relationship—mitigate means to lessen, not intensify.

6. Answer: D (Difficulty: Medium)

The sentence is grammatically correct as written. Each word functions properly:

A ("perhaps" vs. "maybe") is a stylistic choice, not an error.

B ("caller" vs. "calling") misunderstands the noun "caller" (one who calls).

C ("persistent" vs. "persistently") would change meaning: "persistent caller" (noun phrase) is correct.

7. Answer: C (Difficulty: Easy)

The phrase personifies nature as an ally that responds to "good intentions" with rewards.

A (strict schedules) is not mentioned or implied.

B (government support) has no basis in this line's context.

D (elephants deterred) misreads the line: it's about nature broadly, not elephant behavior specifically.

Passage 2:

8. Answer: C – Difficulty: Hard

The boys' frantic cries and frantic scrambling around Flashman immediately after he falls signal genuine alarm rather than opportunism or disbelief. The narrative emphasis on Tom being "scared out of his wits" and East sharing that fright underscores genuine panic.

A is incorrect because Tom's reaction isn't to exploit but to summon help urgently.

B misreads Diggs's tone—his "Not he" retort shows skepticism, not indifference.

D suggests Flashman routinely exaggerates—but here the narrator shows the boys truly believed he was dying, not that they doubted him.

9. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

“Relentless” describes someone who does not ease up in effort or pressure. Here, Diggs shows no mercy or hesitation in his treatment of Flashman.

A is opposite in tone—nothing in the passage shows remorse.

B “sudden” fails to capture the unyielding, ongoing sense implied.

C “calm and composed” suggests restraint; Diggs is harsh and persistent, not serene.

10. Answer: B – Difficulty: Medium

“Sprang to their legs” is a dynamic way of saying “stood up.” Similarly, “bathe their wounds” is an active form of “wash injuries,” matching the structure action : result.

A “crooked his leg : grappled” mixes an action with an intended secondary result, not a straightforward synonym pairing.

C “caught by the throat : choked” changes subject and result relationship.

D “made off upstairs : descended” is contradictory rather than equivalent.

11. Answer: A – Difficulty: Hard

“Surly” means bad-tempered, brusque, and unfriendly—exactly “ill-tempered and gruff.”

B “jovial and friendly” is the direct opposite.

C “hesitant and unsure” describes indecision, not irritability.

D “sorrowful and regretful” suggests sadness, not antagonism.

12. Answer: C – Difficulty: Medium

“Through with” is the idiomatically precise way to indicate completion or finality—“we’re through with our old friend Flashey” reads as standard English, whereas “done with” is informal.

Option A merely swaps synonymous adverbs (“too” vs. “as well”) without addressing a grammatical issue.

Option B awkwardly shifts the tense to a past perfect conditional (“had finished”), which alters the meaning.

Option D overlooks the subtle idiomatic improvement that C provides.

13. Answer: D – Difficulty: Hard

The author clearly disapproves of Flashman’s post-fight behavior—using spite and rumour to harm reputations. Phrases like “spiteful heart” and “venomous tongue” convey moral censure.

A is wrong because there is no praise for Flashman’s exit. B misstates the tone; the author doesn’t shrug off Flashman’s malice but condemns it. C would require admiration for cunning; instead, the narrative criticizes his underhanded tactics.

14. Answer: B – Difficulty: Easy

Tom’s surprised “Is it though?” upon being told his collar is soaked with blood shows he was oblivious to his own injury until Diggs pointed it out.

A would show alarm, but Tom’s tone is mild surprise, not horror.

C would require a resentful retort, which doesn’t occur.

D would suggest eagerness, but Tom immediately goes to tend his wound rather than dash off.

Passage 3:

15. Answer: A – Difficulty: Easy

The passage recounts the author’s evolving journey from ignorance of Kerala traditions to active participation in Onam celebrations, including cooking the sadya at home. Every paragraph emphasizes newfound appreciation—whether for Neipayasam, pookalam, or cooking avial—underscoring celebration and cultural bonding.

B (critique of authenticity) is incorrect because the author never questions the genuineness of the festival; rather, they embrace it wholeheartedly.

C (analyze origins of Onam) is incorrect; there is no discussion of Onam’s historical or mythological background.

D (compare regional cuisines) is incorrect; while multiple dishes are mentioned, the passage does not rank or compare them comparatively but highlights what the author has come to enjoy.

16. Answer: A – Difficulty: Medium

In the sentence “whether I bonded with my Malayali friends first ... or if it is my love for their food ... is really immaterial,” the author means that it makes no real difference—i.e., it is irrelevant or unimportant to determine which came first.

B (composed of fine, ethereal substance) misreads the metaphorical use; nothing in the context implies a physical texture.

C (limiting or restrictive) contradicts the sense of insignificance conveyed by “immaterial.”

D (carrying strong influence) is the opposite of the intended meaning; the author insists the sequence has no bearing, not that it wields influence.

17. Answer: C – Difficulty: Hard

The analogy Sadya : Onam :: turkey : Thanksgiving maps the central celebratory meal (sadya) to its festival as turkey is to Thanksgiving feast. Both sadya and turkey serve as canonical, defining dishes of their respective celebrations. A (Christmas celebrations): While turkey may appear at Christmas dinner in some cultures, it is not the signature dish in the same way.

B (Easter meals): Turkey is not emblematic of Easter.
D (Valentine's Day gifts): Valentine's Day traditions center on chocolates and flowers, not turkey, making this option irrelevant to the festival–dish relationship.

18. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

The sentence “I think the last point trumps the other two” is grammatically correct as written. “Trumps” here functions properly in the present tense to indicate superiority in argument.

A (“had trumped”): Changes the tense to past perfect unnecessarily, altering the intended meaning of an ongoing preference.

B (“trumps over”): The verb “trump” does not require “over”; “trump” alone conveys the comparative sense.

C (“trumps on”): Incorrect preposition usage; “trump on” is unidiomatic.

19. Answer: A – Difficulty: Medium

By linking food, festivals, and bonding, the author implies that enjoying a meal together at a festival strengthens interpersonal relationships. The parallel structure (“food and festivals ... festivals and bonding”) conveys that one naturally leads to the other.

B (food is sole element): Overstates the point; the author speaks of bonding and shared experience, not food as the only component.

C (bonding more important than celebration): Reverses the relationship; the passage presents them as synergistic, not ranking one above the other.

D (festivals lose meaning without crowds): There is no discussion of crowd size or external validation; focus remains on personal bonds.

20. Answer: C – Difficulty: Hard

The author recalls a “dark brown, sweet, and sticky prasad” from their Malayali neighbour's Ayyappan Puja, later identifying it as Neipayasam. This rice-based sweet pudding matches the description of a viscous, grain-infused dessert.

A (unniappam): Though a sweet rice-based snack, unniappam are small, fried dumplings rather than a pudding.

B (pazham pori): Banana fritters are golden and crisp, not dark brown and sticky.

D (avial): A savory mixed-vegetable dish, not sweet or sticky.

21. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

The author repeatedly expresses joy—“I am just happy to celebrate Onam,” “cook to my heart's content,” “sleep with a full tummy”—revealing genuine enthusiasm for both the cooking process and the festival itself.

A (apathetic): Directly contradicted by the author's eagerness to learn recipes and host sadya.

B (skeptical): There is no doubt or questioning of the traditions; the tone is celebratory.

C (annoyed): No frustration with preparations is expressed; the author embraces the complexity as part of the joy.

Passage 4:

22. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

Farquhar is portrayed as a planter “at heart a soldier,” “chafed under the inglorious restraint,” and “longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction.” These phrases make it unmistakably clear that his primary motivation is the personal thrill and honor he expects from soldiering.

A is incorrect because there is no resentment of planters; he is himself a planter and politician.

B misreads his loyalty—he ardently supports the Confederacy rather than seeking to undermine it.

C is too narrow—while family honor may play a role, the text stresses his personal yearning for military glory over economic considerations.

23. Answer: C – Difficulty: Medium

“Imperious” means commanding, urgent, or domineering, capturing the sense of circumstances that are irresistibly pressing upon him. The context of “circumstances of an imperious nature ... had prevented him from taking service” shows that external constraints were forceful and demanding.

A “timid and unassertive” is the opposite of domineering.

B “humble and deferential” contradicts the sense of an overbearing force.

D “uncertain and hesitant” fails to capture the compelling, almost dictatorial sense of “imperious.”

24. Answer: B – Difficulty: Hard

While “inglorious” literally means “not bringing glory,” in context Farquhar feels constrained by a refusal to earn battlefield honor. Thus, it signifies “dishonorable but accompanied by a desire for distinction”—the restraint is unglorious precisely because it denies him heroic action.

A “shameful and dishonorable” overstates—there is no suggestion the restraint itself is morally shameful.

C “excellent and commendable” is the direct opposite of unglorious.

D “ostentatious and showy” misinterprets the term entirely; “inglorious” has nothing to do with display.

25. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

The soldier's return northward and revelation as a Federal scout expose that he was using the civilian guise to feed Farquhar precisely the information needed to lure him into sabotaging Owl Creek bridge. Farquhar's own eagerness and lack of suspicion made him vulnerable to this enemy stratagem.

A is incorrect because Mrs. Farquhar's hospitality is irrelevant—he drank water but did not gain tactical advantage from her directly.

B is too specific; while he did mislead Farquhar about the ease of interference, the key implication is Farquhar's gullibility rather than deliberate exaggeration alone.

C wrongly implies a broader conspiracy among residents, which the passage does not suggest; the ruse is the soldier's alone.

26. Answer: A – Difficulty: Medium

The sentence, though lengthy, is grammatically correct. Each clause—contrasting humble service and perilous adventure—is parallel, and the modifiers (“in good faith and without too much qualification”) correctly precede the verb phrase.

B “to aid the South” would be a style change but not strictly necessary; “in the aid of” is acceptable.

C rearranges phrase order without correcting an actual error.

D “at least part of” vs. “a part of” is a subtle stylistic choice, not a grammatical necessity.

27. Answer: B – Difficulty: Hard

The narrative employs mildly ironic language—calling the dictum “frankly villainous” and detailing Farquhar's naive hunger for action—highlighting his grand ambitions while foreshadowing his downfall. The tone is neither wholly approving nor neutral but subtly critiquing his misplaced zeal.

A is incorrect because there is evaluative language (e.g., “villainous dictum”) that suggests ironic distance.

C is wrong; the author's choice of words indicates judgment rather than mere reporting.

D goes too far; the passage does not condemn secession outright but pokes mild fun at Farquhar's vulnerability to his own romantic ideals.

28. Answer: C – Difficulty: Easy

The line draws a universal parallel: just as opportunities for military glory are inevitable in wartime, so Farquhar believes his chance will arrive. It emphasizes the evenhanded allure of combat for anyone craving distinction, not just him personally.

A is close but misses the nuance of personal yearning—it's not inevitability alone but the shared craving for glory.

B is incorrect because Farquhar is presented as typical rather than uniquely impatient.

D reverses the implied comparison; the sentence highlights allure, not security.

Passage 5:

29. Answer: A – Difficulty: Easy

The passage explicitly flags two “worrying portents”: first, the farm sector “lost momentum due to an unhelpful monsoon,” and second, “private consumption spends rose at less than half the economy's pace,” with PFCE growth of just 4%, the weakest outside the COVID year. This dual concern underpins the argument that a normal monsoon and stronger consumption are vital to sustain growth.

B is incorrect because the passage does not discuss infrastructure investment or FDI declines at all.

C is incorrect; while oil prices and import bills are mentioned later, the central concerns are farm and consumption growth, not fiscal or trade deficits.

D is wrong since non-performing assets and credit conditions are not part of the analysis.

30. Answer: B – Difficulty: Medium

In “virtuous cycle of more investments leading to more jobs and higher consumption,” “virtuous” denotes a self-reinforcing positive loop: beneficial outcomes that encourage further gains. The author is not making a moral or religious claim but describing an economic feedback mechanism.

A is incorrect because the usage is metaphorical, not an ethical or religious statement.

C “rare and difficult to achieve” misreads the focus on positive feedback rather than rarity.

D “superficial and symbolic” is the opposite; the cycle is substantive and impactful.

31. Answer: C – Difficulty: Hard

A “K-shaped consumption pattern” in economic parlance refers to divergent trajectories among different segments. Here, the author notes “higher-end goods and services seeing greater offtake than the rest,” meaning some consumption categories recover strongly while others lag—depicting a K's diverging arms.

A describes divergence but incorrectly emphasizes rural vs. non-rural; the passage specifies “higher-end” versus “the rest,” not rural vs. urban.

B is wrong because a uniform K-shape rise and plateau isn't referenced.

D is incorrect since there is no cyclical up-and-down pattern suggested; rather, it's a split recovery.

32. Answer: D – Difficulty: Medium

“Fatigue” here means weakening or slowing down of urban demand. Its antonym is “vigor,” indicating strength and sustained energy in spending.

A “stagnation” is similar in meaning to fatigue, not opposite.

B “moderation” implies measured pace but does not convey the opposite of exhaustion.

C “persistence” suggests continued but not necessarily vigorous activity; “vigor” best captures the antonym.

33. Answer: A – Difficulty: Easy

The analogy draws a parallel: a poor monsoon undermines rural consumption just as high interest rates hamper urban spending. Both are macro-conditions that temper demand in their respective domains.

B is incorrect in this context because while interest rates affect investment, the passage explicitly links them to urban demand, not private investment.

C is wrong as global oil prices are a separate variable, not an effect of rates.

D misplaces the effect: industrial capacity utilisation is influenced by consumption and investment, not directly equated with interest rates in the passage.

34. Answer: B – Difficulty: Hard

The proper preposition for embedded charges is “in,” not “into.” Thus, the sentence should read “levies embedded in retail fuel prices.”

A is incorrect because there is a prepositional error.

C adding “the” before “reduced costs” is stylistic but not necessary for clarity.

D “pass through” vs. “passing through” involves voice and style, but the critical grammatical error is the preposition.

35. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

By advocating a “substantive fuel price cut” rather than a mere token reduction (two rupees a litre), the author implies that only a meaningful, broad measure will materially support consumption across urban and rural India and thus bolster growth.

A overstates the focus by singling out both segments; while true in spirit, it lacks the emphasis on meaningful relief.

B misreads the proposal as targeted solely at rural consumers, which the passage does not suggest.

C contradicts the author’s argument that token cuts are insufficient; he calls for more than a symbolic gesture.

Passage 6:

36. Answer: C – Difficulty: Easy

The passage lampoons the fawning crowds of businessmen and politicians—Mr. Bonney and his committee—who jockey for position, bow excessively, and cluster around Sir Matthew Pupker and the MPs to curry favor for the crumpet company’s petition. This is classic satire of self-interest and sycophancy in public life.

A is incorrect because the humor is not focused on billboard size but on the pandering behavior.

B is wrong; there is no genuine praise or critique of meeting protocols—only mockery of the attendees’ conduct.

D misses the point entirely; there is no commentary on architecture or décor.

37. Answer: D – Difficulty: Medium

“Propriety” here refers to whether petitioning Parliament would be appropriate or fitting, not its legality or popularity. The committee debates if it suits their purpose and dignity.

A (“legality”) is incorrect; nothing suggests they question the lawfulness of the petition.

B (“timeliness”) misreads the focus on correctness of action rather than its speed.

C (“popularity”) is off-base; the passage says nothing about public opinion polls or approval ratings.

38. Answer: B – Difficulty: Hard

“Approbation” means warm approval or praise—exactly how the newcomers are received.

A (“reproach and criticism”) is the direct opposite of praise.

C (“indifference and neutrality”) implies no strong emotion, which contradicts “universal approbation.”

D (“surprise and bewilderment”) doesn’t convey positive reception; it suggests confusion.

39. Answer: A – Difficulty: Easy

A knock on the table is a clear call for attention; likewise, a whistle traditionally signals the start of an event (e.g., race, game). Both are concise auditory cues to focus the crowd.

B (“bring people together”) is too vague; the analogy focuses on signaling, not gathering.

C (“honor distinguished guests”) is ceremonial, not functionally parallel to capturing attention.

D (“conceal confidential information”) is completely unrelated to a public signal.

40. Answer: B – Difficulty: Medium

A wink during government pronouncements suggests secret understanding or complicity, indicating back-room support for the company's cause.

A ("uniformly transparent") is the opposite; winking implies concealment, not openness.

C ("literal wink as consent") is absurd; parliamentary procedures are not literally signaled by winks.

D ("reluctant to express true intentions") misses the nuance of active, conspiratorial signaling.

41. Answer: A – Difficulty: Hard

The idiomatic phrase is "a press of papers," referring to multiple sheets. Using the singular "paper" is incorrect when describing men carrying dozens of announcements.

B ("tackling") alters meaning; "tacking" here—like sailors changing direction—is metaphorically correct for men weaving through traffic.

C suggests adding an article where none is needed; "across the road" is complete as is.

D ignores the subtle but significant mismatched number in the phrase.

42. Answer: D – Difficulty: Easy

The description of lingering, smiling, and rubbing hands in hopes of "something turning up" perfectly captures obsequious sycophancy—courting favor rather than serving public interest.

A ("genuinely enthusiastic about public service") misreads the self-serving motive.

B ("methodically debating merits") contradicts the aimless fawning behavior.

C ("earnestly concerned with public good") is false; the men are primarily seeking personal notice, not the common welfare.

Passage 7:

43. B (Easy)

The passage meticulously examines Israel's targeted killing of Hezbollah's leader, the strategic weakening of Hezbollah, the risk of a ground offensive, and the broader regional consequences—especially with respect to Iran's potential response and U.S. policy. It is not an expression of praise for Iran (C), nor a proposal for ceasefire terms (D), nor an argument that Iran should provoke Israel (A). Instead, it offers a balanced analysis of Israel's action and its likely fallout in West Asia.

A is incorrect because the author advises against giving

Netanyahu an excuse for wider war, not promoting Iranian provocation.

C is incorrect since praise of Iran's restraint is only a sub-point and not the passage's central thrust.

D is incorrect as the passage does not lay out concrete ceasefire proposals.

44. D (Medium) "Consequential" means significant or having important effects. Its closest antonym among the options is "trivial and insignificant" (D).

A ("Instrumental...") is actually a synonym or near-synonym of "consequential," not an antonym.

B ("High...") reiterates the core meaning of "consequential."

C ("Resulting in far-reaching effects") echoes the definition of "consequential."

D correctly captures the opposite sense of being of little to no importance.

45. C (Hard) The passage warns that a ground offensive into Lebanon "would displace and kill tens of thousands" and worsen Lebanon's economic woes, making inference C the most justified.

A is incorrect because the author explicitly states Israel's Gaza invasion "is yet to meet its declared objectives."

B is incorrect: the passage says Israel's strikes have "weakened Hezbollah but not destroyed its missile capabilities."

D is incorrect since Iran "has so far exercised relative restraint," meaning it has not yet responded militarily.

46. A (Easy) Option A faithfully rephrases the highlighted segment with equivalent meaning and neutral tone.

B distorts the meaning by suggesting prevention of returns rather than enabling returns.

C reverses the sense, implying compulsion to stay away instead of facilitation of return.

D inaccurately narrows the scope to "only a small fraction," which is not supported by the original.

47. B (Medium) "Parallel state" refers to an entity like Hezbollah that functions as a de facto government alongside Lebanon's official institutions, matching B.

A understates it as subordinate rather than parallel.

C implies temporariness and emergency context, which is not in the passage.

D suggests complete secrecy; the passage describes Hezbollah as a prominent, semi-public entity.

48. A (Hard) The analogy draws on both being non-state armed actors threatening Israel, making A the correct match.

B describes a peacekeeping force, which is a state- or UN-backed entity, unlike Hamas.

C is a conventional political party without a military wing, unlike Hamas.

D references a diplomatic mission, not a militant organisation.

49. C (Easy) The author cautions Iran to “exercise restraint” to avoid handing Netanyahu an excuse for a broader war, reflecting stance C.

A is the opposite of the passage’s advice.

B misreads the passage: it acknowledges Iran’s red lines but does not call responses pointless.

D is not mentioned as a recommendation.

50. D (Medium) The passage explicitly states that “Israel’s invasion of Gaza is yet to meet its declared objectives of destroying Hamas and securing the release of hostages,” making D a factual statement.

A is false; no such declaration of war is noted.

B is incorrect; the passage merely speaks of the possibility of pushing Hezbollah north of the Litani, not that it has occurred.

C is incorrect; the U.S. “continues to arm Israel,” so arms shipments have not ceased.

51. Answer: A President Lula da Silva immediately issued a public statement rejecting the U.S. tariffs, affirming that Brazil’s judiciary is independent and warning that Brasília would consider reciprocal measures if Washington persisted. This robust diplomatic stance underlined Brazil’s commitment to the rule of law and spurred internal debate on diversifying export markets to reduce vulnerability to U.S. policy shifts.

Why B is incorrect: There was no behind-the-scenes WTO mediation request; Brazil chose a high-profile public rebuttal over quiet negotiations.

Why C is incorrect: Prominent exporters and industry associations condemned the tariffs as damaging to trade rather than supporting U.S. interference.

Why D is incorrect: Brazil never halted its major commodity exports; imposing and then reversing such a boycott would have been economically self-defeating—and it did not occur.

52. Answer: C India secured 184 out of 193 votes in the UN General Assembly election on June 13, 2025, thereby winning one of the Asia-Pacific seats on the Human Rights Council and marking its third term (previous tenures were 2007–09 and 2011–14).

□ Why A is incorrect: India did not receive 143 votes, and the seat was not for the Western European and Others Group.

Why B is incorrect: No country holds a permanent seat

on the Human Rights Council; all members serve defined terms.

Why D is incorrect: India comfortably surpassed the required majority; it did not fail to get elected.

53. Answer: B Paris Saint-Germain routed Internazionale Milan 5–0 at Munich’s Allianz Arena on May 31, 2025—the widest margin in a Champions League final since 1960—securing PSG’s first-ever European Cup. Goals came from Achraf Hakimi, two from Désiré Doué, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and Senny Mayulu.

Why A is incorrect: Manchester City did not play in that final.

Why C is incorrect: Real Madrid’s 4–0 win over Liverpool was in 1986, not 2025.

Why D is incorrect: Inter Milan lost heavily and did not claim victory in extra time.

54. Answer: D Brazil defeated Argentina 2–0 at MetLife Stadium on July 25, 2025, thanks to a first-half strike by Neymar and a late goal from Vinícius Júnior. This triumph gave Brazil a record-extending tenth Copa América title.

Why A is incorrect: Argentina did not score; they were beaten 2–0. Why B is incorrect: There was no penalty shootout; Brazil won in regulation time.

Why C is incorrect: Uruguay did not feature in that final match.

55. Correct Option: A) 15 March 2006.

Why A is correct: The UN General Assembly’s resolution 60/251 on 15 March 2006 formally replaced the Commission on Human Rights with the Human Rights Council.

Why B–D are wrong: The Council began in 2006, not in 2007, 2008, or 2009.

56. Answer: B The Preamble to the Indian Constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949, by the Constituent Assembly. It encapsulates the core values—justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity—that guide the nation before the Constitution came into force on January 26, 1950.

Why A is incorrect: Article 368 (amendment procedure) was part of the text adopted then, but the question asks specifically about the Preamble.

Why C is incorrect: Article 51A (Fundamental Duties) was added later by the 42nd Amendment in 1976.

Why D is incorrect: Article 14 (equality before law) was in the original Constitution text but is not the adopted Preamble itself.

57. Correct Option: A

Why A is correct: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was sworn in as India’s first Law Minister on 15 August 1947. He headed

the Ministry of Law and Justice and chaired the Drafting Committee that prepared the Constitution, laying the legal foundations of the Republic.

Why B is incorrect: Though S. P. Mukherjee was a notable jurist after Independence, he never held the Cabinet portfolio of Law Minister.

Why C is incorrect: N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar served as Home Minister in the early 1950s but was not appointed Law Minister at Independence.

Why D is incorrect: K. M. Munshi later became Governor of Uttar Pradesh and was active in education and cultural affairs, but he was never India's Law Minister.

58. Correct Option: A

Why A is correct: Kangchenjunga, at 8,586 m, is the highest peak that lies at least partly within Indian territory (in Sikkim).

Why B is incorrect: Nanda Devi, though entirely in India, is 7,816 m tall, which is significantly lower than Kangchenjunga.

Why C is incorrect: K2 is higher at 8,611 m but is located in the Pakistan-administered Karakoram region, not within India.

Why D is incorrect: Mount Everest is the world's tallest at 8,849 m, but it straddles the Nepal-China border and does not lie in India.

59. Correct Option: B

Why B is correct: Vembanad Lake spans three districts in Kerala and covers approximately 2,033 km², making it the largest lake in India by surface area.

Why A is incorrect: Although Chilika Lake is Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, its area of about 1,100 km² is nearly half that of Vembanad.

Why C is incorrect: Kolleru Lake, a significant freshwater body in Andhra Pradesh, covers only around 245 km², far smaller than Vembanad.

Why D is incorrect: Sambhar Salt Lake is India's largest saltwater lake at about 190 km², but its surface area is much less than that of Vembanad.

60. Answer: D Jonas Vingegaard won the 2025 Tour de France, claiming back-to-back titles by dominating the mountain stages and time trials, finishing nearly three minutes ahead of his closest rival.

Why A is incorrect: Tadej Pogačar finished second, not first.

Why B is incorrect: Primož Roglič did not challenge for the overall classification.

Why C is incorrect: Christophe Laporte excelled in stage wins but was not a contender for the general classification.

61. Answer: B Jafar Panahi's *It Was Just an Accident* won the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2025, marking his triumphant artistic return despite travel bans. The film was clandestinely shot under heavy restrictions, underscoring Panahi's defiance and his commitment to human-rights storytelling. His acceptance speech called for unity and freedom in Iran, amplifying the film's political resonance.

Why A is incorrect: *Sentimental Value* earned the Grand Prix, not the Palme d'Or.

Why C is incorrect: *The Secret Agent* won Best Director for Krobe Mendonça Filho, but not the top prize.

Why D is incorrect: *Young Mothers* claimed Best Screenplay, not the festival's highest honor.

62. Answer: B Paris Saint-Germain routed Internazionale Milan 5-0 in the 2025 Champions League final, the largest margin of victory in a final since 1960. PSG's breakthrough was sealed by goals from Achraf Hakimi, two from Désiré Doué, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and Senny Mayulu, delivering the club its first European Cup.

Why A is incorrect: Manchester City did not feature in that final.

Why C is incorrect: Real Madrid's 4-0 over Liverpool was in 1986, not this edition.

Why D is incorrect: Inter Milan suffered the heavy defeat—they did not win in extra time.

63. Answer: A On June 6, 2025, the RBI's MPC cut the repo rate by 50 basis points from 6.00% to 5.50% per annum to bolster growth amid softening inflation. This "jumbo" move marked the third cut in five months and shifted the stance to neutral, aiming to stimulate bank lending and economic activity.

Why B is incorrect: A reduction to 6.25% would have been a 25 bps cut, not 50 bps.

Why C is incorrect: 6.75% would signify a rate increase, opposite to the announced cut.

Why D is incorrect: No move was made toward 7.00%; monetary policy was eased, not tightened.

64. Answer: A ProPublica received the 2025 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for its investigative series exposing how restrictive abortion-law interpretations led to fatal delays in maternal care. Their reporting prompted state policy reviews, legislative debates, and national discourse on medical ethics and women's health.

Why B is incorrect: The Washington Post's awards that year were in breaking news and commentary, not Public Service.

Why C is incorrect: The New York Times did not win the

Public Service prize in 2025.

Why D is incorrect: The Wall Street Journal's recognized work was honored in other categories, not Public Service.

65. Answer: A June 2025's gross GST collection was ₹1.85 lakh crore, up 6.2% year-on-year. While April's ₹2.37 lakh crore was inflated by year-end filings, and May's ₹2.01 lakh crore reflected transitional compliance, June's figure indicated a normalization yet remained robust.

Why B is incorrect: ₹2.37 lakh crore refers to April, not June.

Why C is incorrect: ₹2.01 lakh crore was May's collection.

Why D is incorrect: ₹1.59 lakh crore represents net GST after refunds, not the gross mop-up.

66. Answer: B Article 32 is the "heart and soul" of the Constitution, granting every citizen the right to move the Supreme Court for enforcement of Fundamental Rights. The Court may issue writs—habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto, and certiorari—to uphold those rights directly.

Why A is incorrect: Article 14 ensures equality before law but does not confer writ-issuing power.

Why C is incorrect: Article 226 empowers High Courts, not the Supreme Court, to issue certain writs.

Why D is incorrect: Article 368 deals with constitutional amendment procedures, unrelated to writs.

67. Answer: D Parliament comprises the President and the two Houses—Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Supreme Court is an independent judicial organ under Part V of the Constitution and does not form part of the legislature.

Why A is incorrect: The Lok Sabha is the directly elected lower house of Parliament.

Why B is incorrect: The Rajya Sabha is the upper house representing states.

Why C is incorrect: The President gives assent to bills and addresses Parliament, making the office a formal component.

68. Answer: C The ICC is headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, reflecting the city's legacy as a center for international justice. Since its 2002 establishment under the Rome Statute, The Hague has housed both the ICC and the International Court of Justice.

Why A is incorrect: Geneva hosts agencies like WHO and UNHCR, not the ICC.

Why B is incorrect: Vienna is home to UNIDO and the IAEA.

Why D is incorrect: New York is the seat of the UN Secretariat, not the ICC.

69. Answer: A The Pacific Ocean is the largest, covering about 163 million km²—approximately one-third of Earth's surface—making it far larger than the Atlantic (85 million km²), Indian (70 million km²), or Arctic (14 million km²).

Why B is incorrect: The Indian Ocean ranks third in size at roughly 70 million km².

Why C is incorrect: The Atlantic is second largest at about 85 million km².

Why D is incorrect: The Arctic is the smallest ocean at around 14 million km².

70. Answer: A Ved Vyasa is traditionally credited with compiling and composing the Mahabharata, India's longest epic. He is also ascribed authorship of the Puranas and the division of the Vedas into four.

Why B is incorrect: Valmiki authored the Ramayana, not the Mahabharata.

Why C is incorrect: Tulsidas wrote the 16th-century Ramcharitmanas, a version of the Ramayana.

Why D is incorrect: Kalidasa penned classical Sanskrit works like Shakuntala, not the Mahabharata.

71. Answer: A

Correct Option: "Kālachakra – People, Peace and Planet" was the official theme of the Raisina Dialogue 2025, emphasizing cyclicity (kālachakra) and the interdependence of societies, peace processes, and planetary health.

Why A is correct: The Ministry of External Affairs officially announced this theme for the three-day strategic forum in New Delhi, highlighting a holistic approach to global challenges.

Why B is incorrect: "Navigating the New Cold War in the 21st Century" was never adopted as the Raisina Dialogue theme.

Why C is incorrect: "Digital Innovation and Global Governance" was not used for the 2025 Dialogue.

Why D is incorrect: "Climate Finance and Sustainable Development" did not feature as the Dialogue's branding.

72. Answer: C

Why C is correct: Official G20 announcements confirmed the 19th Summit was held at the newly inaugurated Bharat Mandapam convention centre on 28 May 2025.

Why A is incorrect: The Tokyo International Forum hosted earlier G20 ministerial meetings but was not the site of the 2025 Summit.

Why B is incorrect: Itamaraty Palace in Brasília was the venue for the 2024 Summit, not 2025.

Why D is incorrect: The Sandton Convention Centre was the location of a BRICS summit, not the G20.

3. Answer. B

Why B is correct: Carlos Alcaraz defeated Jannik Sinner in a marathon five-set final to claim the 2025 French Open men's singles title.

Why A is incorrect: Novak Djokovic did not reach the final in 2025.

Why C is incorrect: Though Jannik Sinner was the runner-up, he lost to Alcaraz.

Why D is incorrect: Rafael Nadal did not compete in the 2025 final.

74. Answer. D

Why D is correct: Anora was announced as the Best Picture winner at the 97th Academy Awards.

Why A is incorrect: The Substance won a technical award but not Best Picture.

Why B is incorrect: Dune: Part Two received nominations in several categories but did not win Best Picture.

Why C is incorrect: Emilia Pérez was nominated but did not secure the top prize.

75. Answer. A

Why A is correct: Donald J. Trump, having been re-elected for a second non-consecutive term, hosted Prime Minister Modi for an official state working visit on 13 February 2025.

Why B is incorrect: Joe Biden was not in office at that time.

Why C is incorrect: Barack Obama's presidency ended in 2017.

Why D is incorrect: George W. Bush left office in 2009.

76. Answer. B

Why B is correct: India's current total of UNESCO World Heritage Sites is 44, comprising cultural, natural, and mixed listings.

Why A is incorrect: 36 refers only to cultural sites, excluding natural and mixed.

Why C is incorrect: 49 is an overcount not supported by UNESCO's official list.

Why D is incorrect: 54 is likewise incorrect.

77. Answer. D

Why D is correct: On 5 August 1991, Leila Seth became the first woman to serve as Chief Justice of an Indian High Court (Himachal Pradesh).

Why A is incorrect: Fathima Beevi was the first woman Supreme Court judge, not a High Court Chief Justice.

Why B is incorrect: Ruma Pal was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2000, not as a High Court Chief Justice.

Why C is incorrect: Indu Malhotra became a Supreme

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Court judge much later and did not head a High Court.

78. Answer. C

Why C is correct: SEBI's central headquarters is in Mumbai, with regional offices in a few other major cities.

Why A is incorrect: New Delhi hosts only a regional office.

Why B is incorrect: Chennai is another regional office location, not the HQ.

Why D is incorrect: Kolkata likewise has a regional office.

79. Answer. A

Why A is correct: The First Law Commission, chaired by Macaulay from 1834, prepared the draft IPC, which was finalized in 1856.

Why B is incorrect: Lord William Bentinck was Governor-General but did not chair the Law Commission.

Why C is incorrect: Sir Barnes Peacock contributed to later revisions but did not lead the original commission.

Why D is incorrect: Edward Livingston was not involved with India's IPC drafting.

80. Answer. D

Why D is correct: Though enacted in 1860, the IPC formally came into force on 1 January 1862 throughout British India.

Why A is incorrect: 1856 was the year the draft was completed, not when it commenced.

Why B is incorrect: 1858 marked the transfer of power to the Crown, not IPC enforcement.

Why C is incorrect: 1860 was enactment, but enforcement began in 1862.

81. Answer: A [Difficulty Level: Easy]

Detailed Explanation:

From Premises 1 & 2 ("Some teachers are mentors" and "All mentors are guides"), we infer that some teachers are guides, because the subset of mentors within guides includes at least those teachers who are mentors.

Why B fails: Premise 3 ("No guide is a student") and Premise 4 ("Some students are researchers") do not imply that mentors (a subset of guides) exclude researchers; researchers might include non-student researchers. Why C fails: "Some guides are researchers" cannot be deduced, since $\text{guides} \cap \text{students} = \emptyset$ (Premise 3), and only students are linked to researchers.

Why D fails: "All students are guides" contradicts "No guide is a student" (Premise 3).

82. Answer: C [Difficulty Level: Medium]

Detailed Explanation:

1. From Premise 2 ("Some eagles are birds") and Premise 3 ("All eagles are predators"), we infer that those eagles who are birds are also predators—hence "Some predators are birds."
2. Why A fails: There is no link between predators and mammals in the premises.
3. Why B fails: "No predators are mammals" cannot be deduced; predators might include non-eagle types.
4. Why D fails: "All birds are predators" overgeneralizes "Some eagles are birds" to all birds.

83. Answer: D [Difficulty Level: Medium]

Detailed Explanation:

- A. "Some gifts are roses." Fail: We know "some flowers are gifts" (Premise 2) and "all roses are flowers" (Premise 1), but there is no guarantee that the subset of flowers that are gifts includes any roses; the gift-flowers could all be non-roses.
- B. "No roses are gifts." Fail: Similarly, the premises do not tell us that roses are excluded from gifts—only that some flowers (which could include roses) are gifts. We cannot conclude roses and gifts are disjoint.
- C. "Some flowers are cheap." Fail: Premise 2 says some flowers are gifts, and Premise 3 says no gift is cheap, so those gift-flowers are not cheap. But other flowers (non-gifts) might or might not be cheap—we have no information either way.

84. Answer: A [Difficulty Level: Hard]

Detailed Explanation:

From Premise 2 ("Some edible things are exotic") and Premise 3 ("No exotic thing is local"), we infer that those exotic edibles are necessarily not local. Therefore, some edible things are not local (A).

Why B fails: "No edible thing is local" would require that every edible thing be exotic (so none could be local), but Premise 2 only asserts that some edibles are exotic, leaving others unspecified (Premise 2).

Why C fails: Although some local things are organic (Premise 4), you cannot generalize "all local things are organic" from "some." The leap from some to all is invalid.

Why D fails: "No organic thing is exotic" would require that the entire set of organic things lie outside the exotic category. But we only know that some organic things are local (Premise 4) and thus not exotic; other organic things might well be exotic.

By strictly applying only what the premises provide—without assuming any additional overlap—you see that A is the sole valid conclusion.

85. Answer: D [Difficulty Level: Hard]

Detailed Explanation:

A. "Some writers are respected." We know writers $\subseteq$ educated (Premise 1), and some educated are scholars (Premise 2), and all scholars are respected (Premise 3). However, that chain only guarantees that some educated are respected—it does not guarantee that any writer (a subset of educated) is among those scholars. The "some educated $\rightarrow$ scholars" overlap could entirely exclude writers.

B. "No generous person is uneducated." "Some respected people are generous" (Premise 4) and "No writer is uneducated" (Premise 1) tell us that some generous people might be writers (and thus educated), but they do not rule out the possibility that other generous people are uneducated. There is no premise linking generosity exclusively to educated status.

C. "Some scholars are generous." Although scholars $\subseteq$ respected (Premise 3) and some respected are generous (Premise 4), the overlap between "scholars" and "generous" sets is not guaranteed. The "some respected" who are generous could be non-scholars.

86. Answer: D

Difficulty: Medium

Explanation:

1. From (A) "All poets are writers," we know poets $\subseteq$ writers.
2. From (B) "Some writers are authors," we know there is an overlap between writers and authors.
3. To infer I ("Some poets are authors") we would need that overlap to include poets; but "some writers are authors" could involve writers outside the poets subset—so I does not necessarily follow.
4. To infer II ("All authors are writers") requires that the entire set of authors lie within writers; but "Some writers are authors" does not guarantee that every author is a writer—authors could include non-writers—so II fails.
5. Therefore, neither conclusion is logically compelled by the premises.
6. Option D correctly indicates that both I and II fail.

87. Answer: B

Difficulty: Easy

Explanation:

1. From (A) "No dog is a cat," dogs and cats are disjoint sets.
2. From (B) "All cats are mammals," cats $\subseteq$ mammals.
3. Conclusion I ("No dog is a mammal") would require dogs $\cap$ mammals = $\emptyset$, but dogs could be other mammals (e.g., wolves) not contradicted by the premises—so I fails.
4. Conclusion II ("Some mammals are cats") follows

directly because cats (a nonempty set) lie within mammals—hence there is at least one mammal that is a cat.

5. Only II is valid, so Option B is correct.

88. Answer: A

Difficulty: Easy

Explanation:

- (A) gives “All flowers are plants” $\Rightarrow$ flowers $\subseteq$ plants.
- (B) gives “No plant is a mineral” $\Rightarrow$ plants $\cap$ minerals = $\emptyset$.
- From these two, flowers (a subset of plants) also cannot intersect minerals $\Rightarrow$ “No flower is a mineral” holds, so I follows.
- II (“Some minerals are plants”) contradicts (B), which states plants $\cap$ minerals = $\emptyset$.
- Thus only I follows. Option A is correct.

89. Answer: C

Difficulty: Medium

Explanation:

- (A) “Some cars are electric” $\Rightarrow$ there exists at least one item in cars $\cap$ electric.
- (B) “All electric things are modern” $\Rightarrow$ electric $\subseteq$ modern.
- For I, take the cars that are electric (from A) and map them into modern (via B); those cars are modern $\Rightarrow$ “Some cars are modern” holds.
- For II, since electric $\subseteq$ modern and there is at least one electric thing (A), there is at least one modern thing that is electric $\Rightarrow$ “Some modern things are electric” holds.

Both conclusions follow, so Option C is correct.

90. Answer: C

Difficulty: Medium

Explanation:

- Premise D: “No mammal is a plant” $\Rightarrow$ mammals $\cap$ plants = $\emptyset$.
- Premise A: “All cats are mammals” $\Rightarrow$ cats $\subseteq$ mammals.
- From D & A, cats $\subseteq$ mammals and mammals $\cap$ plants = $\emptyset$, so cats $\cap$ plants = $\emptyset \Rightarrow$ “No cat is a plant” (E).
- Option (C) gives premises D $\rightarrow$ A, conclusion E, which is valid.
- Why (b) CAF fails: C & A do not link to F. “Some cats are aquatic” (C) is not established by A & B, and F (“Some aquatic creatures are cats”) reverses a “some” without justification.
- Why (a) BCF fails: B (“Some mammals are aquatic”) and C (“Some cats are aquatic”) cannot serve as premises to conclude F; the “some” sets may not overlap.

7. Why (d) EDB fails: E (“No cat is a plant”) and D do not yield B (“Some mammals are aquatic”); premises don’t support that conclusion.

91. Answer: A

Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

- Premise B: “All berries are sweet” $\Rightarrow$ berries $\subseteq$ sweet.
- Premise D: “No sweet thing is sour” $\Rightarrow$ sweet $\cap$ sour = $\emptyset$.
- From B & D, berries $\subseteq$ sweet and sweet $\cap$ sour = $\emptyset \Rightarrow$ berries $\cap$ sour = $\emptyset \Rightarrow$ “No berry is sour” (E).
- Option (a) uses premises B $\rightarrow$ D leading to conclusion E, which is valid.
- Why (b) ABE fails: A (“Some fruits are berries”) and B lead to C, not E; A is irrelevant to deriving E.
- Why (c) CAF fails: C (“Some fruits are sweet”) and A do not connect to F (“Some sour things are fruits”), which contradicts D.
- Why (d) DBC fails: D & B combined yield E, not C; and C is “Some fruits are sweet,” which needs A & B, not D.

92. Answer: A

Difficulty: Medium

Explanation:

- From Statement 1 and 2: “Some painters are sculptors” and “All sculptors are artists” together imply that those painters who are sculptors must be artists. Hence “Some painters are artists” (I) follows.
- For II, we’d need painters $\subseteq$ skilled. We know from Statement 3 that artists $\cap$ unskilled = $\emptyset$, so no artist is unskilled. But only some painters are artists—other painters (non-sculptors) could be unskilled. Therefore we cannot conclude “No unskilled person is a painter.”
- Option B fails because II does not follow.
- Option C fails because II is not guaranteed even though I is.
- Option D fails because I clearly follows from Statements 1 & 2.

Thus, only conclusion I is logically compelled by the premises.

93. Answer: B [Difficulty Level: Medium]

Explanation:

- The survey shows “public buses ... carry only 15%” of short-distance commuters, despite “dedicated lanes on 40% of city roads.” This directly implies that those lanes have not significantly boosted bus usage (Premises).
- Choice A (“Congestion pricing ... would shift at least half ...”) is speculative and not supported by any data about price sensitivity or mode-shift rates.
- Choice C (“Taxi and ride-sharing ... underutilized due to higher costs”) introduces cost as the cause without any cost data—unsupported by the matrix.

4. Choice D (“Expanding bus lanes ... eliminate congestion”) overstates effects; even 40% coverage didn’t dramatically increase ridership, and there’s no link to overall congestion.

5. Only B accurately restates what the facts depict: that existing bus lanes covering 40% of roads have failed to significantly move commuters onto buses.

6. This inference sticks strictly to the given proportions (15% ridership vs. 40% lane availability) without adding causal assumptions.

94. Answer: C [Difficulty Level: Medium]

Explanation:

1. The argument’s conclusion—that higher upfront costs will be recouped in five years—relies on energy savings and reduced maintenance. It assumes maintenance costs for solar units won’t exceed current costs; otherwise, savings could vanish.

2. Choice A (equal luminosity) is desirable but not necessary to the payback calculation; savings pertain to fuel/energy and maintenance, not brightness.

3. Choice B (constant energy prices) is not required if maintenance savings alone suffice for payback.

4. Choice D (citizen preference) is irrelevant to municipal cost-recoup calculations.

5. Only C secures the assertion that maintenance won’t inflate costs and ruin the projected five-year payback.

95. Answer: A

Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. Key claim: Loyalty points will boost long-term engagement beyond the current 5% retention.

2. Choice A reports a controlled trial in a comparable app where a similar loyalty approach lifted retention from 5% to 25%. This directly demonstrates the causal mechanism the developers propose—points → higher retention—making it the strongest reinforcement of their argument.

3. Choice B actually undermines the loyalty rationale by showing rewards aren’t what users value most.

4. Choice C notes that marketing spend rose but users still fell, which speaks to acquisition problems, not to whether a loyalty system can improve retention among those already acquired. It neither supports nor refutes the loyalty argument.

5. Choice D even in a rewards context, if engagement gains proved only temporary with no long-term effect, it suggests the loyalty system may not sustain the claimed boost in long-term engagement, thus weakening rather than strengthening the developers’ case.

6. Only A provides clear, directly relevant evidence that

a loyalty-points system can transform a low (~5%) three-month retention rate into a substantially higher (~25%) one, mirroring the developers’ objective.

96. Answer: C [Difficulty Level: Hard]

Explanation:

1. The argument links 30% fuel cost savings → 20% lower fares → 25% passenger growth.

2. If airport taxes are 40% of ticket price, then fuel cost is a small share; a 30% cut in a minor component cannot yield a 20% overall fare reduction. This directly invalidates the fare-cut projection.

3. Choice A (industry price drop) slightly improves fuel cost but doesn’t negate the airline’s own cost structure.

4. Choice B (passenger preferences) might dampen growth but doesn’t refute the feasibility of fare reduction.

5. Choice D (competitors upgrading) affects market share but not the cost-savings calculation.

97. Answer: A [Difficulty Level: Medium]

Explanation:

1. The paradox: more coffee consumed but fewer imports.

2. Choice A explains that domestic production replaced imports while meeting rising consumption.

3. Choice B alone could reduce imports but would likely lower consumption, not raise it.

4. Choice C is irrelevant—tea vs. coffee doesn’t explain import drop.

5. Choice D suggests statistical inflation of consumption but doesn’t justify import decline.

Only A accounts for local supply growth filling the consumption gap while cutting imports.

98. Answer: C

Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The data link two variables: bike lanes ↔ fewer accidents, and bike-lane cities ↔ lower speeds.

2. Conclusion C (“Lower vehicle speeds correlate with fewer road accidents”) simply restates the observed statistical relationship without assuming causation.

3. A (“Installing bike lanes causes drivers to slow down...”) invokes causality not proven by correlation alone.

4. B introduces law-abiding behavior without evidence.

5. D assumes bike lanes are the sole factor influencing accidents, ignoring other variables.

6. Only C is a conservative conclusion that draws on both premises without overreaching.

99. Answer: A

Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The argument assumes a causal link between pod usage and higher scores.
 2. If pod users already had higher GPAs before using pods (A), then the correlation may reflect self-selection rather than pod efficacy, undermining the causal claim.
 3. B is irrelevant to the causal link between pods and performance.
 4. C shows off-campus groups also do well but doesn't negate that pods might help users.
 5. D is a future plan, not evidence against causality.
- Only A reveals an alternative explanation (selection bias) that seriously weakens the argument's inference of causation.

100 . Answer: D

Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The argument links extra evening study hours to higher literacy, so it assumes that evening study time is indeed the critical factor limiting literacy.
2. Choice A is too strong—residents may use time for other productive activities.
3. Choice B concerns measurement timeframe, not program logic.
4. Choice C relates to implementation feasibility, not the core causal assumption about study time and literacy.
5. Only D posits that increasing evening study directly addresses the main barrier to literacy; without this, extra hours may not yield literacy gains.

101. A (Difficulty: Medium)

Explanation: Ravi is excused because the municipal order makes performance literally illegal and impossible. As the scenario states at line 5, “the local municipality unexpectedly bans sale and transfer of all earthenware as a precaution against an environmental hazard,” and at line 7, Ravi “informs UDL that shipping would break the ban” (lines 5–7). Under the doctrine of frustration, a subsequent prohibition that makes the contracted act unlawful discharges both parties. Option B is incorrect because it treats the ban as merely local hardship, yet the text confirms no lawful transfer can occur. Option C fails since partial work cannot be enforced when the overall contract has been frustrated by illegality. Option D is wrong because courts do not rewrite or modify illegal contracts—they simply discharge them.

102 – A (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation: Charu is not liable for the December 20 debt because nothing in the registered deed or any written amendment binds her to pre-admission

liabilities. The passage at line 2 tells us, “Their partnership deed (registered in June 2024) silently omits any clause about future admissions,” and at line 4, “they orally agree...that Charu will not assume any debts incurred before January 1” (lines 2–4). Partnership law requires a written amendment or express written consent to saddle a new partner with existing debts. Option B wrongly imputes implied liability from management rights, but the deed is silent. Option C misplaces focus on Charu's knowledge rather than on the statutory deed requirement. Option D invents a “due diligence” exception that does not exist under the Partnership Act.

103 – A (Difficulty: Medium-Hard)

Explanation: Farah can rescind the entire loan agreement because Devdas abused the priest-devotee relationship to secure unfair terms. The scenario tells us at line 3, “Over three meetings at the temple, Devdas suggests that ‘a token of my guidance’—a ₹50 lakhs loan agreement secured by the property—would demonstrate Farah's sincere devotion,” and at line 6, “Devdas threatens foreclosure unless she pays the full ₹50 lakhs at once” (lines 3–6). Such exploitation of spiritual influence voids genuine consent, rendering the agreement voidable in its entirety. Option C is too absolute in restoring all payments but ignores that rescission undoes the entire contract. Option B improperly severs only the interest term, though the taint runs through the whole bargain. Option D isolates the power-of-sale clause, but undue influence permeates the principal obligation too.

104 – C (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation: Answer: C. Injunction preventing Bina from further involvement with PayWave and accounting for all profits she gained from that venture.

Explanation: Under the principle of uberrimae fidei (highest good faith), partners must disclose any opportunity or material information affecting the partnership and cannot compete without unanimous consent. Bina's secret ₹20 lakhs investment in PayWave, her work on competing fintech modules under NDA, and her transfer of proprietary code snippets constitute a clear breach of her fiduciary duty to CodeStream LLP.

1. Injunction: Equity will restrain a partner from further breaches of the non-competition/unanimous consent clause. Preventing Bina from any further involvement with PayWave directly enforces the LLP agreement and protects the partnership's business.

2. Accounting for profits: A fiduciary who usurps a partnership opportunity or competes unlawfully must disgorge all profits made from that misconduct. Bina must account for any gains or benefits she derive

d through PayWave that originated from her breach of duty.

Why the other options fail:

Option B (Specific performance compelling share transfer): Courts will not normally force a partner to surrender personal investments or equity in a third party; instead, they mandate disgorgement of profits and injunctions, not forced ownership re-allocation.

Option A (Rescission of the LLP agreement): Bina's breach does not automatically invalidate the entire LLP agreement for all partners. Equity aims to remedy the breach, not dissolve the entire firm absent extraordinary circumstances.

Option D (Limited monetary damages only): Monetary compensation alone is insufficient here because the breach is ongoing (further competition and code transfer risks) and injunctive relief is necessary to prevent future harm.

Thus, Option C most faithfully implements partnership fiduciary principles by both halting further misconduct and reclaiming improperly obtained profits.

105. Correct Option: A (Difficulty: Medium) In this case, granting bail with stringent conditions best balances Rohit's strong community ties and low flight risk against the gravity of the driver's grievous injuries. Under Section 437 CrPC, the court may impose conditions such as surrendering travel documents, regular reporting, and non-contact with the victim to protect the integrity of the proceedings and the victim's safety. Rohit has no prior record and is unlikely to abscond, but unrestricted release (as in option C) risks intimidation, and mere moderate conditions (option D) fail to address the need to prevent contact with the driver (lines 8–12). Outright denial of bail (option B) dismisses the valid self-defence plea and Rohit's responsibility toward his ailing mother (lines 14–16), making option A the most appropriate order.

106. Correct Option: B (Difficulty: Hard) Kavita's case attracts culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 299 IPC, rather than murder under Section 300. The facts show she acted in panic to protect her child, lacking the requisite intention or knowledge that her knife thrust would almost certainly cause death (lines 15–18). Option A is incorrect because murder requires a murderous intention or knowledge of probable fatality, which the variations in Kavita's statements undermine (lines 20–22). Option C—trespass—is misplaced since she was on her own property's common area and the killing goes beyond trespass. Option D mischaracterises the offence as merely causing hurt; the fatal outcome elevates it to culpable

homicide (lines 11–13). Thus, option B properly reflects the legal principles and the nuanced facts.

107. Correct Option: B (Difficulty: Medium) The warrantless search and seizure of drugs in Meera's apartment cannot stand because no genuine exigency justified bypassing the magistrate's warrant requirement under CrPC Section 100. The police had ample opportunity to apply for a warrant, and mere suspicion of danger is insufficient (lines 5–8). Option A is incorrect as the speculative risk to public safety does not meet the threshold for emergency entry (lines 2–4). Option C misapplies an exception for inherently dangerous items, which still requires urgency to justify a warrantless search (lines 7–9). Option D wrongly suggests after-the-fact consent would validate the initial illegal search; Section 100 expressly bars evidence obtained from unlawful searches even if consent follows (lines 10–12). Consequently, the seized drugs are inadmissible, making option B correct.

108. Correct Option: D (Difficulty: Easy)

Explanation:

1. Involuntary Intoxication Defense (Section 85 IPC): Under Indian law, "an act committed by a person incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law, by reason of intoxication caused against his will" is excusable. Rajan did not know his drink was spiked.

2. No Prior Criminal History & Customary Brew: Although Rajan voluntarily drank chhang, the law distinguishes between voluntary consumption (which may bar a defense) and subsequent involuntary sedation. It was the sedative—administered without his knowledge—that deprived him of the capacity to form intent.

3. Mens Rea for Arson: Arson requires knowing or intentional setting of fire. Severe disorientation from involuntary intoxication vitiates the required mens rea—he lacked the "knowledge" or "intention" element essential for arson liability.

4. Why A Fails: Option A wrongly treats all consequences of any drink consumption as voluntary. It ignores that the critical intoxicant (the sedative) was secretly administered, not self-induced.

5. Why C Fails: Option C concedes negligence but still imposes a lesser liability. Involuntary intoxication exculpates all criminal liability (not just intentorial offenses) because the actor is legally viewed as lacking capacity—so he is not merely negligent but excused.

6. Why B Fails: Option B overstates the law: only involuntary, not all intoxication, is a defense. Voluntary intoxication generally does not exempt one from criminal liability under Indian law.

Because Rajan can demonstrate that the sedative—not the customary brew—was administered without his knowledge, he meets the criteria of Section 85 IPC, excusing him from criminal liability for the arson.

109. (Difficulty: Medium) The correct answer is C. UrbanTech's deliberate nightly discharge of untreated effluent into the shared canal has demonstrably killed fish, discoloured crops, and emitted noxious odors that unreasonably interfere with Farmers A and B's enjoyment of their land (lines 3–4). Private nuisance law centers on the nature and effect of the interference, not on after-the-fact mitigation; installing a downstream purifier does not absolve UrbanTech of liability for its ongoing harmful discharges. Option A is incorrect because corporate-social-responsibility measures and timing do not legitimize the persistent pollution of an agrarian water source. Option B fails since nuisance does not require breaching statutory thresholds—any substantial and unreasonable interference suffices once harm is shown. Option D is misguided: even if the canal were classified as navigable, UrbanTech's right-of-way under an obsolete lease does not override the tort duty not to pollute neighbouring lands.

110. (Difficulty: Hard) The correct answer is A. MetroRide set the commercial framework—fares, routes, and insurance requirements—for D's gig work, and although D's shortcut was unauthorized, it occurred while he was fulfilling a ride contract and furthered MetroRide's business objectives (lines 1–3). A brief GPS dropout does not render a logged-in driver “off-duty” when MetroRide continues to exert control over key aspects of the service and derives revenue. Option B mischaracterizes the shortcut as a “frolic”: minor route deviations that advance the employer's enterprise remain within the course of employment. Option C is incorrect because vicarious liability hinges on the connection between the tort and the employer's business, not on explicit prior authorization of every detour. Option D errs by assuming contractual labels determine liability; courts instead examine the reality of control and economic dependence.

111. (Difficulty: Medium) The correct answer is A. The “SafeCity” facial-recognition scheme lacks any statutory authorization, retention limits, independent oversight, or appeal mechanisms, rendering it a disproportionate and intrusive state intrusion under Article 21 (lines 3–4). While public-area CCTV for security is generally lawful, automated biometric tracking of all commuters without safeguards exceeds permissible bounds. Option B is too narrow: focusing solely on data-retention limits ignores the fundamental absence of any legal basis or

accountability framework. Option C overstretchers by suggesting all public-space CCTV is permissible, failing to distinguish between passive monitoring and active, database-driven identification. Option D wrongly dismisses X's harm as speculative; the right to privacy is violated by the nature and scale of the surveillance, not contingent on proving material injury.

Question 112 (Difficulty: Hard) The correct answer is B. The five-generation residency requirement serves the legitimate legislative aim of preserving local cultural heritage, and the ancestry test bears a rational nexus to that objective by ensuring deep community roots (lines 1–4). Legislatures enjoy broad deference in crafting socio-economic classifications for public-interest goals. Option A misreads Article 14 by treating heritage protection and skill as mutually exclusive, disregarding legislative latitude. Option C misidentifies the locus of arbitrariness: the lottery for non-locals is a neutral distribution mechanism, whereas the core classification is the ancestry rule itself. Option D misunderstands the statute's clear generational criterion—mere birth in Bengaluru does not satisfy the five-generation requirement.

113. (Difficulty: Medium): Option A. SweetHome Bakers is likely to succeed because Golden Crust's “Sweet Home Foods” mark and house-logo are deceptively similar in overall impression—the identical phrase, near-identical color scheme, and shared house imagery create a real likelihood of confusion among ordinary consumers (lines 2–4). Trademark law protects against confusion, not only literal copying. Option B fails because even common phrases gain distinctiveness through registration and use; the thicker font does not dispel confusion when the overall get-up is similar (lines 2–5). Option C is incorrect since proof of actual confusion is not required—likelihood of confusion suffices for infringement (lines 3–4). Option D misreads the balance of goodwill: a local bakery's registered mark cannot be overridden by a larger entity's reputation once infringement is shown (lines 1–2).

114. (Difficulty: Hard): Option B. Mr. Rao's claim is unlikely to succeed because the municipality's periodic clearances in 2012 and 2018 interrupted his exclusive and hostile possession, indicating permissive use rather than continuous adverse occupation (lines 2–3). Adverse possession requires uninterrupted continuity—any acknowledgment of ownership by the true owner defeats the claim. Option A overlooks that interruptions by the owner reset the limitation period. Option C errs by suggesting a formal notice is mandatory; adverse possession is established by facts of possession, not by

registration of notice. Option D is wrong because public land may, in certain jurisdictions, be subject to adverse possession unless specifically exempted by statute, but here the interruptions would defeat the claim regardless.

115. (Difficulty: Medium): Option A. Ms. Gupta is entitled to a full refund of ₹15,000, compensation for mental agony, and reimbursement of litigation expenses because ShopEase's imposition of a diagnostic fee directly contradicts its advertised "30-day full-refund guarantee," constituting an unfair trade practice and deficiency in service (lines 1–3). The Consumer Protection Act forbids imposing hidden conditions contrary to promotional promises. Option B is incorrect because internal policies cannot override the consumer's statutory rights or the advertised terms. Option C fails as demanding a diagnostic fee after promising a full refund is neither reasonable nor disclosed in the original offer. Option D misapplies the policy wording; no "standard checks" were mentioned in the guarantee—ShopEase cannot deduct fees when the guarantee was unconditional.

116. Answer: C [Difficulty Level: Easy]

Explanation:

- Anita's position is given as seat 1 (line 1).
- In an eight-seat circle, the seat directly opposite seat 1 is seat 5.
- Ehsaan (E) is two seats clockwise from Govind (G) (line 4).
- Harini (H) sits between Anita and Ehsaan going counterclockwise (line 5), so if Anita is at 1 and Harini is between 1 and E going CCW, Harini must be at 8 and Ehsaan at 7.
- Counting two seats clockwise from Govind to reach Ehsaan at 7 places Govind at seat 5.
- Therefore, the occupant of seat 5—directly opposite Anita—is Govind.
- Why A is incorrect: Bala cannot occupy seat 5 without violating the E–G relationship (line 4).
- Why B is incorrect: Farida sits at an even-numbered seat (line 7) but seat 6 is taken by Deepak (opposite Farida, line 3), so Farida does not sit opposite Anita.
- Why D is incorrect: Ehsaan is at seat 7 (from lines 4–5), not opposite Anita.

117. Answer: C. Priya Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

- Manoj at A fixes position A as M.
- Rina three seats clockwise from M: from A → B (1), C (2), D (3), so R at D.
- Priya immediately counterclockwise of Rina: CCW from D is C, so P at C.

4. Qadir opposite Manoj places Q at E (the seat directly across from A).

5. Qadir not next to M or Omar: Q at E's neighbors are D (R) and F (empty); Omar cannot occupy F because Q cannot sit next to O, so Omar must be in one of the remaining seats—B, G, or H.

6. Nisha and Omar in consecutive seats: available seats now are B, F, G, H, but F is avoided by Omar, so N and O must occupy two adjacent positions among B–C (which is P), C–D, D–E, E–F, F–G, G–H, or H–A. Excluding taken/invalid seats, the only adjacent open pair is G–H. Thus N and O occupy G and H (order pending).

7. Leela opposite Sameer: the only remaining opposite-open pair is B–F. So L and S occupy B and F in some order.

8. Position C is conclusively Priya.

Options A, B, and D fail because Nisha, Omar, and Sameer cannot occupy C given the definitive placements derived from Rules 2–4.

Hence, Priya is at position C.

118 (Difficulty: Hard)

Answer: B

Explanation: 1. Place Arun and Hari. Arun at 1 (rule 1) and Hari at 8 (rule 6).

2. Locate Divya. Two seats CCW from Arun: from 1 go CCW to 8 (one) and 7 (two), so Divya at 7 (rule 2).

3. Assign Bhavna/Cyrus. Bhavna must sit in an odd-numbered seat (rule 7) and Cyrus immediately CCW of her (rule 3). Available odd seats now are 3 and 5 (1 and 7 taken). Try Bhavna at 5, Cyrus at 4.

4. Place Ebrahim/Greta and Fazal. Opposite pairs are (1–5), (2–6), (3–7), (4–8). 1 and 5 are taken (Arun, Bhavna), 4 and 8 taken (Cyrus, Hari), 3 and 7 taken (seat 7 is Divya), so Ebrahim & Greta must occupy seats 2 and 6. Fazal sits immediately CW of Ebrahim (rule 5), so E at 2, F at 3, and G at 6 (rule 4 uses "opposite" for E/G but we've already placed them as 2–6).

5. Verify consistency: All rules are satisfied.

6. Seat 4 occupant: That is Cyrus.

Why A (Bhavna) is incorrect: Bhavna is at seat 5 (odd, rule 7) with Cyrus at 4.

Why C (Ebrahim) is incorrect: Ebrahim sits at seat 2 (opposite Greta at 6, rule 4).

Why D (Fazal) is incorrect: Fazal sits at 3, immediately CW of Ebrahim at 2 (rule 5).

119. Answer: D (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation:

1. Deepa is fixed in position 3 (line 2), which anchors the sequence.

2. Faraz occupies an end position (line 4), and because Deepa's at 3, Faraz cannot be at 1 (otherwise Cyrus would be forced into 3, occupied by Deepa, violating

line 5). Thus Faraz must be at 6.

3. Exactly one person stands between Cyrus and Faraz (line 5), so with Faraz at 6, Cyrus must be at 4.

4. The only seat directly between positions 4 and 6 is position 5.

5. Esha is placed at position 5 (by elimination and because she cannot sit next to Deepa at 3, line 6).

6. Therefore, Esha stands immediately between Cyrus (4) and Faraz (6).

Why A (Anil) is incorrect: Anil stands at position 1 (Brinda is immediately to his right at 2, line 1), not at 5.

Why B (Brinda) is incorrect: Brinda is at position 2 (line 1), far from the segment between 4 and 6.

Why C (Deepa) is incorrect: Deepa occupies position 3, not between seats 4 and 6.

120: C [Difficulty Level: Easy]

1. Assign Nidhi (N) & Ritu (R): From Clue 2 & 4, pick Nidhi = seat 4 and Ritu = seat 3.

2. Place Leena (L) & Ojas (O): From Clue 3, Ojas = Leena + 3.

The only workable assignment is Leena = seat 5 → Ojas = seat 8.

3. Place Pallavi (P), Qasim (Q), and Ritu (R): From Clue 5 (P between Q and R), the only triple that works around Ritu at 3 is seats (1–2–3): Q (1), P (2), R (3).

4. Place Karthik (K) & Manish (M): From Clue 7, $K \neq 1, 8$. Free seats are {6, 7}.

From Clue 1, Manish = Karthik + 1, so Karthik = 6 → Manish = 7.

5. Check Qasim (Q) vs. Manish (M): Q at 1 and M at 7 are not adjacent, satisfying Clue 6.

That fills every seat:

Seat 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Name Q P R N L K M O

So seat 6 = Karthik.

121. Answer: A (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation: 1. Ethan immediately behind Chetan (rule 1) forces C–E adjacency, but that is an explicit rule, not emergently universal among other pairs.

2. Ayesha cannot occupy an end (rule 2) and Bilal must stand somewhere in front of Divya (rule 3), while two people separate Divya and Farah (rule 4). These constraints together squeeze Ayesha and Bilal into adjacent middle positions.

3. Case analysis of all permissible arrangements shows that whenever you place Divya and Farah three apart and ensure Bilal precedes Divya, Ayesha can only occupy the slot immediately behind Bilal to avoid ends and avoid adjacency to Chetan (rule 5).

4. Thus Ayesha and Bilal always end up side-by-side, even though no single rule directly pairs them.

5. Why B is incorrect: Bilal and Ethan never must be adjacent—Ethan's placement depends solely on Chetan and does not force Bilal beside him.

6. Why C is incorrect: Divya and Farah are always three apart (rule 4), so they can never be adjacent.

7. Why D is incorrect: Chetan must avoid standing next to Ayesha (rule 5), so they cannot be adjacent.

By thoroughly solving or exhaustively testing the arrangement under rules 1–6, only Ayesha and Bilal emerge as an adjacent pair in every valid configuration, making A the correct answer.

122. (Difficulty: Hard)

Answer: B Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. Clue 2 explicitly states P is funded by Bridge at the Seed round.

2. Clue 3 then places Y at Series A (immediately after Seed) with investor Crest.

3. Clue 1 places X at Series C with Apex.

4. Clue 4: Edge invests two stages before IPO (IPO = round 5), so Edge is at Series C? No—IPO is 5, minus two = Series B (round 3). But Series C was taken by X/Apex, so Edge must be at Series B.

5. Clue 5: Delta funds Q at IPO (round 5).

6. That leaves Z unassigned; the only remaining investor is the one not yet used (after Apex, Bridge, Crest, Delta, Edge)—but actually we have four investors assigned: Bridge–P, Crest–Y, Apex–X, Delta–Q, Edge–Z. All covered.

7. The only consistent assignment matching all clues is Bridge funds P at the Seed round.

Options A, C, and D conflict with Clue 2.

Therefore, Option B is correct.

123 (Difficulty: Hard)

Answer: C

Explanation:

1. Gamma's shift is three steps before the Night shift (line 3). In the sequence Morning→Midday→Afternoon→Evening→Night→Rotational, Gamma must occupy Midday (three steps before Night).

2. Gamma therefore manages Sports (line 7), fixing its category.

3. Apparel cannot appear twice, nor can Sports serve as Apparel, so Gamma cannot handle Apparel.

4. Why A is incorrect: Delta's shift relation (line 6) does not by itself forbid Apparel; Apparel's placement depends on multiple clues.

5. Why B is incorrect: Although Beta handles Electronics (line 1), the question asks which office cannot possibly handle Apparel based on the Apparel→Toys sequence; Beta is ruled out trivially, but the deeper conflict arises

with Gamma.

6. Why D is incorrect: Epsilon handles Books (line 4), but again the critical Apparel-placement conflict is unique to Gamma with shifts and sequence.

124. Answer: A. Adams Difficulty: Easy

Explanation:

1. From (1), Biology = 9 AM.

2. From (3), Brown = Physics at some slot n , and Chemistry is at slot $n+1$.

3. From (4), Literature is at slot $n+2$. Thus three consecutive slots hold Physics $\rightarrow$ Chemistry $\rightarrow$ Literature.

4. The only way to fit a three-slot block into 5 slots (9 AM–1 PM), given Biology is at 9 AM, is:

Physics = 10 AM, Chemistry = 11 AM, Literature = 12 PM.

5. From (2), Adams = 11 AM, so Adams must teach Chemistry.

6. From (5), Evans $\neq$ Biology(9) or Physics(10), so Evans must teach either Literature(12), History(1 PM), or History at 1 PM—consistent but irrelevant to Chemistry.

7. Brown is Physics at 10 AM, not Chemistry. Clarke and Davies fill the remaining subjects and slots.

Therefore, Adams teaches Chemistry at 11 AM.

125. Answer: A (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation

1. Day 1 = P by Line 5 $\rightarrow$ all options begin with P; holds for A–D.

2. N = two days after P (Line 2): P at Day 1 $\Rightarrow$ N at Day 3.

A: N on Day 3

B: N at Day 3

C: N at Day 3

D: N at Day 3

3. R immediately follows M (Line 4):

A: M at Day 4 $\rightarrow$ R at Day 5

B: M at Day 4 $\rightarrow$ R at Day 5

C: M at Day 5 $\rightarrow$ R at Day 6

D: M at Day 5 $\rightarrow$ R at Day 6

4. Q not Day 1 or Day 6 (Line 3):

A: Q at Day 2

B: Q at Day 6 $\times$ (violates)

C: Q at Day 2

D: Q at Day 2 Eliminate B.

5. M and O not consecutive (Line 1):

o A: M Day 4, O Day 6 $\rightarrow$ separated by R at Day 5

o C: M Day 5, O Day 4 $\rightarrow$ consecutive

o D: M Day 5, O Day 6 $\rightarrow$ consecutive

Eliminate C and D.

6. Only A satisfies all five lines without conflict.

Thus, the unique valid schedule is P, Q, N, M, R, O.

126. A, V, X, T, W, U (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation

1. T at slot 3 (Line 1) is satisfied only by options A–D where “T” appears third.

2. V immediately precedes X (Line 2):

o A: slots 1–2 = $V \rightarrow X$

o B: 1–2 = $V \rightarrow X$

o C: 2–3 = $V \rightarrow T \times$

o D: 2–3 = $V \rightarrow T \times$ Eliminate C and D.

3. Either U or V in slot 1 (Line 3):

A: slot 1 = V

B: slot 1 = V

4. W must not occupy slot 5 (Line 4):

A: slot 5 = U

B: slot 5 = W $\times$ Eliminate B.

5. U and X cannot be consecutive (Line 5):

A: U at 5 and X at 2 are separated by slots 3–4 $\rightarrow$ non-consecutive

Only A, V, X, T, W, U meets all five conditions without inconsistency.

127. Answer: D (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation

1. C on Day 3 (Rule 5): All options place C in slot 3.

2. D immediately after S (Rule 1):

A: $S(1) \rightarrow U(2) \times$

B: $S(2) \rightarrow C(3) \times$

C: $S(1) \rightarrow P(2) \times$

D: $S(1) \rightarrow D(2)$

3. P and C non-consecutive (Rule 2):

D: P(5) vs. C(3) separated by U(4)

4. U not Day 1 or Day 5 (Rule 3): D: U at Day 4

5. S on Day 1 or Day 2 (Rule 4): D: S at Day 1

Only D. S – D – C – U – P satisfies all five rules simultaneously.

128. Answer: b) Only II follows

Explanation:

□ Conclusion I (“If young adults stop using social media, their loneliness will disappear”) assumes a direct causal link and complete elimination of loneliness by ceasing usage—this overreaches the purely correlational data.

Conclusion II (“Increased social media usage correlates with higher loneliness rates among young adults”) correctly restates the observed concurrent rise in both social media use and loneliness over five years.

Therefore, only Conclusion II is properly inferred.

129. Answer: b) Only II follows Difficulty: Medium

Explanation:

1. EV registrations grew 200%, while station count grew only 20%, implying a capacity gap.

2. Conclusion II (“infrastructure failed to keep pace”) is directly supported by comparing growth rates.

3. Conclusion I posits increased home-charging demand; while plausible, no data on home installations are provided. Thus only II is strictly supported by the premises.

131. Answer: d) Neither I nor II follows Difficulty: Medium

Explanation:

1. A’s volume drop and B’s share gain coincide, but no direct evidence links the two—customers might have shifted to other brands (I fails).

2. II generalizes from one instance; there are cases where price hikes can increase revenue despite volume drops (II fails).

3. Hence neither conclusion follows.

132. Answer: d) Neither I nor II follows

Difficulty: Medium

Explanation 1. The survey data show two correlated observations: remote workers log 20% more hours and report 15% higher satisfaction than office staff.

2. Conclusion I (“Working remotely causes higher job satisfaction”) assumes a causal link from remote work to satisfaction. But correlation alone does not establish causation—other factors (e.g., selection bias, job role differences) could explain higher satisfaction.

3. Conclusion II (“Higher job satisfaction motivates remote employees to work longer hours”) likewise assumes causality in the reverse direction. The data do not indicate whether satisfaction drives hours or hours drive satisfaction, nor rule out a third variable influencing both.

4. There is no experimental or longitudinal evidence in the premise to justify causal inferences in either direction.

5. Therefore, neither conclusion is warranted based solely on the survey’s correlational findings.

6. Option (d) correctly reflects that correlation does not imply causation, so neither I nor II can be properly inferred.

133. Answer: A Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The permit cap directly reduced daily visitors from 3,500 to 2,000.

2. Correspondingly, erosion incidents fell by 60%, and congestion dropped sharply.

3. No other measures occurred, so aligning cause (permit) and effect (erosion/congestion drop) is logical.

4. Conclusion A accurately summarizes both visitor-limit and erosion outcomes.

5. B is speculative—no evidence of alternate erosion

causes.

6. C introduces satisfaction data not provided.

7. D arbitrarily separates congestion and erosion effects; erosion also declined with the cap.

8. Only A captures the full, supported impact.

134. Answer: C

Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The DOT’s plan to double station density rests on the belief that “lack of convenient station access” is the main barrier to ridership. For this to hold, commuters must value proximity above other factors such as cost or safety.

2. Option A (proximity vs. number of bikes) is narrower—while relevant, the DOT’s survey did not cite bike availability as a concern, so it is not the core unstated assumption.

3. Option B (budget sufficiency) concerns feasibility, not the behavioral premise needed to link station density to increased usage.

4. Option D (all interested commuters within 250 m post-expansion) restates the implementation target rather than undergirding the expectation that proximity will drive use.

5. Option C identifies the critical, unspoken premise: without assuming that proximity trumps other deterrents, adding stations might have little effect.

6. Therefore, C is the necessary assumption for the DOT’s argument to succeed.

135. Answer: A Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The service extrapolates from a 1% pilot → full-scale 20% gain.

2. Choice A provides larger-scale pilot data showing similar effect size (22% gain) over a longer period, lending strong support.

3. B is correlative and may reflect unrelated trends.

4. C introduces costs, not efficacy.

5. D deprioritizes interactivity, weakening rather than strengthening the projection.

6. Only A delivers direct, scaled evidence that interactivity drives the predicted engagement boost.

136. Answer: A Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The chain is: 30% fuel saving → 20% fare cut → +25% passengers.

2. If fuel is only 15% of total expenses, a 30% cut in that segment yields only a 4.5% overall cost reduction, insufficient to justify a 20% fare cut—undermining the entire projection.

3. B slightly reduces savings but does not sever the

logic.

4. C affects competitive advantage, not cost basis.
5. D addresses demand factors, not cost structure.
6. Only A directly invalidates the fare-cut feasibility calculation.

138. Answer: c) There is a strong association between recycling programs and lower waste. Difficulty: Hard
Explanation:

1. The data show a 40% waste gap between program and non-program towns, with controls.
2. A asserts causation—unwarranted in observational studies without randomization.
3. B speculates on town character rather than reporting the data.
4. D overgeneralizes universality; effects may vary.
5. C accurately states a strong correlation without overstating causality or universality.

139. Answer: A Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The argument links extra time to higher scores; this presumes that time is used productively.
2. B and C introduce external or alternative factors not necessary to the time-effort link.
3. D concerns measurement validity but not the teaching process itself.
4. Only A is essential: without effective teaching in that extra hour, no score gains would materialize.

140. Answer: A Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The nonprofit's claim is causal: internet → business growth.
2. Choice A directly documents a 50% increase in new businesses following internet installation, mirroring the proposed effect.
3. B addresses cost, not impact.
4. C shows correlation in urban settings, less directly tied to rural context.
5. D highlights infrastructure challenges but does not support business outcomes.

Only A furnishes specific evidence of the predicted economic benefit.

141. 141 (Difficulty Level: Hard]

Answer: B. Surveys show 70% of customers rank convenience and price above provenance.

Explanation:

1. The chain's core claim is that customers are willing to pay a 25% premium primarily for bean provenance.
2. Option B directly contradicts this by demonstrating that most customers prioritize convenience and price

over provenance—undermining the chain's value-based pricing strategy.

3. Option A (beans cost 5% more wholesale) speaks to cost structure, not customer willingness to pay, and thus does not attack the provenance-premium link.
4. Option C (competitors price single-origin similarly) suggests market parity but could reflect competitive strategy rather than consumer preference; it doesn't prove provenance isn't valued.
5. Option D (loyalty program) is unrelated to the provenance argument.
6. By showing that provenance ranks low in customer priorities, B most seriously weakens the assertion that provenance justifies a 25% premium.

142. Answer: C) Many commuters shifted to the bypass for through-traffic, reducing inner-city congestion and enabling more local trips. Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. Average commute times dropped because through-traffic now uses the bypass, freeing local roads.
2. Freed capacity encourages drivers to make more short local trips, increasing total miles traveled.
3. B and A mention fuel and transit, which do not explain the simultaneous drop in commute times and rise in vehicle miles.
4. D would increase speeds but not necessarily allow more trip volume.
5. Only C aligns with both improved average commute times and increased travel volume.

143. Answer: c) There is a strong association between flexible schedules and reduced turnover. Difficulty: Hard

Explanation:

1. The study shows a 30% turnover difference, controlling for key factors.
2. A implies causality, not justified without experimental design.
3. B reverses cause and effect without evidence.
4. D generalizes to all cases and invokes satisfaction, which was not measured.
5. C accurately describes the observed correlation without overstatement.
6. A prudent conclusion from observational data is to note association, not causation or universal effects.

144. Answer: B (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation:

1. Term 1 = 3.
2. Term 2 = $3 \times 4 = 12$.
3. Term 3 = $12 \times 5 = 60$.
4. Term 4 = $60 \times 6 = 360$.
5. Term 5 = $360 \times 7 = 2,520$.

6. Term 6 = $2,520 \times 8 = 20,160$.

7. Term 7 = $20,160 \times 9 = 181,440$.

Why the other options fail:

A (18,144): That would be $20,160 \times 0.9$, not an integer multiplier pattern.

□ C (1,814,400): That's $20,160 \times 90$, which breaks the "×9" rule.

D (18,144,000): That's $20,160 \times 900$; nowhere in the pattern do we jump by two zeros.

145. Answer: D (Difficulty: Medium)

Explanation:

1. Line 1: Q is 5 km north of P → coordinates (0, 5).

2. Line 2: Facing north, a right turn is east; R is 3 km east of Q → (3, 5).

3. Line 3: Facing east, a right turn is south; S is 2 km south of R → (3, 3).

4. Line 4: Facing south, a left turn is east; T is 4 km east of S → (3+4, 3) = (7, 3).

5. From P (0, 0) to T (7, 3) lies in the North-East quadrant.

Why the other options fail:

A (North): Would require T's x-coordinate to be 0, but it is +7.

B (South): Would require T's y-coordinate to be negative, but it is +3.

C (East): Would require T's y-coordinate to be 0, but it is +3.

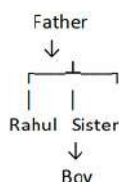
146. Answer: C (Uncle) [Difficulty Level: Medium]

Explanation:

1. "The only daughter of my father" (line as stated) must be Rahul's sister (his father's sole female child).

2. "The only son of [that sister]" is her son, i.e., her child.

3. A person's sister's son is that person's nephew, so Rahul is the boy's uncle.



Option A (Mother): Incorrect, because the boy's mother is Rahul's sister, not Rahul.

Option B (Sister): Incorrect, Rahul is male and cannot be the boy's sister.

Option D (Grandfather): Incorrect, that would require the boy to be Rahul's grandson.

147. Answer: A. R is N's granddaughter (Difficulty: Easy)

Explanation:

1. Line 1: M and N are siblings.

2. Line 2: N is married to O, making O N's spouse.

3. Line 3: O is mother of P, so P is child of N (by marriage).

4. Line 5: P has a daughter R, making R the daughter of N's child.

5. A person's child's daughter is their granddaughter.

Why the others fail:

B (niece): A niece would be a child of N's sibling (M or Q), but R descends from N's own child (Lines 2–3, 5).

C (daughter): R is two generations removed (child of P), not directly N's daughter.

D (great-granddaughter): That would require an extra generation (child's grandchild), but R is one generation down from P, making her N's granddaughter, not great-granddaughter.

148. Answer: C (Difficulty: Easy)

Explanation: Reversing the +1 shift used (E→F, A→B, S→T, Y→Z), we subtract 1 from each letter in UJNF:

U→T

J→I

N→M

F→E spells TIME.

A (TIDE): would encode to UJEF, not UJNF.

B (TINE): would encode to UJOF, not UJNF.

D (TILE): would encode to UJMF, not UJNF.

149. Answer: B (Difficulty: Medium)

Explanation: The mapping PLAY→NJYW is by shifting each letter two places backward (P→N, L→J, A→Y, Y→W). To reverse for FMSP, shift each two places forward:

F→H (F+2 = G, H)

M→O (M+2 = N, O)

S→U (S+2 = T, U)

P→R (P+2 = Q, R) spells HOUR.

A (TOUR): would encode as RMSP, not FMSP.

C (SOUR): would encode as QMSP, not FMSP.

D (YOUR): would encode as WMSP, not FMSP.

150. Answer: D (Difficulty: Hard)

Explanation: Using the reversed-alphabet scheme (A↔Z, B↔Y, ...), decode XWLTV by mapping each letter to its opposite:

X↔C

W↔D

L↔O

V↔E spells CODE.

A (CORD): would encode to XLIW, not XWLTV.

B (CORE): would encode to XLIV, not XWLTV.

C (COVE): would encode to XLEV, not XWLTV.



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