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*"Gurukul for CLAT &
AILET"*

THE ARAVALLI

100m



CLAT Tathya

JANUARY 2026

NPLC's TOP 10 GLORY 2025&26

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

AIR

4

CLAT 2026



Arshnoor Singh

AIR

2

AILET 2025



Chaitanya Ghosh

AIR

2

CLAT 2025



Daiwik Agarwala

AIR

4

CLAT 2025



Aditya Gautam
Ankhad

AIR

4

AILET 2026



Siddhant Rohit



REAL MENTORSHIP. REAL RESULTS.



NPLC's TOP PERFORMERS 2026



AIR 04, CLAT



Arshnoor Singh



AIR 04, AILET



Siddhant Rohit



AIR 22, AILET



Aryan Gupta



AIR 30, CLAT



Aarav Sachdeva



AIR 43, AILET



Nandini Gupta



AIR 69, AILET



Yamya Alag



AIR 74, AILET



Samarth Kumar



AIR 77, AILET



Sabhyata Singh



AIR 86, AILET



Medhini Srinath

YE POSTER NAHI, PROOF HAI!



NPLC's TOP PERFORMERS 2025



AIR 02, AILET



Chaitanya Ghosh



AIR 02, CLAT



Daiwik Agarwala



AIR 04, CLAT



Aditya Ankhad



AIR 6, AILET



Dhruv Kamath



AIR 10, AILET



Vidisha Singh



AIR 24, AILET



Samyuktha Kovilakath



AIR 30, AILET



Goohika Joshi



AIR 51, AILET



Aditya Mehta



AIR 78, AILET



Yutika Kumar

YE POSTER NAHI, PROOF HAI!



NISHANT PRAKASH LAW CLASSES

"Gurukul for CLAT & AILET"

Founded in 2011, Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) has earned the reputation of being the 'Gurukul for CLAT'—a space where commitment, discipline, and mentorship come together to build India's finest legal minds. Often referred to as the 'Super 30 of CLAT', NPLC is not just a coaching institute—it's a movement for serious law aspirants.

What makes NPLC truly unique is its strictly limited intake—only 90 students offline and 30 online each year. With batch sizes of just 25, every student is thoughtfully selected to ensure they are not just coached, but personally mentored. This one-of-its-kind model helps create a tightly-knit academic environment where no student is left behind, and every performance is tracked, sharpened, and elevated.

Since its inception, NPLC has consistently delivered extraordinary results, with a CLAT success rate of over 90% every year, and most recently, rank 4 in both CLAT & AILET 2026. In 2025, 5 of the top 10 ranks in CLAT & AILET were from NPLC. We do not offer test series, correspondence courses, or shortcut-based programs—only full-time classroom learning, because we believe greatness is built with time, discipline, and relentless hard work.

At NPLC, students are not identified by roll numbers but by their potential—and we make it our mission to ensure they live up to it.

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Personalized Mentorship



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1:15 Mentor - Student
Ratio



Only 90 intakes per year
Offline + 30 Students Online

NAVIGATE.
PREPARE.
LEAD.
CONQUER.

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

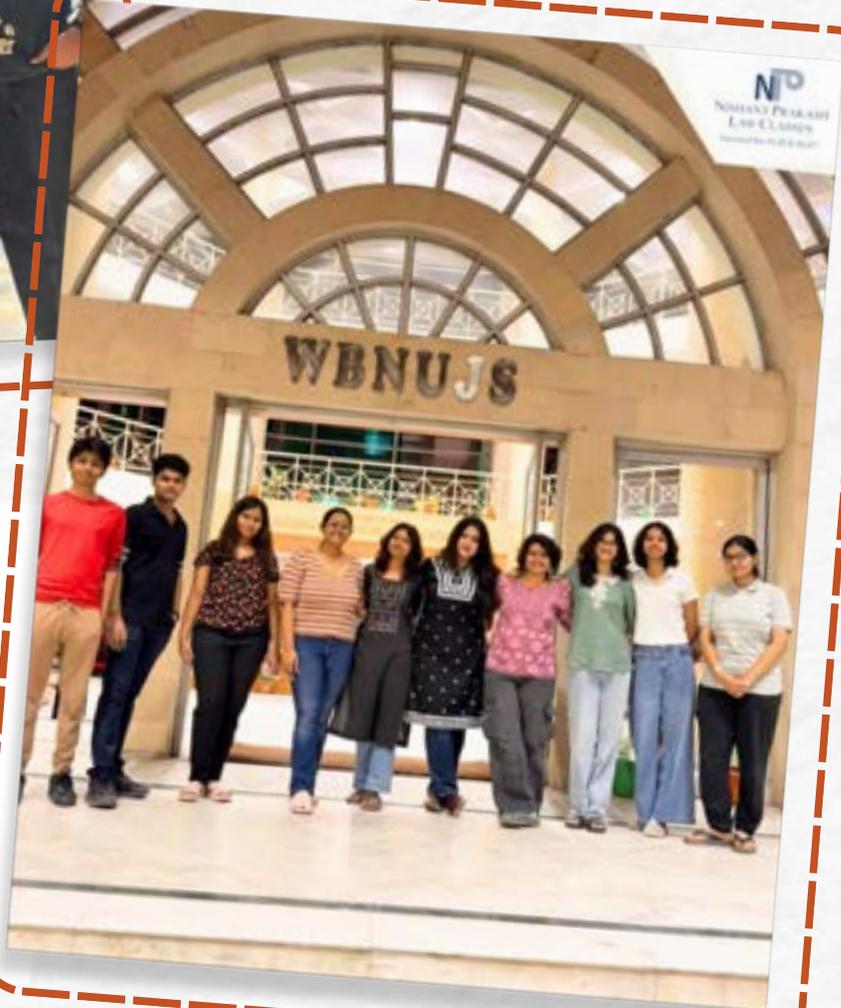
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Dhruv Kamath
Aditya Ankhad**

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



Their Next Chapter



NLU - Delhi

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Amoolya Kapani, Vidisha
Singh, Goohika Joshi,
Masirah Hussain, Krish
Walia, Chaitanya Ghosh,
Aditya Mehta**



NLU - Jodhpur

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Khushi Gaur
Maahi Yadav
Shefali Talwar
Kaushtubh Anand**

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1 SANCHAR SAATHI APP CONTROVERSY

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** issued a directive mandating the pre-installation of the **Sanchar Saathi** application on all mobile phones manufactured or imported for use in India, citing “telecom cyber security” and the need to curb counterfeit devices as stated rationales.
- The directive’s **Clause 7(b)** requires manufacturers to ensure that the application is “readily visible” and that its functionalities are “not disabled or restricted,” and it sets a compliance timeline of 90 days.
- Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia verbally clarified on December 2, 2025, that the application is “optional” and that users can delete it, creating a recorded divergence between the directive’s written requirements and the minister’s public assurance.

What is Sanchar Saathi App?

- The application is described as a citizen-centric platform designed by the DoT to strengthen mobile security and enable users to protect themselves from rising cyber fraud.
- The platform’s features include services to track, block, and trace lost or stolen phones through International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) services and to verify all mobile connections issued in a user’s name while reporting suspicious or forged Know Your Customer (KYC) entries.
- The Chakshu feature is described as enabling reporting of fraud calls, Short Message Service (SMS) messages, WhatsApp messages, and “digital arrest” scams.
- The platform is described as verifying the genuineness of mobile handsets to help prevent counterfeit devices in the market, and it is also described as enabling reporting of international spoofed calls disguised as +91 numbers.



Directive design, Consent Mechanics, and User Control Claims

- A stated concern is that pre-installation changes the consent dynamic from opting in to opting out, because users receive the application by default rather than by actively choosing to download it from an app store.
- The “**default effect**” is described as making it less likely that users will take active steps to exercise control, including deletion, compared to a scenario where a user initiates installation.
- The directive is described as requiring that users should not be able to delete the application, while the minister’s verbal statement described the application as optional and deletable, and the coexistence of these positions is described as creating ambiguity around **user consent**.
- The application is described as seeking permissions for location, camera, and call logs, which is cited as relevant to privacy and surveillance concerns.

- The platform is also described as voluntary and capable of being activated or deleted at any time, and as operating only with user consent, creating a direct tension with the directive’s pre-installation requirements as described.

Privacy standards in constitutional doctrine and the cited test

- The directive is assessed against **KS Puttaswamy (2017)**, which affirmed privacy as a fundamental right and articulated a three-fold test for state intervention into privacy consisting of legality, necessity, and proportionality.
- It is stated that the mandate lacks a statutory basis and that an executive order is being used to impose the requirement, with an accompanying claim that this fails the necessity and proportionality requirements
- It is stated that curtailment of fundamental rights must be “done by law” and not by notifications issued under rules, and that surveillance exercises require legislative oversight rather than being executed through delegated legislation.
- A parallel is drawn to legal challenges related to Aadhaar, noting that the government ultimately brought in a specific Act to ensure continuation of the scheme.

Surveillance risk arguments and architectural concerns

- A risk described as **function creep** is articulated as the

Bhaskar English

SANCHAR SAATHI

Sanchar Saathi tracks and blocks stolen or lost mobiles

You can report a stolen or lost phone. It can be tracked and blocked.

You can report fraud calls or messages, threats, phishing, etc.

Through a handset’s IMEI number, you can check whether the mobile is genuine or not.

You can find out about all mobile connections or SIMs issued in your name.

You can report international calls coming from Indian numbers.

Source: Sanchar Saathi App

Sanchar Saathi App Interface:

- Sanchar Saathi
- Citizen Centric Service
- Chaksha – Report Suspected Fraud Communication
- Block Your Lost/Stolen Mobile Handset
- Know Mobile Connections in Your Name
- Know Gentleness of Your Mobile Handset
- Report Incoming International Call with Indian Number

- A risk described as **function creep** is articulated as the concern that data collected for one purpose may be used for another over time, and this is linked to the application’s scale and the breadth of permissions described.
- It is stated that even if the stated purpose is accepted, a government-mandated application can create an “architecture for future surveillance,” and that backend use could expand over time to collect more data or use it for undeclared purposes.
- It is stated that the government has less intrusive alternatives, including web portals and SMS services, to verify IMEIs without forcing application installation.
- It is stated that a government-mandated application could become a single point of failure and a vulnerability that could be targeted by hackers.
- It is stated that Access Now has previously raised concerns about amendments to Telecom Cyber Security Rules that expanded the definition of entities the government can regulate, which is described as enabling such regulatory expansion to occur.

Quantitative outcomes & stated performance

- It is stated that the application was launched in January 2025 and had crossed 50 lakh downloads by August 2025.
- It is stated that, till August 2025, more than 37.28 lakh lost or stolen mobile devices had been blocked and 22.76 lakh had been traced.
- It is also stated that, since launch, the application has blocked over 42 lakh stolen or lost devices, helped trace 26 lakh phones, and enabled the return of 7.23 lakh phones, reflecting a second set of reported outcome figures presented alongside the earlier till-August counts.

LEGAL ALIGNMENT CLAIMS UNDER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DATA PROTECTION LAWS

The platform is stated to adhere to the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act) and the **DPDP Act 2023**, and it is stated to collect minimal data and to share it only when legally required.

It is stated that the directive is being viewed with suspicion in the absence of a data protection regime that commands trust, and the directive is described as arising soon after the release of Digital Personal Data Protection Rules.

It is stated that making the application mandatory and effectively undeletable removes consent as a meaningful choice and violates the spirit of the DPDP Act 2023.

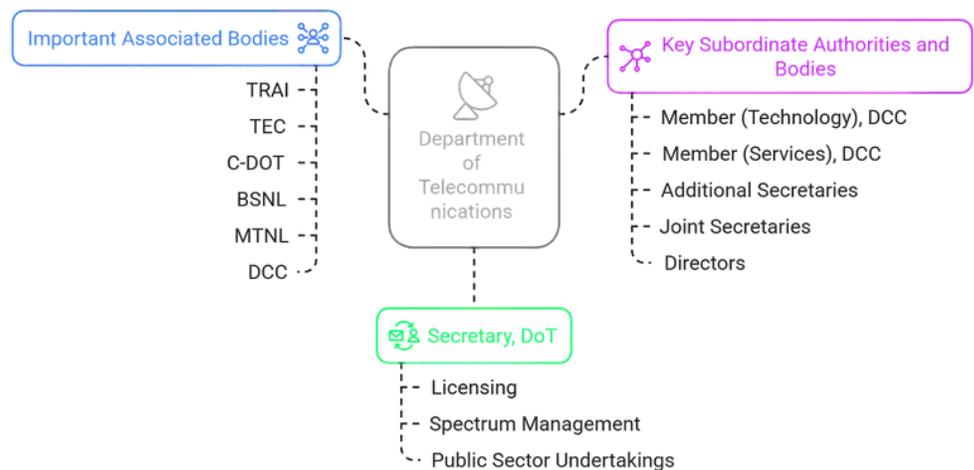
DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT, 2023 AND THE DRAFT RULES DESCRIBED FOR 2025

- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) is described as India's first comprehensive data protection law establishing a legal framework for handling digital personal data while safeguarding privacy and permitting lawful processing.
- The DPDP Act is described as enacted nearly six years after the Supreme Court's 2017 privacy ruling and as inspired by global frameworks such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- The DPDP Act is described as applying to digital personal data processed within India, including data collected digitally or digitised later, and to processing outside India where it is for offering goods or services in India.
- The DPDP Act is described as not applying to personal data used for personal purposes or data made public by the Data Principal or under a legal obligation.
- The DPDP Act is described as requiring consent for lawful purposes, allowing withdrawal of consent, and requiring parental or guardian consent for children or persons with disabilities, with Section 9 described as mandating verifiable parental consent and restricting harmful processing and targeted advertising for minors under 18 years.
- The rights of Data Principals are described as including access to information, correction or deletion, grievance redressal, and nomination of a representative in case of death or incapacity, alongside a duty to avoid false complaints or information with violations punishable up to ₹10,000.
- Data Fiduciary obligations are described as including ensuring accuracy, implementing security safeguards, notifying the Data Protection Board of India (DPBI) and affected individuals in case of a breach, and erasing personal data once the purpose is fulfilled and retention is no longer legally required.
- Significant Data Fiduciaries are described as being designable by the Central Government based on factors including data volume, sensitivity, and risks to rights and national security-related interests, and as being subject to additional duties including appointing a Data Protection Officer, an independent auditor, and conducting impact assessments.
- Exemptions are described as limiting certain rights and obligations (except data security) for specified cases, including notified agencies for security and public order interests, research or statistical purposes, notified categories such as start-ups, enforcement of legal rights and claims, prevention and investigation of offences, judicial or regulatory functions, and processing in India of non-resident data under foreign contract.
- The DPBI is described as established by the Central Government with members appointed for two years and eligible for reappointment, with functions described as monitoring compliance, imposing penalties, handling breach responses, and hearing grievances, and with appeals described as lying to the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).
- Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act is described as amending Section 8(1)(j) of the Right to Information Act (RTI Act) by removing the "larger public interest" test, enabling government bodies to withhold personal information under RTI requests without weighing public benefit by labeling it as personal data.
- The draft DPDP Rules, 2025 are described as permitting certain cross-border data transfers as approved by the government, allowing data retention for up to three years from last interaction or the effective date of rules (whichever is later), and requiring notification to the Data Principal at least 48 hours before erasure.

- The draft DPDP Rules, 2025 are described as permitting certain cross-border data transfers as approved by the government, allowing data retention for up to three years from last interaction or the effective date of rules (whichever is later), and requiring notification to the Data Principal at least 48 hours before erasure.
- The draft DPDP Rules, 2025 are described as providing a “digital by design” DPBI approach for consent mechanisms and grievance redressal, establishing graded responsibilities for lower compliance burdens for start-ups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and recognising higher obligations for Significant Data Fiduciaries.
- The draft DPDP Rules, 2025 are described as treating large digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Amazon, Flipkart, and Netflix as qualifying as Significant Data Fiduciaries, and as enabling consent collection through consent managers with a minimum net worth of ₹2 crore and Indian company status.

Telecom governance bodies and institutional architecture

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is described as established on 20 February 1997 under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, with a mission to create and nurture conditions for telecom growth and to provide a fair and transparent policy environment for competition.

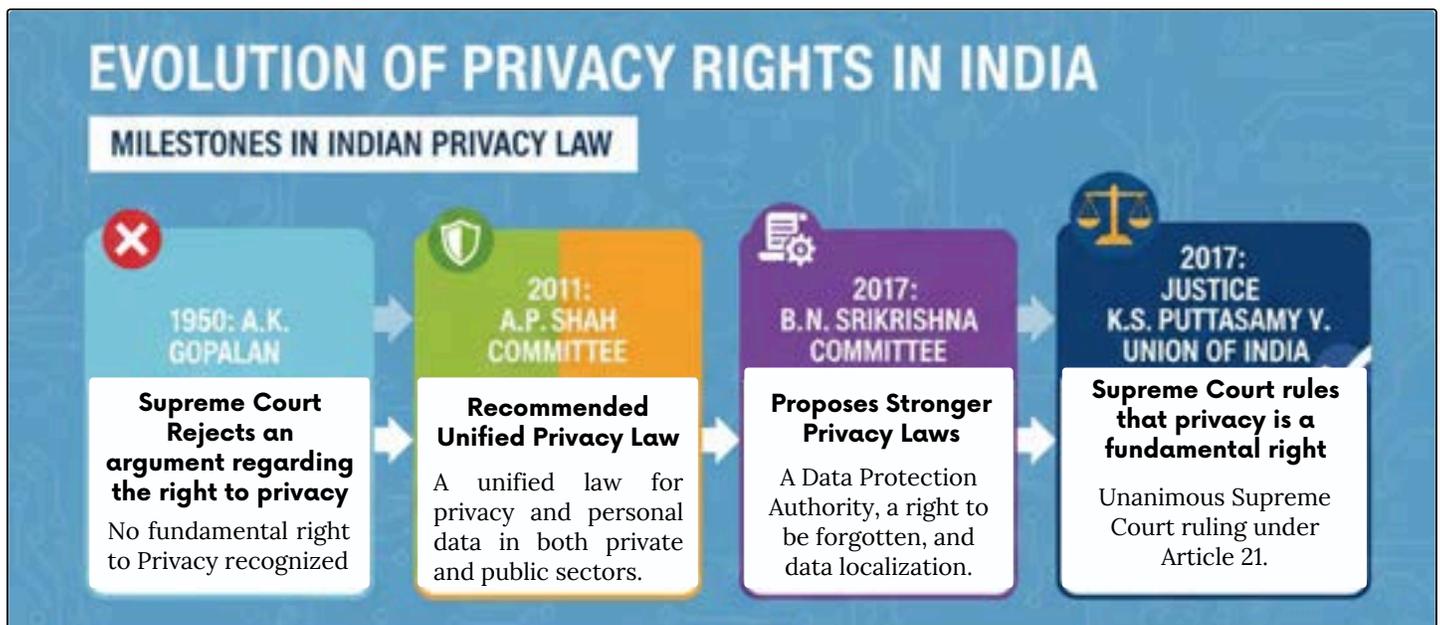


- TRAI is described as regulating telecom services including fixation and revision of tariffs that were earlier vested in the Central Government, and as having its headquarters in New Delhi.
- TRAI is described as consisting of a Chairperson, two whole-time members, and two part-time members appointed by the Government of India, with a tenure of three years or until 65 years of age, whichever is earlier.
- The Chairperson is described as exercising general superintendence and presiding over meetings, and the Central Government is described as empowered to appoint a Vice-Chairperson from among members to act in the Chairperson’s absence.
- The Central Government is described as empowered to remove a TRAI member if the member is adjudged insolvent, convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude, becomes physically or mentally incapable, or abuses position such that continuance is prejudicial to public interest.
- TRAI meeting decisions are described as taken by majority vote of members present, with a casting vote by the Chairperson or presiding member in the event of equality.

Device identity systems and IMEI-linked enforcement described

- An International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number is described as a 15-digit unique number that identifies a device on a mobile network, functioning like a device identity.
- The telecom and customs departments are described as working together to check and record IMEI numbers of handsets entering India.
- IMEI is described as used to verify device identity when a user uses the internet or places a call, and dual-SIM phones are described as having two IMEI numbers, one for each SIM.
- IMEI is described as enabling network providers to track devices in cases of theft or loss, and as enabling carriers to deny network access to reported devices even if a new SIM card is used.
- A Central Equipment Identity Register (CIER) is described as categorising mobile phones based on IMEI status into white, grey, and black lists, with whitelist devices permitted, blacklist devices reported stolen or lost and denied access, and greylist devices described as non-conforming but permitted under supervision.
- The register is described as allowing the DoT to carry out IMEI-based lawful interception.
- In 2017, rules were notified to prevent tampering with IMEI numbers by making such tampering a punishable offence that could also attract a jail term.

Rights-to-privacy trajectory described in Indian jurisprudence



- A.K. Gopalan (1950) is described as a case where the Supreme Court rejected an argument regarding the right to privacy.
- Kharak Singh (1962) is described as the first instance where the Supreme Court granted relief based on privacy, while not formally recognising privacy as a fundamental right at that time.
- The A.P. Shah Committee (2011) is described as recommending comprehensive privacy legislation through a unified law for privacy and personal data in both private and public sectors.
- The B.N. Srikrishna Committee (2017) is described as recommending stronger privacy laws including processing restrictions, a Data Protection Authority, a right to be forgotten, and data localisation.

- Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) v. Union of India (2017) is described as a unanimous Supreme Court ruling that privacy is a fundamental right inherent to life and liberty under Article 21.

International observances and comparative governance references

- World Telecommunication Day is described as celebrated annually since 1969 to mark the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865, and as aimed at raising awareness of telecom's contribution to social and economic development.
- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is described as calling for declaration of May 17 as World Information Society Day, and the ITU is described as combining both observances in 2006 as World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) on May 17.
- The European Union (EU) is described as having the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as a comprehensive personal data protection law recognising privacy as a fundamental right tied to dignity and control over personal information.
- China is described as having a Data Security Law (DSL) requiring business data classification by importance and restricting cross-border transfers, and a Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) granting rights to prevent misuse of personal data.
- The United States is described as lacking a comprehensive privacy law comparable to GDPR and as relying on sector-specific regulations, with government data use governed by broad laws such as the Privacy Act and private-sector rules described as limited and sector-specific.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following government bodies issued the directive mandating the pre-installation of the Sanchar Saathi application on mobile phones in India?
 - (a) Ministry of Information and Technology
 - (b) Department of Telecommunications
 - (c) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
 - (d) National Cyber Security Coordination
2. Which specific clause of the directive mandates that the Sanchar Saathi application must remain visible and fully functional on devices?
 - (a) Clause 5 (a) of directive
 - (b) Clause 6 (c) of directive
 - (c) Clause 7 (b) of directive
 - (d) Clause 9 (d) of directive
3. What is the compliance timeline provided to manufacturers under the DoT directive for implementing the Sanchar Saathi pre-installation requirement?
 - (a) 30 days from official date of notification
 - (b) 60 days from official date of notification
 - (c) 90 days from official date of notification
 - (d) 180 days from official date of notification
4. Which of the following services allows users to track, block, and trace lost or stolen mobile phones on the platform?
 - (a) Location Based Handset Authentication
 - (b) International Mobile Equipment Identity
 - (c) Subscriber Identity Verification Assistance
 - (d) Network Traffic Monitoring and Analytics
5. Which of the following types of communications can be reported using the Chakshu feature of the platform?
 - (a) Fraud calls, SMS messages, and WhatsApp communications
 - (b) Television advertisements and online banner promotions
 - (c) Mobile data speed issues and roaming service failures
 - (d) Internet service outages and broadband connectivity issues
6. What type of scam is explicitly mentioned as reportable under the Chakshu feature?
 - (a) Digital arrest related intimidation and extortion scams
 - (b) Online shopping discount and refund related scams
 - (c) Cryptocurrency investment and trading related scams
 - (d) Employment recruitment and job placement related scams
7. Which of the following constitutional tests is applied to assess the directive under the KS Puttaswamy (2017) judgment?
 - (a) Reasonableness, equality, and natural justice
 - (b) Legality, necessity, and proportionality test
 - (c) Due process, fairness, and public interest
 - (d) Transparency, accountability, and governance
8. What was the approximate time gap between the Supreme Court's 2017 privacy ruling and the enactment of the DPDP Act?
 - (a) about 2 years after the ruling
 - (b) nearly 3 years after the ruling
 - (c) around 4 years after the ruling
 - (d) nearly 6 years after the ruling
9. Which provision of the DPDP Act amends Section 8(1)(j) of the Right to Information Act by removing the "larger public interest" test?
 - (a) Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act
 - (b) Section 21(2) of the DPDP Act
 - (c) Section 36(1) of the DPDP Act
 - (d) Section 52(4) of the DPDP Act
10. What is the numerical structure of an International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number as described?
 - (a) 10-digit identification number for device
 - (b) 12-digit identification number for device
 - (c) 14-digit identification number for device
 - (d) 15-digit identification number for device
11. Which of the following systems categorises mobile phones into white, grey, and black lists based on IMEI status?
 - (a) Device Identification System
 - (b) Mobile Phone Identification System
 - (c) Mobile Phone Classification System
 - (d) Mobile Phone Tracking System

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (a) National Mobile Equipment Verification System
- (b) Telecom Device Authentication Control Mechanism
- (c) Central Equipment Identity Register System
- (d) Unified Telecom Device Monitoring Framework

12. Which of the following Supreme Court cases unanimously declared privacy to be a fundamental right under Article 21?

- (a) Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India case
- (b) Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India
- (c) Justice V.S. Ramaswamy v. State of Madras
- (d) Justice Kharak Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh

13. What is the name of the committee that proposed a unified privacy law for personal data across public and private entities?

- (a) The Justice Verma Committee
- (b) The Justice Lodha Committee
- (c) The J.P. Nandan Committee
- (d) The A.P. Shah Committee

14. Which body originally proposed the observance that later became part of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day?

- (a) The World Summit on the Information Society
- (b) The International Telecommunication Union body
- (c) The United Nations Educational Scientific Council
- (d) The World Economic Forum organisation

15. Which organisation's founding is commemorated by World Telecommunication Day celebrated annually since 1969?

- (a) World Telecommunication Development Organisation
- (b) Global Telecommunication Cooperation Organisation
- (c) International Telecommunication Union Organisation
- (d) Universal Telecommunication Standards Organisation

SOLUTIONS

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

2

50 YEARS OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (BWC)

MISCELLANEOUS

IN FOCUS

- An international conference titled “50 Years of **Biological Weapons Convention**: Strengthening Biosecurity for the Global South” was held at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi, from December 01–02, 2025.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated on December 1, 2025, that the world is not yet adequately prepared to deal with the threat of **bioterrorism** and that biological threats cannot be handled by countries in isolation from international stakeholders.
- The conference was framed around strengthening **Biosecurity for Global South**, with discussions on treaty performance since entry into force, public health governance developments following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the role of international cooperation.

Conference focus and discussion themes

- The conference was organised as an initiative of the Government of India to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Convention’s entry into force, with India described as one of the 189 States Parties.
- The conference aimed to take stock of the Convention’s contribution to international peace and security and to review global developments since its entry into force, especially in public health governance after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The conference included discussions with scientific experts, policy makers, diplomats from different countries, and representatives from international and regional organisations.
- The conference proposed to outline complementarities between the Convention and multilateral export control regimes such as the **Australia Group**.
- The conference placed emphasis on the Global South bearing disproportionate impacts of rapidly evolving biosecurity and biosafety challenges, and it highlighted regional contexts and gaps in existing policy and institutional frameworks.
- The conference underscored the importance of the **One Health approach** for addressing interconnected biosecurity and biosafety challenges, with a stated focus on strengthening international cooperation and biosecurity partnerships globally.
- The conference described new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and synthetic biology as having potential to strengthen preparedness and response to public health emergencies while



also raising concerns regarding misuse, especially from **non-state actors**, and it raised the need for greater regulation and oversight.

CORE TREATY FRAMEWORK AND OBLIGATIONS

What is the BWC?

“Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction”

- Prohibits:
- Development, Production, Acquisition, Transfer, Stockpiling, and Use

Article I: The General Purpose Criterion

Bans **ANY** biological agents or toxins that lack:

✓ Peaceful
✓ Protective
✓ Prophylactic Purpose

Adapts to advancing science

1925

Geneva Protocol
“Use Ban”

1972

Opened for Signature

1974

India Ratified

1975

Entered into Force

Reviewed Every 5 Years

What Are Biological & Toxin Weapons?

Viruses

Bacteria

Fungi

Toxins

Used to cause disease or death to Humans, Animals, or Plants

- The Convention is formally titled “The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction,” and it is stated to prohibit the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling, and use of biological and toxin weapons.

- Article I is described as incorporating the **General Purpose Criterion**, which bans biological agents, toxins, or related materials that lack legitimate peaceful, protective, or prophylactic use, rather than listing specific agents or technologies.
- The Convention opened for signature in 1972 and entered into force in 1975, and India is stated to have ratified it in 1974.
- The Convention is stated to be reviewed every five years to align it with evolving scientific, technological, and security challenges.
- The Convention is stated to supplement the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibited only the use of biological weapons.
- Biological and toxin weapons are described as microorganisms such as viruses, bacteria, and fungi, or toxins produced by living organisms, that are deliberately released to cause disease or death in humans, animals, or plants.
- The Convention is stated to be the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of **Weapons of Mass Destruction**.

Institutional gaps & calls for modernisation

- S. Jaishankar stated that the Convention still lacks basic institutional structures and identified that it has no compliance system, no permanent technical body, and no mechanism to track new scientific developments.
- S. Jaishankar stated that these gaps must be bridged to strengthen confidence and called for the Convention's modernisation.
- The Convention is described as lacking a formal compliance and verification mechanism to ensure member countries follow treaty obligations.
- The Implementation Support Unit is described as handling administrative and coordination tasks without verification powers, leaving the Convention without an enforcement mechanism, unlike the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- The Convention is described as lacking a structured system to track emerging scientific and technological developments, and these gaps are stated to weaken global confidence and reduce collective preparedness against bioweapons.

India's stated implementation posture and proposals

- India is stated to have proposed a **National Implementation Framework** covering high-risk agents, oversight of dual-use research, domestic reporting, and incident management.
- India is stated to be committed to ensuring the non-proliferation of sensitive and dual-use goods and technologies, with this commitment described as supported by a strong legal and regulatory system.
- India's domestic regulatory framework for full implementation is described as including the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro-organisms, Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells Rules, 1989; the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005; and export controls under the Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies list.
- S. Jaishankar described unequal access to vaccines and medicines as not just development issues but as global risks, and he stated that the Global South should be at the centre of preparations to deal with bioweapons.
- S. Jaishankar stated that the Global South is the most vulnerable, has much to gain from stronger biosecurity, and has much to contribute, and he stated that its voice must shape the next 50 years of the Convention.
- S. Jaishankar referenced India's vaccine diplomacy that took shape against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bioterrorism Concept and Risk Profile

- According to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), bioterrorism is described as the deliberate release of harmful biological agents or toxins to cause disease and fear, with the aim of pressuring or influencing governments or civilian populations for political or social objectives.

India's Role in Strengthening Global Biosecurity
IMPLEMENTATION POSTURE & PROPOSALS

"The Global South is the most vulnerable, has much to gain from stronger biosecurity, and has much to contribute."
— S. Jaishankar
Minister of External Affairs, India

India's National Implementation Framework

- High-Risk Agents Management
- Oversight of Dual-Use Research
- Domestic Reporting
- Domestic Reporting
- Incident Management

✓ Ensuring the Non-Proliferation of Sensitive Goods & Technologies
✓ Backed by strong legal and regulatory system

Regulatory Frameworks

- **1989** Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro-organisms, Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells Rules
 - ✓ Laws controlling risky biological agents
- **2005** Weapons of Mass Destruction & their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act
 - ✓ Criminalizes the unlawful handling of WMDs

Export Controls

- Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies

India's Call for Global Equity in Biosecurity

- ✓ Give Global South a seat at the table
Central to preparations against bioweapons
- ✓ End unequal access to vaccines & medicines
Development issue → global risk
- ✓ Shape the next 50 years of the Convention
Strengthen biosecurity for all nations

- Biological threats are described as having high casualty potential because biological agents can spread rapidly, cause mass infections, and overwhelm public health systems.
- COVID-19 is described as having exposed major gaps in global outbreak response, showing how unprepared nations were even for natural pathogens.
- Biological attacks are described as difficult to detect and attribute because many resemble natural outbreaks, making early detection and identification of perpetrators challenging.
- Advances in biotechnology, synthetic biology, and genetic engineering are described as creating dual-use research risks that can be misused to create more potent or resistant pathogens.
- Biological weapons are described as low-cost, high-impact threats compared to nuclear or chemical weapons, making them attractive to non-state actors.
- Bioterrorism is described as capable of psychological and economic disruption through fear, misinformation, and public panic that can destabilise societies, disrupt supply chains, and damage economies.
-

Related multilateral biodiversity instruments and the COP-15 chronology

- The Convention on Biological Diversity is described as a legally binding treaty to conserve biodiversity that has been in force since 1993, and its Conference of Parties is described as the governing body of the Convention.

- The Convention on Biological Diversity is described as a legally binding treaty to conserve biodiversity that has been in force since 1993, and its Conference of Parties is described as the governing body of the Convention.
- The 10th Conference of Parties at Nagoya, Japan, in 2010 is described as adopting the **Nagoya Protocol** on access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation, including coverage of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.
- The 10th Conference of Parties is also described as adopting a ten-year framework for action known as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including 20 targets collectively known as the Aichi Targets for biodiversity.
- The 15th Conference of Parties is described as having Phase I held in Kunming, China, in October 2021 with the theme “Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth,” and it is described as linked with the Kunming Biodiversity Fund.
- The 15th Conference of Parties is described as having Phase II held in Montreal, Canada, where the **Kunming-Montreal Framework** was adopted as the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with four goals and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030.
- The post-2020 framework is described as including a “30 by 30” target to restore 30% degraded ecosystems and protect at least 30% of the world’s lands, oceans, and coastal areas by 2030.
- It is stated that no single country met all 20 Aichi targets (which expired in 2020) within its own borders.
- Selected Conference of Parties milestones are described as including COP 1 (1994) at Nassau, Bahamas, where 29 December was proposed as International Day for Biological Diversity, and COP 5 (2000) at Nairobi, Kenya, where the United Nations General Assembly adopted 22 May as International Day for Biological Diversity.
- An extraordinary meeting (EXCOP 1) is described as occurring at Cartagena, Colombia (February 1999) and Montreal, Canada (January 2000), and it is described as associated with adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as a supplementary agreement to the Convention.

Weapons of mass destruction and treaty landscape

- Weapons of mass destruction are described as weapons capable of inflicting death and destruction on such a massive scale and so indiscriminately that their presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat.
- Modern weapons of mass destruction are described as nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons, collectively referred to as NBC weapons.
- The term “weapons of mass destruction” is described as being in currency since at least 1937, when it was used to describe massed formations of bomber aircraft.
- Efforts to control the spread of weapons of mass destruction are described as being reflected in international agreements including the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968, the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972, and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993.
- India is described as not having signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, while being a signatory to both the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following was the central theme around which the conference discussions were framed?
 - Strengthening global health financing mechanisms
 - Advancing biosecurity for Global South nations
 - Reforming international humanitarian law systems
 - Enhancing digital surveillance for health security
- What approach was highlighted by the conference as essential for addressing interconnected biosecurity and biosafety challenges?
 - One Health integrated multidisciplinary approach
 - Sector-specific containment and isolation strategy
 - National security-centric biological risk model
 - Technology-driven disease surveillance framework
- What is the defining feature of Article I as described in the context of the Convention?
 - Listing prohibited biological agents and toxins
 - Applying the General Purpose Criterion principle
 - Restricting biotechnology research and innovation
 - Regulating commercial pharmaceutical production
- How frequently is the Convention reviewed to keep pace with evolving scientific and security challenges?
 - Every 3 years through review meetings
 - Every 4 years through expert consultations
 - Every 5 years through review conferences
 - Every 10 years through treaty amendments
- What earlier international instrument is the Convention described as supplementing?
 - 1900 Hague Conventions regulating warfare
 - 1924 Chemical Weapons Convention banning
 - 1922 Geneva Conventions on humanitarian law
 - 1925 Geneva Protocol on biological weapon use
- Which of the following is described as the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destruction?
 - Biological Weapons Convention treaty
 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
 - Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
 - Chemical Weapons Convention treaty
- What is bioterrorism according to the definition provided by INTERPOL?
 - Accidental laboratory release of pathogens gases
 - Spread of disease due to climate change action
 - Use of chemicals for economic sabotage action
 - Deliberate release of harmful biological agents
- Which of the following outcomes is associated with the 10th Conference of Parties held at Nagoya in 2010?
 - Establishment of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund
 - Adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework
 - Creation of a biodiversity compliance tribunal
 - Adoption of Nagoya Protocol and Aichi Targets
- Which location hosted Phase II of the 15th Conference of Parties where the Kunming-Montreal Framework was adopted?

(a) Nairobi, Kenya	(b) Bonn, Germany
(c) Montreal, Canada	(d) Kunming, Japan
- Which date was proposed at COP 1 (1994) held in Nassau, Bahamas, as the International Day for Biological Diversity?

(a) 29 December	(b) 22 November
(c) 05 January	(d) 08 September
- Which of the following agreements was adopted in association with the extraordinary meeting (EXCOP 1) held at Cartagena and Montreal?
 - Nagoya Protocol on Genetic Resources
 - Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change
 - Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
 - Montreal Protocol on Biodiversity
- Which country follows the position of remaining outside the NPT while adhering to international conventions banning biological and chemical weapons?

(a) India	(b) Iran
(c) China	(d) Israel
- What was the official theme associated with the Kunming phase of COP-15 linked to the Kunming Biodiversity Fund?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (a) Environmental Cooperation: Strengthening Global Biodiversity Action
- (b) Nature and Humanity: Advancing Shared Ecological Responsibility
- (c) Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth
- (d) Protecting Ecosystems: Collective Commitments for Sustainable Living

SOLUTIONS

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

3 23RD INDIA–RUSSIA ANNUAL SUMMIT

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi hosted President of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin for a State visit to India on December 04–05, 2025, for the 23rd Annual Summit between India and Russia.
- A joint statement issued on December 05, 2025, reaffirmed the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia and noted that 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership established in October 2000.
- India and Russia exchanged sixteen agreements across defence, trade, economy, healthcare, academics, culture and media, and the leaders co-chaired the India–Russia Business Forum in New Delhi.

Strategic partnership framing and diplomatic engagement

- The leaders described India–Russia relations as characterised by mutual trust, respect for each other’s core national interests and strategic convergence, and as an anchor of global peace and stability based on equal and indivisible security.
- The relationship was recorded as spanning political and strategic, military and security, trade and investment, energy, science and technology, nuclear, space, cultural, education and humanitarian cooperation, alongside stated efforts to explore new avenues while strengthening traditional areas.
- The leaders noted continued intensification of contacts since the last summit, including meetings on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan and the 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Tianjin.
- The joint statement recorded the 26th session of the India–Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC) and the 22nd session of the India–Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Military and Military–Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) as key institutional tracks co-chaired at ministerial level.
- The joint statement listed high-level visits and dialogues, including visits from the Indian side by the Lok Sabha Speaker, External Affairs Minister, Raksha Mantri, and other ministers and officials, and from the Russian side by the Chairman of the State Duma, deputy prime ministers, and ministers, along with National Security Advisor-level dialogue, Foreign Office Consultations, consultations on United Nations issues, and a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism.
- The leaders welcomed the opening of two Consulates General of India in Yekaterinburg and Kazan and looked forward to early operationalisation to strengthen inter-regional cooperation.



Trade, investment, and economic coordination

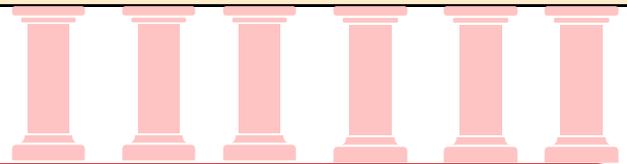
- The leaders reaffirmed an ambition to expand bilateral trade in a balanced and sustainable manner, including by increasing India's exports to Russia, strengthening industrial cooperation, and forging new technological and investment partnerships, especially in advanced high-technology areas.
- The leaders welcomed adoption of **Programme 2030**, titled the Programme for the Development of Strategic Areas of India-Russia Economic Cooperation till 2030.
- The leaders recorded ongoing work on a Free Trade Agreement on goods between India and the Eurasian Economic Union and directed intensification of negotiations, while also directing intensified efforts toward an agreement on promotion and protection of investments.
- The sides underlined the importance of an open, inclusive, transparent and non-discriminatory multilateral trade system with the World Trade Organization at its core and identified steps such as addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers, removing logistics bottlenecks, promoting connectivity, and ensuring smooth payment mechanisms.
- The joint statement recorded a revised bilateral trade target of USD 100 billion by 2030 and identified insurance and reinsurance solutions and regular business interaction as elements for timely achievement of the target.
- Russia and India agreed to continue jointly developing systems of bilateral settlements using national currencies and to continue consultations on interoperability of national payment systems, financial messaging systems, and central bank digital currency platforms.
- The sides welcomed steps to ensure long-term supply of fertilisers to India and discussed the potential establishment of joint ventures in this area.



- The sides welcomed signing of agreements related to mobility of skilled workers.
- The Russian side welcomed participation of Indian delegations in the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum (June 2025) and the Eastern Economic Forum (September 2025), and both sides noted contributions of India-Russia business dialogue organised on the sidelines of these forums.

Quantitative trade and investment details were stated as follows, alongside sectoral composition of trade:

- Bilateral trade was stated to have reached USD 68.7 billion in Financial Year 2024–25, driven largely by energy imports by India.
- The stated targets included USD 100 billion in trade by 2030 and USD 50 billion in mutual investments by 2025.
- India's exports were stated to include pharmaceuticals, chemicals, iron and steel, and marine products, while India's imports were stated to include crude oil and petroleum products, sunflower oil, fertilisers, coking coal, and precious stones and metals.
- Official data was stated to show India's exports to Russia in Financial Year 2024–25 at USD 4.88 billion and imports at USD 63.84 billion.



Energy cooperation as a pillar

- The sides described energy cooperation as a significant pillar of the strategic partnership and noted current and potential cooperation between Indian and Russian companies in oil and oil products, oil refining and petrochemical technologies, oilfield services and upstream technologies, related infrastructure, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) infrastructure, underground coal gasification technology, and nuclear projects.
- The sides noted the importance of expeditious resolution of issues related to investment projects in the energy sector and agreed to resolve concerns faced by investors.
- The material stated that Russia remained India's top oil supplier in 2024–25 and that India saved USD 12.6 billion over about three years from buying Russian oil, while also stating that the discount narrowed in 2024–25 to about USD 2.3 per barrel cheaper than other imports on average.

Connectivity, logistics, and transport corridors

- The sides agreed to deepen cooperation in building stable and efficient transport corridors by expanding logistics links and enhancing infrastructure capacity to support the **INSTC** (International North–South Transport Corridor), the **Chennai–Vladivostok Corridor** (Eastern Maritime Corridor), and the **Northern Sea Route**.
- The sides welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on training specialists for ships operating in polar waters.
- The sides noted cooperation between the railways of Russia and India aimed at partnerships in mutually beneficial technology exchange.
- The material stated that the Chennai–Vladivostok Maritime Corridor was declared operational in November 2024, reducing transit time from 40 to 24 days, and reducing shipping distance to 5,600 nautical miles compared to the European route.

Far East and Arctic engagement

- The sides confirmed readiness to intensify trade and investment cooperation in the Far East and the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and referenced the Program of India–Russia Cooperation in Trade,

- Economic and Investment Spheres in the Russian Far East for 2024–2029 as a framework.
- The 2024–2029 framework was stated to cover sectors including agriculture, energy, mining, manpower, diamonds, pharmaceuticals, and maritime transport.
- Both sides underscored the importance of regular bilateral consultations on Arctic-related issues and welcomed progress on the Northern Sea Route, with the Russian side appreciating Indian participation in the 6th International Arctic Forum in Murmansk in March 2025. India expressed readiness to play an active role as an Observer in the Arctic Council.

Civil nuclear cooperation and peaceful space partnership

- The sides confirmed intention to broaden cooperation in nuclear energy, including fuel cycle, life cycle support for operating Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), non-power applications, and a new agenda on peaceful use of atomic energy and related high technologies aligned with India's plan to increase nuclear energy capacity to 100 gigawatts by 2047.
- The sides welcomed progress on KKNPP construction of remaining units and agreed to adhere to timelines for supplies of equipment and fuel.
- The sides noted the importance of further discussion on a second site in India for a nuclear power plant and stated that India will strive to finalise formal allotment in accordance with earlier signed agreements.
- The sides agreed to accelerate technical and commercial discussions on VVER of Russian design, research and joint development of nuclear power plants, localisation, and joint manufacturing of nuclear equipment and fuel assemblies for Russian-designed large-capacity nuclear power plants subject to mutually agreeable terms.
- The sides welcomed enhanced partnership between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Russian State Space Corporation Roscosmos for peaceful uses of outer space, including human spaceflight programmes, satellite navigation, planetary exploration, and cooperation in rocket engine development, production and use.

Additional space-related details were stated as follows:

- Astronauts for India's human spaceflight initiative Gaganyaan underwent training at Russia's Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center.
- A 2025 deal was stated for RD-191M semi-cryogenic engine technology transfer.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What milestone anniversary was noted in 2025 regarding India–Russia strategic relations?
 - (a) 20 years of bilateral defence cooperation
 - (b) 35 years of diplomatic relations milestone
 - (c) 30 years of treaty based friendship
 - (d) 25 years of strategic partnership
2. How many agreements were exchanged between India and Russia during the 23rd Annual Summit?
 - (a) 16 agreements
 - (b) 14 agreements
 - (c) 15 agreements
 - (d) 12 agreements
3. Which forum did the two leaders co-chair during the New Delhi summit meetings?
 - (a) India Russia Strategic Dialogue Forum
 - (b) India Russia Business Forum meeting
 - (c) India Russia Energy Cooperation Forum
 - (d) India Russia Defence Industry Forum
4. Which institutional mechanism focuses on military and military–technical cooperation between India and Russia?
 - (a) India Russia Strategic Security Dialogue
 - (b) India Russia Defence Ministers Council
 - (c) India Russia Military Coordination Group
 - (d) IRIGC Military Technical Cooperation body
5. Which country was stated to be India’s top oil supplier in 2024–25?
 - (a) Oman as oil supplier
 - (b) Iran as top oil supplier
 - (c) Russia as top oil supplier
 - (d) Iraq as primary oil supplier
6. Which transport corridor was declared operational in November 2024 reducing transit time significantly?
 - (a) International North South Transport Corridor
 - (b) Chennai Vladivostok Maritime Corridor
 - (c) Baltic Sea Maritime Transport Corridor
 - (d) Northern Sea Route logistics corridor
7. Which nuclear power project in India continues to receive Russian cooperation and support?
 - (a) Tarapur Atomic Power Station
 - (b) Kalpakkam Nuclear Power Station
 - (c) Rawatbhata Nuclear Power Station
 - (d) Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant
8. Which missile system was described as jointly developed by India and Russia?
 - (a) BrahMos cruise missile system
 - (b) Prithvi short range missile system
 - (c) Akash surface air missile system
 - (d) Agni Five strategic missile system
9. Which organisation partnered with ISRO for cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space?
 - (a) European Space Agency organisation
 - (b) National Aeronautics Space Administration
 - (c) China National Space Administration
 - (d) Russian State Space Corporation Roscosmos
10. Which joint military exercise was specifically appreciated by both sides?
 - (a) Malabar naval exercise series
 - (b) INDRA joint military exercise
 - (c) Yudh Abhyas army exercise
 - (d) Varuna bilateral naval exercise
11. Which organisation’s reform did Russia reiterate support for, backing India’s permanent membership?
 - (a) World Trade Organization
 - (b) International Monetary Fund
 - (c) United Nations Security Council
 - (d) World Health Organization
12. Which alliance did Russia adopt a framework agreement to join, welcomed by India?
 - (a) International Big Cat Alliance
 - (b) International Solar Alliance
 - (c) Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
 - (d) Global Tiger Conservation Alliance
13. Where was Phase I of the 15th Conference of Parties to the CBD held in October 2021?
 - (a) Montreal Canada conference location
 - (b) Nairobi Kenya conference location
 - (c) Paris France conference location
 - (d) Kunming China conference location

SOLUTIONS

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

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

4 RBI CUTS REPO RATE TO SUSTAIN 'GOLDILOCKS PHASE'

IN FOCUS

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** cut the **repo rate** by 25 basis points to 5.25%, taking the cumulative reduction in 2025 to 125 basis points.
- The policy rate cut was accompanied by liquidity measures, including ₹1 lakh crore of government bond purchases through Open Market Operations (OMO) and a \$5 billion, 3-year USD-INR buy/sell swap.
- RBI retained a neutral policy stance, with the policy stance recorded as “neutral” alongside the rate action.

Policy Decision and Liquidity Operations

₹ **Repo Rate Reduction**

5.50% → 5.25%

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** cut the **repo rate** by 25 basis points to 5.25%, taking the cumulative reduction in 2025 to 125 basis points.

₹ **Durable Liquidity**

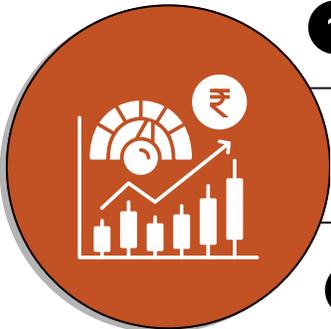
1L Crore

RBI announced **₹1 lakh crore of government bond** purchases under OMO to inject durable liquidity into the banking system and influence longer-term yields.

₹ **Rupee Liquidity Swap**

RBI announced a \$5 billion, 3-year **USD-INR buy/sell** swap as a liquidity operation and as a measure linked to managing rupee volatility more smoothly.

Growth and Inflation Conditions



- 1 RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra described India as being in a “rare goldilocks period” characterised by strong growth and very low inflation.
- 2 Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was stated to have accelerated to 8.2% in Q2:2025-26 as a six-quarter high, with growth stated to be buoyed by strong spending during the festive season and facilitated by rationalisation of GST rates.
- 3 Headline inflation was stated to have fallen to an average of **1.7%** in Q2:2025-26, breaching the lower tolerance threshold of 2% around the inflation target of 4%, and it was stated to have dipped further to 0.3% in October 2025.



- 4 Inflation at 2.2% and growth at 8.0% were stated for H1:2025–26 as part of the conditions described as supporting the rate decision.
- 5 RBI was stated to have raised its full-year Financial Year 2025–26 (FY26) GDP growth forecast to 7.3% from 6.8%, and to have cut its inflation projection for the current year to 2% from 2.6%.

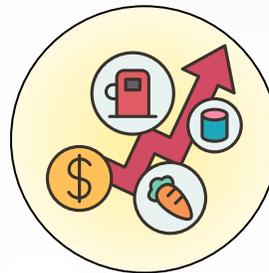
What is 'Goldilocks' Economic phase?



Economic Phase



Balance
between



Inflation



Recession

- A Goldilocks phase was described as a period that is neither too hot nor too cold, marked by moderate and sustainable growth alongside subdued inflation.
- The term was described as being drawn from the story “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” where one option is “just right,” and the economic usage was described as an ideal state where growth supports incomes and employment without pushing inflation too high.
- The December 2025 context was described as meeting this balance because growth stood at 8.2% in Q2:2025–26 while inflation averaged 1.7% in Q2:2025–26 and dipped to 0.3% in October 2025.
- A Goldilocks phase was described as expanding central bank room to manoeuvre, including keeping rates lower for longer or cutting rates to extend the favourable cycle.

Factors cited for the Repo Rate Cut:

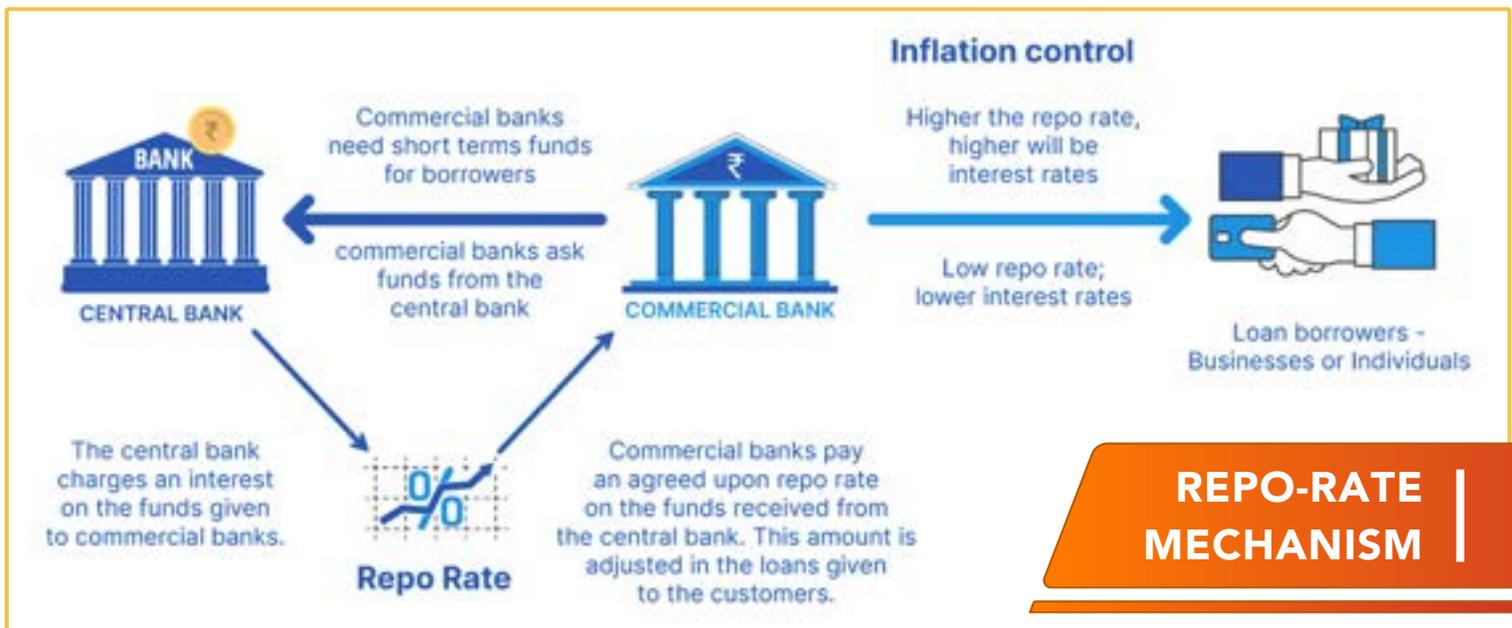
- Sustained disinflation was identified as a key factor, with inflation described as falling sharply to 1.7% in Q2:2025–26 and to 0.3% in October 2025, creating policy space for easing without risking overheating.
- It was stated that headline inflation fell below the 2% lower tolerance band for the first time under Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT).
- Strong growth alongside low inflation was presented as the macroeconomic setting for the decision, with growth stated at 8.2% in Q2 and inflation stated at 2.2% in H1:2025–26.
- External headwinds were cited as part of the backdrop, including references to new United States (US) tariffs and global trade tensions that can affect exports, and a weak rupee described as being under pressure and breaching levels treated as psychological lines in the sand.
- The decision was described as reinforcing momentum in a phase where inflation was no longer the

binding constraint on monetary policy, and as supporting domestic demand and investment against global uncertainty.

- It was stated that the fall in inflation was faster and sharper than earlier forecasts, linked to softer food prices in months when they usually rise and contained core inflation once excluding food and fuel and stripping out the impact of gold.

Repo Rate and its Role in Monetary Policy

- The repo rate was described as the interest rate at which commercial banks borrow funds from the central bank.
- It was described as a short-term liquidity tool where banks borrow funds against collateral in securities that are repurchased later at a higher price including interest.
- A higher repo rate was described as raising loan costs and slowing borrowing, while a lower repo rate was described as lowering borrowing costs.
- The repo rate was described as a monetary policy instrument used to influence money supply, inflation, and economic growth.



REPO-RATE MECHANISM

Flexible Inflation Targeting Framework used by RBI

- **Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT)** was described as a monetary policy framework where the central bank aims to achieve a specific medium-term inflation target while retaining flexibility to consider short-term output and employment stabilisation.
- The primary mandate was described as a publicly declared inflation target expressed as a point or a range, with India's mandate described as maintaining Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation at 4% within a band of $\pm 2\%$ (2% to 6%).
- FIT was described as formally recognising short-term trade-offs between controlling inflation and supporting growth, while keeping inflation as the overriding nominal anchor.

Monetary Policy: Process & Committee Structure

- The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** was described as being formed and managed by RBI to control a nation's overall money supply and achieve economic growth.

- Monetary policy was described as distinct from fiscal policy, with fiscal policy described as managed by the Ministry of Finance through measures of spending and taxation in the Indian economy.
- The ex-officio Chairperson of the MPC was stated to be the RBI Governor, and the objective was stated as determining the policy rate required to achieve the inflation target of $4\% \pm 2\%$ associated with the Urjit Patel Committee.
- The legal framework was stated as Section 45ZB of the amended Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, under which the Central Government is empowered to constitute a six-member MPC.
- The MPC was stated to be required to meet at least four times in a year, with each member having one vote and the Governor having a second or casting vote in the event of equality of votes.
- RBI was stated to release a **Monetary Policy Report** once every six months to explain sources of inflation and provide an inflation forecast for 6–18 months ahead.

Interest-rate transmission and rate-linked implications stated

- Repo-linked or external benchmark-linked loan rates were stated as likely to adjust lower over time depending on the speed of pass-through by banks, as part of the described effects of the policy rate reduction.
- Deposit rates were stated as more likely to drift lower in the coming months rather than rise, as part of the stated direction of rate dynamics following policy easing.
- The combination of rate cuts and liquidity injections was described as supportive for bonds and equities, and the rupee was described as potentially remaining under pressure while being managed to remain orderly through RBI's signalling and operations.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- What was the cumulative reduction in the repo rate during the calendar year 2025?
 - 125 basis points
 - 100 basis points
 - 150 basis points
 - 120 basis points
- Which of the following liquidity measures involved ₹1 lakh crore of government bond purchases?
 - Standing Deposit Facility operation
 - Variable Rate Reverse Repo auction
 - Long Term Repo Operation scheme
 - Open Market Operations programme
- What was the size and tenure of the USD-INR swap announced by RBI?
 - 7 billion dollars for two years
 - 8 billion dollars for one year
 - 5 billion dollars for three years
 - 10 billion dollars for three years
- What policy stance did RBI retain while cutting the repo rate?
 - Explicit accommodative policy stance
 - Explicit tightening policy stance
 - Explicit neutral to hawkish stance
 - Explicit neutral policy stance
- Who described India as being in a “rare goldilocks period” in the policy statement?
 - Union Finance Minister of India
 - Chief Economic Adviser of India
 - Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank
 - RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra
- To what level did inflation fall in October 2025?
 - 1.2% level
 - 0.3% level
 - 0.5% level
 - 1.1% level
- What is meant by a “Goldilocks” economic phase as described?
 - Excessively rapid growth with inflation
 - Economic stagnation with low inflation
 - High inflation with moderate growth
 - Balanced growth with low inflation
- Which factor was cited as a key reason enabling the repo rate cut?
 - Sustained and sharp disinflation
 - Sharp slowdown in economic growth
 - Surge in global commodity prices
 - Rising inflation expectations domestically
- What external factor was cited as part of the policy backdrop?
 - Expansion of European monetary policy
 - Surge in Chinese industrial exports
 - New United States tariffs pressures
 - Stability in global trade conditions
- What is the repo rate described as in monetary policy terms?
 - Rate at which banks lend to firms
 - Rate at which banks lend to public
 - Rate at which government borrows
 - Rate at which banks borrow from RBI
- What is the inflation target under India’s Flexible Inflation Targeting framework?
 - 3% with 2% band
 - 4% with 1% band
 - 2% with 1% band
 - 4% with 2% band
- Which committee’s recommendations underpin India’s inflation targeting framework?
 - Rangarajan Committee on monetary policy
 - Chakravarty Committee on banking reform
 - Urjit Patel Committee on inflation
 - Narasimham Committee on financial sector
- Who serves as the ex-officio Chairperson of the Monetary Policy Committee?
 - Union Finance Secretary of India
 - Chief Economic Adviser of India
 - Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank
 - Governor of Reserve Bank of India
- Under which legal provision is the Monetary Policy Committee constituted?
 - RBI Act Section 40 ZC
 - RBI Act Section 35 ZD
 - RBI Act Section 45 ZA
 - RBI Act Section 45 ZB
- How often is the Monetary Policy Committee required to meet each year?
 - 4 times annually
 - 3 times annually
 - 5 times annually
 - 2 times annually

SOLUTIONS

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

5

HEALTH SECURITY IS NATIONAL SECURITY CESS BILL, 2025

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

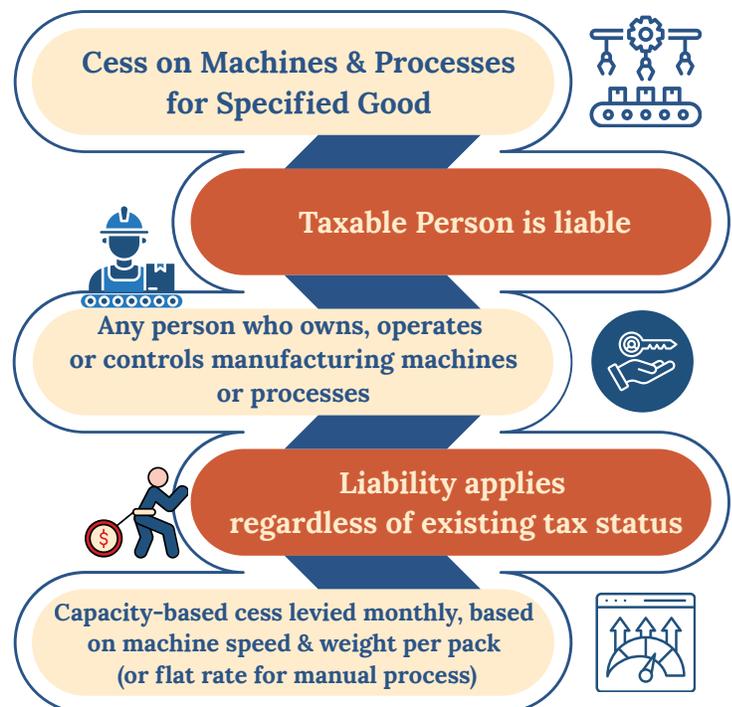
- The Lok Sabha passed the **Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025** on December 5, 2025, to levy a special excise cess linked to machinery installed or processes undertaken for manufacturing specified goods and to use the proceeds for national security and public health expenditure.
- The Bill was described as initially applicable to **pan masala**, with enabling provisions for the Government to notify additional goods in the future.
- During the Lok Sabha debate, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that the cess will be shared with the states, citing that public health is a state subject, while national defence is a Government of India domain.

CORE DESIGN AND STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE BILL

- The Bill was introduced to create a clear legal framework for a special excise cess on machinery installed or processes undertaken for manufacture or production of goods, whether manual or through hybrid processes.
- The proceeds of the cess were stated to be credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India** and used to support Government expenditure related to national security and public health.
- The Bill was described as creating a structured and rule-based framework intended to secure stable revenues through a dedicated and reliable stream for programmes, schemes and activities relating to national security and public health.

Coverage, liability, and basis of levy

- The Bill specifies that the cess applies to machines installed or processes undertaken for manufacturing specified goods and operates in addition to other duties and taxes, as prescribed.
- The Bill defines the liable category as a taxable person, described as any person who owns, operates, or controls machines or processes manufacturing specified goods, with liability applying regardless of the person's existing tax status, as prescribed.
- The levy was described as a capacity-based cess computed on a monthly basis using parameters such as maximum rated speed (pouches, tins or containers per minute) and weight per pack for machine-based manufacture, with a separate flat rate structure for manual processes, as prescribed.

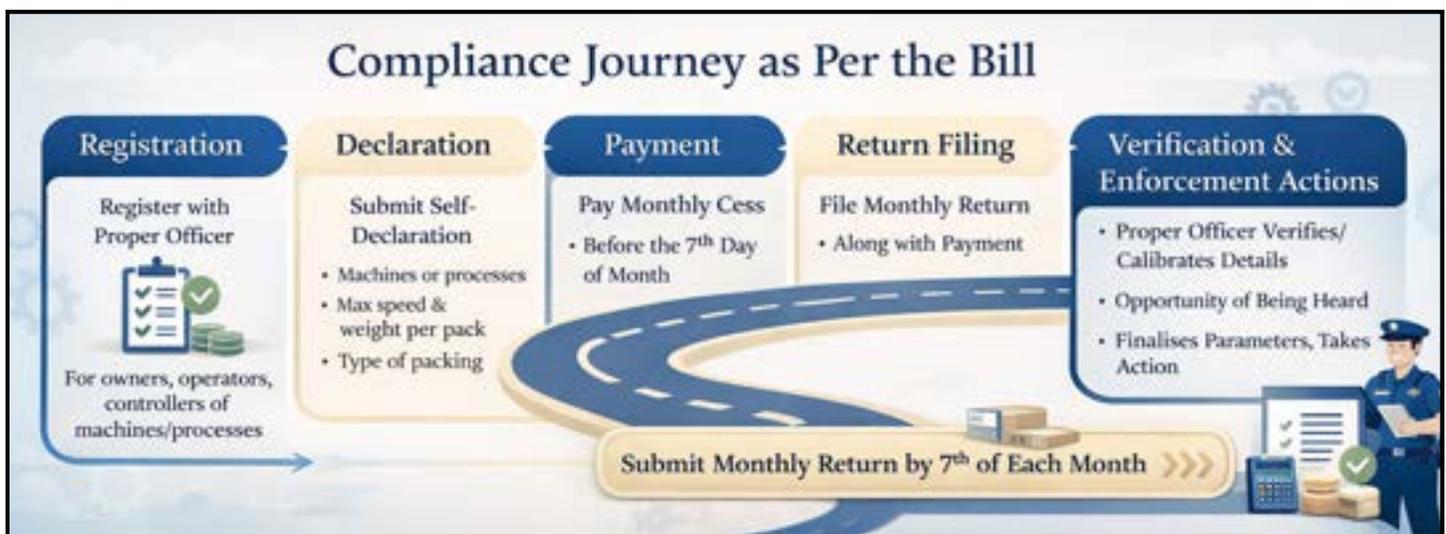


Notified rates, computation parameters, and abatement

- For machine-based manufacturing, the monthly cess amount was stated as ₹101 lakh per month for the specified slab described as up to 500 pouches, tins or containers per minute and up to 2.5g, as prescribed.
- For manual processes, the monthly cess amount was stated as ₹11 lakh per month as a flat levy, as prescribed.
- The Bill provides **abatement** where a machine or unit remains inoperative for a continuous period of 15 days or more, allowing a proportionate reduction in cess subject to conditions.

Procedural compliance sequence set out in the Bill

- The Bill outlines a step-by-step compliance journey beginning with registration, followed by declaration of manufacturing parameters, payment, return filing, and subsequent verification and enforcement actions.
- Registration requires any person owning, operating, or controlling machines or processes manufacturing specified goods to register with the proper officer.
- The taxable person must submit a self-declaration of machines or processes, including parameters such as maximum rated speed, weight per pack, and type of packing, as applicable
- The declared details may be verified or calibrated by the proper officer, with an opportunity of being heard, before finalising relevant parameters used for cess computation.
- The cess is to be paid at the beginning of each month but no later than the 7th day of the month, accompanied by a monthly return filed by the taxpayer.



Monitoring powers, audit, and verification tools

- The Bill provides for scrutiny of returns, audit, inspection, search and seizure powers as part of oversight and verification mechanisms intended to ensure accuracy and transparency in reporting.
- The framework includes provisions for assessment and recovery where cess is unpaid or short-paid, alongside scrutiny of returns and audits.

Offences, enforcement tools, and graded consequences

- The Bill establishes an enforcement framework that includes inspection, search, seizure, confiscation of goods and machinery, recovery of dues, penalties, and arrest in severe contraventions.
- The Bill provides a **graded penalty structure** that links the nature and scale of violations with consequences that may include monetary fines, imprisonment, and confiscation, as prescribed.
- Offences described as attracting enforcement action include operating machines without declaration, evasion of cess, falsification of records, obstruction of officers, and fraudulent refund claims.

Appeals and adjudication pathway: The Bill provides a multi-tier remedies structure allowing challenges to move from the Appellate Authority to the **Appellate Tribunal**, and then to the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Parliamentary Debate Themes
Recorded During Passage of Defence & Manufacturing Bill

Debate Themes in Parliament

Finance Minister
Nirmala Sitharaman

Defence Technology Funding

- **Credible Defence Capabilities**
Resources Needed for Technology Updates Against Modern Conflicts
- **Operation Sindoor**
Showed Tech Precision
- **Kargil Conflict - Budget**
Constraints in 1990s Left Army with Only 70-80% of authorised equipment

MP, Rashtriya Loktantrik Party
Hanuman Beniwal

Decrying Celebrity Endorsements

- **National Awards Withdrawal**
Withdraw Awards from Actors Who Promote Paan Masala & Gutka
- **Named Celebrities**
Named Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn, Salman Khan
- **Ethics Concern**
Criticised Role Models Promoting Harmful Substances

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that credible defence capabilities require periodic technology updates because modern conflicts are dominated by precision weapons, autonomous systems, space assets and cyber operations, and she linked this to the need for additional resources.
- Sitharaman stated that technology-driven precision was displayed during **Operation Sindoor** and used this to underline that investments in defence capability require resources
- Sitharaman invoked the Kargil conflict and stated that Army Generals had said that budgetary constraints from the early 1990s had resulted in the Army holding only 70-80% of authorised weapons, ammunition and equipment, and she stated that this should not recur.
- Hanuman Beniwal of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) demanded withdrawal of national awards from film actors and celebrities who endorse paan masala and gutkha, and he named Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn and Salman Khan in this context.

Meaning of cess and its constitutional positioning

- A cess was described as a tax on tax imposed for a specific, earmarked purpose and collected in addition to existing taxes such as excise duty or income tax, with collection continuing until adequate funds are raised for the designated objective.
- The constitutional basis was described as including Article 270, with the 80th Amendment stated to have explicitly excluded cesses and surcharges from the divisible pool, meaning that revenue from cesses is not shared with states.
- In the same set of materials, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated in the Lok Sabha that the cess will be shared with the states because public health is a state subject, and both statements were recorded without reconciliation in the provided information.
- Examples of cesses were listed as Education Cess, Swachh Bharat Cess, and Krishi Kalyan Cess.
- A tax was described as a general compulsory levy for government revenue used for any public expenditure and typically shared with states through the divisible pool.

- A cess was described as a tax on tax for a specific purpose used only for the earmarked purpose and described as not shared with states.
- A surcharge was described as an extra tax on tax applied to high-income taxpayers that adds revenue to the Union and has no specific purpose, and it was described as not shared with states.
- Examples were listed as follows: income tax, Goods and Services Tax (GST) and customs duty for tax; education cess, clean energy cess and Swachh Bharat cess for cess; and surcharge on income above ₹50 lakh for surcharge
- The Article 266(1) provision was stated as establishing the Consolidated Fund of India as the primary fund for all receipts and expenditures of the Union Government, while Article 266(2) was stated as providing for the Public Account of India and Article 267 as establishing the Contingency Fund of India.
- The Consolidated Fund of India was described as the principal repository for all revenues received by the Government of India, all loans raised

GST COMPENSATION CESS

- 01 GST cess is levied on Both intrastate & inter-state supply of goods or services to provide compensation to the States for loss of revenue due to the implementation of GST.
- 02 The GST Compensation cess would be imposed for a period of 5 years from the day of GST implementation.
- 03 If the funds from GST compensation cess are unutilised, then after the transition period ends, it would be shared equally by the Central & State Government.
- 04 It is applicable on tobacco products, aerated waters etc.

- by it, and all repayments of loans made by the Government, with legally authorised Union Government expenditures drawn from this fund Sources of revenue for the Consolidated Fund of India were stated to include taxes, fees, duties and other receipts; loans raised through treasury bills, market loans or ways and means advances; and repayments of loans previously granted by the Government.
- Expenditures from the Consolidated Fund of India were described as requiring legal sanction by Parliament, linking fund operation to legislative approval and accountability.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initially notified good under the cess framework?
(a) Cigarettes and tobacco
(b) Pan masala products
(c) Alcoholic beverages
(d) Processed food items
2. Which of the following best describes the nature of the cess introduced?
(a) Ad valorem production tax
(b) Capacity based excise cess
(c) Profit linked corporate levy
(d) Consumption linked sales tax
3. What fund are the proceeds of the cess credited to?
(a) Consolidated Fund of India
(b) Public Account of India
(c) Contingency Fund of India
(d) National Security Reserve Fund
4. Who stated in the Lok Sabha that the cess would be shared with states?
(a) Amit Shah (b) Nitin Gadkari
(c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) Rajnath Singh
5. What is the monthly cess amount for manual processes?
(a) ₹5 lakh per month (b) ₹11 lakh per month
(c) ₹50 lakh per month (d) ₹101 lakh per month
6. Which of the following allows abatement under the Bill?
(a) 13 days inoperation (b) 15 days inoperation
(c) 14 days inoperation (d) 16 days inoperation
7. By when must the monthly cess be paid?
(a) End of assessment year
(b) Seventh day of month
(c) Fifteenth day of month
(d) Last working day
8. Which bodies may assist in enforcement actions?
(a) Election Commission offices
(b) Police and customs
(c) Municipal corporations
(d) Public sector banks
9. Under which Article is the Consolidated Fund established?
(a) Article 267(1) (b) Article 270 (1)
(c) Article 266 (1) (d) Article 280 (1)
10. Which amendment excluded cesses from the divisible pool?
(a) 80th amendment (b) 42nd amendment
(c) 52nd amendment (d) 83rd amendment
11. Which of the following is an example of a cess?
(a) Customs cess (b) Education cess
(c) Income cess (d) Trade cess
12. Which appellate body hears the first appeal?
(a) High Court (b) Finance Commission
(c) Supreme Court (d) Appellate Authority
13. Which of the following is defined as a taxable person?
(a) Operator, dealer or supplier
(b) Owner, operator or controller
(c) Supplier, operator or controller
(d) Owner, operator or dealer

SOLUTIONS

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

6 KARNATAKA'S NEW HATE SPEECH BILL

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The Karnataka government has moved to introduce the **Karnataka Hate Speech Bill** as a state law to curb and prevent the dissemination, publication, or promotion of hate speech, with provisions that include imprisonment and online takedown powers.
- One account recorded that the Bill was set to be introduced in an upcoming legislative session, while another recorded that it was tabled in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on December 13, 2025.
- The Bill was described as a first-of-its-kind state legislation specifically targeting hate speech, against the backdrop that “hate speech” is not formally defined in India’s criminal laws and is currently addressed through multiple provisions used for public order and related concerns.

What the Karnataka Bill seeks to regulate

- The Bill’s stated objective includes curbing and preventing the dissemination, publication, or promotion of hate speech and providing adequate compensation to injured victims.
- The Bill seeks to define “hate crime” as communication of hate speech and includes expressions made, published, or circulated in words (spoken or written), signs, visible representations, electronic communication, or otherwise, in public view, with an intention to cause injury, disharmony, or feelings of enmity, hatred, or ill-will against a person (alive or dead), class, group, or community to meet “prejudicial interest.”
- The Bill defines “prejudicial interest” to include bias on grounds including religion, race, caste or community, sex, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, residence, language, disability, or tribe.
- The Bill’s definition of hate speech was also described as an expression causing injury or disharmony against a person or group based on religion, race, caste, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, or disability.
- The Bill was described as expanding protected categories by explicitly including “sexual orientation” and “gender” beyond categories traditionally reflected in earlier Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 provisions and now the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 provisions.
- The Bill provides exemptions for “bona fide artistic creativity, performance or other form of expression,” “any academic or scientific inquiry,” “fair and accurate reporting or commentary,” and proselytization.



Punishment framework and offence layering

- The Bill provides for a mandatory minimum imprisonment of one year, which may extend to seven years, along with a fine of ₹50,000 for a hate crime.
- For subsequent or repetitive offences, the punishment is not less than two years and may extend to ten years, with a fine of ₹1,00,000.
- The Bill was also described as prescribing imprisonment ranging from two to ten years for offenders, alongside other penal features including organisational accountability.
- The Bill clarifies that it will operate in addition to, and not in derogation of, the provisions of any other law for the time being in force, indicating that prosecution may be pursued alongside BNS provisions where

- applicable.
- The enhanced sentencing significance was noted in the context that the Supreme Court has underlined the “bail, not jail” approach for offences carrying a sentence of less than seven years and that directions on a liberal scheme for bail are known as the Arnesh Kumar guidelines.

Base Offence (Hate Crime)	Repeat / Subsequent Offences	Enhanced Penal Features	Legal & Judicial Context
<p>Mandatory Punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum imprisonment: 1 year • May extend up to 7 years • Fine: ₹50,000 <p>No discretion to go below minimum sentence</p>	<p>Enhanced Punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum imprisonment: 2 years • May extend up to 10 years • Fine: ₹1,00,000 <p>Higher punishment for repetitive offences</p>	<p>Aggravated Liability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imprisonment range: 2–10 years • Includes organisational accountability • Liability extends beyond individuals <p>Targets structured or organised offences</p>	<p>Concurrent Operation & Bail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates in addition to other laws • Parallel prosecution with BNS allowed • SC principle: “Bail, not jail” • Guided by Arnesh Kumar guidelines (for offences below 7 years) <p>Higher sentences reduce bail entitlement</p>

Organisational accountability and collective responsibility

- A distinct feature of the Bill is **collective liability**, under which persons in positions of responsibility within an organisation can be deemed guilty if hate speech is linked to that organisation.
- The Bill defines “institution” broadly as an association of persons, whether registered or not, and states that if an offence is committed by an organisation or institution, every person who was in charge of and responsible for the conduct of its business at the time shall be deemed guilty and liable to be proceeded against and punished, along with the organisation or institution.
- The Bill provides an exception that a person will not be punished if he proves the offence was committed without his knowledge or that he had exercised all due diligence to prevent its commission, while also indicating that the accused bears the burden of establishing these conditions.

State powers to block or remove online content

- The Bill empowers the state government to block or remove online content deemed to be hate speech and extends powers to address digital propagation of hate speech.
- The Bill authorises a designated officer, notified by the state government, to direct service providers, intermediaries, persons, or entities to block or remove **hate crime materials** from their domain, including electronic media.
- The Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009 were identified as generally providing guidelines that must be followed when the government decides to prohibit content.

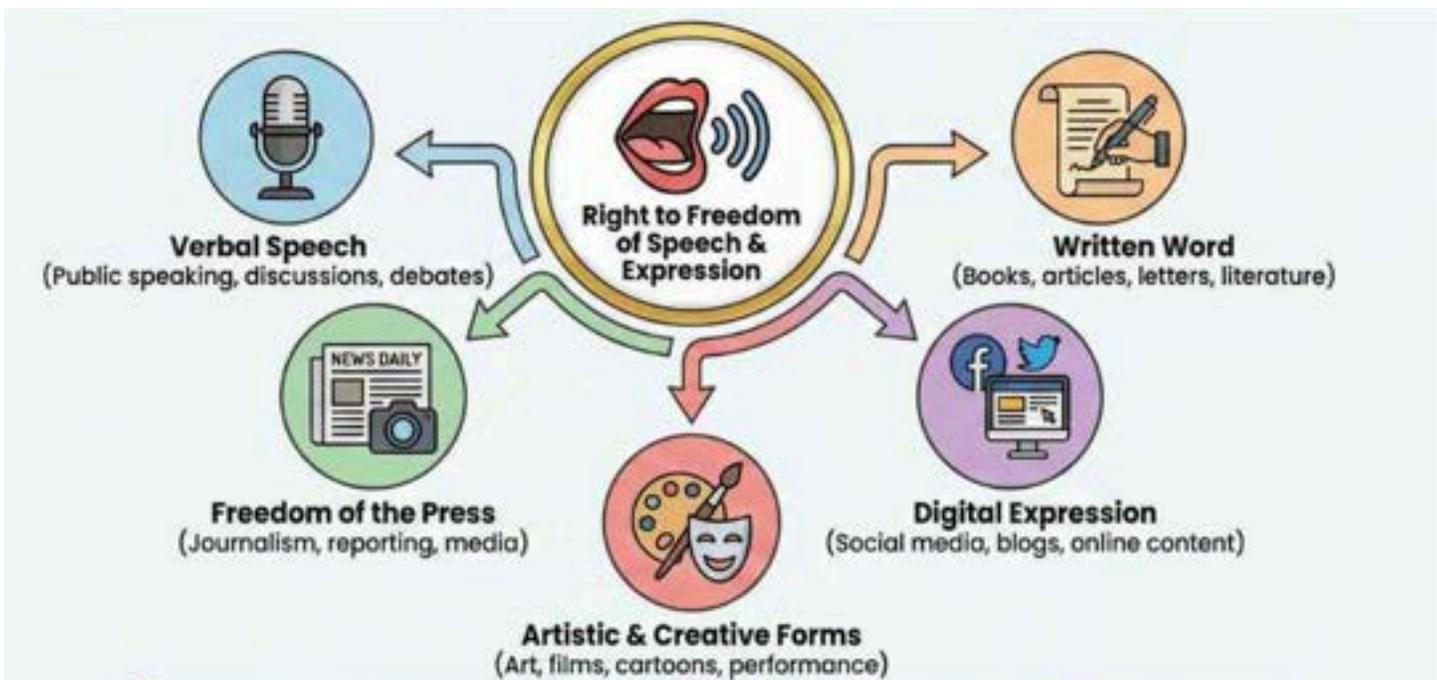
State powers to block or remove online content

- In the absence of a specific statute defining hate speech, law enforcement agencies invoke a cluster of provisions from the BNS, which were described as primarily intended to maintain public order rather than penalise hate speech as a distinct category.
- The most frequently invoked provision was identified as Section 196 BNS, described as the successor to Section 153A of the IPC, 1860, penalising promoting enmity between different groups on grounds including religion, race, place of birth, residence, and language, and doing acts prejudicial to the

- maintenance of harmony.
- Another commonly used provision was identified as Section 299 BNS, described as penalising deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings by insulting a religion or religious beliefs and as being similar to Section 295A of the IPC, 1860.
- Section 353 of the BNS was described as penalising statements or false information that may induce or incite someone to commit offences against the State or a community or disturb public order.
- It was stated that these offences are cognisable and carry punishment of up to three years.
- A wider list of BNS provisions described as invoked by states for hate speech-related matters included Sections 299 (outraging religious feelings), 298 (damage or defilement of a place of worship), 301 (trespassing in a place of sepulture), 302 (uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person), and 300 (disturbing a religious assembly).
- Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 was described as having been used for online hate speech until it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 for being unconstitutionally vague.

Constitutional speech framework referenced for hate speech regulation

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India: Right to Freedom of Speech & Expression



- **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution of India was described as guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression as a fundamental right for all citizens and as typically invoked against the state.
- **Article 19(2)** was described as permitting reasonable restrictions on speech in the interests of sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, and in relation to contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence.

Supreme Court directions and evolving approach

- In October 2022, in *Shaheen Abdulla v. Union of India and Ors, 2022*, a bench of Justices K.M. Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy observed that a “climate of hate prevails in the country” and directed the police chiefs of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand to take suo motu action against hate speech cases without waiting for formal complaints, warning that hesitation would be viewed as contempt.

- The October 2022 direction was later extended to all states and union territories in April 2023. In August 2023, a Supreme Court bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and S.V.N. Bhatti stated, while hearing a case, that defining hate speech is complex and recorded that the problem in tackling it lay in implementation and execution of law and judicial pronouncements.
- On November 25, 2025, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta ruled that the Supreme Court was not inclined to monitor every incident of hate speech and noted that police stations and High Courts were competent to deal with such cases, referring to guidelines laid down in Tehseen Poonawalla (2018) that mandated appointment of nodal officers to prevent mob violence and lynching.
- In *Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India*, 2014, the Supreme Court was described as having asked the Law Commission to consider defining hate speech and recommend ways to empower the Election Commission to curb it.

Attempts to define hate speech and prior reform proposals

- The 267th Law Commission report was also described as stating that hate speech is an incitement to hatred primarily against groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, and similar characteristics, and as emphasising that context is crucial in determining
- A 2022 Private Member's Bill titled "The Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill" was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by Bharat Rashtra Samithi Member of Parliament K.R. Suresh Reddy, seeking to define hate speech as expression that "incites, justifies, promotes or spreads discrimination, hatred, hostility, or violence against a person or group," and to define hate crime as an offence motivated by prejudice against a victim's real or attributed status, including religion, caste, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and this Bill was not passed.
- Committees referenced in reform discussions included the Viswanathan Committee (2015), which proposed additions such as Sections 153C(b) and 505A to the IPC to punish incitement to offences on specified grounds with up to two years' imprisonment and a ₹5,000 fine, and the Bezbaruah Committee (2014), which proposed amendments including Section 153C (promoting acts against human dignity) and Section 509A (insulting a particular race) with specified punishment ranges..
- The 267th Law Commission Report (March 2017) recommended insertion of new sections 153C and 505A into the IPC to specifically criminalise incitement to hatred and provocation of violence.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following forms of expression is covered under the Bill's definition of hate speech?
 - Expressions in public view
 - Private personal conversations
 - Internal organisational notices
 - Confidential legal documents
- Which newly expanded categories are explicitly included in the Bill?
 - Occupation and income
 - Political ideology and party
 - Sexual orientation and gender
 - Educational qualification level
- Which of the following activities is exempted under the Bill?
 - Political campaign propaganda
 - Bona fide artistic creativity
 - Commercial advertising speech
 - Anonymous online commentary
- What is the minimum imprisonment prescribed for a first-time hate crime?

(a) 5 year	(b) 3 year
(c) 2 year	(d) 1 year
- What is the punishment for subsequent hate speech offences?
 - 1 to 5 years imprisonment
 - 2 to 10 years imprisonment
 - 3 to 7 years imprisonment
 - 1 to 3 years imprisonment
- Which legal principle is referenced regarding bail for offences under seven years?
 - Doctrine of proportionality
 - Natural justice doctrine
 - Arnesh Kumar guidelines
 - Public trust doctrine
- Which concept introduces liability for persons in charge of organisations?
 - Strict liability
 - Collective responsibility
 - Absolute criminal liability
 - Vicarious punishment
- Who is empowered to order removal of online hate content?
 - Designated officer
 - District magistrate
 - Chief secretary
 - Election commissioner
- Which rules generally govern online content blocking procedures?
 - Cable Television Rules 1994
 - IT Blocking Rules 2009
 - Digital Media Ethics Code
 - Press Council Guidelines
- Which BNS provision is the successor to IPC Section 153A?

(a) Section 299	(b) Section 200
(c) Section 353	(d) Section 196
- What was the maximum punishment under commonly invoked BNS hate speech provisions?
 - One year imprisonment
 - Two years imprisonment
 - Three years imprisonment
 - Seven years imprisonment
- Which provision of the IT Act was struck down in 2015?

(a) Section 69A	(b) Section 66A
(c) Section 72A	(d) Section 79A
- Which constitutional provision guarantees freedom of speech?

(a) Article 19(1)(a)	(b) Article 14(1)(a)
(c) Article 21(1)(a)	(d) Article 25(1)(a)
- Which Supreme Court case directed suo motu police action on hate speech?
 - Tehseen Poonawalla case
 - Shaheen Abdulla case
 - Pravasi Bhalai case
 - Arnesh Kumar case
- Which state invoked BNS Section 152 for hate speech action?

(a) Kerala	(b) Bihar
(c) Odisha	(d) Assam

SOLUTIONS

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

7 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK 2025

ENVIRONMENT

IN FOCUS

- The seventh edition of the United Nations (UN) Global Environment Outlook-7 (GEO-7), issued every five to seven years, was released in December 2025 as an assessment linking global warming, pollution, depletion of nature, and the global political economy.
- The report records that its finalisation involved dissension on phasing out fossil fuels, switching to clean energy, and reducing plastic use, and it was published without a negotiated summary.
- It states that the climate crisis is undermining human health, food and water security, and is contributing to conflicts, while also quantifying health and economic benefits of an ecologically sustainable development pathway.

WHAT IS GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK ?



- **Global Environment Outlook (GEO)** is UNEP's flagship environmental assessment series that evaluates the **state, trends, and future projections of the global environment**, linking scientific evidence with policy action.
- GEO assesses drivers of environmental change, reviews the effectiveness of existing policies, and provides forward-looking scenarios to guide decision-making at global, regional, national, and local levels.
- The GEO process is led and coordinated by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, involving governments, scientists, and experts worldwide, with reports produced through an intergovernmentally mandated and peer-reviewed process.
- GEO reports are policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive, meaning they inform governments with evidence-based analysis while leaving policy choices to Member States.

Key findings highlighted in the 2025 GEO assessment

- The report states that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have increased by 1.5% annually since 1990, reaching record highs in 2024 alongside a recorded 1.55°C level and intensifying climate impacts.

- It records that one million species out of an estimated eight million are threatened with extinction, and that 20–40% of global land area is degraded, affecting over 3 billion people.
- It states that climate-related extreme weather events cost approximately USD 143 billion annually over the last two decades.
- It records that air pollution-induced health damages cost USD 8.1 trillion in 2019, stated as 6.1% of global gross domestic product (GDP).
- It states that 9 million deaths occur annually from pollution-related causes.
- It records that the planet is polluted by 8,000 million tonnes of **plastic waste**, and that toxic chemical exposure is associated with USD 1.5 trillion in annual health-related economic losses.
- It states that strategic investments in climate stability, biodiversity, and pollution reduction could yield USD 20 trillion annually by 2070, while inaction risks severe impacts on economies and ecosystems.

► **Negotiation dynamics and constraints reflected in the final text**

- The report's release is described as marked by a lack of consensus on phasing out fossil fuel use, switching to renewables, and reducing the use of plastics.
- It records that the Donald Trump administration reportedly sided with Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to weaken the language on climate change and the shift to clean energy.
- It states that this dissension resulted in the first instance of a Global Environment Outlook report being published without a **Summary for Policymakers** (SPM) negotiated line by line to distil science into plain language for policymakers.
- It records that the United States (US) did not send a delegation when the report was being put together in Nairobi, while also recording that America's representatives reportedly intervened during negotiations on finalising the report.
- It states that the report does not quantify the reduction in fossil fuel use required to avert catastrophic consequences, and instead asks countries to "drastically ramp up" generation of renewable energy.

► **Quantified implications linked to emissions pathways and climate governance**

- It records that, as the world's second-largest carbon emitter, the US decision to obstruct global initiatives on clean energy has major implications for a rapidly warming planet.
- It states that the dismantling of predecessor policies is projected to raise US emissions by 7 billion tonnes in the next five years, described as more than double India's annual emissions.
- It records that the recently concluded COP 30 is described as showing early steps toward a climate governance architecture after the US withdrawal from the Paris Pact.
- It states that the undermining reflected in the report's finalisation indicates that the endeavour to build climate governance architecture remains fraught.

► **Documented impacts of environmental degradation**

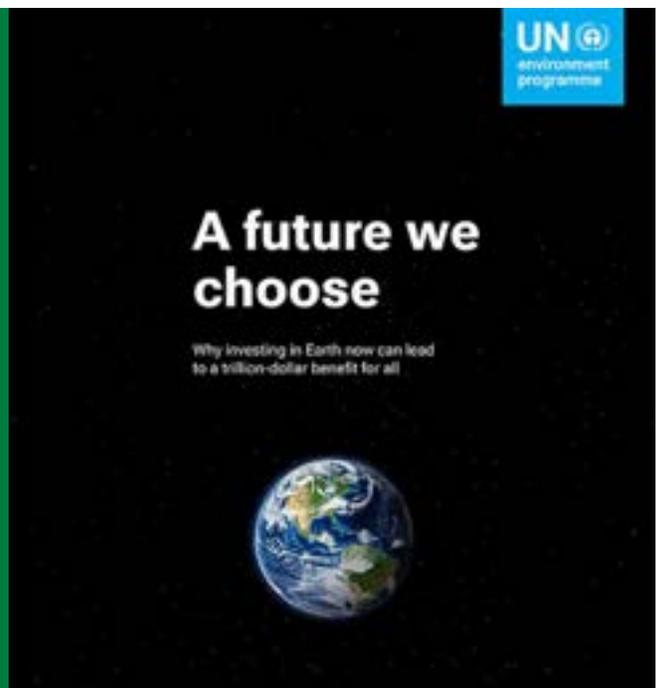
- It states that the world is likely to exceed 1.5°C by the early 2030s and 2.0°C by the 2040s, and it links these thresholds to irreversible ecosystem collapse and mass displacement.
- It records that annual global GDP could fall by 4% by 2050 and 20% by 2100, and it links these declines to mass unemployment, poverty, and systemic instability.
- It states that fertile land loss each year is equivalent to an area the size of Colombia or Ethiopia, and it links this loss to threats to agriculture and water availability, destruction of livelihoods, conflict, and biodiversity erosion.
- It records that per-person food availability could drop by 3.4% by 2050, intensifying hunger, malnutrition, famine, and social unrest.
- It states that existing costs already total trillions annually, that they will grow, and that they will divert resources and trap societies in recurring crisis conditions.

Recommended transformative actions to avert environmental collapse

- It states that economy and finance reforms should shift to comprehensive wealth metrics and price externalities to reflect the true value of GDP, alongside policy reforms to incentivise decarbonisation, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem restoration.
- It records that achieving net-zero 2050 and funding biodiversity needs requires approximately USD 8 trillion in annual investment until 2050, stated as a fraction of the cost of inaction.
- It states that global benefits could reach USD 20 trillion per year by 2070 and could rise thereafter to a potential USD 100 trillion per year.
- It records that materials and waste actions include transparent, traceable circular design, shifting investments to circular and regenerative models, and reshaping consumption through circular mindsets.
- It states that energy actions include decarbonising energy supply, improving energy efficiency across sectors, ensuring sustainable critical mineral value chains, and addressing energy access and energy poverty.
- It records that 9 million premature deaths could be avoided by 2050 through measures including cutting air pollution.
- It states that food systems actions include promoting healthy and sustainable diets, increasing agricultural circularity and efficiency, and sharply cutting food loss and waste.
- It records that almost 200 million people could be lifted out of undernourishment and that over 100 million people could escape extreme poverty.
- It states that environmental actions include accelerating ecosystem conservation and restoration, enhancing climate adaptation via Nature-based Solutions, and enforcing strong climate mitigation strategies.
- It records that implementation requires co-development by governments, private sector, civil society, academia, and Indigenous Peoples, and it states that policies across the identified key areas must be implemented in parallel to ensure a just transition.

About GEO-7, authorship, review architecture, and timeline

- It states that the full report is online as Global Environment Outlook 7, and it describes GEO-7 as the most comprehensive scientific assessment of the global environment to date.
- It records that GEO-7 brings together 287 experts from 82 countries, with contributions from over 800 reviewers worldwide, and that authors met in Bangkok, Vienna, and Nairobi during preparation.
- It states that Member States approved the resolution initiating the GEO-7 process in March 2022 and that GEO-7 was released in December 2025.
- It records that, for the first time, Indigenous and traditional knowledge holders helped shape the report through dialogues in Mexico, Thailand, and online.
- It states that, between early 2024 and late 2025, experts and governments examined multiple drafts, and it records that 56 review editors ensured every comment was addressed.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which annual growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions since 1990 is recorded in GEO-7?
(a) 0.8% annually (b) 1.5% annually
(c) 2.2% annually (d) 3.0% annually
- What global temperature level was recorded alongside record emissions in 2024?
(a) 1.20°C (b) 1.35°C
(c) 1.55°C (d) 1.75°C
- What was the estimated cost of air-pollution-related health damages in 2019?
(a) USD 2.5 trillion
(b) USD 4.7 trillion
(c) USD 6.9 trillion
(d) USD 8.1 trillion
- What is the estimated annual cost of climate-related extreme weather events?
(a) USD 50 billion
(b) USD 90 billion
(c) USD 300 billion
(d) USD 143 billion
- How many pollution-related deaths occur globally each year according to the report?
(a) 9 million deaths
(b) 5 million deaths
(c) 7 million deaths
(d) 3 million deaths
- Which proportion of known species is stated as being threatened with extinction?
(a) 1 in 10 species
(b) 1 in 5 species
(c) 1 in 8 species
(d) 1 in 4 species
- Which amount of plastic waste is recorded as polluting the planet?
(a) 2,000 million tonnes
(b) 4,500 million tonnes
(c) 6,200 million tonnes
(d) 8,000 million tonnes
- Which annual investment is stated as necessary to achieve net-zero and biodiversity goals?
(a) USD 2 trillion
(b) USD 5 trillion
(c) USD 12 trillion
(d) USD 8 trillion
- What share of global land area is recorded as degraded?
(a) 5–10% (b) 10–20%
(c) 20–40% (d) 50–60%
- What temperature threshold is the world likely to exceed by the early 2030s?
(a) 1.5°C (b) 1.2°C
(c) 1.5°C (d) 2.0°C
- What area of fertile land is lost each year according to GEO-7?
(a) Size of France or Ethiopia
(b) Size of Japan or Ethiopia
(c) Size of Colombia or Ethiopia
(d) Size of Australia or Ethiopia
- By when could global GDP fall by 20% under current trajectories?
(a) By 2035 (b) By 2050
(c) By 2075 (d) By 2100
- Which group is identified as being underrepresented in climate leadership?
(a) Urban youth
(b) Indigenous elders
(c) Women
(d) Private corporations
- How many experts contributed as authors to GEO-7?
(a) 120 experts (b) 287 experts
(c) 200 experts (d) 450 experts
- In which year was the GEO-7 process formally initiated by Member States?
(a) 2019 (b) 2022
(c) 2021 (d) 2020

SOLUTIONS

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

8

DEEPAVALI INSCRIBED ON UNESCO ICH LIST

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

IN FOCUS

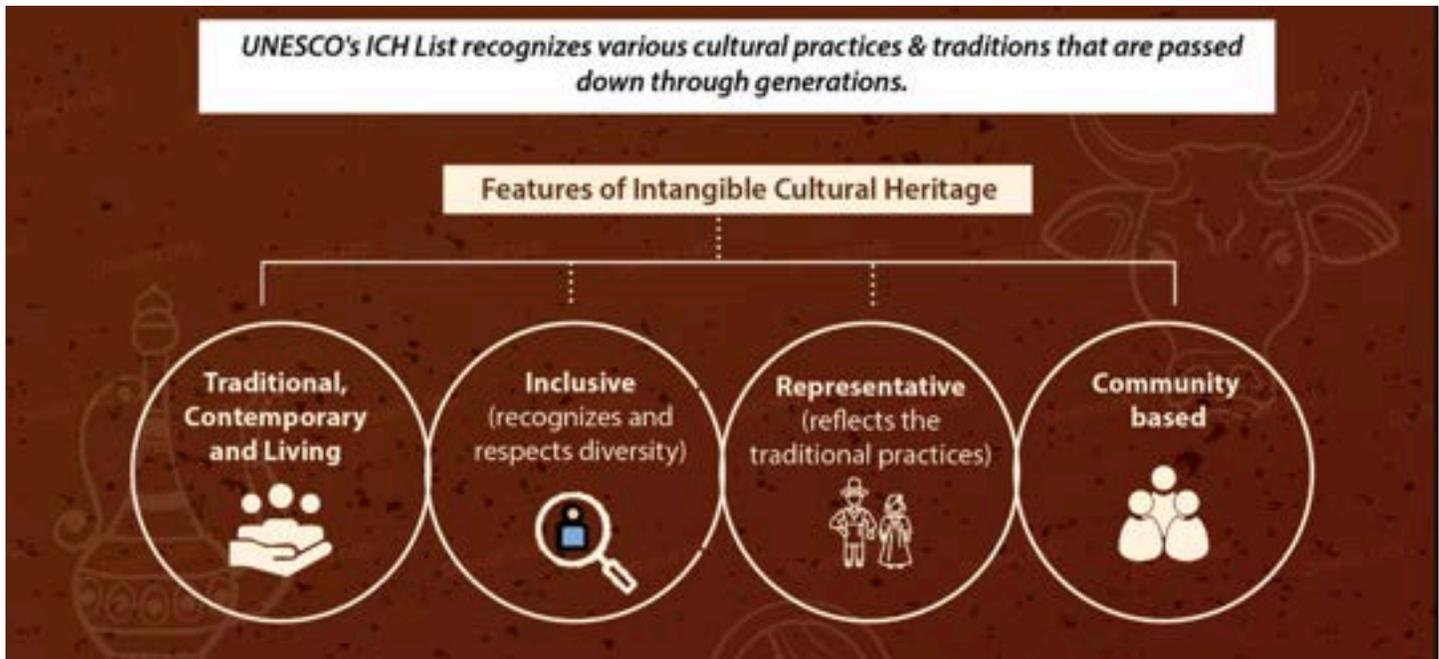
- India's festival of lights, **Deepavali**, was inscribed in December 2025 on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, alongside 19 other cultural elements included in the 2025 inscriptions.
- The inscription was announced during the 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee held in New Delhi from 8–13 December 2025, with the decision adopted in the presence of delegates from 194 Member States, international experts, and UNESCO network representatives.
- The inscription is also reported to have been marked by community celebrations in Nepal, including a musical bhajan evening with lamp-lighting at the Pashupati temple premises, and public reactions welcoming the listing.

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

- Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) refers to living traditions and practices such as oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festivals, traditional knowledge, and craftsmanship.
- UNESCO's ICH framework aims to safeguard, document, and promote living heritage, ensuring it is transmitted across generations.
- ICH emphasizes community participation, recognising that heritage is defined, practiced, and sustained by communities themselves.
- UNESCO supports ICH through international recognition, safeguarding lists, capacity-building, and global cooperation.
- The goal of ICH is not preservation in isolation, but keeping cultural practices alive, relevant, and evolving in a globalised world.

UNESCO framework

- The UNESCO ICH List is described as a mechanism created under the 2003 global framework for safeguarding living cultural traditions, and Deepavali was nominated by India for the 2024–25 cycle.
- The listing is described as recognising Deepavali's cultural, social, and economic significance, including its links to Sustainable Development Goals through livelihoods, well-being, gender participation, and community resilience.
- The inscription is described as the 16th Indian element on the list, as stated in the material on the announcement and accompanying reporting.
- The 2003 Convention framework is described as protecting living cultural traditions that may be threatened by globalisation, while promoting awareness, respect, cultural diversity, and community-led safeguarding of practices and knowledge.
- Intangible cultural heritage is described as living traditions inherited across generations, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge concerning nature and the universe, and skills to produce traditional crafts.
- The listed heritage is described as traditional and contemporary at the same time, inclusive, representative, and community-based, and as supporting intercultural dialogue and mutual respect across communities.



What the Intangible Cultural Heritage list covers

- The **Representative** List is described as identifying living traditions whose safeguarding supports cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and community-led preservation.
- States are described as submitting a **nomination file** demonstrating community consent, safeguarding plans, and cultural significance, with one nomination permitted every two years, and the Intergovernmental Committee evaluates nominations.
- Deepavali is described as occurring on Kartik Amavasya (October–November) and symbolising light over darkness, hope over despair, and renewal and prosperity.

Cultural features associated with Deepavali's inscription

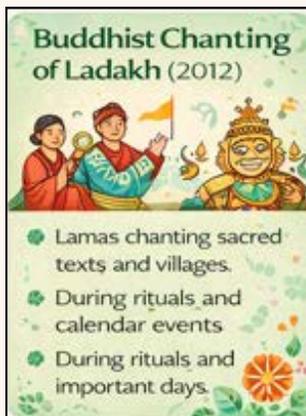
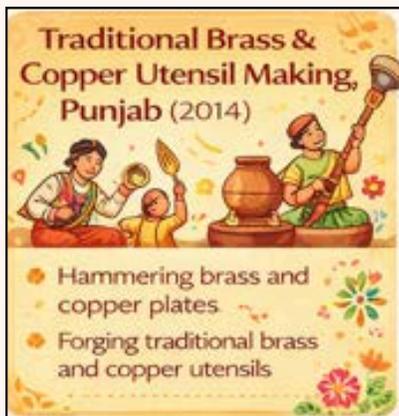
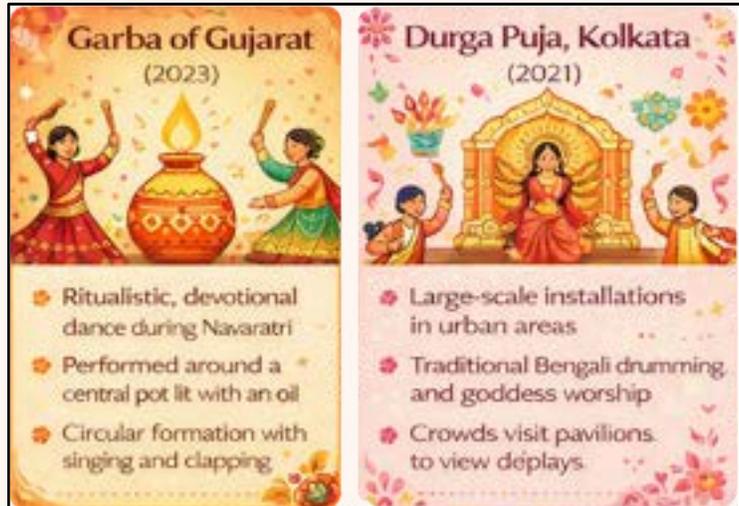
- Deepavali is described as an annual living tradition celebrated in India, and it is described as being deeply linked to India's culture and ethos in the public welcome recorded from the Prime Minister.
- The festival night is described as involving illumination of residences, thoroughfares, and temples with numerous oil lamps that produce a warm golden glow representing light overcoming darkness and righteousness triumphing over evil.
- The evening is described as featuring fireworks, and associated practices are described as including cleaning homes, markets, and public spaces that promote hygiene and a healthy lifestyle.
- The coming together of families and friends is described as enhancing social and emotional well-being, and the inscription is described as acknowledging the role of communities and artisans in sustaining the tradition.



India's already-inscribed elements on the list

- Garba of Gujarat (2023) is described as a ritualistic and devotional dance performed during Navaratri around a central earthenware pot lit with an oil lamp or an image of the mother goddess, with participants moving in a circular formation while singing and clapping.
- Durga Puja in Kolkata (2021) is described as characterised by large-scale installations and pavilions in urban areas, traditional Bengali drumming, and veneration of the goddess, with crowds visiting to view the installations.
- Kumbh Mela (2017) is described as a major pilgrimage congregation during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river, and it is described as drawing large numbers of devotees.
- Yoga (2016) is described as including poses, meditation, controlled breathing, and chanting techniques, and it is described as practised across age groups without discrimination and adopted in many parts of the world.
- Nowruz (2016) is described as an ancestral festivity meaning “new day,” marking spring and renewal of nature, and it is described as involving rituals, ceremonies, special meals, family visits, and gift exchange.

India's Elements on UNESCO'S Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) List



- Traditional brass and copper utensil-making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab (2014) is described as a traditional technique of manufacturing brass and copper utensils through hammering metal plates into required shapes.
- Sankirtana of Manipur (2013) is described as ritual singing, drumming, and dancing performed to mark religious occasions and life-cycle stages, with performances narrating the lives and deeds of Krishna through song and dance.
- Buddhist chanting of Ladakh (2012) is described as lamas chanting sacred texts in monasteries and villages, practised across sects and performed during life-cycle rituals and important days in religious and agrarian calendars.
- Chhau dance (2010) is described as a tradition from eastern India enacting episodes from epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, with three distinct styles linked to regional festivals.
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan (2010) are described as disseminating mythological knowledge through stories, with dancers wearing traditional garments and performances associated with festivals such as Holi.
- Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala (2010) is described as a community ritual dance drama based on the myth of a battle between the goddess Kali and the demon Darika.
- Ramman festival of the Garhwal Himalayas (2009) is described as an annual religious festival in honour of Bhumiya Devta in the twin villages of Saloor-Dungra, involving recitation of a version of the epic of Rama and masked dances.
- Kutiyattam Sanskrit theatre (2008) is described as one of India's oldest living theatrical traditions in Kerala, featuring stylised and codified theatrical language with prominent eye expression and gesture language.
- Ramlila, traditional performance of the Ramayana (2008) is described as staged across northern India during Dussehra through a series of scenes involving song, narration, recital, and dialogue.
- Tradition of Vedic chanting (2008) is described as the oral chanting of Vedic verses during sacred rituals and daily recitation in communities, preserved through techniques used by Brahmin priests over long periods.
- One account lists India's inscribed elements as including Durga Puja in Kolkata (2021), Kumbh Mela (2017), Nowruz (2016), Thatheras of Jandiala Guru (2014), Sankirtana of Manipur (2013), Buddhist chanting of Ladakh (2012), Chhau, Kalbelia, and Mudi yettu (2010), Ramman (2009), and Kutiyattam, Ramlila, and Vedic chanting (2008), while another account lists Garba of Gujarat (2023), Durga Puja (2021), Kumbh Mela (2017), Yoga (2016), Thatheras (2014), Sankirtana (2013), Buddhist chanting (2012), Chhau, Kalbelia, Mudi yettu (2010), Ramman (2009), and Kutiyattam, Vedic chanting, and Ramlila (2008).

20th Intergovernmental Committee session hosted in India

- The 20th Committee session is described as being hosted by India for the first time and organised by the Ministry of Culture along with the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- The session is described as coinciding with the 20th anniversary of India's ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention.
- The key objectives are described as examining new nominations for inscription, reviewing already-inscribed elements through periodic reports, and strengthening cooperation, capacity building, and exchange of best practices among Member States.
- The session is described as enabling India to showcase a national safeguarding model integrating documentation, community participation, and institutional support, and as enhancing global visibility for India's intangible heritage.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following cultural elements from India was inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in December 2025?
(a) Kumbh Mela (b) Durga Puja
(c) Deepavali (d) Garba
2. What was the total number of cultural elements inscribed in the 2025 UNESCO ICH cycle?
(a) 15 elements (b) 19 elements
(c) 17 elements (d) 21 elements
3. Where was the 20th Intergovernmental Committee session held?
(a) Paris (b) Bangkok
(c) New Delhi (d) Nairobi
4. What is the UNESCO framework year under which the Intangible Cultural Heritage List operates?
(a) 1998 Convention
(b) 2003 Convention
(c) 2001 Convention
(d) 2005 Convention
5. Which session of the Intergovernmental Committee approved Deepavali's inscription?
(a) 18th session (b) 19th session
(c) 20th session (d) 21st session
6. What does Deepavali symbolise according to the inscription description?
(a) Wealth and power
(b) Light over darkness
(c) Victory of empires
(d) Seasonal transition
7. Which Indian heritage element involves mass river bathing rituals?
(a) Sankirtana
(b) Chhau dance
(c) Kumbh Mela
(d) Ramlila
8. Which lunar day is Deepavali traditionally observed on?
(a) Kartik Purnima (b) Kartik Amavasya
(c) Ashwin Amavasya (d) Chaitra Purnima
9. Which element involves Sanskrit theatrical performance from Kerala?
(a) Kutiyattam (b) Mudiyettu
(c) Kalbelia (d) Sankirtana
10. What number of Indian elements does Deepavali represent on the UNESCO ICH List?
(a) 14th (b) 15th
(c) 17th (d) 16th
11. Which organisation co-organised the 20th Committee session with the Ministry of Culture?
(a) Archaeological Survey of India
(b) Lalit Kala Akademi
(c) Sangeet Natak Akademi
(d) National School of Drama
12. Which Indian element was inscribed on the UNESCO ICH List in 2023?
(a) Yoga (b) Garba
(c) Durga Puja (d) Kumbh Mela
13. Which country's heritage item titled "Commandaria wine" was inscribed in 2025?
(a) Greece (b) Italy
(c) Cyprus (d) Spain
14. Which country was associated with Cuarteto music, dance and lyrics?
(a) Brazil (b) Chile
(c) Uruguay (d) Argentina
15. Which Indian tradition involves ritual singing and dancing narrating Krishna's life?
(a) Chhau (b) Sankirtana
(c) Ramlila (d) Mudiyettu

SOLUTIONS

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

9

WORLD INEQUALITY REPORT 2026

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The **World Inequality Report 2026** was released in December 2025 as the third edition in the series after the 2018 and 2022 reports, and it presents updated estimates on income, wealth, gender, climate, and public services inequality.
- The report states that income inequality in India remains among the highest globally, with the **top 10%** capturing 58% of national income while the **bottom 50%** receives 15%.
- It reports that wealth inequality in India is sharper than income inequality, and it also records persistent gender gaps, including low female labour participation.
- The report is produced by the World Inequality Lab (WIL) and is based on work by over 200 scholars affiliated with the lab, with the 2026 edition edited by Lucas Chancel, Ricardo Gómez-Carrera, Rowaida Moshrif, and Thomas Piketty.

WHAT IS

WORLD INEQUALITY REPORT

“A global report that analyses income and wealth inequality within and across countries using transparent, comparable data.”

- It is prepared by the World Inequality Lab using tax records, national accounts, and survey data. The report tracks inequality trends over time and highlights the share of income and wealth held by the top and bottom groups.
- It informs public debate and policymaking by showing how government policies shape economic inequality.

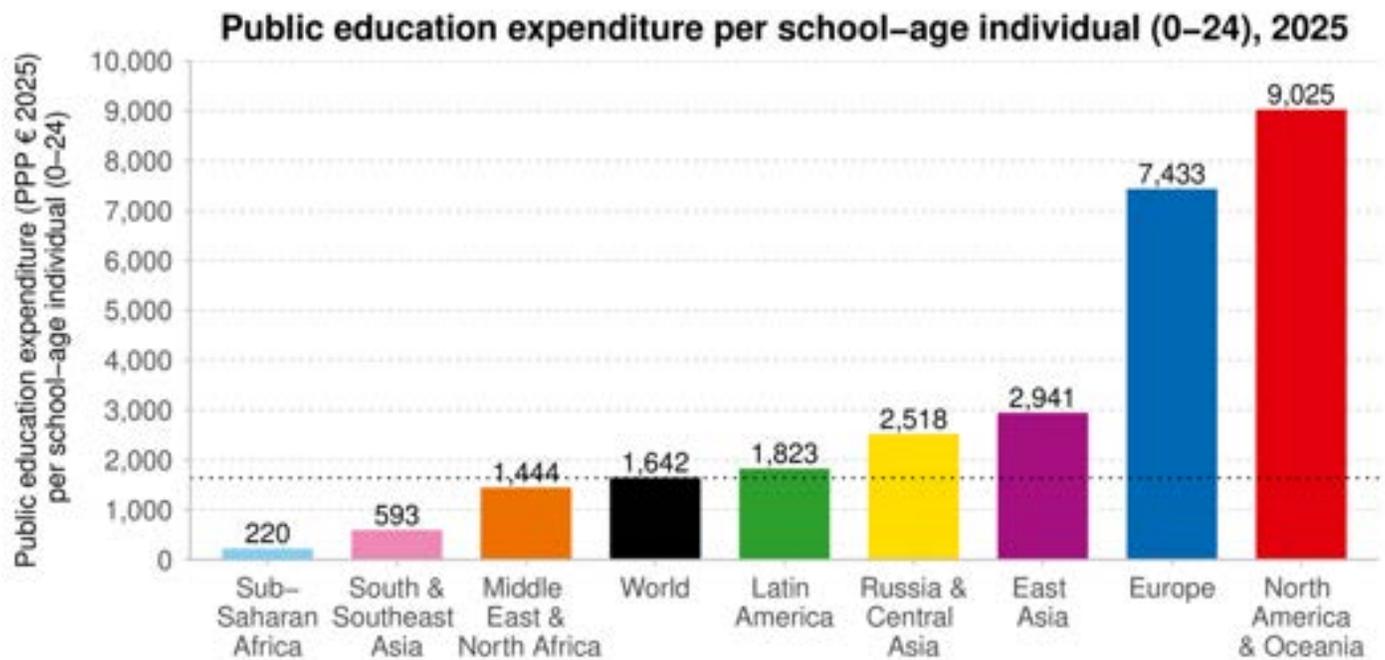
WORLD
INEQUALITY
LAB

CORE GLOBAL FINDINGS RECORDED IN THE REPORT

- The report states that global wealth has reached historic highs while remaining unevenly distributed, with the global top 10% owning three-quarters of all wealth and the bottom 50% holding 2%.
- It further states that the wealthiest top 0.001% group, described as fewer than 60,000 multi-millionaires, owns three times more wealth than the entire bottom half of humanity combined, and that this group's share rose from almost 4% in 1995 to over 6% by 2025.
- It records that the top 1% controls 37% of global wealth, described as more than eighteen times the wealth of the entire bottom half of the world population.
- It states that the top one-in-a-million collectively holds 3% of global wealth, and it separately records that the top one-in-100 million (56 adults worldwide) holds an average wealth of 53 billion euros each.
- It records that global income shares in 2025 are 8% for the bottom 50%, 38% for the middle 40%, and 53% for the top 10%, while global wealth shares in 2025 are 2% for the bottom 50%, 23% for the middle 40%, and 75% for the top 10%.

- The report states that average education spending per child is 220 euros (Purchasing Power Parity) in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared with 7,430 euros (PPP) in Europe and 9,020 euros (PPP) in North America & Oceania.
- It records that excluding unpaid work, women earn 61% of men’s hourly income, and when unpaid labour is included, women earn 32% of men’s hourly income.
- It states that the poorest half of the global population accounts for 3% of carbon emissions associated with **private capital emissions**, while the top 10% accounts for 77% and the wealthiest 1% accounts for 41%.
- It reports that average daily income is 125 euros in North America & Oceania compared with 10 euros in Sub-Saharan Africa, described as a 13-fold difference.
- It records a regional snapshot of monthly per-capita national income (2025 PPP) as 300 euros for Sub-Saharan Africa, 600 euros for South & Southeast Asia, 1,100 euros for Latin America, 1,200 euros for the world average, 1,300 euros for the Middle East & North Africa, 1,500 euros for East Asia, 1,700 euros for Russia & Central Asia, 2,900 euros for Europe, and 3,800 euros for North America & Oceania.
- The report states that annually a **net financial transfer** equal to 1% of global GDP moves from poorer to wealthier nations, described as three times total development aid, due to demand for US and European sovereign bonds.

Figure 11. Large inequality of opportunity across regions



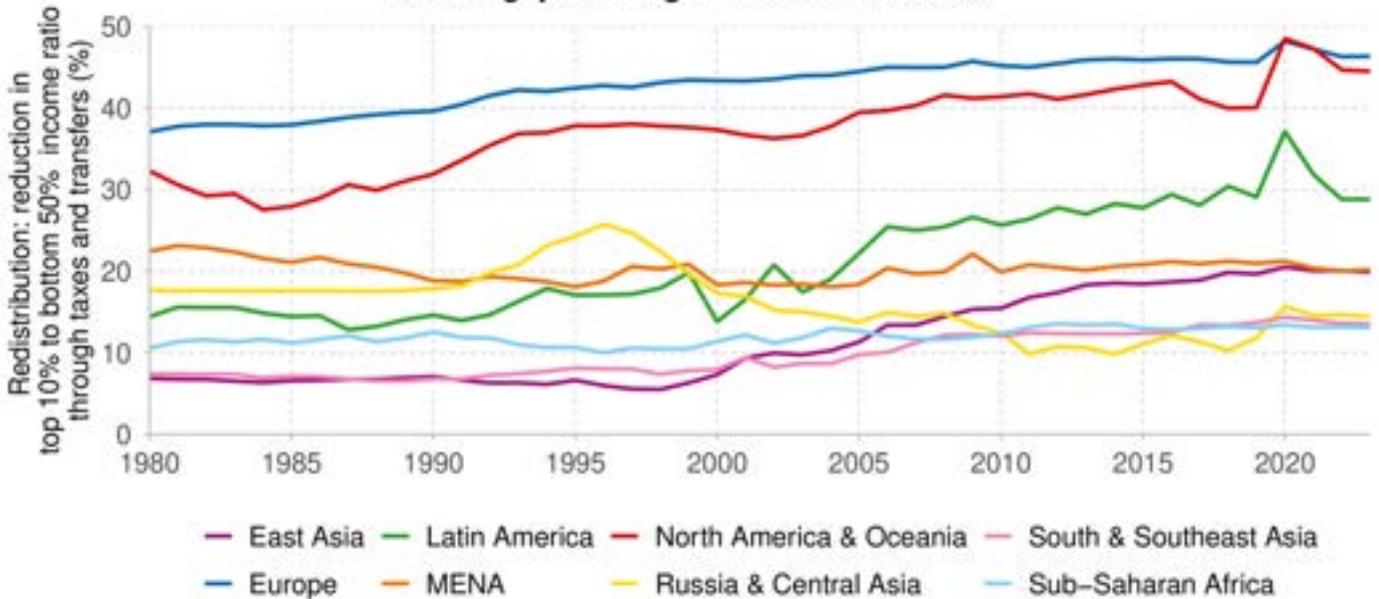
INDIA-SPECIFIC FINDINGS RECORDED IN THE 2026 EDITION

- The report states that India’s income distribution in 2024 is characterised by the top 10% capturing 58% of national income and the bottom 50% receiving 15%, and it also reports that the top 10% income share in India is equal to 58% in 2024.
- It reports that wealth concentration is higher than income concentration in India, with the richest 10% holding around 65% of total wealth and the top 1% holding about 40% of total wealth.
- It records that the “Top 10% to Bottom 50% income gap” value in India is 38.0 for 2014 and 38.2 for 2024 in the India outlook table.

- It records India’s average annual income per capita as around 6,200 euros (PPP) and average wealth as about 28,000 euros (PPP), and it also presents an “Inequality outlook – India” table showing average income (PPP euros) of 6,224 for the full population and average wealth (PPP euros) of 28,141 for the full population.
- It reports that **female labour participation** in India remains very low at 15.7% and shows no improvement over the past decade, and it also records a female labour share of 15.7% for both 2014 and 2024 in the India outlook table.
- It records distributional detail for India in the outlook table showing that the bottom 50% has average income of 940 euros (PPP) with a 15.0% share of total income, while the top 10% has average income of 35,901 euros (PPP) with a 57.7% share of total income.
- It records distributional detail for wealth in the India outlook table showing that the bottom 50% has average wealth of 1,801 euros (PPP) with a 6.4% share of total wealth, while the top 10% has average wealth of 182,913 euros (PPP) with a 65.0% share of total wealth.
- It reports that the top 1% in India has an average income of 140,649 euros (PPP) with a 22.6% share of total income, and it reports that the top 1% has an average wealth of 1,128,435 euros (PPP) with a 40.1% share of total wealth.
- It states that the earlier World Inequality Report 2022 recorded India’s top 10% holding 57% of total national income and the bottom 50% holding 13% in 2021, and it contrasts this with the 2026 report’s updated shares.

HOW THE REPORT SITUATES GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SHIFTS SINCE 1980

Redistribution, 1980–2025: reduction in top 10/bottom 50 income gaps through taxes and transfers



- The report states that in 1980 the global elite was concentrated in North America & Oceania and Europe, with Latin America having some presence near the top and China and India almost entirely confined to the bottom half of the global distribution.

- It states that by 2025 China's position shifted upward with much of its population moving into the middle 40% and a growing share entering upper-middle segments, while India is described as having lost relative ground with almost all of its population in the bottom 50% by 2025.
- It states that Sub-Saharan Africa has remained in the lower half of the global distribution.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE OF THE REPORT AND THE LAB

- The report is described as a major global publication providing comprehensive data and analysis on income and wealth distribution across countries and over time, produced by the **World Inequality Lab** at the Paris School of Economics.
- It states that it goes beyond conventional metrics like GDP by presenting a deeper assessment using a multidimensional lens that includes gender inequality, climate impact, and access to public services.
- The lab is described as hosting the World Inequality Database as an extensive public database on global inequality dynamics and as disseminating working papers, reports, and methodological handbooks as part of its mission.

POLICY DIRECTIONS AND MEASURES DESCRIBED IN THE REPORT

Taxation and the Ultra-Rich

- Ultra-rich individuals escape taxation while rates rise for the population
- Billionaires pay far lower effective income tax rates than others



Progressive Taxation and Public Goods

- Regressive taxation reduces public investment capacity
- Progressive taxes mobilize more revenue to finance public goods



Public investment in Social Services

- Funding education, healthcare, childcare, and nutrition programs
- Enhances early-life and lifelong opportunities



Redistributive Social Protection Programs

- Cash transfers, pensions, and unemployment support
- Shifts resources from the top to the bottom of the distribution



Global Currency and Financial Flow Reforms

- Global currency reform discussed to rebalance financial flows
- Address net financial transfers from poorer to richer economies



- The report states that taxation often fails most where it is most needed at the very top of the distribution, describing ultra-rich individuals as escaping taxation while effective income tax rates rise for most of the population and fall sharply for billionaires and centi-millionaires.
- It states that this regressive pattern reduces state resources for essential investments in education, healthcare, and climate action, and it describes progressive taxation as crucial for mobilising revenues to finance public goods and reduce inequality.
- It states that public investment in free, high-quality schools, universal healthcare, childcare, and nutrition programs can reduce early-life disparities and support lifelong learning opportunities.
- It states that redistributive programs such as cash transfers, pensions, unemployment benefits, and targeted support for vulnerable households can directly shift resources from the top to the bottom of the distribution.
- It describes reform discussion around global currency arrangements as a possible path to reduce unequal financial flows, in the context of the report's description of net financial transfers from poorer to richer economies

INDIA-LINKED INEQUALITY-MITIGATION PROGRAMMES NAMED FOR CONTEXT

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Scheme (MGNREGA) is a legal guarantee framework that provides for at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year for rural households with adult members willing to do unskilled manual work.
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is described as a credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at creating self-employment opportunities through establishing micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector.
- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) is described as enabling urban poor households to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment through building grassroots-level institutions of the poor and improving livelihoods sustainably.
- Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2.0 is described as aiming to ensure access to quality education with an equitable and inclusive classroom environment, and it is recorded as extended from 2021–22 to 2025–26.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is described as ensuring access to financial services including a basic savings bank account, access to need-based credit, remittances, insurance, and pension for excluded sections.
- Lakhpati Didi Initiative is described as enabling women members of Self-Help Groups to earn a minimum sustainable income of one lakh rupees per annum, with an average monthly income of at least Rs. 10,000 sustained for at least four agricultural seasons and/or business cycles.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following editions of the World Inequality Report was released in December 2025?
(a) 1st edition of the series
(b) 2nd edition of the series
(c) 4th edition of the series
(d) 3rd edition of the series
- What share of India's national income is captured by the top 10% according to the report?
(a) 58% (b) 52%
(c) 55% (d) 54%
- Who among the following is listed as an editor of the 2026 edition?
(a) Angus Deaton (b) Joseph Stiglitz
(c) Thomas Piketty (d) Amartya Sen
- What share of global wealth is owned by the top 10% worldwide?
(a) 50% (b) 75%
(c) 45% (d) 65%
- Which group is described as owning three times more wealth than the entire bottom half combined?
(a) 1% (b) 1.1%
(c) 0.01% (d) 0.001%
- Which proportion of national income does the bottom 50% in India receive?
(a) 10% (b) 15%
(c) 13% (d) 18%
- What share of global wealth does the top 1% control?
(a) 35% (b) 31%
(c) 37% (d) 47%
- What is the reported female labour participation rate in India?
(a) 15.2% (b) 15.7%
(c) 15.5% (d) 21%
- Which share of global income accrues to the bottom 50% in 2025?
(a) 5% (b) 8%
(c) 12% (d) 15%
- What is the average wealth held by the top one-in-100 million adults globally?
(a) 10 billion euros (b) 25 billion euros
(c) 53 billion euros (d) 100 billion euros
- Which region has the highest monthly per-capita national income (PPP) in 2025?
(a) Europe and North Africa
(b) East Asia and Oceania
(c) Middle East and North Africa
(d) North America and Oceania
- Which global financial pattern is described as moving resources from poorer to richer nations?
(a) Trade imbalance effect
(b) Development aid allocation
(c) Sovereign bond demand
(d) Foreign direct investment
- Which earlier World Inequality Report recorded India's bottom 50% income share at 13%?
(a) World Inequality Report 2022
(b) World Inequality Report 2021
(c) World Inequality Report 2020
(d) World Inequality Report 2024
- What is India's average annual income per capita in PPP terms?
(a) 3,000 euros (b) 5,500 euros
(c) 6,200 euros (d) 8,000 euros
- Which Indian programme is legally guaranteed to provide 100 days of rural wage employment?
(a) PMEGP
(b) DAY-NULM
(c) Samagra Shiksha Scheme
(d) MGNREGA

SOLUTIONS

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

10 VANDE MANTRAM DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT

MISCELLENEOUS

IN FOCUS

- During a Lok Sabha discussion on 8 December 2025 marking 150 years of **Vande Mataram**, the Prime Minister described it as an inspiration and alleged that the Congress “fractured” the song by conceding to Muslim League demands.
- The Congress responded by disputing this characterisation and stated that Rabindranath Tagore had also supported the practice of singing only the first two stanzas at national gatherings.
- The debate revisited the 1937 Congress Working Committee decision to restrict singing to the first two stanzas at national gatherings due to concerns about later stanzas’ allusions and religious ideology.

About "Vande Mataram":

- One historical account states that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed the song around 1875 and that it was first published in the literary journal *Bangadarshan* on 7 November 1875. Another account states that the song was first written in 1870 and later included in Bankim’s novel *Anandamath* in 1882, and it also states that the novel was published in 1882.
- A separate account records that the hymn was initially composed independently and later incorporated into *Anandamath*, and it further records that *Anandamath* was serialised in *Bangadarshan* before publication in book form.
- Another detail records that the song appeared as a standalone composition in the March–April 1881 issue of *Bangadarshan* edited by Bankim, and it is also stated that the song gained prominence when the novel was serialised in *Bangadarshan* magazine in 1881.
- The novel *Anandamath* is described as narrating a rebellion of sanyasis against Muslim rulers, and it is also described as centring on a group of Sanyasins known as Santanas who dedicate their lives to liberating the motherland from oppression. The Santanas’ devotion is described as being to the motherland personified as a mother, and the song is described as the hymn sung by the Santanas within the novel’s narrative.
- The “religion of patriotism” is described as the central theme of *Anandamath*, with *Vande Mataram* presented as the symbol of that theme.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay



Symbolism of the “three Mothers” imagery

- In the Santanas’ temple, three images of the Mother are described as representing the motherland: the Mother that was, the Mother that is, and the Mother that will be.
- The Mother that was is described as great and glorious in majestic grandeur, the Mother that is is described as wretched and grovelling in the dust, and the Mother that will be is described as returning in pristine glory.
- This threefold depiction is described as symbolising India’s past glory, present subjugation, and envisioned future resurgence.

From literary hymn to mass slogan in the nationalist movement

- By the early twentieth century, the refrain is described as transforming from a literary hymn into a powerful rallying cry of the nationalist movement, particularly during the Swadeshi and anti-partition mobilisation following the 1905 partition of Bengal.
- A political-slogan milestone is stated as 7 August 1905, when thousands of students representing all communities are described as raising cries of Vande Mataram in a procession toward the Calcutta town hall at the time a boycott and swadeshi resolution was adopted.
- In October 1905, a Bande Mataram Sampradaya is described as being founded in North Calcutta, with members described as undertaking Sunday Prabhat Pheris, singing Vande Mataram and collecting voluntary contributions in support of the motherland.
- On 20 May 1906, an unprecedented procession in Barisal is described as involving over ten thousand participants, with Hindus and Muslims marching through the town carrying Vande Mataram flags.
- In August 1906, an English daily titled Bande Mataram is described as being launched under Bipin Chandra Pal's editorship, with Sri Aurobindo later joining as joint editor, and it is described as spreading messages of self-reliance, unity, and political consciousness.

Colonial restrictions and documented incidents of suppression

- Authorities in the newly created province of Eastern Bengal are described as issuing circulars prohibiting singing or chanting Vande Mataram in schools and colleges, accompanied by warnings of derecognition, debarment from government service, and other punitive consequences.
- In November 1905, a fine of Rs 5 is described as being imposed on each of 200 students of a school in Rangpur for chanting Vande Mataram, and anti-partition leaders in Rangpur are described as being instructed to serve as special constables to prevent chanting.
- In November 1906, at a meeting in Dhulia, Maharashtra, cries of Vande Mataram are described as having been raised, and in 1908 at Belgaum, Karnataka, police are described as thrashing boys and arresting persons for chanting Vande Mataram against a verbal order prohibiting it.
- In April 1906 at Barisal, British authorities are described as banning public chanting and eventually prohibiting the conference itself, after which delegates are described as continuing to raise the slogan and facing severe police repression.
- In May 1907 in Lahore, young protesters are described as marching in defiance of colonial orders and chanting Vande Mataram to condemn arrests at Rawalpindi, and the demonstration is described as being met with brutal police repression.
- On 27 February 1908, around a thousand workers of the Coral Mills in Tuticorin are described as striking in solidarity with the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and marching late into the night chanting Vande Mataram.
- In June 1908, thousands are described as gathering outside the Bombay police court during Lokmanya Tilak's trial and singing Vande Mataram, and on 21 June 1914, Tilak's welcome in Pune is described as featuring crowds echoing the slogan.

Congress adoption, performance milestones, and the 1937 "two stanzas" decision

- Rabindranath Tagore is described as first singing the song at the 1896 Congress session in Calcutta, and it is also stated that he set it to music.
- The Indian National Congress (INC) is described as adopting the song for all-India occasions at its Varanasi session in 1905, in a period when the slogan is described as becoming powerful in the Swadeshi and anti-partition movement.
- In October 1937, the **Congress Working Committee** decided that when the song is sung at national gatherings, only the first two stanzas should be sung, stating that other stanzas were little known and hardly ever sung and that they contained allusions and a religious ideology not in keeping with the ideology of other religious groups in India.

Objections recorded by the Muslim League and Jinnah's stated position

- The Muslim League is described as objecting to references in the song, and it is stated that it believed “bowing to the mother” amounted to idolatry, with Jinnah described as a prominent critic of the song
- At the Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference in Karachi in October 1938, **Mohammad Ali Jinnah** is quoted as stating that the Congress started legislatures with Vande Mataram, which he described as “idolatrous” and as, in its origin and substance, a hymn to spread hatred for Musalmans.

Tagore's articulation of limiting the song to the first two stanzas

- **Rabindranath Tagore** is described as stating that the tenderness and devotion expressed in the first portion, and its emphasis on beautiful and beneficent aspects of the motherland, made a special appeal to him.
- He is described as stating that he found no difficulty dissociating the first portion from the rest of the poem and from the portions of the book of which it formed a part, given his monotheistic ideals
- He is also described as conceding that the whole poem read with its context could be interpreted in ways that might wound Muslim susceptibilities, while stating that a national song that had come to consist only of the first two stanzas had acquired a separate individuality and inspiring significance and need not offend any sect or community.



Gandhi's position on avoiding conflict over singing in mixed gatherings

- Mahatma Gandhi is described as admiring the song while also stating in the 1930s that it should not be sung at gatherings where people objected to it.
- In a Harijan note dated 1 July 1939, he is described as writing that the refrain became a powerful anti-imperialist battle-cry during partition days in Bengal and that it had not occurred to him that it was a Hindu song or meant only for Hindus.
- He is also described as writing that he would not risk a single quarrel over singing Vande Mataram at a mixed gathering and that if anyone objected at a mixed gathering, even with Congress expurgations, the singing should be dropped.

International echoes and overseas revolutionary use

- In 1907, Madam Bhikaji Cama is described as raising the tricolour flag for the first time outside India at Stuttgart, Berlin, with the words Vande Mataram written on the flag.
- On 17 August 1909, Madan Lal Dhingra is described as being hanged in England, with “Bande Mataram” described as his last words before the gallows.
- In 1909, Indian patriots in Paris are described as undertaking publication of a magazine called Bande Mataram from Geneva, and in October 1912, Gopal Krishna Gokhale is described as being welcomed in Cape Town with cries of Vande Mataram.

National status decisions and the 24 January 1950 statement

- In 1950, the **Constituent Assembly** is described as having absolute unanimity over adopting both Jana Gana Mana and Vande Mataram as national symbols, with no debate recorded on the issue.
- On 24 January 1950, Dr. Rajendra Prasad is described as stating that the words and music known as **Jana Gana Mana** would be the National Anthem, subject to authorised alterations, and that Vande Mataram would be honoured equally and have equal status with it due to its historic part in the freedom struggle.
- It is stated that the statement was adopted, with Rabindranath Tagore's Jana-Gana-Mana adopted as the national anthem and Bankim's Vande Mataram adopted as the national song with equal status.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who composed the song Vande Mataram?
(a) Rabindranath Tagore
(b) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay
(c) Sri Aurobindo
(d) Bipin Chandra Pal
- Which novel by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay features Vande Mataram?
(a) Kapalkundala (b) Durgeshnandini
(c) Anandamath (d) Rajsingha
- What do the “three Mothers” imagery in Anandamath symbolise?
(a) Past present future (b) Faith hope charity
(c) Body mind soul (d) Land water people
- Which event in August 1905 marked the song’s emergence as a mass political slogan?
(a) INC session at Calcutta
(b) Launch of a nationalist journal
(c) Formation of Muslim League
(d) Boycott procession to town hall
- Which group sings Vande Mataram within the narrative of Anandamath?
(a) Zamindars (b) Santanas
(c) Sepoys (d) Merchants
- Who edited the English daily titled “Bande Mataram” launched in August 1906?
(a) Bipin Chandra Pal (b) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
(c) Lala Lajpat Rai (d) Motilal Nehru
- What was the literary journal in which Vande Mataram was first published according to one account?
(a) Prabasi (b) Bangadarshan
(c) Harijan (d) Modern Review
- Who first sang Vande Mataram at an Indian National Congress session in 1896?
(a) Rabindranath Tagore (b) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
(c) Gopal Krishna Gokhale (d) Dadabhai Naoroji
- What decision did the Congress Working Committee take in October 1937?
(a) Ban singing of the song
(b) Replace it with Jana Gana Mana
(c) Restrict singing to two stanzas
(d) Declare it national anthem
- Which organisation adopted Vande Mataram for all-India occasions in 1905?
(a) Muslim League (b) Indian National Congress
(c) Hindu Mahasabha (d) Home Rule League
- Which leader objected to Vande Mataram on grounds of idolatry?
(a) Maulana Azad (b) Aga Khan
(c) Liaquat Ali Khan (d) Mohammad Ali Jinnah
- What were Madan Lal Dhingra’s last words before execution in 1909?
(a) Inquilab Zindabad (b) Jai Hind
(c) Bande Mataram (d) Swaraj is my birthright
- On which date were Jana Gana Mana and Vande Mataram accorded national status?
(a) 24 January 1950 (b) 26 January 1950
(c) 15 August 1947 (d) 2 October 1950
- Who raised the tricolour with “Vande Mataram” written on it at Stuttgart in 1907?
(a) Sarojini Naidu
(b) Annie Besant
(c) Madam Bhikaji Cama
(d) Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay
- Which constitutional article mandates respect for the national anthem?
(a) Article 19A(a) (b) Article 21A(a)
(c) Article 51A(a) (d) Article 356A(a)

SOLUTIONS

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

11

SC DECLARES INVOLUNTARY NARCO TEST AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The Supreme Court held that any forced or involuntary **Narco-analysis test** is unconstitutional and invalid, and it set aside a Patna High Court order that had permitted such a test.
- The ruling arose from the **Amlesh Kumar** case (Amlesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, 2025), where the Supreme Court found the High Court's direction to be inconsistent with binding Supreme Court jurisprudence.
- The Court reiterated that involuntary narco testing violates constitutional protections, and that material obtained without free consent cannot be used as evidence.
- The Court emphasised that safeguards around consent and procedure remain central, and that such tests can only be contemplated within the limited contours already recognised in prior precedent.

WHAT NARCO ANALYSIS INVOLVES IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION



Sedation-Based Truth Extraction

A narco test is described as an investigative process in which a subject is sedated through administration of substances such as barbiturates, including Sodium Pentothal, with the expectation that reduced inhibitions & reasoning may lead to disclosure of concealed facts.



Cognitive Autonomy Violation

The ruling records that despite being non-violent, narco analysis interferes with cognitive autonomy and therefore attracts constitutional scrutiny when conducted without free consent.



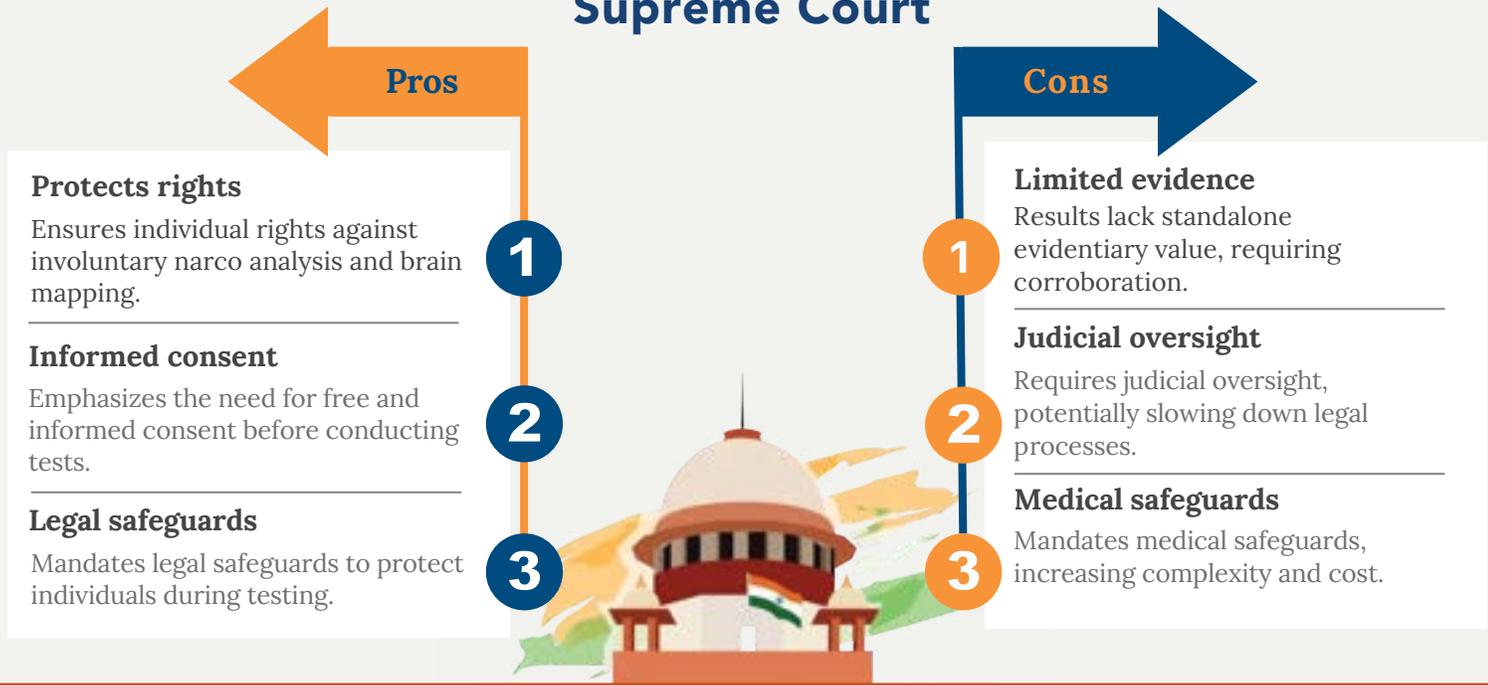
Coercive Cognitive Techniques

The technique is described as a non-violent investigative method, and it is compared with other techniques such as polygraph tests and brain mapping in terms of its investigative objective of eliciting information by reducing conscious control.

Constitutional grounds underlying the bar on Involuntary Testing

- The Court reiterated that the protection against self-incrimination under **Article 20(3)** bars compelling an accused person to be a witness against themselves, and an involuntary narco test breaches this protection by extracting testimonial responses in a drug-induced state.
- The ruling reaffirmed that personal liberty under Article 21 includes privacy interests such as mental privacy and bodily autonomy, and that a forced narco test violates the **Right to Privacy** and personal autonomy absent express consent.
- The Court linked the fairness requirement under “procedure established by law” in Article 21 with the constitutional framework described as the **Golden Triangle** of Articles 14, 19, and 21, as recognised in Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978).

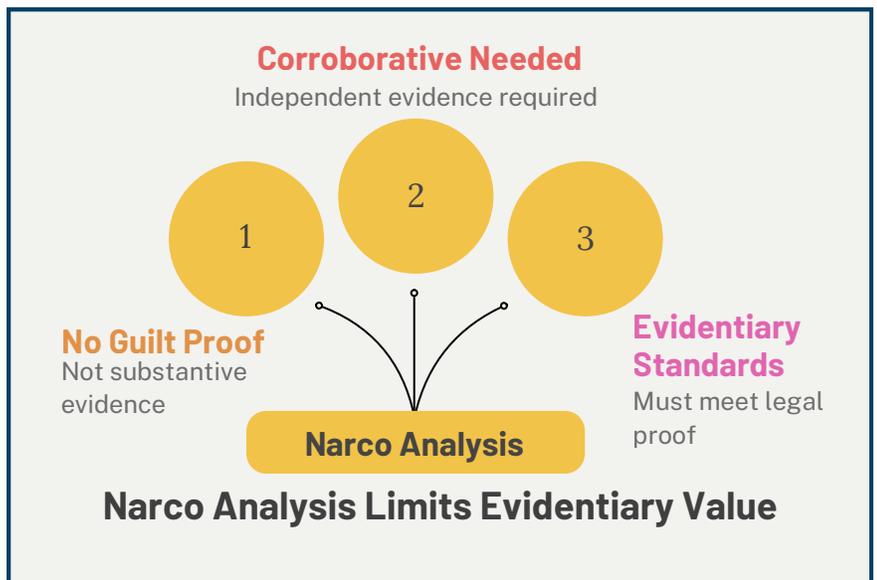
Binding Precedent & the Standards reaffirmed by the Supreme Court



- The Court held that the Patna High Court order was contrary to the Selvi guidelines laid down in Selvi v. State of Karnataka (2010), which prohibited involuntary narco analysis, polygraph tests, and brain mapping.
- The Court reiterated that consent must be free and informed, must be recorded before a Judicial Magistrate, and must be accompanied by medical, legal, and procedural safeguards.
- The Court reiterated that results of such tests do not have standalone evidentiary value and must be assessed only within the strict limits recognised by law, including corroboration requirements.

Evidentiary limits highlighted by courts

- The ruling reiterated that information obtained through narco analysis does not confirm guilt and cannot be treated as substantive proof of guilt in itself.
- It recorded that courts in Manoj Kumar Saini v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2023) and Vinobhai v. State of Kerala (2025) have held that narco test outcomes do not prove guilt and can, at best, assist investigation when supported by Corroborative evidence from independent sources.
- It reiterated that any investigative use of leads emerging from narco analysis must be tested through ordinary evidentiary standards and cannot replace legally admissible proof.



Why involuntary narco tests are unconstitutional

- A forced narco test is unconstitutional because it compels testimonial disclosure by suppressing free will, which directly violates the right against self-incrimination under Article 20(3).
- A forced narco test is unconstitutional because it intrudes into mental privacy and bodily autonomy, engaging Article 21 protections over life and personal liberty and the fairness of investigative procedure.
- The constitutional infirmity persists even if the method is described as non-violent, because the legal objection is directed at coercion, loss of autonomy, and compelled testimonial extraction rather than physical force alone.
- The Court's approach is framed as preserving democratic criminal justice values by ensuring that investigative efficiency cannot override constitutional guarantees.
- The Court reiterated that statements or information obtained without Informed consent are inadmissible, and that consent must be specifically scrutinised and procedurally recorded.

When voluntary narco testing may be considered in law

- The Court clarified that an accused may volunteer for narco analysis at the stage of defence evidence under Section 253 BNSS (Section 253 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023), but there is no absolute or indefeasible right to demand such a test.
- Voluntary testing is legally conditioned on consent being free, informed, and recorded before a magistrate, along with compliance with medical, legal, and procedural safeguards.
- Even where voluntary, the results do not acquire standalone evidentiary status, and any investigative value remains contingent on independent corroboration and lawful proof.
- The Court framed the permissibility of voluntary testing as an exception bounded by safeguards, rather than as a routine investigative entitlement of either the prosecution or the defence.
- The Court reiterated that the fairness requirement under Article 21 applies to any such investigative step and requires strict adherence to procedure established by law.

Ethical rationale recorded alongside constitutional doctrine

- The ruling grounded the requirement of consent in individual autonomy and natural justice, and it stated that forced narco testing violates ethical principles as well as core human values.
- The Court referenced autonomy-based ethical reasoning, including Kantian thought that an act is ethical only when performed with consent, to reinforce the constitutional prohibition on involuntary testing.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following tests was held unconstitutional when conducted forcibly by the Supreme Court in December 2025?
 - Polygraph examination
 - Brain electrical mapping
 - Narco analysis test
 - Psychological profiling
- What is the primary substance commonly administered during narco analysis?
 - Morphine
 - Sodium Pentothal
 - Diazepam
 - Ketamine
- Which constitutional article protects against self-incrimination relied upon by the Court?
 - Article 19(1)
 - Article 20(3)
 - Article 21(1)
 - Article 22(3)
- Which constitutional right relating to mental and bodily autonomy was emphasised by the Court?
 - Right to Equality
 - Right to Freedom
 - Right to Privacy
 - Right to Religion
- Which constitutional article protects against self-incrimination relied upon by the Court?
 - Article 19(1)
 - Article 20(3)
 - Article 21(1)
 - Article 22(2)
- Which Supreme Court judgment originally laid down guidelines prohibiting involuntary narco tests?
 - Maneka Gandhi case
 - Selvi case
 - Puttaswamy case
 - Nandini Satpathy case
- Which doctrine was cited to link fairness of procedure with Articles 14, 19 and 21?
 - Golden Triangle Doctrine
 - Due Process Doctrine
 - Basic Structure Doctrine
 - Harmonious Construction
- Before whom must consent for narco analysis be recorded?
 - Investigating officer
 - Public prosecutor
 - Judicial Magistrate
 - Medical superintendent
- What is the evidentiary value of narco analysis results according to the Court?
 - Conclusive proof of guilt
 - Substantive evidence
 - Circumstantial proof
 - No standalone evidentiary value
- Which prior case held that narco test results do not prove guilt?
 - Manav Selvi v. State of Madhya Pradesh
 - Manoj Kumar Saini v. State of Madhya Pradesh
 - Maneka Gandhi v. State of Madhya Pradesh
 - Nandini Satpathy v. State of Madhya Pradesh
- Which investigative principle applies even if the narco test is described as non-violent?
 - Physical harm test
 - Mental cruelty doctrine
 - Coercion and autonomy test
 - Public interest override
- Which article ensures fairness of investigative procedure?
 - Article 21
 - Article 19
 - Article 14
 - Article 22
- Under which provision may an accused voluntarily offer to undergo narco analysis?
 - Section 161 BNSS
 - Section 167 BNSS
 - Section 313 BNSS
 - Section 253 BNSS
- Which investigative techniques were grouped with narco analysis in prior rulings?
 - DNA profiling and forensics
 - Polygraph and brain mapping
 - Fingerprinting and handwriting
 - Surveillance and wiretapping
- What was the name of the case in which the Supreme Court set aside a Patna High Court order allowing narco-analysis?
 - Amlesh Kumar v. State of Bihar
 - Selvi v. State of Karnataka
 - Nandini Satpathy v. P.L. Dani
 - Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India

SOLUTIONS

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

12 GRAP 4 INVOKED IN DELHI

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

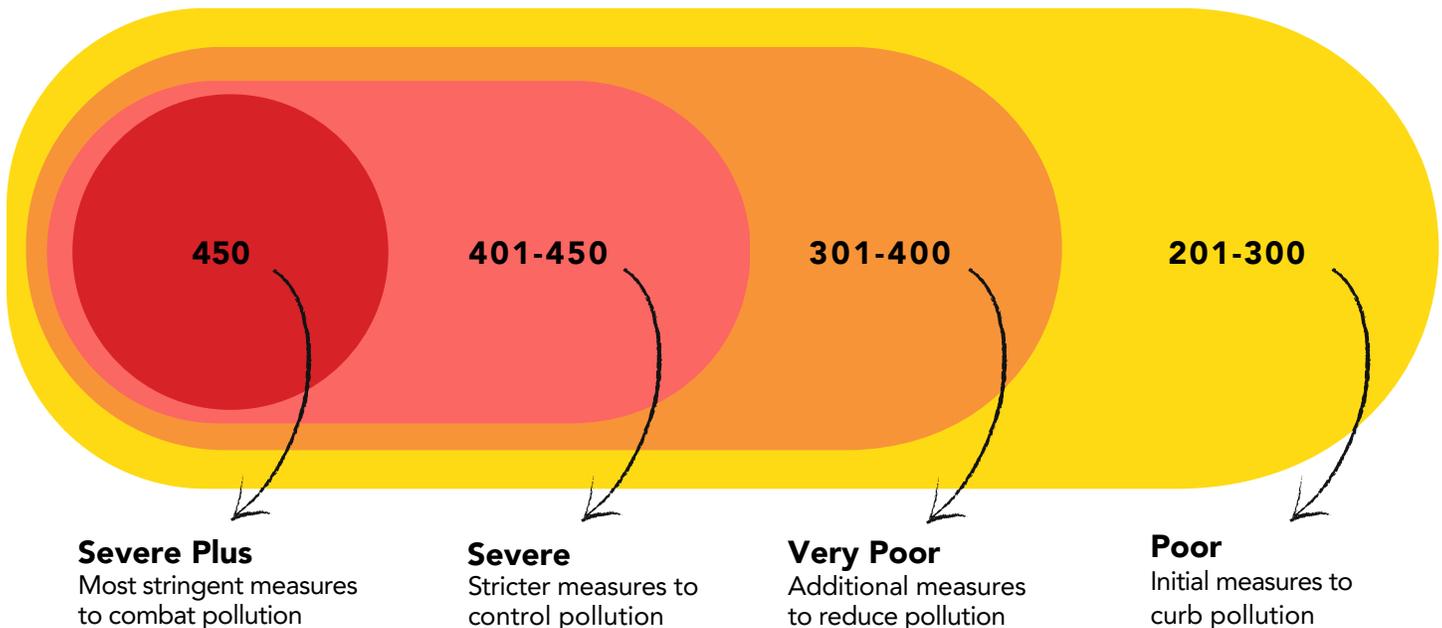
IN FOCUS

- The Central authorities activated **GRAP Stage IV** in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) from December 18, 2025, following a sharp deterioration in air quality conditions.
- The Air Quality Index (AQI) remained in the very poor to severe range, with Delhi recording an AQI of 358 on December 18 and breaching the severe threshold earlier.
- The measures were enforced in addition to restrictions already operational under earlier stages of the Graded Response Action Plan.
- Multiple curbs relating to vehicular movement, construction activity, office attendance, and educational institutions came into force across Delhi-NCR.

Framework and Purpose of the Graded Response Action Plan

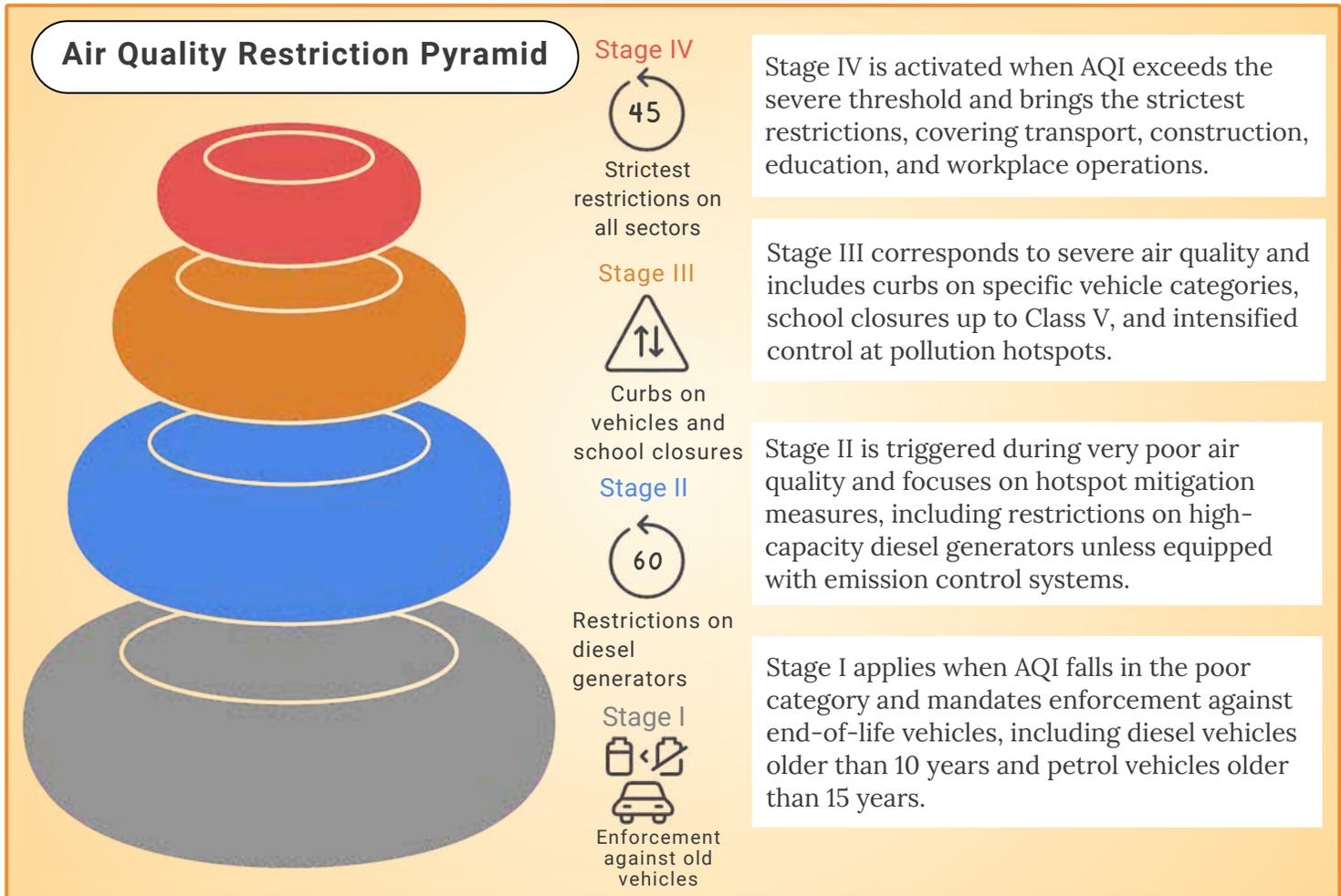
The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) consists of a set of pre-defined emergency measures designed to prevent further deterioration of air quality once specific AQI thresholds are crossed in the Delhi-NCR region.

Graded Response Action Plan Stages



- The plan was notified in 2017 by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and is implemented through the **Commission for Air Quality Management** in NCR and adjoining areas.
- GRAP follows an incremental approach, under which measures from earlier stages continue to apply as air quality worsens into higher stages.
- The implementation structure divides responses into four stages corresponding to worsening AQI categories ranging from poor to severe.

Air Quality Stages and Corresponding Restrictions



Measures Enforced Under Stage IV

- Entry of non-Delhi registered private vehicles that do not meet **BS-VI Norms** is prohibited, except for vehicles using clean fuels or transporting essential goods and services.
- Vehicles without a valid **Pollution Under Control** certificate are barred from refuelling at petrol and CNG stations within Delhi from December 18, 2025.
- Non-essential light commercial vehicles registered outside Delhi are restricted from entering the city unless they are electric, CNG-based, or compliant with BS-VI diesel standards.
- Vehicles carrying construction materials are not permitted to enter Delhi during the enforcement period.
- A complete **Construction Demolition Ban** is imposed on all construction and demolition activities, including linear public infrastructure projects that were otherwise permitted under lower GRAP stages.
- Public, municipal, and private offices are required to operate with only 50% staff physically present, with the remainder working under the **Work From Home** arrangement.
- Schools in Delhi are directed to conduct classes in a hybrid format, allowing students from Classes VI to IX and XI the option of online attendance, thereby formalising **Hybrid Schooling**.
- Governments are advised to consider additional emergency steps, including closure of colleges, suspension of non-essential commercial activities, and implementation of an odd-even vehicle policy if conditions worsen.

GRAP Impact Relief



A one-time compensation of ₹10,000 has been announced for 2,57,244 registered construction workers affected by the suspension of construction and demolition activities under GRAP Stages III and IV.

Exemptions and Permitted Activities

- The immediate deterioration in air quality has been attributed primarily to adverse meteorological conditions rather than a sudden spike in emissions.
- Slow wind speeds, stable atmospheric conditions, and a feeble western disturbance resulted in poor dispersion of pollutants and increased moisture levels in the lower atmosphere.
- These winter-specific conditions led to smog and dense fog formation, trapping pollutants near the surface and contributing to an **AQI Severe** situation in parts of Delhi-NCR.

Causes Behind the Deterioration in Air Quality

- Emergency and essential services, including hospitals, fire services, public transport, electricity supply, pollution control agencies, forest services, and water supply authorities, are exempt from operational restrictions.
- Personnel engaged in emergency and essential services are excluded from mandatory work-from-home requirements.
- Persons with disabilities are permitted to operate BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles if such vehicles are specifically adapted for their personal use.

Understanding the Air Quality Index System

- The Air Quality Index is a national tool introduced in 2014 to systematically measure and communicate air quality levels across Indian cities.
- AQI categorises air quality into six bands ranging from good to severe, based on a numerical scale from 0 to 500.
- The index is calculated using concentrations of eight pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, ammonia, and lead.
- A minimum of three pollutants, including either PM10 or PM2.5, is required to compute the AQI, using 24-hour or 8-hour average values depending on the pollutant.

Institutional Role of the Commission for Air Quality Management

- The Commission for Air Quality Management is a statutory body established under the 2021 Act to coordinate air quality management across Delhi-NCR and adjoining areas.
- Its mandate includes policy coordination, identification of pollution sources, research facilitation, and enforcement of region-wide air quality measures.
- The Commission comprises a Chairperson, ex officio members from NCR states, full-time technical experts, representatives from non-governmental organisations, and experts from national institutions.
- The body exercises overriding authority over the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards within its jurisdiction to ensure uniform and effective implementation of air quality measures.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following GRAP stages was activated in Delhi-NCR from December 18, 2025?
(a) Stage I (b) Stage II
(c) Stage III (d) Stage IV
2. What was the Air Quality Index recorded in Delhi on December 18, 2025?
(a) 358 (b) 335
(c) 312 (d) 401
3. Which authority implements the Graded Response Action Plan in Delhi-NCR?
(a) National Green Tribunal
(b) Central Pollution Control Board
(c) Commission for Air Quality Management
(d) Ministry of Road Transport
4. Which operational principle governs the structure of GRAP?
(a) One-time restriction model
(b) Incremental escalation model
(c) Random enforcement model
(d) Seasonal restriction model
5. Which AQI category triggers Stage I of GRAP?
(a) Moderate (b) Severe
(c) Very poor (d) Poor
6. Which AQI category corresponds to Stage II under GRAP?
(a) Moderate (b) Poor
(c) Very poor (d) Severe
7. Which restriction applies specifically under GRAP Stage III?
(a) Complete construction ban
(b) Closure of colleges
(c) School closures up to Class V
(d) Odd-even vehicle policy
8. Which type of non-Delhi registered vehicles are prohibited from entry under Stage IV?
(a) Vehicles not meeting BS-VI norms
(b) BS-VI compliant vehicles
(c) Vehicles using clean fuels
(d) Vehicles transporting essential goods
9. Which category of vehicles is barred from refuelling in Delhi under Stage IV?
(a) Diesel vehicles older than five years
(b) Vehicles without valid PUC certificates
(c) Vehicles registered outside NCR
(d) Vehicles carrying construction material
10. What is the status of construction activity under GRAP Stage IV?
(a) Restricted at night only
(b) Allowed for public infrastructure
(c) Allowed with dust control norms
(d) Completely prohibited
11. What office attendance rule applies during Stage IV?
(a) Full physical attendance
(b) Seventy-five percent attendance
(c) Fifty percent physical attendance
(d) Mandatory remote work only
12. Which schooling arrangement is mandated in Delhi during Stage IV?
(a) Complete closure of schools
(b) Only online classes
(c) Only offline classes
(d) Hybrid schooling option
13. Which group is exempted from work-from-home requirements?
(a) Private sector employees
(b) Construction supervisors
(c) Emergency and essential service personnel
(d) Educational administrators
14. Which vehicles are permitted for persons with disabilities under Stage IV?
(a) BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles
(b) BS-IV petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles
(c) Only electric and BS-IV diesel vehicles
(d) Only BS-VI and BS-IV diesel vehicles
15. In which year was the Air Quality Index introduced in India?
(a) 2010 (b) 2012
(c) 2014 (d) 2016

SOLUTIONS

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

13 INDIGO CONTROVERSY

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- IndiGo faced widespread flight cancellations and delays in early December 2025, with disruptions linked to an acute crew shortage following the full rollout of revised crew duty and rest requirements.
- The final phase of the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms took effect in November 2025, tightening operational limits for airlines, particularly for night operations
- IndiGo stated that it initiated calibrated adjustments to its schedule through rescheduling and cancellations to stabilise operations in line with crew availability.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) asked IndiGo to present the facts leading to the situation and submit mitigation plans for operational stabilisation.

Revised Flight Duty Time Limitation Rules and Compliance

The revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms are safety regulations issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that prescribe how long pilots can remain on duty, how many hours they can fly, the number of night landings permitted, and the minimum rest they must receive.

The norms are intended to prevent pilot fatigue, reduce human error, and enhance aviation safety, and they are aligned with international aviation standards.

The new rules require a weekly rest of 48 hours for pilots, increasing the mandatory consecutive weekly rest from 36 hours earlier to 48 hours.

The new rules impose a night landings cap by reducing permitted night landings for flight crew to two from six earlier, and by disallowing more than two continuous night duties.

Airlines must implement mandatory roster adjustments by redesigning crew rosters to remain within the new duty and rest limits.

Airlines must submit quarterly fatigue-related reporting to the DGCA as part of the fatigue risk management expectations under the revised framework.

Implementation Timeline and Regulatory Trigger for Rollout

- The revised FDTL norms were originally planned for implementation from June 2024, but implementation was delayed after airlines sought phased introduction on the ground that additional crew strength would be needed.
- The rules were implemented in 2025 by the DGCA following a **Delhi High Court directive**.
- The revised framework was rolled out in two phases, with the first phase implemented in July and the second phase implemented in November.
- IndiGo handled the first phase, which included longer weekly rest, with relatively limited impact, while the second phase introduced tighter constraints for night operations and reduced permissible night landings.

IndiGo Disruptions and Immediate Operational Impact

- IndiGo experienced heavy flight cancellations and delays over several days, affecting thousands of passengers and causing congestion and complaints at multiple Indian airports.
- IndiGo’s on-time performance deteriorated sharply, with only 19.7% of flights operating on time on December 3, compared to 35% on December 2 and around 50% on December 1.
- IndiGo apologised and initiated schedule changes described as calibrated adjustments, involving rescheduling and cancellation of some flights to stabilise operations in line with crew availability.
- The operational disruptions prompted significant passenger inconvenience, with reports of long delays, cancellations, and travelers shifting to more expensive flights on other carriers due to the disruption.

Why IndiGo Was Disproportionately Affected Compared to Other Airlines

- IndiGo was impacted more severely because of its massive scale of operations and a high-frequency network that amplifies the operational effect of crew shortages under tighter duty limits.
- IndiGo operates a significant number of late-night and early-morning flights, including red-eye and early-morning segments that are directly constrained by stricter rest and night-duty rules.
- IndiGo’s low-cost carrier model relies on very high aircraft and crew utilisation levels, leaving limited slack when the revised duty caps and rest requirements reduce scheduling flexibility.
- IndiGo operates a fleet of over 400 aircraft and runs over 2,300 flights a day, connecting over 90 domestic and 45 international destinations, and this scale means even a small cancellation rate translates into a large absolute number of cancellations.
- IndiGo’s network is heavily dependent on narrow-body Airbus A320 aircraft operating multiple legs each day, which increases the risk that delays cascade into larger disruptions when crew reach duty-hour caps and replacements are required.
- Other carriers were comparatively less affected because some are operating at lower-than-optimal aircraft utilisation due to delayed new aircraft deliveries and aircraft grounded for refits, which increases roster flexibility by leaving more pilots available relative to fleet size.

400+
Aircraft

2,300+
Flights/Day

135+
Destinations

High
Crew Utilisation

Key Statistics



- IndiGo informed the DGCA that it recorded 1,232 flight cancellations in November, including 755 cancellations attributed to crew and FDTL-related constraints.
- IndiGo also attributed 258 cancellations in November to airspace and airport restrictions, 92 cancellations to air traffic control system failure incidents, and 127 cancellations to other reasons.
- IndiGo's **on-time performance** fell to 67.7% in November from 84.1% in October, and it deteriorated further with widespread disruption in early December.

DGCA Oversight, Airline Explanations, and Stabilisation Steps

- The DGCA intervened by seeking details from IndiGo on the factors leading to the disruption and by asking for mitigation plans to stabilise operations.
- IndiGo stated that multiple unforeseen operational challenges affected its operations, including minor technology glitches, winter-linked schedule changes, adverse weather conditions, increased congestion in the aviation system, and the full implementation of the revised FDTL rules.
- According to the DGCA, IndiGo is implementing corrective steps that include strengthening crew planning and rostering to align assignments with FDTL limits and improve crew availability.
- According to the DGCA, IndiGo is enhancing coordination with Air Traffic Control (ATC) and airports to manage capacity constraints and reduce bottlenecks.
- According to the DGCA, IndiGo is improving turnaround processes and disruption-management systems to reduce cascading effects from delays and cancellations.
- IndiGo's operational sensitivity is heightened when crews hit duty-hour caps due to upstream delays, because replacement crew must be arranged within the revised duty and rest framework, and shortages can multiply cancellations rapidly.

Pilot Associations' Criticism and Requests to the Regulator

- Pilot associations stated that IndiGo had sufficient notice and should have prepared for the revised FDTL implementation through proactive resource planning and staffing measures.
- The Airline Pilots' Association of India (ALPA) stated that the disruptions reflected a failure of proactive resource planning by dominant airlines and suggested there could be an attempt to pressure the regulator to dilute the new norms.
- The Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) described the disruption as a consequence of a prolonged lean manpower strategy, particularly in flight operations, and alleged that staffing and planning choices contributed to the crisis.
- The FIP alleged that, despite a two-year preparatory window, IndiGo adopted a hiring freeze, entered non-poaching arrangements, maintained a pilot pay freeze, and followed planning practices it described as short-sighted.
- The FIP alleged that after the first phase rollout on July 1, IndiGo reduced pilot leave quotas, and after the second phase rollout, the airline attempted to buy back pilot leave, and it linked these measures to morale concerns. Pilot groups urged the DGCA to approve seasonal flight schedules only after airlines demonstrate adequate pilot strength under the revised norms, rather than relying on historical slot usage and proposed schedules.

- The FIP urged the DGCA to consider reassessing and reallocating slots if IndiGo fails to operate its committed capacity due to avoidable staffing shortages, and it referenced airlines such as Air India and Akasa Air as potential capacity holders.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation: Regulatory Mandate and Functions

- The DGCA, headquartered in New Delhi, is India's apex regulatory body for civil aviation safety and functions as an attached office of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- The DGCA acts as an aviation safety regulator by ensuring air safety, flight operations safety, and airworthiness standards in India, in coordination with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
- The DGCA is a licensing authority for pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, flight engineers, and air traffic controllers, and it regulates scheduled and non-scheduled air transport services of Indian and foreign operators.
- The DGCA investigates aviation accidents and incidents and enforces preventive safety measures, and it monitors aircraft noise and engine emissions as per ICAO Annex 16.
- The DGCA updates Aircraft Rules and Civil Aviation Requirements (CARs) and supports the development and implementation of aviation laws, including oversight actions such as seeking DGCA mitigation plans from airlines during disruptions.



Directorate General of Civil Aviation

Key Government Initiatives for the Aviation Sector

- The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), 2016 enables international operations for Indian airlines after meeting minimum domestic capacity and aims to expand India's global aviation footprint, improve connectivity, and boost competition.
- The **UDAN Scheme** (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) was launched to promote regional air connectivity by providing affordable air travel to Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and by using Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to make unprofitable routes commercially viable.
- DigiYatra is a biometric-based, paperless passenger processing system that uses facial recognition technology for seamless airport entry, reduces waiting time, improves security, and supports the push towards digital and smart airports.
- The Open Sky Policy promotes private sector participation in airport development and operations, records that about 60% of India's airport traffic is handled under PPP mode, and aims to improve service quality, efficiency, and infrastructure investment.
- Foreign Direct Investment and tax liberalisation measures allow 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) under the automatic route for greenfield airports and permit 74% FDI for brownfield airports, with stated objectives of encouraging global investment, domestic manufacturing, and cost efficiency.
- The GAGAN Navigation System is India's Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) developed jointly by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to improve accuracy of Global Positioning System (GPS) signals, enhance approach and landing safety, and strengthen safety in hilly, coastal, and remote regions.



India's Aviation Sector Scale, Growth, and Regulatory Evolution

SCALE & GROWTH

Global Market Position

India is the third-largest domestic aviation market globally, after the United States and China, driven by rapid urbanization, tourism growth, and expanding middle-class demand.

Passenger Traffic Expansion

Passenger traffic is projected to grow six-fold, reaching ~1.1 billion passengers by 2040, indicating sustained long-term demand.

Economic Contribution

As of 2025, aviation supports over 7.7 million jobs (direct and indirect) and contributes 1.5% of India's GDP.

INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

Airport Network Growth

- Operational airports increased from 74 (2014) to 163 (2025).
- India aims to develop 350–400 airports by 2047, with a focus on greenfield airports and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

REGULATORY EVOLUTION

Early State Control

The Air Corporations Act, 1953 nationalised nine airline companies, leading to decades of dominance by government-owned carriers.

Market Liberalisation

The Open Sky Policy (1990–94) permitted private air taxi operators and dismantled the monopoly of Indian Airlines and Air India.

Modern Legal Framework

- The Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam replaces the Aircraft Act, 1934.
- It aligns Indian aviation law with International Civil Aviation Organization standards and the Chicago Convention, supports Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat, simplifies licensing and regulation, and introduces a structured appeals mechanism.

Enhanced Penalty Framework

The Act strengthens enforcement by introducing stricter penalties for violations of aviation regulations, including provisions for fines and imprisonment. This framework is designed to deter non-compliance, reinforce regulatory discipline, and enhance overall safety and security across the aviation ecosystem.

International Civil Aviation Organisation: Structure and India's Engagement

- The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is a specialised United Nations agency established in 1944 through the Convention on International Civil Aviation signed in Chicago, and it sets global standards for safe and peaceful air navigation.
- ICAO is headquartered in Montreal, Canada, has 193 member states including India, and promotes the orderly growth of international air transport.
- The ICAO Assembly is held every three years as the organisation's sovereign body and includes all 193 signatory states of the Chicago Convention.
- The 36-member **ICAO Council** is elected by member states during the Assembly for three-year terms and is divided into three parts covering states of chief importance in air transport, states making the largest contributions to international civil air navigation, and states ensuring geographic representation.
- India is placed in Part II among states making large contributions to international civil air navigation, and India is identified as a founding member that has played a role in promoting safe, secure, sustainable, and inclusive international civil aviation.
- For 2025–2028, India's stated focus includes strengthening safety and security, enhancing air connectivity, advancing technology, and supporting ICAO's No Country Left Behind initiative aimed at assisting states in implementing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following was the primary trigger for IndiGo's widespread flight disruptions in early December 2025?
 - (a) Sudden aircraft grounding orders
 - (b) Acute crew shortage after revised FDTL rollout
 - (c) Airport privatisation delays
 - (d) International fuel supply disruptions
2. What regulatory framework governs the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation norms?
 - (a) International Civil Aviation Organisation
 - (b) National Civil Aviation Policy
 - (c) Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam
 - (d) Directorate General of Civil Aviation
3. Which rest requirement was enhanced under the revised FDTL norms?
 - (a) Daily rest increased to twelve hours
 - (b) Weekly rest increased from 36 to 48 hours
 - (c) Monthly rest increased to four days
 - (d) Annual leave extended by ten days
4. What change was made to permitted night landings under the revised norms?
 - (a) Reduced from six to two
 - (b) Reduced from eight to four
 - (c) Reduced from five to three
 - (d) Reduced from four to one
5. What was the original planned implementation timeline for the revised FDTL norms?
 - (a) January 2024
 - (b) March 2024
 - (c) June 2024
 - (d) December 2024
6. Which judicial intervention triggered implementation of the revised FDTL norms in 2025?
 - (a) Supreme Court directive
 - (b) Delhi High Court directive
 - (c) National Green Tribunal order
 - (d) Bombay High Court ruling
7. Which phase of FDTL implementation had the greatest operational impact on IndiGo?
 - (a) First phase in July
 - (b) Preparatory phase in January
 - (c) Trial phase in March
 - (d) Second phase in November
8. What was IndiGo's on-time performance on December 3, 2025?
 - (a) 50 percent
 - (b) 35 percent
 - (c) 19.7 percent
 - (d) 67.7 percent
9. How many total flight cancellations did IndiGo record in November 2025?
 - (a) 755
 - (b) 1,232
 - (c) 258
 - (d) 127
10. What is the approximate size of IndiGo's fleet as stated in the material?
 - (a) Around 200 aircraft
 - (b) Around 300 aircraft
 - (c) Over 400 aircraft
 - (d) Over 600 aircraft
11. What proportion of November cancellations were attributed to crew and FDTL constraints?
 - (a) About one quarter
 - (b) About one third
 - (c) About half
 - (d) About two thirds
12. Where is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation headquartered?
 - (a) Mumbai
 - (b) New Delhi
 - (c) Hyderabad
 - (d) Bengaluru
13. Which international body coordinates global civil aviation standards?
 - (a) International Air Transport Association
 - (b) World Trade Organisation
 - (c) International Civil Aviation Organisation
 - (d) United Nations Environment Programme
14. In which part of the ICAO Council is India placed?
 - (a) Part I
 - (b) Part II
 - (c) Part III
 - (d) Part IV
15. Which Act replaces the Aircraft Act, 1934?
 - (a) Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024
 - (b) National Civil Aviation Policy, 2024
 - (c) Air Corporations Act, 2024
 - (d) Airports Authority Act, 2024

SOLUTIONS

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

14 SHANTI BILL 2025

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

The *Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025* has been in the news because it represents a **major overhaul of India's long-standing nuclear energy regulatory framework**, with far-reaching implications for energy policy, private sector participation, and the country's clean-energy goals. The Bill was **tabled in Parliament in December 2025**, passed by the **Lok Sabha on 17 December 2025**, and subsequently approved by the **Rajya Sabha**, before receiving **Presidential assent on 20 December 2025**. The passage of the Bill marks the culmination of a legislative process that repeals and replaces older legislation governing nuclear energy in India.

The SHANTI Bill has attracted significant attention because it **opens parts of the nuclear energy sector to private sector involvement for the first time**, signals an intent to modernise nuclear governance and liability norms, and aligns nuclear power more closely with India's broader energy transition and climate objectives. The legislation has been described by its proponents as **transformational**, while critics have raised concerns over safety, liability, and regulatory capacity.

Provisions of the SHANTI Bill 2025

1. Repeal and Consolidation of Existing Laws

The Bill **repeals the Atomic Energy Act, 1962** and the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010**, consolidating nuclear law into a **single unified legislative framework**. This structure is intended to simplify the regulatory regime and make it more responsive to contemporary energy challenges.

2. Private Sector Participation

For the first time in India's history, the SHANTI Bill **enables limited and regulated private sector participation in the nuclear energy sector**. Under the new law:

- Private companies, joint ventures, and other qualified entities can **build, own, operate, and decommission nuclear power plants and reactors**.
- Private investment is permitted in nuclear power generation and related infrastructure, with some provisions allowing **up to 49% foreign direct investment** under licensed frameworks.
- Participation extends to areas such as **project development, component manufacturing, and reactor servicing**, while **strategic activities** related to fuel enrichment and waste management remain under government control.

3. Regulatory and Licensing Framework

The Bill establishes a **modern licensing and safety authorisation regime** covering the **entire lifecycle of nuclear facilities** – including siting, construction, operation, modification, decommissioning, fuel handling, and waste management. A unified licensing process and clearer regulatory procedures are expected to reduce bottlenecks and improve oversight.

SHANTI BILL 2025

A NEW ENERGY ERA FOR INDIA



4. Statutory Recognition for the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board

One of the most important institutional reforms in the Bill is the **statutory empowerment of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)**. Previously functioning without clear statutory backing, the AERB is now established as an **independent regulator** tasked with:

- Issuing licences and safety authorisations.
- Conducting inspections and enforcing compliance.
- Taking emergency actions such as shutdown orders.
- Ensuring public safety and radiation protection standards.

5. Civil Nuclear Liability and Insurance Framework

The SHANTI Bill creates a **graded operator liability regime** to replace the earlier uniform cap on liability. Under this system:

- Liability limits range from **₹100 crore to ₹3,000 crore** depending on reactor type and capacity.
- Operators are required to maintain **insurance or financial security** to cover potential nuclear damage up to the prescribed limits.
- Certain liability provisions (such as recourse for defective equipment supply) have been revised to balance investor confidence with public interest.

6. Dispute Resolution and Appeals Mechanism

The Bill envisages a **structured appellate and dispute resolution framework**, which includes:

- An **Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council** for appeals against regulatory or government orders. A dedicated **Appellate Tribunal** for electricity and nuclear disputes. The ability to escalate cases to the **Supreme Court of India** where necessary.

7. Research, Innovation, and Technology Promotion

The legislation explicitly supports **research and development (R&D)** in nuclear technologies, including **advanced reactors and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**. Exemptions and incentives are structured to accelerate innovation while maintaining safety oversight.

8. Non-Power Uses of Nuclear and Radiation Technologies

The SHANTI Bill also expands the regulatory framework to cover **non-power applications of nuclear and radiation technologies**, including their use in **healthcare, agriculture, research, industry, and food processing** – sectors where radiation applications already play a significant role.

History of Nuclear Power in India

- **Early Beginnings and Strategic Vision:** India's engagement with nuclear science began in the 1940s and 1950s with the establishment of research facilities such as the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research** and the **Atomic Energy Establishment at Trombay** (later Bhabha Atomic Research Centre), under the leadership of Homi J. Bhabha. India's first research reactor, **Apsara**, became operational in 1956, laying the foundation for peaceful nuclear technology use.
- **The Atomic Energy Act, 1962:** The Atomic Energy Act of 1962 established a statutory framework for the regulation and control of nuclear materials, facilities, and related activities. Under this Act, the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and its agencies – such as the **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** – were authorised to undertake nuclear power production, research, and fuel cycle activities in a government-controlled model. The law ensured that nuclear energy remained a sovereign domain given its strategic significance.
- **Expansion and Indigenous Capability:** Over subsequent decades, India developed a unique three-stage nuclear power programme designed to utilise the country's thorium reserves, first through pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs) using domestic uranium, then moving toward fast breeder reactors and, eventually, thorium-based reactors.

- **Civil Nuclear Liability and International Engagement:** In response to the 2010 **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act**, India developed a statutory regime for compensation in the event of a nuclear accident. This legislation was significant in the context of India's **civil nuclear cooperation agreements** with countries such as the United States, France, Russia, and others, and was intended to strike a balance between liability protection and public safety.

○ Past Reforms in the Nuclear Landscape in India ○

- **2008-2009 Civil Nuclear Agreement with the United States:** India's landmark **civil nuclear agreement with the United States** (finalised in 2008) opened the door to international nuclear trade after decades of isolation following India's 1974 nuclear test. This agreement allowed India to access global nuclear technology and fuel markets without signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), subject to safeguards. It also paved the way for bilateral cooperation with other countries, helping to expand India's reactor fleet and access advanced technologies.
- **Amendments to the Atomic Energy Act:** In subsequent years, amendments to the 1962 Act – particularly in the mid-2000s – allowed for **government companies and joint ventures** to generate nuclear power. This was an early step toward loosening strict government monopoly, although private sector participation was still highly constrained.
- **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010:** The **2010 liability legislation** established a “no fault” compensation regime to provide redress for nuclear damage, clarified the legal liabilities of operators and suppliers, and was essential for enabling international suppliers to participate in India's civil nuclear programme. However, the statutory cap and approach to liability were criticised by some industry and investor groups for creating uncertainty.
- **Strategic and Commercial Partnerships:** Over the past decade, India has progressively signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements with multiple countries, including France, Russia, the UK, and others, enabling technology transfer, supply of fuel, and construction partnerships for new reactors.
- **Movement Toward Regulatory Independence:** Although the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) was created to oversee safety and radiation protection, it lacked **full statutory independence**. Calls for stronger, autonomous regulation intensified over time, culminating in the SHANTI Bill's provisions to finally confer clear statutory authority on the regulator.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following dates marks when the SHANTI Bill, 2025 received Presidential assent?
(a) 20 December 2025 (b) 21 December 2025
(c) 22 December 2025 (d) 19 December 2025
2. What does the acronym SHANTI stand for in the context of the nuclear energy legislation passed in December 2025?
(a) Strategic Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Technology for Transforming India
(b) Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India
(c) Synergistic Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Technology for Transforming India
(d) Systematic Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India
3. Who is being allowed to participate in India's nuclear energy sector for the first time under the SHANTI Bill, 2025?
(a) Foreign government entities and international nuclear corporations
(b) State-owned enterprises and public sector undertakings exclusively
(c) Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups
(d) Private sector companies and private enterprise participants
4. What is the maximum level of foreign direct investment permitted in nuclear power generation and related infrastructure under India's licensed framework?
(a) up to 26% (b) up to 49%
(c) up to 74% (d) up to 100%
5. Which of the following bodies is granted statutory independence to oversee nuclear safety and regulation under the proposed institutional reforms?
(a) Nuclear Fuel Complex Organisation
(b) Atomic Power Projects Authority
(c) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board
(d) National Radiation Control Council
6. Which of the following ranges correctly represents the graded operator liability limits introduced under the SHANTI Bill for nuclear power operators?
(a) ₹50 crore to ₹1,000 crore
(b) ₹75 crore to ₹2,000 crore
(c) ₹200 crore to ₹2,500 crore
(d) ₹100 crore to ₹3,000 crore
7. Which of the following bodies is envisaged under the Bill to hear appeals against regulatory or government orders?
(a) Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council
(b) National Nuclear Dispute Resolution Council
(c) Central Atomic Energy Appellate Tribunal
(d) Nuclear Safety Regulatory Review Council
8. Which of the following bodies is envisaged under the Bill to adjudicate electricity and nuclear-related disputes?
(a) Regulatory Authority (b) Appellate Tribunal
(c) Advisory Council (d) Review Committee
9. Which of the following institutions is envisaged under the Bill as the final authority for escalation of nuclear and electricity disputes?
(a) National Green Tribunal
(b) Atomic Energy Tribunal
(c) Central Electricity Board
(d) Supreme Court of India
10. Who led the establishment of early nuclear research institutions in India during the 1940s and 1950s?
(a) Raja Ramanna (b) Homi J Bhabha
(c) Vikram Sarabhai (d) Satish Dhawan
11. Which of the following laws established statutory control over nuclear materials and facilities in India?
(a) Nuclear Safety Act 1962
(b) Nuclear Energy Act 1962
(c) Radiation Safety Act 1962
(d) Atomic Energy Act 1962
12. Which of the following institutions lacked full statutory independence prior to the SHANTI Bill?
(a) Nuclear Power Corporation Limited
(b) Department of Atomic Energy
(c) Atomic Energy Commission India
(d) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board

SOLUTIONS

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

15

VIKSIT BHARAT- GUARANTEE FOR ROZGAR AND AJEEVIKA MISSION (GRAMIN) BILL, 2025

POLITY

IN FOCUS

- The *Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025*—often referred to as **VB-G RAM G Bill, 2025**—has been in the news recently because it was **passed by both Houses of Parliament in December 2025** and received the **President’s assent on 21 December 2025**, thereby becoming law and **replacing the long-standing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005**.
- The legislation marks a **significant overhaul of India’s key rural employment guarantee framework**, adjusting its principles, institutional structure, funding patterns, and implementation mechanisms to align with the government’s **long-term development vision of Viksit Bharat @2047**—which aims to make India a developed nation by 2047.



Viksit Bharat–G RAM G Bill, 2025

At a Glance

<p>1 Replaces MGNREGA A modern rural employment framework aligned with Viksit Bharat 2047</p>	<p>5 Support to Agriculture Pause in work for aggregate 60 days during peak sowing and harvesting seasons</p>
<p>2 Enhanced Employment Guarantee 125 days of wage employment per rural household</p>	<p>6 Predictable Funding Framework Shift to normative funding with protected employment guarantee</p>
<p>3 Focused Nature of Works Four priority areas covering water security, rural infrastructure, livelihood infrastructure and climate resilience</p>	<p>7 Strong Transparency and Oversight AI based monitoring, real time dashboards and mandatory social audits</p>
<p>4 Local planning with National Integration Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans linked with national spatial platforms</p>	<p>8 Centrally Sponsored Structure Shared Centre-State responsibility with calibrated cost sharing</p>

Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025

The VB-G RAM G Bill 2025 constitutes a **comprehensive statutory framework** for rural employment and

livelihood security, replacing MGNREGA with a new vision aligned with national development goals, decentralised planning, and infrastructure creation. Key provisions of the Bill include the following:

- **Statutory Wage Employment Guarantee:** The Bill provides a statutory guarantee of at least 125 days of wage employment per financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work. This expands upon the earlier guarantee of 100 days under MGNREGA, strengthening income security and predictability for rural families.
- **Replacement of MGNREGA:** The Bill repeals the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, thereby subsuming its institutional arrangements, assets, and schemes into the new framework. This constitutional transition shifts India's rural employment law from a legacy policy to a revised statutory model.
- **Implementation Framework and State Schemes:** Under the Act, state governments are mandated to notify implementing schemes within six months of the Act's commencement. These schemes must be consistent with the central legislation and may be tailored to local socio-economic conditions, subject to legislative and regulatory norms.
- **Funding Pattern and Cost Sharing:** The Bill redefines the funding pattern as a centrally sponsored scheme:
 - For most Indian states, the Centre-State cost sharing ratio is 60:40.
 - For North-eastern and Himalayan states, the ratio is 90:10.
 - The new pattern covers wages, material, and administrative costs, while unemployment allowances and compensation for wage payment delays remain the responsibility of the state governments.
 - This marked departure from previous funding under MGNREGA—which saw the central government meet a larger share of wage costs—is one of the most significant fiscal changes introduced by the Bill.
- **Normative Allocation and Budget Predictability:** The law introduces normative annual financial allocations to states, replacing the labour budget approach under MGNREGA. States are responsible for expenditure beyond these allocations, potentially increasing fiscal pressure during peak employment demand.
- **Seasonal and Calamity Provisions:** The Bill includes provisions allowing states to temporarily suspend employment guarantees during specified peak agricultural seasons, such as sowing or harvest periods, to ensure adequate labour availability for farming activities.
- **Decentralised Planning and Panchayat Empowerment:** Under the new framework, Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas play a central role in planning and implementation, including preparation of Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans that integrate rural infrastructure and employment initiatives. This provision aims to strengthen decentralised governance, local ownership, and alignment of rural development priorities.
- **Transparency, Digital Monitoring, and Grievance Redressal:** The Act promotes technology-driven monitoring, digital tracking of employment and wages, public disclosure of work implementation details, and formal grievance redressal mechanisms at various levels of administration. These provisions are designed to enhance accountability and reduce leakages or fraud in programme execution.

History of MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005)

The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** was enacted on **23 August 2005** and came into operation in **February 2006**. It was introduced during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, with the objective of **providing a legal guarantee of wage employment to rural households** and enhancing livelihood security for the rural poor.

Origins and Rationale

- The roots of MGNREGA extend to earlier rural employment and poverty alleviation programmes that emerged in post-Independence India, particularly efforts in the 1960s through the 1990s to address rural unemployment, seasonal distress, and infrastructure deficits. These included initiatives such as the National Rural Employment Programme and the Employment Assurance Scheme, among others.
- The experience of these schemes highlighted the need for a stronger statutory framework that could **ensure employment as a right rather than as an ad-hoc welfare provision**. This culminated in the drafting and passage of MGNREGA—a demand-driven employment guarantee law that sought to combine livelihood support with rural asset creation.



Under MGNREGA:

- **Every rural household with adult members willing to undertake unskilled manual work was legally entitled to 100 days of wage employment per financial year.**
- If employment was not provided within 15 days of requesting work, workers were entitled to an **unemployment allowance**.
- The scheme emphasised **labour-intensive public works**, especially those related to water conservation, soil development, rural connectivity, and other basic infrastructure.
- Implementation was intended to be **decentralised**, with Gram Panchayats entrusted with planning, execution, and oversight.
- Over time, MGNREGA integrated **digital payment systems, Aadhaar authentication, geo-tagging of assets, and social audits** to enhance transparency and accountability.

Right to Work as Part of the Constitution of India

Unlike fundamental rights explicitly guaranteed in Part III of the Constitution of India, the “Right to Work” is not directly listed as a fundamental right. Therefore, Indian citizens do not have a constitutional claim to work under Part III (Fundamental Rights). Instead, the idea of a right to work in India is embedded in the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs) found in Part IV of the Constitution. These provisions guide the state in policy formulation but are not enforceable in a court of law. Key constitutional aspects include:

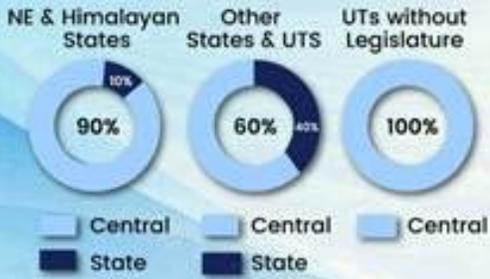
- Article 41 of the Constitution states that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, provide public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want. This provision reflects the spirit of promoting livelihood security and opportunity for work, but it is not enforceable as a fundamental right.
- Through Article 38 and other DPSPs, the Constitution directs the State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people and reduce inequalities in income and status, which implicitly supports policies aimed at expanding employment opportunities.



The Financial Architecture of Viksit Bharat-G RAM G Bill A Centrally Sponsored Scheme with Shared Responsibility

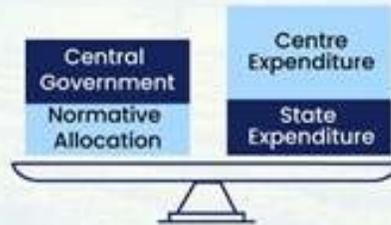
01

Fund Sharing Pattern



02

Key Financial Principle: Normative Allocation



The Central Government will determine a state-wise normative allocation each year based on objective parameters.

03

State Responsibility



States are solely responsible for the expenditure on unemployment allowance and delay compensation.

Source: Ministry of Rural Development

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following legislations replaced MGNREGA after receiving Presidential assent in December 2025?

- (a) VB-G RAM G Bill (b) Rural RAM G Bill
(c) Employment G Bill (d) Rozgar Vikas Bill

2. What is the minimum number of guaranteed employment days provided under the new rural employment law?

- (a) 100 days (b) 125 days
(c) 150 days (d) 200 days

3. Which of the following ratios defines Centre-State cost sharing for most Indian states under the new Act?

- (a) 50:50 (b) 60:40 (c) 70:30 (d) 90:10

4. Which category of states receives ninety ten cost sharing under the new rural employment framework?

- (a) Coastal and island states
(b) Industrialised Indian states
(c) Aspirational district states
(d) North eastern Himalayan states

5. Which of the following expenditures remains solely the responsibility of state governments?

- (a) Wage material administration costs
(b) Digital monitoring system costs
(c) Unemployment allowance payments
(d) Panchayat planning support costs

6. Which planning instrument must be prepared at the village level under the new framework?

- (a) District Employment Action Plan
(b) Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans
(c) State Rural Infrastructure Plan
(d) National Livelihood Mission Plan

7. Which feature replaces the labour budget system used under MGNREGA?

- (a) Normative annual financial allocation
(b) Rolling employment demand register
(c) Open ended fiscal commitment
(d) District employment sanction mode

8. Who headed the government that introduced MGNREGA in 2005?

- (a) Atal Bihari Vajpayee (b) Narendra Modi
(c) Manmohan Singh (d) Rajiv Gandhi

9. What was the original employment guarantee under MGNREGA per financial year?

- (a) 103 days (b) 90 days
(c) 109 days (d) 100 days

10. Which constitutional provision reflects the principle of right to work in India?

- (a) Article 45 (b) Article 32
(c) Article 41 (d) Article 51

11. Which type of constitutional provisions contain the right to work concept?

- (a) Fundamental Rights provisions
(b) Directive Principles provisions
(c) Emergency Powers provisions
(d) Constitutional Amendment provisions

12. Which institution undertakes nuclear power generation under the Atomic Energy Act 1962?

- (a) Nuclear Regulatory Safety Authority
(b) Department of Energy Affairs
(c) Nuclear Power Corporation Limited
(d) Central Electricity Authority

13. Which reactor marked India's first operational nuclear research facility in 1956?

- (a) Dhruva research reactor
(b) Apsara research reactor
(c) Kamini test reactor
(d) Fast breeder reactor

14. Who led India's early nuclear institutional development in the mid twentieth century?

- (a) Vikram Sarabhai (b) Raja Ramanna
(c) Homi J Bhabha (d) Satish Dhawan

SOLUTIONS

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

16 SABKA BIMA, SABKI RAKSHA BILL, 2025

POLITY

IN FOCUS

- The *Sabka Bima, Sabki Raksha Bill, 2025* has been in the news because it was **introduced and passed by both Houses of the Indian Parliament in December 2025**, marking one of the **most significant reforms in India's insurance legislation in decades**. The Bill seeks to **amend three key statutes governing the insurance sector** – the **Insurance Act, 1938**, the **Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956**, and the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999** – with the purpose of **boosting investment, enhancing regulatory oversight, and improving policyholder protection**. Parliament approved the Bill with broad focus on promoting growth and expanding access to insurance, and it is expected to receive **Presidential assent to become law**.
- One of the most talked-about features of the Bill is its provision to **increase the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in Indian insurance companies from 74% to 100%**, a long-pending reform aimed at attracting large-scale foreign capital, global expertise, and technology into India's under-penetrated insurance market. The move has generated widespread public and media interest, as it is expected to transform competitive dynamics in the sector while raising debates on **policyholder protection, domestic insurance company competitiveness, and regulatory readiness**.
- In addition to FDI changes, the Bill also includes **strengthened regulatory powers for the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**, **liberalisation of entry norms**, **revision of capital requirements for reinsurers**, and the establishment of a **Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund** – all aimed at modernising and deepening the reach of insurance in India.

Provisions of the Sabka Bima, Sabki Raksha Bill, 2025

Increase in FDI Limit to 100%: The Bill raises the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in Indian insurance companies from 74% to 100% of paid-up equity capital. This change allows full foreign ownership of insurance firms, which is expected to facilitate significant capital inflows, technology transfer, and enhanced global market participation in India's insurance sector.

Amendments to Core Insurance Law: The Bill proposes amendments to:

- **The Insurance Act, 1938** – foundational legislation that governs the registration, regulation, and functioning of insurance companies in India.
- **The Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956** – statute governing the operations, autonomy, and regulatory boundaries of LIC.
- **The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999** – law that establishes and empowers IRDAI to regulate and develop the insurance sector.
- These amendments are intended to update outdated statutory provisions, simplify regulatory processes, and allow more flexibility for business practices and capital structures.

Reduced Capital Requirements for Reinsurers: Under the existing regime, foreign reinsurers operating in India were required to maintain net owned funds of ₹5,000 crore. The Bill reduces this requirement to ₹1,000 crore, which is expected to deepen the reinsurance market, encourage new entrants, and help India become a regional reinsurance hub.

INSURANCE BILL 2025: Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha

Goal: "Insurance for All by 2047" "Insurance for All by 2047"

Modernising Sector Expanding Coverage

100% FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

- ◆ FDI Cap Raised to 100%
- ◆ Increased Global Capital
- ◆ Tech & Service Boost

EASIER ENTRY FOR REINSURERS

- ◆ NOF Requirement Cat to ₹1,000 Crore
- ◆ More Global Reinsurers

STRONGER POWERS FOR IRDAI

- ◆ Stricter Regulatory Oversight
- ◆ Higher Equity Transfer Limit

GREATER AUTONOMY FOR LIC

- ◆ LIC Can Expand Overseas
- ◆ Faster Decision-Making

KEY OMISSIONS & LIMITATIONS

- ◆ No Composite Licence
- ◆ High Capital Norms
- ◆ No Captive Insurance

100% FDI APPROVED

Boosting India's Insurance Sector

Broader Scope of Insurance Intermediaries: The Bill expands the category of insurance intermediaries to include additional entities such as managing general agents and insurance repositories. This broader definition facilitates greater participation of intermediaries in distribution, servicing, and digital infrastructure roles.

IRDAI Regulatory Powers Strengthened: The Bill significantly enhances the regulatory authority of IRDAI, including:

- Authority to approve arrangement schemes between insurers and non-insurance companies.
- Ability to supersede the board of an insurer by appointing administrators in cases where the insurer's actions are prejudicial to policyholders.
- Authority to set limits and regulatory norms for remuneration, commissions, and disclosures for insurance agents and intermediaries.

Threshold for Share Transfers Adjusted: Under the Bill, the threshold for IRDAI approval for the registration of share transfers in an insurance company is increased from 1% to 5% of paid-up share capital, thereby simplifying equity transfers and improving ease of doing business.

Minimum Capital Requirements for Insurance Societies Eased: The Bill removes the mandatory minimum paid-up share capital of ₹100 crore for life, general, and health insurance businesses conducted by co-operative societies, thereby lowering entry barriers and enabling greater participation of such societies in the insurance market.

Application of Insurance Laws in SEZs and IFSCs: The Bill extends the central government's power to modify the application of insurance laws to insurers and insurance intermediaries operating in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs), thereby facilitating easier operation of insurance businesses in these specialised zones.

Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund: In order to improve policyholder awareness and protection, the Bill envisages the creation of a Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund, which will be utilised for spreading insurance literacy, safeguarding consumer interests, and supporting conflict resolution.

Ease of Mergers and Business Models: The Bill permits the merger of non-insurance companies with insurance firms, provided the resultant entity carries on insurance business, facilitating greater operational flexibility and strategic corporate structuring.

Overview of the Insurance Sector in India

- The insurance sector in India forms a crucial component of the financial services industry and plays a significant role in mobilising savings, managing risk, and providing financial protection to individuals and institutions. Over the past few decades, the sector has undergone liberalisation and regulatory reform, leading to rapid expansion in products, distribution channels, and capital flows.
- Insurance in India is broadly divided into life insurance, which offers financial protection against death and provides savings/ investment elements, and general insurance, which includes health, motor, property, liability, and other non-life covers. The industry is regulated by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), which was established by an Act of Parliament in 1999 to ensure orderly growth, protect policyholder interests, and promote market development.
- Despite significant growth potential, India's insurance penetration (measured as total premiums as a percentage of GDP) has traditionally been low compared to global averages, reflecting under-insurance among large segments of the population, especially in rural areas. The government and regulator have articulated a mission of "Insurance for All by 2047" to significantly increase insurance penetration and coverage in the coming decades.
- The sector has seen the participation of both domestic and foreign players, with multiple Indian insurance companies partnered with global insurers. The entry of foreign capital and expertise since the early 2000s has contributed to product innovation, improved service quality, and enhanced competitiveness. The Sabka Bima, Sabki Raksha Bill, 2025 is designed to accelerate this trajectory by enabling full foreign ownership and bolstering the regulatory framework.

Government Insurance Schemes in India

The Government of India has introduced multiple insurance and social security schemes to **expand insurance coverage, reduce financial vulnerability, and promote risk protection**, particularly for low-income households, unorganised sector workers, farmers, and vulnerable populations. The major schemes are as follows:

- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY):** The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana was launched in 2015 by the Government of India. The scheme provides life insurance coverage of ₹2 lakh in case of death due to any reason. It is targeted at individuals aged 18 to 50 years who have a bank account. The scheme operates on an annual renewable basis, with a low fixed premium, and is implemented through public and private life insurance companies, primarily under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance.

- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY):** The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana was launched in 2015 as a government-backed accident insurance scheme. It provides coverage of ₹2 lakh in case of accidental death or permanent total disability, and ₹1 lakh for permanent partial disability. The scheme targets individuals aged 18 to 70 years who hold a bank account and consent to auto-debit of the annual premium. The scheme is implemented through general insurance companies, both public and private.
- **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY):** The Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana was launched in 2018 as a government-funded health insurance scheme. It provides cashless and paperless health insurance coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalisation. The scheme targets economically vulnerable families, identified based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data. It is implemented by the National Health Authority under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY):** The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana was launched in 2008 to provide health insurance coverage to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households and unorganised sector workers. The scheme aimed to cover hospitalisation expenses through a smart card-based cashless system. Although RSBY played a significant role in expanding health insurance coverage, it has largely been subsumed under Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) since 2018.
- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):** The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana was launched in 2016 as a crop insurance scheme for farmers. The scheme provides financial protection against crop loss due to natural calamities, pests, and diseases. It targets both loanee and non-loanee farmers, with subsidised premium rates and government support. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, in partnership with public and private insurance companies.
- **Atal Pension Yojana (APY):** The Atal Pension Yojana was launched in 2015 to provide old-age income security to workers in the unorganised sector. Subscribers contribute regularly during their working years and receive a guaranteed monthly pension ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 after attaining the age of 60 years. The scheme is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) under the Ministry of Finance.
- **Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS):** The Central Government Health Scheme was introduced in 1954 to provide comprehensive healthcare facilities to Central Government employees, pensioners, and their dependents. The scheme offers outpatient services, specialist consultations, and hospitalisation facilities through a network of empanelled hospitals. It is administered by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following Bills proposes a comprehensive reform of India's insurance legislation in 2025?
 - (a) Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha Bill
 - (b) National Insurance Reform Bill
 - (c) Bharatiya Beema Vikas Bill
 - (d) Sarvajan Bima Suraksha Bill
2. Which of the following Acts is amended by the Bill to modernise insurance regulation?
 - (a) Banking Regulation Act
 - (b) Companies Act 2013
 - (c) Insurance Act 1938
 - (d) Securities Contract Act
3. Which authority receives strengthened regulatory powers under the Bill?
 - (a) Reserve Bank Authority
 - (b) Securities Market Regulator
 - (c) Pension Fund Regulator
 - (d) Insurance Regulatory Authority
4. Which fund is proposed to promote policyholder awareness and protection?
 - (a) Policyholders Education Protection Fund
 - (b) Insurance Literacy Development Fund
 - (c) Consumer Insurance Awareness Fund
 - (d) National Policyholder Welfare Fund
5. What change is made to net owned fund requirements for reinsurers?
 - (a) Increased to 6000 crore
 - (b) Reduced to 1000 crore
 - (c) Maintained at 5000 crore
 - (d) Approximate to 4000 crore
6. Which category of entities is newly included as insurance intermediaries?
 - (a) Managing general agents
 - (b) Commercial banking institutions
 - (c) Non banking finance companies
 - (d) Cooperative credit societies
7. Which scheme provides life insurance coverage of two lakh rupees?
 - (a) Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima
 - (b) Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti
 - (c) Rashtriya Swasthya Bima
 - (d) Atal Pension Yojana
8. Which scheme offers accident insurance coverage for individuals?
 - (a) Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
 - (b) Ayushman Bharat Scheme
 - (c) Suraksha Bima Yojana
 - (d) Atal Pension Programme
9. Which authority implements Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY?
 - (a) Insurance Regulatory Authority
 - (b) National Health Authority
 - (c) Ministry of Rural Development
 - (d) Central Welfare Commission
10. Which insurance scheme was largely subsumed under PM-JAY?
 - (a) Central Government Health Scheme
 - (b) Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana
 - (c) Employees State Insurance Scheme
 - (d) National Health Protection Scheme
11. Which ministry administers the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana?
 - (a) Ministry Agriculture Farmers Welfare
 - (b) Ministry Rural Development Affairs
 - (c) Ministry Finance Economic Affairs
 - (d) Ministry Cooperative Institutional Affairs
12. Which year marked liberalisation of insurance sector participation?
 - (a) 2009
 - (b) 2005
 - (c) 2008
 - (d) 1999
13. Which body administers Atal Pension Yojana scheme?
 - (a) Reserve Bank India Authority
 - (b) Pension Fund Regulatory Authority
 - (c) Insurance Regulatory Authority
 - (d) Securities Market Regulatory Authority
14. Which benefit is provided by the Central Government Health Scheme?
 - (a) Comprehensive healthcare services
 - (b) Crop insurance protection
 - (c) Accident disability compensation
 - (d) Guaranteed retirement pensions

SOLUTIONS

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

17 PROTECTING THE ARAVALLI RANGE

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

IN FOCUS

- The Supreme Court of India delivered a consequential order in November 2025 while dealing with long-standing environmental litigation relating to mining regulation and ecological protection in the Aravalli region.
- In this order, the Court accepted a uniform definition of the Aravalli Hills and Aravalli Ranges proposed by an expert committee constituted by the Union Government through the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- The committee's recommendation relied primarily on a 100-metre local relief (elevation) criterion to identify Aravalli hills and a 500-metre proximity rule to identify Aravalli ranges.
- This judicial acceptance immediately drew national attention because it had the effect of excluding large ecologically significant portions of the Aravalli landscape from the special protective regime, particularly in Haryana, Rajasthan, and the National Capital Region.
- The order was followed by intense public backlash, scientific criticism, and legal challenges, prompting the Supreme Court in December 2025 to stay its own November order and direct a reconsideration of the definition through a fresh expert exercise.

Supreme Court

Judgment on Aravalli



- The Supreme Court's November 2025 order must be understood against the background of **decades of judicial engagement with the Aravalli region**, most notably through cases such as *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India* and *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India*.
- Through these cases, the Court had repeatedly recognised the Aravallis as an **ecologically fragile and environmentally indispensable landscape**, especially in the context of illegal mining, deforestation, groundwater depletion, and unregulated urban expansion in northern India. However, despite strong judicial intent, enforcement on the ground remained uneven due to **regulatory ambiguity regarding what legally constitutes the "Aravalli Hills"**.
- To resolve this ambiguity, the Supreme Court directed the **Union Government** to arrive at a **scientifically informed and administratively uniform definition** of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges. Acting on this direction, the **MoEFCC constituted an expert committee**, which recommended defining Aravalli hills based on **measurable topographical prominence**, specifically a **minimum local relief of 100 metres**, measured from the lowest encircling contour. According to the committee, clusters of such hills located within **500 metres of one another** would together constitute an Aravalli range.
- The rationale offered by the committee was that such quantifiable criteria would bring **certainty, consistency, and enforceability** to mining regulation and land-use control across multiple states.
- In its November 2025 order, the Supreme Court **accepted this committee-recommended definition**, explicitly noting that it was relying on **executive expertise rather than judicially evolving its own scientific standard**.
- The Court applied this definition for the purpose of regulating mining activity and directed that **no new mining leases be granted in areas identified as Aravalli ranges under the new criteria until a Management Plan for Sustainable Mining was prepared**. Existing mining operations were also required to

- conform to sustainability guidelines framed within this definitional framework.
- However, this judicial acceptance marked a **significant jurisprudential shift**. Earlier Supreme Court interventions had treated the Aravallis as a **continuous ecological and geological system**, whose importance derived not merely from visible hill structures but from **subsurface rock formations, hydrological functions, forest cover, and landscape connectivity**.
- By contrast, the November 2025 order adopted a **technocratic and reductionist approach**, privileging administrative clarity over ecological complexity. While legally defensible as deference to expert opinion, this approach raised serious questions about whether **quantification alone can capture environmental reality**, especially in ancient and heavily eroded mountain systems.

Public Backlash and the Subsequent Judicial Reconsideration

- The reaction to the November 2025 order was swift and intense. Environmental scientists, geologists, urban planners, and civil society organisations argued that the **100-metre elevation criterion was ecologically unsound**, particularly for the Aravallis, which are among the **oldest mountain systems in the world** and have undergone extensive erosion over billions of years.
- Experts pointed out that **many ecologically critical features of the Aravalli landscape such as groundwater recharge zones, forest patches, wildlife corridors, and rocky outcrops exist at elevations well below 100 metres**. By excluding these areas from Aravalli-specific protection, the judgment risked opening them up to mining, construction, and real estate development.
- Public concern was especially pronounced in **Delhi-NCR**, where the Aravallis serve as a crucial **environmental buffer against air pollution, desert dust, and urban heat stress**. Residents and environmental groups warned that dilution of protection would worsen **air quality, water scarcity, and climate vulnerability** in already stressed urban regions. There was also apprehension that the judgment could **retrospectively legitimise past illegalities**, effectively rewarding regulatory non-compliance.
- In response to mounting criticism and review petitions, the Supreme Court in **December 2025 stayed its November order**, acknowledging that the issue required deeper examination. The Court directed the constitution of a **fresh expert committee** and sought responses from the **Union Government and the states of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat**. This stay is significant because it demonstrates judicial sensitivity to **scientific critique and public interest**, and underscores that environmental adjudication is an **iterative process rather than a one-time technical determination**.

The Aravalli Range: History, Geography, and Environmental Importance

- The **Aravalli Range** is one of the **oldest fold mountain systems on Earth**, with geological origins dating back approximately **1.5 to 2 billion years**. Unlike younger mountain ranges such as the Himalayas, the Aravallis have been subjected to prolonged erosion, resulting in relatively low elevations in many regions.
- However, erosion has not diminished their **geological continuity or ecological relevance**. The range represents an ancient tectonic feature that continues to influence landforms, drainage patterns, and ecosystems across north-western India. Geographically, the Aravalli range extends for about **670 kilometres**, running from **Gujarat in the southwest through Rajasthan and Haryana to the Delhi region in the northeast**.
- While the highest peak, **Guru Shikhar near Mount Abu**, rises to over **1,700 metres**, much of the range especially in Haryana and NCR, exists as **low-lying ridges, rocky plains, and buried hill systems**. These features may not always appear as prominent hills but remain integral to the Aravalli geological system.
- Ecologically, the Aravallis perform functions that are **disproportionate to their elevation**. They act as a **natural barrier against the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert**, help regulate **regional climate**, and play a vital role in **groundwater recharge** by facilitating rainwater percolation through fractured rock systems.
- The range supports **dry deciduous forests, scrub ecosystems, and diverse fauna**, and serves as an ecological corridor connecting different habitats. In the context of urbanisation, particularly around Delhi-NCR, the Aravallis function as a **green lung**, mitigating air pollution and moderating extreme weather conditions.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following institutions delivered the consequential November 2025 order on the Aravalli region?
 - (a) Supreme Court of India
 - (b) National Green Tribunal
 - (c) Central Pollution Control Board
 - (d) Ministry Environment Forest Climate
2. What was the primary basis used to identify Aravalli hills under the expert definition?
 - (a) Forest cover density threshold
 - (b) Local relief of hundred metres
 - (c) Historical geological continuity
 - (d) Wildlife corridor presence
3. Which rule was applied to classify clusters of hills as Aravalli ranges?
 - (a) One kilometre linear spread
 - (b) Four hundred metre proximity
 - (c) Five hundred metre proximity
 - (d) Two kilometre dense continuity
4. Which judicial cases form the background of long-standing Aravalli litigation?
 - (a) M C Mehta Union
 - (b) Subhash Kumar Bihar
 - (c) Olga Tellis Bombay
 - (d) Maneka Gandhi India
5. What was the immediate effect of the November 2025 order?
 - (a) Expansion ecological protection coverage
 - (b) Exclusion of large protected landscapes
 - (c) Ban on all approved mining operations
 - (d) Transfer of mining regulations to states
6. Which states were specifically impacted by exclusion under the new definition?
 - (a) Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
 - (b) Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi NCR
 - (c) Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka
 - (d) Himachal, Uttarakhand and Jammu
7. Which urban region expressed heightened concern over the ruling?
 - (a) Mumbai Metropolitan Region
 - (b) Kolkata Urban Agglomeration
 - (c) Chennai Industrial Corridor
 - (d) Delhi National Capital Region
8. Which ecological function of the Aravallis was highlighted by critics?
 - (a) Coastal storm surge mitigation
 - (b) Groundwater recharge facilitation
 - (c) Marine biodiversity protection
 - (d) Glacial melt regulation
9. What jurisprudential shift did the November 2025 order represent?
 - (a) Rights based environmental protection
 - (b) Technocratic reductionist approach
 - (c) Community driven conservation model
 - (d) Federal cooperative environmentalism
10. What geological age is attributed to the Aravalli Range?
 - (a) approximately 2.5 to 5 billion years
 - (b) approximately 1.5 to 3 billion years
 - (c) approximately 1.5 to 2 billion years
 - (d) approximately 2.5 to 4 billion years
11. Which is the highest peak of the Aravalli Range?
 - (a) Dhaulagiri mountain peak
 - (b) Guru Shikhar Mount
 - (c) Anamudi mountain
 - (d) Nanda Devi peak
12. Which desert expansion is checked by the Aravalli system?
 - (a) Gobi Desert expansion
 - (b) Sahara Desert movement
 - (c) Thar Desert expansion
 - (d) Kalahari Desert spread
13. Which environmental role is played by Aravallis in urban regions?
 - (a) Urban heat moderation
 - (b) Coastal flood absorption
 - (c) Tsunami energy dissipation
 - (d) Glacier avalanche prevention
14. What action did the Supreme Court take in December 2025?
 - (a) Confirmed previous judicial definition
 - (b) Lifted mining lease restrictions
 - (c) Stayed on November order issued
 - (d) Dissolved expert committee

SOLUTIONS

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

18 DULHASTI STAGE-II PROJECT

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- The **Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project (260 MW) on the Chenab River in Kishtwar district** of Jammu & Kashmir has recently been in the news because **India's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)** under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has recommended environmental clearance for the project.
- This approval forms part of a renewed push by the Indian government to accelerate hydropower development on the western rivers of the Indus basin, especially after suspending the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in April 2025 following a terror attack in Pahalgam and attendant diplomatic tensions with Pakistan.
- The clearance of Dulhasti Stage-II, alongside other hydropower schemes such as Ratle and Sawalkot, underscores India's strategic emphasis on energy security, renewable energy expansion, and optimal utilisation of run-of-the-river hydropower potential in Jammu & Kashmir. The project has attracted international attention and controversy, particularly from Pakistan, which has raised objections on the basis of treaty obligations and downstream water rights.

DULHASTI STAGE-II HYDROPOWER PROJECT (260 MW)

LOCATION: CHENAB RIVER, KISHTWAR, J&K

PROJECT OVERVIEW	GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT	STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (UPSC FOCUS)
<p>Capacity: 260 MW</p> <p>Type: Run-of-the-River Scheme (Potential)</p> <p>Status: Cleared by Ministry of Environment</p> <p><i>Focus on clean energy generation.</i></p>	<p>Dulhasti Stage-I (390 MW)</p> <p>Dulhasti Stage-II (Proposed)</p> <p>Kishtwar</p>	<p>Map Chenab Tributaries</p> <p>Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)</p> <p>Context: India's rights on Western Rivers</p> <p>Boost to Regional Water Security & Economy</p> <p><i>Critical for Geography & IR papers.</i></p>

Source: Ministry of Environment Clearance, Dec 2025 | #UPSC #Hydropower #J&K #Chenab #IWT

- The **Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project** is conceived as a **260 MW run-of-the-river (ROR) hydropower scheme** designed to augment India's renewable energy capacity while taking advantage of existing infrastructure. The project site is located on the **Chenab River in Kishtwar district of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir**, and it is promoted by **NHPC Limited**, India's state-owned hydropower company.

- This project is an **extension of the existing Dulhasti Stage-I Hydropower Project**, which has a capacity of 390 MW and has been operational since **2007**. Stage-I functions as a run-of-the-river facility that diverts Chenab water through a long headrace tunnel to a powerhouse, generating peaking power for the Northern Grid. Stage-II builds on this by **drawing surplus water** – primarily from the **Marusudar River (a major Chenab tributary)** – and diverting it via the **Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project** into the Dulhasti reservoir and powerhouse. This design includes construction of a **3,685-metre diversion tunnel** (8.5 m diameter), a **horseshoe pondage**, a **surge shaft**, **pressure shafts**, and an **underground powerhouse** equipped with **two 130 MW turbines**. The total land requirement is estimated at **60.3 hectares**, including approximately **8.26 hectares of private land** from nearby villages.
- The ROR design means the project **relies on natural river flow and elevation drop** to generate electricity without creating a large reservoir or significant submergence, which generally results in **lower ecological displacement compared to storage dams**. However, despite being categorised as relatively eco-friendly, ROR projects still influence river hydrology, sediment transport and downstream ecology, which is why detailed environmental assessments are conducted.
- The estimated cost of the Dulhasti Stage-II Project is approximately **₹3,277 crore**, and the scheme is expected to contribute an additional **260 MW** of renewable hydropower to India's grid, supporting both **energy security** and **grid stability**. It forms part of a **cascade of hydropower developments** in the Chenab basin, which includes existing projects such as **Baglihar (890 MW)**, **Salal (690 MW)** and the ratified **Dulhasti-I (390 MW)**, as well as several under-construction and proposed schemes (Ratle, Kiru, Kwar, etc.).

Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of MoEF&CC

The **Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)** is a statutory body constituted under India's **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** to evaluate **environmental impact assessment (EIA) reports** and make recommendations on whether infrastructure, industrial, or developmental projects should be granted **environmental clearance** under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** and associated EIA Notification.

The EAC comprises specialists from government agencies, academia, scientific bodies, and technical disciplines such as ecology, hydrology, geology, and renewable energy. Its mandate includes assessing:

- **Potential ecological impacts** of the proposed project,
- **Mitigation measures** to minimise harm to biodiversity and water regimes,
- Compliance with national environmental standards and regulatory frameworks, and
- Public hearing outcomes and stakeholder concerns related to land and resource use.



- In the case of **Dulhasti Stage-II**, the EAC on hydropower projects reviewed the project's technical design, hydrological modelling, sediment management provisions, and the linkage with upstream projects such as Pakal Dul. During its **45th meeting in December 2025**, the EAC noted that the project had been planned in

- accordance with the provisions of the **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)**, and that the design largely fell within acceptable run-of-the-river parameters.
- The panel recommended environmental clearance subject to conditions including a river conservation strategy to mitigate hydrological alterations and ensure environmental flow regimes are maintained, while protecting channel morphology and aquatic biodiversity. The recommendation came at a time when India had placed the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, which removed the requirement for prior notification to Pakistan.
- The EAC's approval is a key regulatory step and does not itself authorise construction – final environmental clearance follows post-approval conditions and compliance with required safeguards under national law. The clearance reflects a balance between developmental imperatives (energy, regional growth) and environmental governance, though it has been met with controversy due to geopolitical considerations.

Indus Waters Treaty

The **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), 1960** is a **bilateral water-distribution agreement between India and Pakistan** brokered by the **World Bank**, designed to govern the **shared use of the Indus River system** and its tributaries in both countries. It was signed on **19 September 1960** by Indian Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** and Pakistani President **Ayub Khan**, with the World Bank serving as a depositary and facilitator.

Under the treaty's allocations:

- **Eastern rivers** – the **Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej** – were allocated to **India**, giving it full rights for use including irrigation, hydropower and consumptive uses.
- **Western rivers** – the **Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum** – were allocated primarily to **Pakistan**, reflecting the river system's importance for agriculture and livelihoods in Pakistan. India was permitted **limited non-consumptive uses** (like run-of-the-river hydropower) on western rivers, subject to strict design, storage and operational constraints to ensure that downstream flow regimes were not materially affected.

The IWT incorporates mechanisms for **notification, data exchange, technical review, and dispute resolution**, including a **Permanent Indus Commission** with commissioners from both countries. For projects on the western rivers, India is required to provide **prior information and technical details** to Pakistan so that any potential concerns about downstream impacts can be addressed cooperatively.

In **April 2025**, following a major terror attack in Pahalgam that killed Indian security personnel, the **Government of India declared the Indus Waters Treaty in “abeyance”**, effectively pausing routine treaty obligations. Since then, India has taken actions such as altering the operation of existing dams and pursuing approvals for new hydropower projects, including Dulhasti Stage-II, without formal prior notification to Pakistan – a move that Islamabad has strongly criticised as a potential violation of treaty norms. Pakistan has, in turn, voiced concerns about watershed management and downstream water security, asserting that any control or diversion of water flow should adhere to strict treaty-mandated procedures and warning against unilateral actions that could affect its agricultural base and livelihoods. However, India maintains that the projects are designed within permissible non-consumptive use provisions and emphasises its sovereign right to pursue renewable energy development.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following projects recently received environmental clearance recommendation from the Expert Appraisal Committee?
 (a) Dulhasti Stage Two Project
 (b) Rattle Hydropower Expansion Project
 (c) Sawalkot Hydropower Generation Project
 (d) Kiru Hydroelectric Storage Project
2. What is the generating capacity of the Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project?
 (a) 200 MW
 (b) 260 MW
 (c) 300 MW
 (d) 390 MW
3. Which river hosts the Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project?
 (a) Ravi River system
 (b) Jhelum River system
 (c) Chenab River system
 (d) Sutlej River system
4. Which organisation is promoting the Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project?
 (a) PowerGrid Limited
 (b) NTPC Limited
 (c) Jammu Power
 (d) NHPC Limited
5. Which earlier project does Dulhasti Stage-II directly extend?
 (a) Salal Hydropower Project
 (b) Baglihar Hydropower Project
 (c) Dulhasti Stage One
 (d) Pakal Dul Project
6. What type of hydropower scheme is Dulhasti Stage-II classified as?
 (a) Large storage dam project
 (b) Run of river scheme
 (c) Pumped storage scheme
 (d) Tidal power scheme
7. Which tributary supplies surplus water for Dulhasti Stage-II operations?
 (a) Ravi River tributary
 (b) Jhelum River tributary
 (c) Marusudar River tributary
 (d) Tawi River tributary
8. What is the length of the main diversion tunnel constructed for the project?
 (a) 3,000-metre
 (b) 3,685-metre
 (c) 4,665-metre
 (d) 5,285-metre
9. Which capacity turbines are installed in the underground powerhouse?
 (a) Two turbines, each 150 MW
 (b) Two turbines, each 120 MW
 (c) Two turbines, each 130 MW
 (d) Two turbines, each 150 MW
10. What is the estimated total cost of the Dulhasti Stage-II Project?
 (a) approximately ₹2,200 crore
 (b) approximately ₹3,077 crore
 (c) approximately ₹3,300 crore
 (d) approximately ₹3,277 crore
11. Which statutory body evaluates environmental clearance for such projects?
 (a) Central Electricity Commission
 (b) National Green Tribunal India
 (c) Expert Appraisal Committee
 (d) Central Water Commission
12. Under which law does the EAC operate while granting recommendations?
 (a) Forest Conservation Act
 (b) Environment Protection Act
 (c) Water Prevention Pollution Act
 (d) Wildlife Protection Act
13. Which treaty governs water sharing of the Chenab River?
 (a) Ganga Water Treaty
 (b) Mahakali Treaty Agreement
 (c) Indus Waters Treaty
 (d) Teesta River Accord
14. Who signed the Indus Waters Treaty on behalf of India?
 (a) Lal Bahadur Shastri
 (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
 (c) Indira Gandhi
 (d) Rajiv Gandhi

SOLUTIONS

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

19 INDIA AND NEW ZEALAND FTA

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

IN FOCUS

- India and New Zealand announced the **conclusion of negotiations for a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in December 2025**, following high-level political engagement between the leadership of both countries. The announcement came after prolonged negotiations that had remained stalled for several years, largely due to disagreements over **agricultural market access, especially dairy**, and differing expectations from the scope of liberalisation.
- The conclusion of the FTA is significant because it reflects India's **renewed and calibrated approach to trade agreements**, wherein India seeks to expand exports and services access while **carefully protecting sensitive domestic sectors**. The agreement has also drawn attention because it excludes dairy from tariff concessions, despite New Zealand being one of the world's largest dairy exporters, thereby highlighting India's strategic balancing of trade openness with livelihood protection.

India–New Zealand FTA



- The India–New Zealand FTA is designed as a **modern, comprehensive trade agreement** that goes beyond traditional tariff reduction and focuses on **goods, services, investment facilitation, trade facilitation, mobility, and regulatory cooperation**. From India's perspective, the agreement is export-oriented and employment-focused, while from New Zealand's perspective, it aims to secure predictable access to a large and fast-growing market and deepen long-term economic engagement with India.
- On **trade in goods**, New Zealand has committed to providing **zero-duty market access on 100% of its tariff lines**, effectively granting **duty-free access to all Indian exports** to New Zealand from the date of entry into force of the agreement. This is particularly significant for Indian **labour-intensive sectors** such as textiles, apparel, leather goods, footwear, carpets, handicrafts, gems and jewellery, and certain engineering goods, which previously faced moderate but non-negligible tariffs. The complete elimination of tariffs enhances India's price competitiveness in the New Zealand market and aligns with India's objective of using FTAs to support **manufacturing employment and MSME exports**.
- India's tariff commitments under the FTA are **asymmetrical and phased**, reflecting its development status and domestic sensitivities. India has agreed to tariff liberalisation on **around 70% of tariff lines**, covering **approximately 95% of bilateral trade value**, with a mix of immediate elimination and phased reductions over multiple years. This phased approach allows domestic industries time to adjust to increased competition while still offering New Zealand commercially meaningful access. India's commitments are therefore structured not as blanket liberalisation, but as **selective and sequenced opening**, consistent with India's post-2019 trade strategy. The agreement places strong emphasis on trade in services, an area of comparative advantage for India. New Zealand has offered commitments in a wide range of service sectors, including IT and computer services, professional services, business services, education, construction, environmental services, financial services, tourism, and distribution services.

- Importantly, many of these commitments go **beyond New Zealand's obligations under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)**, thereby offering Indian service suppliers improved market certainty and regulatory transparency. India, in turn, has made services commitments that exceed its GATS baseline, signalling a willingness to integrate more deeply into global services markets where domestic competitiveness is strong.
- A particularly important feature of the FTA is its focus on **mobility and movement of natural persons**, which is a politically sensitive yet economically significant issue. The agreement includes provisions facilitating **temporary entry for business visitors, professionals, and service suppliers**, as well as enhanced **student mobility and post-study work opportunities**. These provisions are relevant for India's skilled and semi-skilled workforce and reflect India's broader strategy of embedding mobility considerations into trade agreements, rather than treating them as standalone migration issues.
- On **investment**, the FTA emphasises **investment facilitation rather than investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS)**, in line with India's revised investment treaty policy. The agreement provides for transparency, administrative assistance, and institutional mechanisms to support investors, including the creation of dedicated facilitation channels. This reflects India's preference for **investment promotion without exposing the State to expansive litigation risks**, while still signalling openness to foreign capital.
- The agreement also includes chapters on **customs procedures, trade facilitation, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and regulatory cooperation**, aimed at reducing non-tariff barriers and transaction costs. These provisions are crucial because, in contemporary trade, regulatory frictions often matter more than tariffs. By addressing procedural delays and compliance costs, the FTA seeks to make market access **effective rather than merely nominal**.

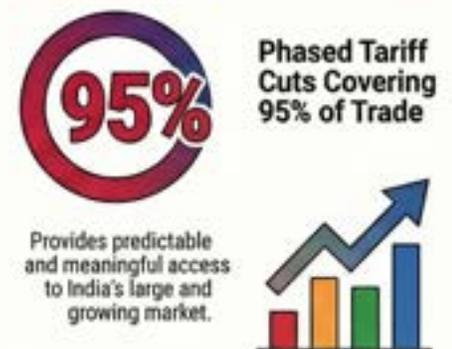
Key Gains for India



India & New Zealand: A Balanced Trade Partnership



Key Gains for New Zealand



Trade with the **Kiwis**

Bilateral merchandise trade (FY25): \$1.3 bn



Key exports: ATF, textiles, pharmaceuticals, machinery, petroleum products

Key imports: Wood, steel and aluminium scrap, coking coal, turbojets, and agri/animal products (shorn wool, milk albumin, apples, kiwifruit)



Services trade (2024):



What's in **FTA**

- NZ's average applied tariff (2.2% in 2025) to fall to zero after implementation
- India offers market access on 70.03% of tariff lines, covering 95% of NZ's exports by value; 29.97% tariff lines excluded
- **The big gainers in India:** Textiles and apparel, leather and headgear, ceramics, carpets, automobiles and auto components
- Apples, kiwifruit and manuka honey from NZ subject to TRQ, MIP and seasonal limits, balancing consumer choice with farmer protection
- Exclusions mainly include dairy, most animal products, select vegetables & pulses, sugar, artificial honey, fats & oils, arms & ammunition, gems & jewellery, and copper

“CONCLUDED IN JUST NINE MONTHS, THIS HISTORIC MILESTONE REFLECTS A STRONG POLITICAL WILL AND SHARED AMBITION TO DEEPEN ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES”



“INDIA IS THE WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY AND FASTEST-GROWING ECONOMY, AND THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOBS FOR KIWIS, EXPORTS, AND GROWTH”



Mobility provisions

- Minimum 20 hours/week work permitted for students in NZ
- Extended post-study work visas for STEM graduates
- 5,000 professional visas in IT, engineering, health care, AYUSH, yoga, music and Indian cuisine for up to 3 years
- 1,000 working holiday visas, granting multiple entries in 12 months

Exclusions and Sensitive Sectors

- The most politically and economically significant aspect of the India–New Zealand FTA lies in its **exclusion list**, which reflects India’s core domestic sensitivities. India has kept **nearly 30% of tariff lines outside the scope of tariff liberalisation**, with **dairy products forming the central exclusion**.
- Milk, cream, butter, cheese, yoghurt, whey, and other dairy derivatives remain **fully protected**, with no reduction in import duties for New Zealand exports.
- The exclusion of dairy is rooted in **India’s socio-economic structure**, where the dairy sector supports **millions of small and marginal farmers**, often operating through cooperative models such as village-level milk societies. Unlike export-oriented agri-businesses in developed economies, Indian dairy is predominantly a **livelihood sector**, and exposure to large-scale imports from a highly efficient exporter like New Zealand could have destabilising effects on rural incomes.
- The exclusion therefore reflects India’s long-standing position that dairy is a **non-negotiable sector** in FTAs.
- Beyond dairy, India’s exclusion list also covers **certain agricultural products**, including sensitive items such as onions, some pulses, sugar, and select edible oils, as well as **specific industrial and strategic products**.
- These exclusions are designed to protect price stability, food security, and strategic interests, while preventing import surges that could disrupt domestic markets.
- At the same time, the agreement introduces **nuanced mechanisms rather than absolute closure**. For certain high-value agricultural products where domestic production is limited or seasonal, India has offered **Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs)**.
- Under TRQs, limited quantities of products such as apples, kiwifruit, and certain processed foods can enter at lower or zero duties, while imports beyond the quota attract higher tariffs. This approach allows India to **balance consumer choice and controlled market access** with protection of domestic producers.
- In the case of dairy, while consumer market access is excluded, the agreement provides for **consultative mechanisms and supply-chain-oriented provisions**, such as facilitating duty-free entry of inputs meant for **processing and re-export**, subject to conditions.
- This reflects a compromise wherein New Zealand gains limited participation in value chains without opening India’s domestic dairy market. The presence of review clauses also allows for future dialogue without creating automatic obligations.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following countries concluded a Free Trade Agreement with India in December 2025?
(a) Australia (b) New Zealand
(c) Canada (d) Japan
2. What was the principal reason earlier India–New Zealand FTA negotiations stalled?
(a) Disagreement over dairy access
(b) Conflict on defence cooperation
(c) Dispute regarding migration visas
(d) Divergence on climate obligations
3. What level of tariff access has New Zealand granted to Indian goods?
(a) Preferential quotas for exports
(b) Partial duty reduction offered
(c) Selective tariff elimination only
(d) Zero duty on all lines
4. Which Indian sectors benefit significantly from New Zealand's tariff elimination?
(a) Textiles apparel leather exports
(b) Crude oil petroleum exports
(c) Defence equipment exports
(d) Pharmaceutical bulk drugs
5. What proportion of India's tariff lines are liberalised under the FTA?
(a) Around 80% (b) Around 50%
(c) Around 90% (d) Around 70%
6. Which area is highlighted as India's comparative advantage in the agreement?
(a) Trade in services
(b) Heavy manufacturing exports
(c) Defence industrial production
(d) Primary agriculture commodities
7. What multilateral agreement is used as a baseline for services commitments?
(a) World Customs Organisation Code
(b) Agreement on Trade Tariffs
(c) General Agreement Trade Services
(d) International Investment Treaty
8. What approach does the FTA adopt toward investment protection?
(a) Investment facilitation focus
(b) Mandatory ISDS inclusion
(c) Binding arbitration tribunals
(d) Investor compensation guarantees
9. Which mechanism is introduced to manage non-tariff barriers?
(a) Currency exchange controls
(b) Unilateral safeguard measures
(c) Emergency import restrictions
(d) Regulatory cooperation chapters
10. What proportion of tariff lines has India excluded from liberalisation?
(a) Nearly 70 percent (b) Nearly 10 percent
(c) Nearly 50 percent (d) Nearly 30 percent
11. Which products are protected through complete tariff exclusion?
(a) Milk, butter and cheese
(b) Textile apparel garments
(c) Engineering machinery tools
(d) Electronic consumer devices
12. What trade instrument allows limited duty-free agricultural imports?
(a) Tariff Rate Quotas
(b) Countervailing duty rules
(c) Anti dumping measures
(d) Safeguard duty triggers
13. Which year were diplomatic relations established between India and New Zealand?
(a) 1971 (b) 1947 (c) 1965 (d) 1952
14. Which initiative reflected New Zealand's structured outreach to India?
(a) Look East Strategy
(b) Opening Doors India
(c) Act Indo Pacific
(d) Trade Connect Mission

SOLUTIONS

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

20 PM NARENDRA MODI'S THREE-NATION VISIT TO JORDAN, ETHIOPIA AND OMAN

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** undertook a **four-day, three-nation diplomatic tour** to **Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman** from **15 to 18 December 2025**, in what was described by the Government of India as a strategic outreach to **West Asia and Africa**. The visit was launched with the objective of **strengthening bilateral ties, enhancing economic cooperation, expanding trade and investment linkages, reinforcing strategic and defence cooperation, and deepening people-to-people contacts** with countries that share civilisational ties or occupy key positions in regional geopolitics. The tour coincided with **significant bilateral anniversaries** – notably the **75th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Jordan** and the **70th anniversary of ties with Oman** – and included key talks with heads of state, signing of agreements and MoUs, and exchange of high honours.

Visit to Jordan

Prime Minister Modi's visit to the **Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** marked his **first full-fledged bilateral visit to the country in 37 years**, and it also celebrated the **75th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between India and Jordan**. The visit was undertaken at the **invitation of His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein**, with both leaders holding extensive discussions on the **entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation** and regional issues of mutual interest.

In Amman, PM Modi and King Abdullah II reviewed existing ties and emphasised shared commitments to **regional peace, security, and stability**. They also reiterated a **united stance against terrorism**, noting terrorism and violent

extremism as threats to global security and highlighting cooperation in counter-terrorism measures.

The two sides signed **five agreements and MoUs** to deepen cooperation in diverse fields, which included a **MoU on technical cooperation in new and renewable energy**, a **MoU on water resources management and development**, a **twining agreement between Petra and Ellora**, the **renewal of the cultural exchange programme (2025–2029)**, and a **Letter of Intent on cooperation for sharing digital solutions at population scale**. These agreements signified a multifaceted approach to economic, scientific and cultural engagement, reflecting the broadening of bilateral relations.

The Jordan visit also emphasised **economic ties** and cooperation in **trade, defence and technology**, reflecting India's interest in expanding partnerships in West Asia beyond energy to include technology, water management and renewable energy. The visit was accompanied by engagement with the **Indian diaspora** and business communities, aiming to translate political goodwill into tangible economic outcomes through expanded bilateral trade and investment.

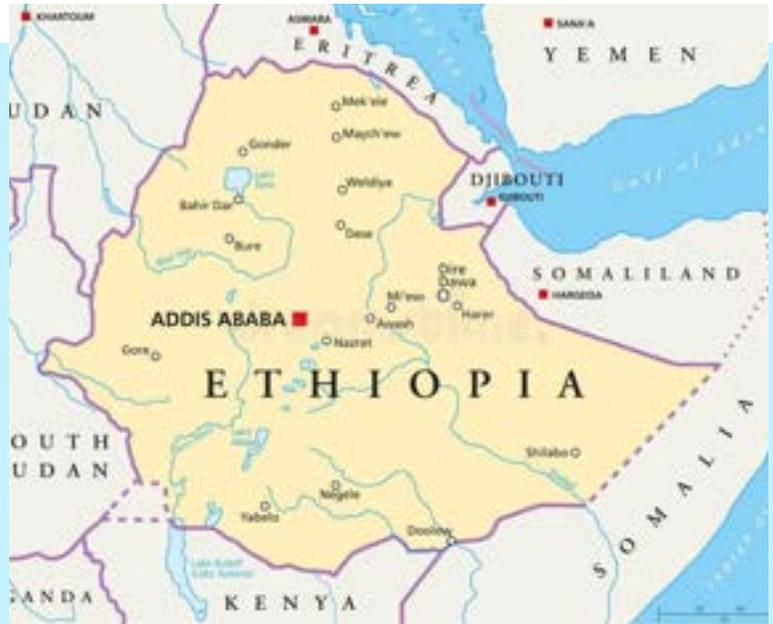


Visit to Ethiopia

The second leg of the tour was to **Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa**, and it marked **Prime Minister Modi's first state visit to Ethiopia**. The visit was undertaken on the invitation of **Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali**, with the two leaders conducting **wide-ranging discussions on bilateral ties** and cooperation. Ethiopia holds particular significance for India not only as a key East African partner but also as the **seat of the African Union (AU)** and a strategic voice within the **Global South**.

During his Ethiopia visit, PM Modi **addressed a joint sitting of the Ethiopian Parliament**, becoming one of the few foreign leaders to have done so. In his speech, he spoke about India's democratic journey, shared experiences as fellow democracies, and emphasised the **value of India-Africa cooperation** in addressing development challenges and advancing global governance reforms. The address was widely seen as an articulation of India's **solidarity with African partners** within the frameworks of inclusive growth, peace, and security.

- A highlight of the Ethiopia visit was the **conferment of the "Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia"**, the country's highest civilian award, on Prime Minister Modi by the Government of Ethiopia, acknowledging his contributions to strengthening bilateral relations and advancing cooperation on global development challenges. This honour underscored the mutual respect between the two nations and the importance Ethiopia places on the India partnership.
- India and Ethiopia share an expanding relationship grounded in **development cooperation, capacity building, agriculture, education and technical assistance**, as well as **support for AU initiatives and reform of global institutions**. India's engagement with Ethiopia has also included infrastructure, IT and pharmaceutical partnerships, reflecting a broadening cooperation agenda.



Visit to Oman

The final leg of the three-nation tour was to the **Sultanate of Oman**, where Prime Minister Modi visited at the invitation of **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik**. The visit marked the **70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Oman** and built on a long history of friendship, strategic cooperation, and economic ties.

During the Oman visit, India and Oman **signed the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** in Muscat on **18 December 2025**. The CEPA stands as a cornerstone outcome of the visit, representing a **forward-looking bilateral trade and economic framework** covering trade in goods



- and services, investment facilitation, regulatory cooperation, and mobility provisions.
- Under this agreement, Oman granted India duty-free access on 98.08% of its tariff lines, covering nearly 99% of Indian exports, while India offered liberalised market access on 77.79% of its tariff lines, representing commitments to deepen trade and investment flows. This CEPA reflects a major milestone, as it is Oman's first bilateral trade agreement since its free trade pact with the United States in 2006 and India's second such agreement with a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member state, after earlier engagement with another partner.
- In Muscat, PM Modi also engaged with business leaders from both countries to catalyse investment and co-operation in sectors such as energy, technology, infrastructure and services. He addressed the Indian diaspora, acknowledging their role in strengthening bilateral ties and contributing to Oman's development.
- The India-Oman relationship has been historically robust, anchored in maritime links and trade, shared strategic interests in regional security (including counter-piracy and Gulf stability), and cooperation in defence and energy sectors. India and Oman have conducted joint military exercises, maintain naval cooperation, and have longstanding ties in the energy and petrochemical sectors, including joint ventures and infrastructure collaboration.
- On the final day of the visit, PM Modi was conferred with the "Order of Oman", a high civilian honour bestowed by the Sultanate, recognising his contribution to strengthening bilateral relations and shared strategic interests.

India's Relationship with Each Country

India-Jordan Relations

India and Jordan established diplomatic relations in **1950**, and over the intervening decades have maintained **steadfast political and economic ties** supported by mutual respect, shared interests in regional stability, and cooperation on counter-terrorism issues. Trade between the two countries has generally grown, with India emerging as one of Jordan's significant partners in Asia. Defence and security cooperation have been complemented by **agreements on education, cultural exchange and renewable energy cooperation**. Jordan has supported India's positions in international fora, and the recent visit during the **75th anniversary of bilateral ties** reaffirmed a shared commitment to peace, economic growth, and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

India-Ethiopia Relations

India and Ethiopia share a relationship rooted in **South-South cooperation** and mutual engagement in African development aspirations. The two nations have cooperated in capacity building, technical assistance, human resource development, agriculture and digital technologies. Ethiopia's strategic location as the **headquarters of the African Union** has further anchored India's engagement with continental institutions and initiatives, including support for AU reform and enhanced economic partnerships. India also maintains ties through development projects, concessional credit lines, and collaboration in multilateral forums such as the G20 and BRICS. The 2025 visit and the conferment of the **Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia** underscore the depth of this evolving partnership.

India-Oman Relations

India-Oman relations are among India's **oldest and most enduring partnerships in the Gulf region**, characterised by **strong people-to-people ties**, extensive economic engagement, and comprehensive strategic cooperation. Historically, maritime trade routes linked the Indian subcontinent and Oman for centuries, and modern bilateral relations, established in **1948**, have continued to build on these foundations. Defence cooperation includes port access for the Indian Navy and joint exercises, while economic links encompass energy, petrochemicals, fertilisers and trade. The **India-Oman CEPA** concluded in December 2025 marks a new era in the economic dimension of this partnership and demonstrates both nations' commitment to deeper integration in trade and investment.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following countries was the first leg of Prime Minister Modi's December 2025 diplomatic tour?
(a) Jordan (b) Ethiopia
(c) Oman (d) Bahrain
2. What anniversary of diplomatic relations was celebrated during the Jordan visit?
(a) 50th year anniversary (b) 75th year anniversary
(c) 60th year anniversary (d) 70th year anniversary
3. Which agreement was signed to promote cooperation in renewable energy with Jordan?
(a) Defence cooperation agreement
(b) Renewable energy cooperation
(c) Space technology agreement
(d) Nuclear research agreement
4. Which cultural heritage sites were linked through a twinning agreement?
(a) Amman Ellora (b) Petra Ajanta
(c) Wadi Rum Ellora (d) Petra Ellora
5. Which city did Prime Minister Modi visit during the Ethiopia leg of the tour?
(a) Nairobi city (b) Djibouti city
(c) Addis Ababa (d) Khartoum city
6. What was unique about PM Modi's address in Ethiopia?
(a) Addressed business summit
(b) Addressed Ethiopian Parliament
(c) Addressed African Union
(d) Addressed civil society
7. Which award was conferred on Prime Minister Modi by Ethiopia?
(a) Star Ethiopia Order
(b) Order Addis Ababa
(c) Ethiopian Freedom Medal
(d) Great Honour Nishan
8. Which organisation is headquartered in Addis Ababa?
(a) African Development Bank
(b) African Union
(c) United Nations Africa
(d) East Africa Community
9. Which country was the final destination of the December 2025 tour?
(a) Kuwait (b) Qatar (c) Oman (d) Bahrain
10. What major economic agreement was signed during the Oman visit?
(a) Strategic Partnership Treaty
(b) Comprehensive Economic Partnership
(c) Defence Logistics Agreement
(d) Energy Supply Agreement
11. What percentage of Oman's tariff lines grant duty-free access to India?
(a) 98.08% (b) 85.08% (c) 78.08% (d) 95.01%
12. Which honour was bestowed on PM Modi by Oman?
(a) Royal Oman (b) Sultan Honour
(c) Order Oman (d) Muscat Order
13. Which year were diplomatic relations established between India and Jordan?
(a) 1965 (b) 1950 (c) 1948 (d) 1955
14. Which country hosts the headquarters of the African Union?
(a) Kenya (b) Nigeria
(c) South Africa (d) Ethiopia
15. Which defence activity reflects India-Oman strategic cooperation?
(a) Joint military exercises
(b) Arms export agreements
(c) Missile technology sharing
(d) Nuclear defence pact

SOLUTIONS

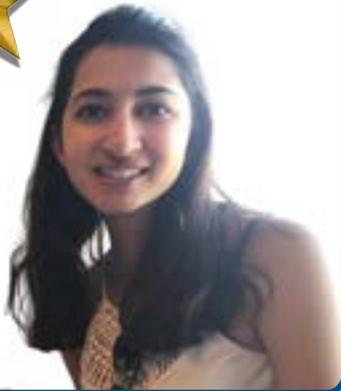
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| 9. (c) | 10. (b) | 11. (a) | 12. (c) | 13. (b) | 14. (d) | 15. (a) | |

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)



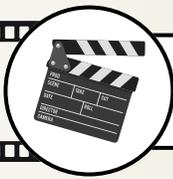
Samyuktha Kovilakath

LNAT (2025 - 2026)



Karthik Ranganadhan

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



MEDIA COVERAGE

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



Renowned Educationist Nishant Prakash in Committee for Implementation of New Education Policy in Assam

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



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

When most students bag 50 marks in the entrance exam, the Super 30 of law entrance bags 5 out of top 10 in AILET and CLAT. The Super 30 students are known for their exceptional performance in law entrance exams. They have consistently scored high marks in the All India Law Entrance Test (AILET) and the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT). The Super 30 students are known for their hard work and dedication to their studies. They have managed to secure top positions in the entrance exams, which is a testament to their exceptional talent and hard work.



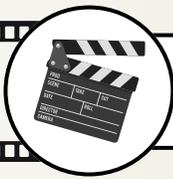
An Interview With India's leading Educationist; How Important Is To Join Coaching Institute To Crack An Aptitude Based Exam Like CLAT



THE HINDU

CLAT candidates aggrieved over 'errors'; consortium denies laxity

A question challenging the process of the general admission test of the Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) for admission to 10 member law universities, the Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) is aggrieved over the process of the general admission test of the Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) for admission to 10 member law universities. The Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) is a consortium of law universities that conduct the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) for admission to law schools. The Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) is a consortium of law universities that conduct the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) for admission to law schools. The Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) is a consortium of law universities that conduct the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) for admission to law schools.



MEDIA COVERAGE

BUREAUCRATS INDIA
Date: December 18, 2025

With a 90% strike rate, Delhi-based Nishant Prakash's students secure top ranks in CLAT and AILET



Two Delhi-based CLAT and AILET Rank 4 aspirants, Nishant Prakash and Siddhant Rohit, who secured All India Rank 4 in CLAT 2026 and AIR 202 in AILET, respectively, are seen celebrating their success. Nishant Prakash, a former corporate professional turned mentor, has trained students for CLAT and AILET. Siddhant Rohit, a former student of Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC), posted a strong, widely disseminated performance in the CLAT and AILET.

Hindustan Times 100
Date: December 31, 2025

CLAT and AILET 2026: How two AIR 4 rankers prepared, handled pressure and adapted when the paper changed



SIDDHANT (AILET AIR 4) **ARSHNOOR SINGH CLAT (AIR 4)**

Arshnoor Singh, who secured All India Rank 4 in CLAT 2026 and AIR 202 in AILET, and Siddhant Rohit, who secured...

Arshnoor Singh and Siddhant Rohit successfully navigated CLAT and AILET by prioritising adaptability and mock testing in preparation.

For law aspirants, entrance exams such as CLAT and AILET are as much a test of temperament as of preparation. That lesson comes through clearly in the journey of Arshnoor Singh, who secured All India Rank 4 in CLAT 2026 and Siddhant Rohit, who secured All India Rank 4 in AILET 2026. Both students began preparing...

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




...दिल्ली को कानून सिखाने वाला बिहारी



Nishant Prakash Law Classes

CLAT Consortium has recently changed the pattern for CLAT. How do you see this?

Nishant Prakash students secure top ranks in CLAT, AILET

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi




With both CLAT and AILET Rank 4 going to his students, corporate-professional-turned-mentor Nishant Prakash on Thursday announced that 70 of his 78 students had qualified in India's two toughest law entrance examinations, with nine securing positions in the top 100.

The declaration of CLAT 2026 and AILET 2026 results has set off the next phase of admissions to India's premier law universities, once again underscoring the intense national competition among aspirants.

Against this backdrop, students trained at Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) posted a strong, widely disseminated performance in the CLAT and AILET.

Arshnoor **Siddhant Rohit AILET (AIR 4)**

1

INDIA ADDS 7 NEW NAMES TO THE MARTIAN MAP

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The International Astronomical Union approved seven new Indian names for Martian geological features based on proposals submitted by Kerala-based researchers, including a 3.5-billion-year-old crater named after pioneering Indian geologist M. S. Krishnan.
- Alongside the Krishnan Crater, several nearby Martian landforms have been named after locations in Kerala such as Valiamala, Thumba, Bekal, Varkala, and Periyar, giving these places scientific counterparts on Mars.
- The approval recognises sustained planetary geology research conducted at the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology and highlights India's growing contribution to global planetary science.

International Astronomical Union and Planetary Nomenclature

- The International Astronomical Union is the globally recognised authority responsible for assigning official names to celestial bodies and surface features across the Solar System.
- It is headquartered in Paris and functions through specialised bodies, including the Working Group for Planetary System Nomenclature, which evaluates and approves naming proposals for planetary landforms.
- The IAU follows a standardised nomenclature system to ensure clarity, scientific consistency, and international neutrality in planetary mapping and research.

Researchers Behind the Naming Proposal

- The naming proposal was jointly submitted by Asif Iqbal Kakkassery, formerly a research scholar at the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology and currently Assistant Professor of Geology at Government College, Kasaragod, and Rajesh V. J. from the Department of Earth and Space Sciences at IIST.
- Their research focused on detailed geological mapping of an unnamed crater in the Xanthe Terra region of Mars, a terrain already known for preserved evidence of ancient glaciation.
- The scientific work leading to the proposal spanned nearly six years and included interruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring repeated documentation, review, and compliance with international naming standards.

Krishnan Crater and Associated Features

- The central feature approved by the IAU is the Krishnan Crater, a large Martian impact crater estimated to be about 3.5 billion years old.
- It is located in the Xanthe Terra region of Mars, an area of high geological interest due to evidence of past glacial and fluvial processes.
- The crater has been named in honour of M. S. Krishnan, a pioneering Indian geologist born in 1898 in Thanjavur, who became the first Indian Director of the Geological Survey of India and made foundational contributions to Earth and planetary sciences.
- Within the crater, the plain has been officially designated as Krishnan Palus, while a channel cutting across this plain has been named Periyar Vallis.

Kerala Place Names on Martian Landforms

- Several smaller craters and landforms associated with the Krishnan Crater have been named after locations in Kerala, marking the first instance of multiple Kerala place names being adopted for Martian features.
- Valiamala Crater is named after Valiamala in Thiruvananthapuram district, which hosts the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, India's premier institution for space education and research.

- Thumba Crater commemorates Thumba, the site of the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Centre established in 1962, which marked the origin of India's space programme and early sounding rocket launches.
- Bekal Crater is named after Bekal in Kasaragod district, known for the historic Bekal Fort, a seventeenth-century coastal fort that came under the Keladi Nayaka dynasty, Hyder Ali of Mysore, and later British control.
- Varkala Crater is named after Varkala, a coastal town known for its geologically unique cliff formations containing minerals such as jarosite, which has also been detected on Mars and makes the area an important Martian analogue site.
- Periyar Vallis is a Martian valley named after the Periyar River, Kerala's longest river, which flows from the Western Ghats to the Arabian Sea.

Scientific Basis of the Naming

- The researchers identified clear geomorphological indicators of ancient glacial movement and flowing water within and around the unnamed crater prior to the naming proposal.
- These observations strengthened the scientific significance of the crater and justified its eligibility for naming under IAU conventions.
- The associated smaller landforms were selected due to their spatial and geological linkage with the main crater, ensuring consistency in nomenclature.

IAU Guidelines for Naming Martian Features

- Under IAU rules, large Martian craters are permitted to be named after deceased scientists who have made foundational contributions to planetary science or related fields.
- Smaller craters may be named after towns or villages with populations below 100,000, provided the names are culturally relevant, easy to pronounce, and internationally acceptable.
- Names must be non-political, non-offensive, unique, and free from duplication across planetary nomenclature systems.
- Each proposal must include the origin of the name, precise coordinates, feature classification, supporting images, and a scientific justification for the naming.

Context of Earlier Indian Names on Mars

- In 2024, the IAU approved three Indian names proposed by the Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad, including Lal Crater named after geophysicist Devendra Lal, and two smaller craters named Mursan and Hilsa after towns in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- Mars also contains surface features named after the Ganga, though these were not proposed through Indian scientific institutions.

Key Facts Related to Mars

- Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and is commonly referred to as the Red Planet due to the oxidation of iron-rich dust on its surface.
- The planet has a radius approximately half that of Earth and possesses a thin, cold, and dusty atmosphere dominated by carbon dioxide.
- A Martian solar day lasts about 24.6 hours, while a Martian year is equivalent to 687 Earth days.
- Mars has two small moons, Phobos and Deimos, and contains prominent surface features such as Olympus Mons, the largest volcano in the Solar System, and Valles Marineris, the largest canyon.

2 ALAKNANDA GALAXY

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- Researchers at the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (NCRA–TIFR), Pune, have identified a massive, well-structured spiral galaxy named Alaknanda that existed when the universe was approximately 1.5 billion years old.
- The galaxy was detected using observations from NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope, and its advanced spiral structure challenges existing models of early galaxy formation.
- The discovery has been reported as one of the earliest observations of a mature spiral galaxy and has been published in a leading European astronomy journal, highlighting its scientific relevance.

Discovery and Institutional Context

- The discovery was led by a research team at NCRA–TIFR, Pune, under the guidance of Professor Yogesh Wadadekar, with the primary research conducted by doctoral scholar Rashi Jain.
- NCRA–TIFR is a premier Indian research institution specializing in radio astronomy and astrophysics and plays a significant role in international observational astronomy collaborations.
- The findings contribute to India’s growing participation in cutting-edge space science research through analysis of data from global observatories.

Observational Instrumentation

- The galaxy Alaknanda was identified using data from NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope, which was launched in December 2021 as the most advanced space-based observatory to date.
- The James Webb Space Telescope is designed to observe distant objects in infrared wavelengths, allowing scientists to study galaxies formed shortly after the Big Bang.
- JWST has enabled astronomers to detect galaxies that formed only a few hundred million years after the origin of the universe, providing unprecedented insight into early cosmic evolution.

Key Physical Characteristics of Alaknanda Galaxy

- Alaknanda is located at a distance of approximately 12 billion light-years from Earth, placing it among the earliest known galaxies observed with a clearly defined structure.
- The galaxy dates back to a time when the universe was only about 10 percent of its current age, corresponding to nearly 1.5 billion years after the Big Bang.
- It exhibits a textbook “grand design” spiral morphology, characterized by two prominent spiral arms symmetrically winding around a bright and dense central bulge.
- The overall diameter of Alaknanda is estimated to be around 30,000 light-years, which is notable for a galaxy formed at such an early cosmic epoch.
- The structural features of Alaknanda show a striking resemblance to the Milky Way, a spiral galaxy that was previously believed to have evolved much later in cosmic history.

Naming and Cultural Significance

- The galaxy has been named Alaknanda after the Himalayan river of the same name, which is a major tributary of the Ganga.
- The name reflects its conceptual association with the Milky Way, which is known as “Mandakini” in Hindi, and the Alaknanda river is traditionally regarded as the sister river of the Mandakini.
- The naming convention emphasizes the galaxy’s resemblance to the Milky Way and symbolizes it as a distant cosmic counterpart.

3

US ANNOUNCES LUNAR FISSION SURFACE POWER PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

- The United States has announced plans under its Lunar Fission Surface Power Project to deploy a small nuclear reactor on the Moon by the early 2030s as part of NASA's Artemis Base Camp programme.
- The initiative marks a major step toward establishing a permanent nuclear power source beyond Earth orbit and has renewed global attention on the scientific potential, technological applications, and regulatory challenges of nuclear power in space.

Need for Energy in Expanding Space Presence

- As human and robotic activity expands beyond Earth orbit to the Moon and Mars, reliable and continuous energy supply has emerged as a strategic requirement for sustained space operations.
- Solar power, while effective for satellites and limited surface missions, is constrained by prolonged lunar nights lasting about 14 Earth days and reduced sunlight in permanently shadowed polar regions.
- On Mars, large-scale dust storms lasting weeks can significantly degrade solar panel efficiency and disrupt energy generation.
- Long-duration missions require uninterrupted power for life support, habitat heating, communication systems, scientific experiments, and industrial activities.

Existing Nuclear Power Technologies in Space

- Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators have been used for decades to power deep-space missions such as the Voyager spacecraft.
- RTGs generate electricity by converting heat released from the radioactive decay of plutonium-238 into electrical energy.
- These systems are highly reliable and function independently of sunlight, making them immune to darkness, dust, and extreme cold.
- However, RTGs typically produce only a few hundred watts of power, which is sufficient for instruments but inadequate for human habitats or industrial-scale operations.

Compact Fission Reactors

- Compact nuclear fission reactors represent the next stage in space-based power generation. These reactors are approximately the size of a shipping container and can generate tens to hundreds of kilowatts of electricity. Such power output is sufficient to support crewed habitats, laboratories, surface mobility systems, and early industrial facilities.
- On the Moon, fission reactors could maintain habitable temperatures, process ice into water and oxygen, and recharge surface vehicles.
- On Mars, reactors buried beneath the regolith could use natural shielding to reduce exposure to cosmic radiation while providing stable power.

Industrial and In-Situ Resource Utilisation Needs

Future space missions plan to use in-situ resource utilisation to extract and process local materials such as water ice. ISRU technologies aim to convert water into oxygen for breathing and hydrogen or methane-based rocket fuel. These processes are energy-intensive and can require power levels exceeding one megawatt for continuous operation. Nuclear fission remains the only proven technology capable of scaling to such power levels in extraterrestrial environments without dependence on sunlight.

4

NAVY DAY AND INDIAN MARITIME DOCTRINE 2025

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, released the **Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025** on Indian Navy Day, formally introducing “no-war, no-peace” as a distinct operational category between peace and conflict.
- The doctrine update reflects changes in India’s maritime security environment and aligns naval strategy with India’s long-term national vision and maritime development priorities.

Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025: Overview

The Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025 serves as the apex guidance document of the Indian Navy, defining principles for planning, preparedness, and operations across the full spectrum of maritime conflict. It outlines strategic concepts, force employment, capability development, and responses to emerging and non-traditional maritime challenges. The doctrine builds upon earlier editions released in 2004, revised in 2009, and amended in 2015, incorporating lessons from the past decade of regional and global maritime developments.

Recognition of “No-War, No-Peace” Category

- The doctrine formally recognises the “no-war, no-peace” condition as a distinct operational space, acknowledging that contemporary maritime competition often occurs below the threshold of armed conflict.
- This category captures sustained coercion, grey-zone operations, hybrid tactics, and sub-threshold actions that do not amount to declared war but still affect national security.
- The approach reflects increasing maritime contestation through presence operations, coercive deployments, cyber activities, information influence, and irregular methods at sea.
- By treating this grey zone as a critical operational domain, the doctrine provides a structured framework for naval responses without escalation to full-scale conflict.

Alignment with National Maritime and Developmental Initiatives

- The Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025 aligns naval strategy with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, positioning maritime power as a pillar of India’s long-term growth and security.
- It integrates key national initiatives such as Sagarmala, PM Gati Shakti, Maritime India Vision 2030, Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, and MAHASAGAR.
- The doctrine links maritime security with economic growth, port-led development, logistics connectivity, and blue economy expansion.
- By synchronising defence objectives with infrastructure and economic policies, the doctrine reflects a whole-of-nation approach to maritime affairs.

Indian Navy Day and Operational Legacy

- Indian Navy Day is observed annually on 4 December to commemorate Operation Trident conducted during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War.
- Operation Trident involved a surprise naval missile attack on Karachi harbour, significantly degrading Pakistan’s maritime operational capabilities.
- The operation was executed using Vidyut-class missile boats INS Nipat, INS Nirghat, and INS Veer, supported by corvettes and a fleet tanker.
- The 2025 theme of Indian Navy Day emphasised combat readiness, cohesion, credibility, and self-reliance in safeguarding maritime interests for a developed and prosperous India.

5 MASALA BONDS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The Enforcement Directorate has issued show-cause notices to the Kerala Chief Minister, the former Finance Minister, and senior officials of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board in connection with alleged violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act and Reserve Bank of India directions related to Masala Bonds.
- The action has brought renewed attention to the Masala Bond issued by KIIFB in 2019, its regulatory compliance, end-use of funds, and its implications for State finances and Centre-State fiscal relations.

Kerala Masala Bond Issue: Background

The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board functions as the principal funding agency of the Kerala government for large-scale infrastructure projects. In March 2019, KIIFB raised ₹2,150 crore through the issuance of Masala Bonds during the tenure of the Left Democratic Front government. The bonds were issued to overseas investors and were listed on international exchanges, including the London Stock Exchange and the Singapore Stock Exchange. The Kerala government later informed the State Legislative Assembly that the entire bond amount was repaid in March 2024.

Enforcement Directorate Probe

The Enforcement Directorate initiated adjudication proceedings alleging contravention of FEMA provisions and non-compliance with RBI directions. According to the agency, show-cause notices were issued in November 2025 in relation to an amount of ₹466.91 crore raised through the Masala Bond. The alleged violation relates to the utilisation of a portion of the bond proceeds for land acquisition, which is cited as a prohibited end-use under the applicable regulatory framework. The notices do not mandate personal appearance and seek written explanations from the individuals concerned.

Regulatory and Audit Observations

The Comptroller and Auditor General, in its State Finances Audit Report for the year ending March 2019, raised concerns regarding the approval process for the Masala Bond. The audit report observed that the Reserve Bank of India's nod appeared questionable and flagged possible constitutional issues relating to the division of borrowing powers between the Centre and the State. The Masala Bond controversy has also been linked to the broader issue of off-budget borrowings undertaken by KIIFB. The Union government has treated KIIFB borrowings as direct liabilities of the State, while the Kerala government has argued that they should be classified as contingent liabilities.

Judicial Developments

In 2023, following the issuance of summons by the Enforcement Directorate, the former Finance Minister approached the Kerala High Court. The Court sought clarification on whether the agency possessed verifiable material to justify continuation of the investigation. The Court observed that while statutory authorities are empowered to conduct inquiries, such investigations cannot be speculative or roving in nature.

Masala Bonds: Concept and Features

Masala Bonds are rupee-denominated debt instruments issued to overseas investors by Indian entities. Although raised from foreign markets, the bonds are denominated in Indian currency, shifting the exchange rate risk to the foreign investor. The primary objective of Masala Bonds is to enable Indian issuers to access international capital without exposure to currency depreciation. The term "Masala Bond" was introduced by the International Finance Corporation in 2014 to promote rupee-denominated fundraising abroad.

6 RIGHT TO DISCONNECT BILL, 2025

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- A Private Members' Bill titled the **Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025** was introduced in the Lok Sabha by NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule to legally protect employees from work-related communications beyond official working hours.
- The Bill has renewed national discussion on work-life balance, mental health, and digital overreach in a hyper-connected work environment, alongside a similar legislative proposal moved by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor.

Background and Context

The concept of limiting work hours has its roots in the 19th-century labour movement, which popularised the principle of dividing the day into fixed periods for work, rest, and personal life. With the expansion of digital communication tools, remote work arrangements, and global business operations, employees are increasingly expected to remain available outside standard working hours. This shift has led to growing concerns over erosion of personal time, increased stress levels, and blurred boundaries between professional and private life. Several countries have already legislated protections recognising the right of employees to disengage from work communications after official hours.

Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025: Overview

The Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025 seeks to formally recognise an employee's right to refuse work-related calls, messages, or emails outside prescribed working hours. The Bill aims to reduce occupational stress and address mental health concerns arising from continuous digital connectivity. This is the second time since 2019 that Supriya Sule has introduced a Private Members' Bill on the same subject.

Key Provisions of the Bill

The Bill states that while employers may contact employees after working hours, employees are not obligated to respond and may lawfully decline such communication. Employees exercising this right cannot be subjected to disciplinary action, adverse service conditions, or penalties by the employer.

- **An Employees' Welfare Authority** is proposed to be established for enforcing the right to disconnect across workplaces. The Authority is mandated to conduct a baseline study to collect comprehensive data on employee engagement with digital tools beyond work hours.
- Companies employing more than ten workers are required to negotiate with employees, trade unions, or representatives to define conditions for work outside normal hours.
- Any work performed beyond fixed hours must be compensated through overtime wages at the normal rate.
- The Bill directs the government, in consultation with employers, to provide counselling services to employees to support work-life balance. It also proposes the establishment of digital detox centres to address issues arising from excessive digital exposure. Non-compliant companies may be liable to pay a penalty amounting to one percent of the total remuneration of their employees.

Parallel Legislative Efforts

- Congress MP Shashi Tharoor introduced the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025.
- This proposal seeks to limit working hours, reinforce the right to disconnect, and establish grievance redress mechanisms and mental health support systems.
- At the State level, a Private Members' Bill titled the Kerala Right to Disconnect Bill was proposed in 2025, contributing to wider policy debate on the issue.

7 MAHAPARINIRVAN DIWAS 2025

MISCELLANEOUS

IN FOCUS

- The 70th **Mahaparinirvan Diwas** of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is being commemorated on 6 December 2025 at **Prerna Sthal, Parliament House Campus**, with the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation organising official tributes on behalf of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The commemoration includes a formal VIP tribute session followed by public access for paying homage at the life-size statue of Dr. Ambedkar on the Parliament House lawn.

Mahaparinirvan Diwas: Meaning and Observance

Mahaparinirvan Diwas is observed on **6 December** to mark the death anniversary of **Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar**, who passed away on **6 December 1956**. The term “Mahaparinirvana” is associated with the Buddhist tradition, with the **Mahaparinibbana Sutta** recording Lord Buddha’s Mahaparinirvana at the age of 80 years. Dr. Ambedkar’s memorial associated with Mahaparinirvan Diwas observances is located at **Chaitya Bhoomi, Dadar (Mumbai)**. Dr. Ambedkar is associated with **Navayana Buddhism**, a modern Buddhist movement emphasising social equality and dignity.

Dr. Ambedkar Foundation: Institutional Profile

The **Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF)** is an autonomous organisation formed on 24 March 1992. The Foundation functions under the aegis of the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India**. The core mandate of DAF includes implementing programmes and initiatives that promote the ideals, vision, and philosophies associated with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at a national level. The Foundation organises the annual Mahaparinirvan Diwas commemoration on behalf of the Government of India to mark Dr. Ambedkar’s death anniversary.

Brief Profile of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on **14 April 1891 at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh**. He is widely recognised as a jurist, economist, social reformer, and the chief architect of India’s constitutional framework through his leadership in constitution drafting. He served as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly tasked with preparing the Constitution of India. He served as Labour Member in the Viceroy’s Executive Council (1942–1946) and later served as Independent India’s first Law Minister. He was posthumously conferred the Bharat Ratna in 1990.

Key Contributions to Constitutional and Social Reform

As Drafting Committee Chairman, he contributed to constitutional design that included **Fundamental Rights**, protections for minorities, federal principles, and the framework for an independent judiciary. He is associated with constitutional measures addressing social equality, including the constitutional abolition of untouchability through enforceable provisions. He led prominent anti-untouchability and social justice movements, including the **Mahad Satyagraha (1927)** and the **Kalaram Temple Satyagraha (1930)**. He participated in **all three Round Table Conferences** as a representative voice for the Depressed Classes in constitutional negotiations. He was a key party to the **Poona Pact (1932)**, which shaped the trajectory of political representation and affirmative action for historically disadvantaged groups. The Poona Pact period is associated with expansion of reserved representation, including an increase in reserved seats from **71 to 147 in provincial legislatures** and to **18% in the Central Legislature**.

He advocated constitutional remedies, and he described **Article 32** as the “soul of the Constitution and very heart of it” in the context of enforcement of fundamental rights.

8

THAILAND LAUNCHES STRIKES INTO CAMBODIA

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

IN FOCUS

- Thailand's army announced on 8 December 2025 that it launched airstrikes on military targets in several areas of Cambodia after at least two Thai soldiers were reported killed in border-related attacks.
- Cambodia denied opening fire and stated that Thailand initiated the strikes, while thousands of people were evacuated on both sides of the Thailand–Cambodia border amid renewed hostilities.
- The escalation has revived the long-running border dispute linked to the Preah Vihear Temple area in the **Dangrek Mountains**, which has repeatedly triggered military clashes and diplomatic crises.

Immediate Trigger and Reported Casualties

Thai authorities stated that the airstrikes were retaliatory actions following reported Cambodian attacks along the border that resulted in the deaths of at least two Thai soldiers. Thailand reported that one Thai soldier died and eight others were injured during the latest escalation, while Cambodian officials reported injuries to civilians on their side during the strikes. Evacuation measures were implemented on both sides of the border, with large-scale temporary displacement reported in affected border provinces.

The Disputed Border: Historical Origins

The Thailand–Cambodia land border has remained contested since colonial-era boundary drawing particularly after a border map prepared in 1907 by France, which was then the colonial administrator in Cambodia. A 1904 treaty framework placed Cambodia's northern frontier along the watershed line of the Dangrek Mountains, which would have placed much of the temple complex on the Thai side under watershed-based interpretation. The French-drawn official map of 1907 placed the Preah Vihear Temple in Cambodia, and the map subsequently became a central reference point in sovereignty claims and legal proceedings. The dispute has continued in varying intensity since Cambodia's independence from France in 1953, with periodic military confrontations and diplomatic ruptures accompanying domestic nationalist mobilisation.

Preah Vihear Temple: Location, Nature, and Cultural Significance

Preah Vihear, known in Thailand as **Phra Viharn**, is located along the Thailand–Cambodia border in the Dangrek Mountains and is regarded as a major cultural and religious symbol for communities on both sides. The temple is a historic shrine dedicated to **Lord Shiva**, and it is associated with the architectural and religious legacy of the Khmer civilisation. The temple complex was constructed during the 11th and 12th centuries, with key patronage linked to Khmer kings including **Suryavarman I and Suryavarman II**. The site is recognised as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, a status that became a flashpoint in modern diplomatic and security tensions after Cambodia's listing initiative.

International Court of Justice Rulings and Continuing Contestation

After Thai troops occupied Preah Vihear in 1954, Cambodia approached the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** to adjudicate the dispute. In 1962, the ICJ ruled that the Preah Vihear Temple belongs to Cambodia, establishing a foundational legal position in Cambodia's favour regarding sovereignty over the temple. Tensions escalated again in 2008 when Cambodia pursued UNESCO World Heritage inscription for the temple, and political actors in both countries used the issue to mobilise domestic nationalist sentiment. In 2013, the ICJ reaffirmed Cambodia's position and linked the ruling to arrangements around the temple area, including the concept of a demilitarised zone around the site. The proposed demilitarised zone was not implemented, and Thailand later rejected the ICJ's jurisdiction in relation to the dispute, leaving enforcement and boundary management contested.

9

INTERPOL ISSUES BLUE CORNER NOTICE IN GOA NIGHTCLUB FIRE CASE

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

IN FOCUS

- The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) has issued a **Blue Notice** against Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, the absconding owners of a Goa nightclub where a major fire incident on 6 December 2025 resulted in 25 deaths.
- The notice was issued following a request from Indian authorities through the Central Bureau of Investigation after the accused reportedly fled the country, with their suspected location traced to Thailand.
- The development has brought renewed attention to the functioning of INTERPOL, the role of colour-coded notices, and India's coordination mechanisms for international criminal cooperation.

Goa Nightclub Fire Case: Key Facts

A massive fire broke out at the **Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub** in Arpora, approximately 25 kilometres from Panaji, late on 6 December 2025. The incident resulted in the death of **25 individuals**, comprising **20 employees** of the nightclub and **five tourists**, including four from Delhi. Five injured persons were admitted to the Goa Medical College and Hospital for treatment following the incident. The owners of the nightclub, Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, allegedly fled India soon after the incident, prompting the Goa Police to seek international assistance.

Initiation of International Cooperation

The Goa Police formally approached the **Central Bureau of Investigation**, which functions as India's National Central Bureau for INTERPOL, to initiate international tracing measures. Acting on this request, the CBI approached INTERPOL for issuance of a Blue Notice to collect information on the accused persons' location and movements. INTERPOL issued the Blue Notice after examining the request in accordance with its constitutional framework and data protection standards.

INTERPOL: Institutional Overview

INTERPOL is officially known as the **International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL)**. It was established in **1923** as an inter-governmental organisation to facilitate international police cooperation. INTERPOL currently has **195 member countries**, including India, which has been a member since **1956**. The organisation is headquartered in **Lyon, France**, and operates through a global network of National Central Bureaus. INTERPOL does not possess independent law enforcement powers such as arrest or prosecution and acts as a coordination and information-sharing platform.

INTERPOL uses a system of **colour-coded notices** to alert member countries about persons, objects, or threats linked to criminal investigations. These notices are international requests for cooperation and do not substitute for judicial warrants unless accompanied by domestic legal processes. Notices are issued by INTERPOL's General Secretariat upon request from a member country's National Central Bureau.

A **Blue Notice** is issued to collect additional information about a person's **identity, location, or activities** in relation to a criminal investigation. It is specifically used when a suspect's whereabouts are unknown and law enforcement agencies seek assistance in tracing movements across borders. A Blue Notice **does not authorise arrest or detention** and is distinct from coercive legal instruments. In the Goa nightclub case, the Blue Notice aims to trace the absconding owners and gather location-based intelligence from other member countries.

Other INTERPOL Colour-Coded Notices

- A **Red Notice** seeks the location and provisional arrest of individuals wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence, subject to national laws.
- A **Yellow Notice** is used to help locate missing persons, particularly minors, or identify persons unable to identify themselves.
- A **Black Notice** is issued to seek information on unidentified bodies.
- A **Green Notice** provides warnings about individuals who may pose a potential threat to public safety based on criminal activities.
- An **Orange Notice** warns of serious and imminent threats involving events, persons, objects, or processes.
- A **Purple Notice** facilitates the exchange of information on criminal modus operandi, tools, devices, and concealment methods.
- The **INTERPOL–UN Security Council Special Notice** applies to individuals or entities subject to UN Security Council sanctions.
- INTERPOL has also introduced a **Silver Notice** on a pilot basis to help trace and identify illicit assets linked to criminal activity.

India's INTERPOL Coordination Mechanism

- Each INTERPOL member country operates through a **National Central Bureau**, which serves as the designated contact point.
- India's National Central Bureau is housed within the **Central Bureau of Investigation**.
- The Indian NCB coordinates requests for notices, diffusions, and international police cooperation on behalf of domestic law enforcement agencies.
- Requests are evaluated for compliance with INTERPOL's legal standards before dissemination to member countries.

10

INDIA EYES FULLY INDIGENOUS SUPERCOMPUTING SYSTEMS BY 2030: ISM CHIEF

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- India has set a target to achieve near-complete **indigenisation of High-Performance Computing (HPC) systems by 2030**, with indigenous content already reaching about 50 percent and projected to exceed 70 percent by the end of the decade.
- Under the **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)**, the country aims to deploy **90 petaflops of computing capacity by March 2026**, strengthening strategic autonomy in advanced computing and artificial intelligence.

National Supercomputing Mission (NSM): Overview

The National Supercomputing Mission was launched in 2015 as a flagship initiative of the Government of India to build comprehensive high-performance computing capability within the country. The mission is jointly steered by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** and the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**. Implementation responsibilities are shared by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune**, and the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**. The mission is designed to enable India to design, develop, and deploy supercomputers for scientific research, national development, and strategic applications.

Three-Phase Implementation Strategy

Phase I focused on creating foundational supercomputing infrastructure by installing six systems with substantial domestic assembly, while building an ecosystem for component integration within India. **Phase II** advanced towards indigenous manufacturing and development of a local software stack, achieving approximately **40 percent value addition** from Indian sources. **Phase III** is focused on complete indigenisation, covering the **design, development, and manufacturing of key components** such as servers, interconnects, and system software within India.

Indigenous Technology Development under NSM

C-DAC has developed **Trinetra**, an indigenous high-speed interconnect network to enhance data transfer and communication between computing nodes. **Trinetra-POC** served as a proof-of-concept system to validate network architecture and performance benchmarks. **Trinetra-A**, supporting **100 gigabits per second**, has been successfully deployed in the **1 petaflop PARAM Rudra** system at C-DAC Pune. **Trinetra-B**, an upgraded **200 gigabits per second** version, is set for deployment in the **20 petaflop PARAM Rudra** system at C-DAC Bengaluru.

Major Supercomputing Installations

PARAM Shivay (2019) was the first indigenously built supercomputer under NSM and was installed at IIT BHU, Varanasi. **PARAM Pravega (2022)** was deployed at IISc Bengaluru with **3.3 petaflops** of computing power, making it the largest supercomputer in an Indian academic institution. **In 2024**, the Prime Minister dedicated three **PARAM Rudra** supercomputers installed in **Pune, Delhi, and Kolkata**, supporting advanced research in physics, earth sciences, and cosmology.

Infrastructure Scale and Capacity Expansion

Under NSM, a total of **34 supercomputers** have been deployed across academic institutions, research organisations, and national laboratories. These systems together provide a combined computing capacity of around 35 petaflops, covering institutions including IISc, IITs, C-DAC centres, and facilities in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. India's roadmap targets deployment of **90 petaflops by March 2026**, significantly expanding national computational capacity.

11 ICG Ship Sarthak at Chabahar Port

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The visit of **Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarthak** to **Chabahar Port** has drawn attention as an important maritime engagement between **India and Iran**, occurring in the context of India's growing focus on **maritime diplomacy, regional connectivity, and security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**. The port call is seen as a confidence-building measure and a demonstration of India's commitment to **safe, secure, and cooperative maritime spaces** amid evolving geopolitical dynamics in West Asia.

About ICG Ship Sarthak

- ICG Ship Sarthak is a **specialised pollution control vessel** of the Indian Coast Guard, designed to handle **marine pollution response, oil spill containment, and environmental protection operations**. The vessel is equipped with advanced systems for **pollution surveillance, containment booms, skimmers, and recovery equipment**, enabling rapid response to maritime environmental emergencies.
- Beyond its technical role, Sarthak also functions as a **platform for capacity building and international cooperation**, frequently participating in joint exercises, training missions, and goodwill visits. Such deployments underscore the Indian Coast Guard's evolving mandate, which now extends beyond coastal security to include **marine environmental protection and regional maritime collaboration**.

Significance of the Visit to Chabahar Port

- The port call at Chabahar is significant for several interconnected reasons. Chabahar occupies a **strategic location on Iran's southeastern coast**, overlooking the **Gulf of Oman** and providing access to the wider Indian Ocean. For India, the port is a critical node in its strategy to **enhance connectivity with Afghanistan and Central Asia**, bypassing Pakistan, and to strengthen its economic and strategic footprint in the region.
- The presence of an Indian Coast Guard vessel at Chabahar reflects India's emphasis on **maritime domain awareness, environmental safety, and humanitarian cooperation**, rather than purely military signalling. By deploying a pollution control vessel, India highlights its commitment to **sustainable maritime practices**, an increasingly important dimension of naval and coast guard diplomacy.

Maritime Cooperation and Capacity Building

- The visit of ICG Ship Sarthak provided an opportunity for **professional exchanges between Indian and Iranian maritime authorities**, particularly in areas related to **marine pollution response, search and rescue, and environmental protection**. Such interactions help build **operational familiarity, trust, and technical interoperability**, which are crucial for responding to maritime emergencies that often transcend national boundaries.
- In a region characterised by heavy shipping traffic, energy transportation, and environmental vulnerability, cooperation on pollution response and maritime safety contributes directly to **regional stability and economic security**.

Strategic and Diplomatic Context

- India's engagement with Iran at Chabahar must be understood within a complex geopolitical environment shaped by **US sanctions on Iran, regional rivalries, and great-power competition**. Despite these constraints, India has continued to emphasise the **strategic and developmental importance of Chabahar**, viewing it as a gateway for trade, connectivity, and regional integration.

12

INDIA-OMAN COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- India and Oman have intensified discussions on a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** as part of India's broader strategy to deepen economic integration with the **Gulf and West Asian region**. The proposed CEPA is viewed as a mechanism to upgrade the existing bilateral trade framework into a **high-standard, forward-looking trade and investment partnership**, covering not only goods but also services, investment, digital trade, supply chains, and mobility. The talks have gained momentum against the backdrop of India's expanding CEPA/FTA network and Oman's interest in positioning itself as a **regional logistics, manufacturing, and investment hub**.

Background of India–Oman Economic Relations

India and Oman share a long history of economic and maritime interaction, with Oman being one of India's oldest partners in the Gulf. Bilateral trade has traditionally been driven by **energy imports (crude oil, LNG)** from Oman and **Indian exports of refined petroleum products, food items, textiles, engineering goods, and chemicals**. Over time, the relationship has diversified to include **investments, services, and logistics**, supported by a large and well-integrated **Indian diaspora in Oman**, which contributes significantly to Oman's economy and to remittance flows to India. Despite strong ties, both sides recognise that the existing trade arrangements do not fully capture the **potential for value-added trade, investment integration, and services cooperation**, providing the rationale for a comprehensive agreement.

What is a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

A CEPA is a **deeper and more ambitious form of free trade agreement**. Unlike limited tariff-reduction pacts, a CEPA typically covers **trade in goods, trade in services, investment protection and facilitation, intellectual property, government procurement, digital trade, standards and conformity assessment, customs cooperation, and dispute settlement mechanisms**. The objective is to create a predictable, transparent, and rules-based environment that promotes **long-term economic integration** rather than narrow market access alone. For India, CEPAs are instruments to integrate domestic industry with **global and regional value chains**, enhance services exports, and secure strategic economic partnerships.

Key Proposed Components of the India–Oman CEPA

- The proposed India–Oman CEPA aims to liberalise **trade in goods** through calibrated tariff reductions while protecting sensitive sectors on both sides. India seeks improved access for **engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, textiles, food products, gems and jewellery, and chemicals**, whereas Oman is interested in facilitating exports of **energy products, petrochemicals, fertilisers, and aluminium-based products**.
- A major focus of the CEPA is expected to be **trade in services**, where India has a comparative advantage. This includes **IT and IT-enabled services, healthcare, education, professional services, construction, and financial services**. Provisions on temporary movement of professionals are particularly significant for India, given the role of skilled Indian workers in Oman's development plans.
- The investment chapter is intended to encourage **two-way investment flows**, with safeguards for investor protection and mechanisms for dispute resolution. Oman's sovereign and institutional investors have shown interest in **Indian infrastructure, logistics, manufacturing, renewable energy, and digital sectors**, while Indian companies view Oman as a base for accessing **Gulf, African, and European markets**.

13

VIKSIT BHARAT SHIKSHA ADHISHTHAN BILL 2025

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 (VBSA Bill) was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 15 December 2025 by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan as part of the Government of India's broad drive to transform the governance architecture of higher education in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047.
- The Bill was referred to a **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)** soon after its introduction amid debates on its implications for federalism, autonomy of institutions, and centralisation of higher education governance. Critics in Parliament contended that the Bill could concentrate power in a single central authority, while proponents argued that it would simplify regulatory structures, reduce overlapping mandates, and enhance quality, transparency, and global competitiveness of Indian higher education.

Provisions of the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025

The VBSA Bill proposes a **comprehensive legal and institutional overhaul** of the regulatory framework governing **higher education in India** with the intent of aligning the system with NEP 2020 objectives of **autonomy, excellence, interdisciplinary learning, research strength, and global integration**. At its core, the Bill seeks to **replace multiple existing regulators with a single apex statutory body** called the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan**, supported by **three specialised councils** responsible for **regulation, accreditation, and standards**. This unified architecture is aimed at dismantling the fragmented regulatory landscape that has historically arisen from the existence of separate statutory authorities such as the **University Grants Commission (UGC)**, **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**, and the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)**, which have often operated with overlapping mandates and procedural delays. The Bill provides for the **repeal of the Acts governing UGC (1956), AICTE (1987), and NCTE (1993)**. All higher educational institutions formerly regulated by these bodies – including **Institutions of National Importance (INIs) such as the IITs, IIMs, NITs, IISERs**, as well as **Central and State universities, deemed universities, and affiliated colleges** will come under the purview of the new Adhishthan for standard-setting, accreditation, and governance oversight. Notably, **medical, legal, pharmaceutical, dental, and veterinary institutions** remain outside the Bill's coverage and continue under their respective regulatory regimes. The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan** itself is envisaged as a **statutory commission** with a Chairperson and up to **12 members**, appointed by the **President of India**. It will provide overarching strategic direction for the nation's higher education ecosystem, ensuring coordination between the councils and driving long-term reforms such as transforming eligible institutions into **large, multidisciplinary education and research universities** capable of global stature. Under the Adhishthan, the **three specialised councils** will perform distinct but coordinated functions:

- The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Vinayam Parishad** (Regulatory Council) will act as the **common regulatory authority** for higher education, overseeing compliance with governance norms, ethical standards, and operational transparency.
- The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Gunvatta Parishad** (Accreditation Council) will oversee and strengthen the **accreditation ecosystem**, ensuring credible, outcome-oriented evaluation of institutions and programmes.
- The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Manak Parishad** (Standards Council) will be responsible for **defining and updating** minimum academic standards, including curriculum frameworks, learning outcomes, and qualifications benchmarks.

14 GOOGLE'S PROJECT SUNCATCHER

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

- **Google's Project Suncatcher** has emerged as one of the most ambitious and futuristic technology initiatives of 2025. Announced by Google through its official research channels, Project Suncatcher is described as a “moonshot” research programme aimed at **scaling machine-learning computation in space** by deploying **solar-powered satellites equipped with artificial intelligence hardware** in Earth orbit. The announcement represents a radical shift in how large-scale AI computation could be powered and managed in the decades ahead, and it has drawn significant attention both for its **technical audacity** and its potential to transform **data centre infrastructure**, energy usage, and the environmental footprint of AI computing. Google CEO Sundar Pichai has stated that initial prototypes could be launched **as early as 2027**, with prototype satellites carrying AI chips into orbit as part of early tests of hardware performance and system control.

What is Project Suncatcher

Project Suncatcher is a **long-term research initiative** led by Google that explores the possibility of building a **space-based, scalable artificial intelligence computing infrastructure** using **solar-powered satellites**. The core concept is to move components of AI data centres—specifically **Tensor Processing Units (TPUs)**, which are Google's custom AI accelerators—into **low-Earth orbit (LEO)** and interconnect them into a distributed computing network that operates **above Earth's atmosphere**. In this envisioned architecture, satellite constellations function as **data centres in space**, harnessing nearly continuous solar energy in orbit and communicating via **high-bandwidth optical links** both between satellites and with ground stations. The initiative stems from the recognition that **AI computation is becoming increasingly energy-intensive**, with terrestrial data centres consuming vast amounts of electricity for both compute and cooling. Space, by contrast, offers **near-uninterrupted access to sunlight**, and satellites in **sun-synchronous orbits** can collect solar energy more efficiently than ground-based solar installations because they are not hindered by weather or day-night cycles. In orbit, compact solar arrays can generate power many times more productive on average than on Earth, allowing high-capacity compute hardware to operate with a potentially smaller environmental footprint.

Project Suncatcher's proposed architecture revolves around several fundamental innovations and technical components:

- **Satellite Constellations with Solar Power:** The plan envisions deploying **constellations of compact satellites**—potentially clusters of dozens to hundreds of units—each equipped with solar arrays capable of capturing energy from the sun nearly continuously due to the absence of atmospheric obstruction in **low-Earth orbit**. These satellites would carry **Google's TPU AI accelerators**, enabling each unit to perform AI computations in orbit.
- **High-Bandwidth Optical Communication:** To function as a distributed computing platform, satellites within the constellation must communicate with each other and with Earth at high data rates. Google's initial research demonstrated optical inter-satellite links capable of transmission at terabit-class speeds, allowing workloads to be shared and coordinated efficiently across the network. These free-space optical links are essential because radio-frequency communication alone would be insufficient for the massive data flows associated with AI tasks.
- **Prototype Missions and Testing:** Google has indicated plans to launch **prototype satellites in partnership with Planet Labs** by early 2027. These early missions are intended to validate how TPU chips and associated hardware perform in space, including **radiation tolerance**, power management, and communication performance. Such tests are critical because the space environment poses unique engineering challenges that terrestrial data centres do not encounter.

15 AUSTRALIA UNDER-16 SOCIAL MEDIA BAN: NEW RULES, IMPACT & GLOBAL REACTIONS

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- In a world-first move, Australia has implemented a legal age restriction preventing children under the age of 16 from holding or creating accounts on major social media platforms, effective 10 December 2025. This measure was introduced through the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024, which amends the existing Online Safety Act 2021. Under this law, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, YouTube, Reddit, Threads, Twitch, and Kick are required to take “reasonable steps” to prevent under-16s from maintaining accounts, with non-compliance exposing companies to civil penalties that can reach up to AUD 49.5 million or more. The legislation enjoyed bipartisan political support in the Australian Parliament and was championed by the Albanese Government as a pioneering public policy designed to protect the mental health and safety of young Australians in the digital environment.

What the New Rules Are

The **Social Media Minimum Age** rules represent a **mandatory age restriction** rather than a parental-consent regime, meaning platforms must proactively block under-16s from creating or retaining accounts. Platforms must verify users' ages and enforce the ban for anyone “physically located in Australia” under the age threshold, irrespective of whether they have valid accounts created prior to the law. Age-verification and compliance obligations are regulated by the **eSafety Commissioner**, which also publishes guidance and maintains a list of age-restricted services. While some services like **Messenger Kids, WhatsApp, GitHub and Roblox** are exempt as non-social-media-centric or educational/communication-only platforms, those whose “significant purpose” is social interaction are included. The law gives platforms a **transition period before enforcement** and mandates regular **independent review** of the age restrictions' effectiveness. Importantly, the ban targets the **account age**, not internet access per se. It does **not criminalise children or their parents** for accessing content, but places legal responsibility on platforms to prevent under-16s from having accounts. Platforms that fail to implement “reasonable steps” to block or remove underage accounts can be pursued in court and fined accordingly.

Implementation & Challenges

On the first day of enforcement, the social media landscape in Australia demonstrated implementation challenges, as some under-16 users reported the ability to circumvent restrictions by creating new accounts or using VPNs, or by falsifying age information during signup. Reporters and officials alike highlighted technical teething problems with age verification systems, given that most platforms historically have relied on self-declared dates of birth without robust identity checks.

Rationale Behind the Ban

- The Australian Government has justified the ban as a public health and **online safety intervention**, pointing to evidence linking early and intensive social media use with **mental health harms**, including anxiety, including anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, exposure to harmful or sexualised content, addiction-like patterns and sleep disruption among young people. The rules reflect a precautionary policy stance, prioritising protection of children's wellbeing over unfettered access to digital platforms, particularly given the highly tailored and continuous engagement features used by social media companies. Supporters argue that delaying mandatory access until 16 gives children more maturity and legal autonomy to navigate complex online spaces.

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ISRAEL'S RECOGNITION OF SOMALILAND

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

Israel formally **recognised Somaliland as a sovereign and independent State in late 2025**, becoming one of the few countries to extend such recognition to the self-declared republic in the Horn of Africa. This decision marked a **major diplomatic development in the geopolitically sensitive Red Sea–Gulf of Aden region** and triggered sharp reactions from **Somalia**, the **African Union**, and several regional and international actors. Israel's move is being closely analysed for its **strategic, security, and geopolitical implications**, particularly in the context of **Red Sea security, Middle East–Africa linkages, and great-power competition**.

What is Somaliland

Somaliland is a **self-declared, de facto State** located in the **north-western part of Somalia**, bordering **Djibouti, Ethiopia, and the Gulf of Aden**. It proclaimed independence from Somalia in 1991 following the collapse of the Somali central government and the end of the Siad Barre regime. Somaliland was briefly an independent country in **1960** (the State of Somaliland) before voluntarily uniting with the former Italian Somaliland to form the **Somali Republic**. Since 1991, Somaliland has maintained **separate political, administrative, and security institutions**, including a constitution, elected governments, judiciary, currency, and security forces. Unlike much of southern and central Somalia, Somaliland has experienced **relative political stability, internal security, and regular elections**. However, it has **not been recognised by the United Nations, the African Union, or the vast majority of States**, which continue to regard it as part of the **Federal Republic of Somalia** under the principle of **territorial integrity**.

Israel's Recognition: Key Features

- Israel's recognition of Somaliland represents a **departure from the long-standing international consensus** of non-recognition. The Israeli government cited Somaliland's **effective governance, democratic credentials, and long-term stability** as factors distinguishing it from Somalia's fragile political situation. Israel also emphasised its sovereign right to recognise States based on **political and strategic considerations**.
- Following recognition, Israel announced its intention to: Establish **formal diplomatic relations** with Somaliland, Open channels for **security, intelligence, and economic cooperation** & Explore **defence, maritime security, cyber-security, agriculture, water management, and technology partnerships**
- This recognition is significant because it lends **symbolic legitimacy** to Somaliland's long-standing claim to statehood and may encourage other countries to reassess their positions, even if widespread recognition remains unlikely in the near term.

Strategic and Geopolitical Motivations Behind Israel's Move

Israel's recognition of Somaliland is widely interpreted through a **strategic and security lens**. Somaliland occupies a **critical geostrategic location along the Gulf of Aden**, close to the **Bab-el-Mandeb Strait**, through which a substantial portion of global maritime trade and energy supplies passes. This maritime corridor has growing importance due to: Rising Houthi attacks and regional instability, Increased involvement of Iran, China, and Gulf States in the Red Sea region and the need to secure sea lanes connecting the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean By recognising Somaliland, Israel potentially gains a friendly strategic partner near one of the world's most sensitive maritime chokepoints, complementing its existing security cooperation with countries around the Red Sea.

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INDIA SIGNS MAJOR DEFENCE CONTRACTS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

India has signed **defence procurement contracts worth ₹4,666 crore** for the induction of **modern infantry weapons and advanced naval torpedoes**, significantly strengthening the **operational preparedness** of the Armed Forces and advancing the national objective of **defence indigenisation**. A key component of the procurement is the acquisition of over **4.25 lakh Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines** for the **Indian Army** and the **Indian Navy**, to be supplied by **Bharat Forge Ltd** and **PLR Systems Pvt Ltd**. These carbines will replace **legacy small arms** currently in service.

The contracts, concluded by the **Ministry of Defence**, cover two critical capability areas: **infantry modernisation** and **naval underwater warfare**. The overall value of **₹4,666 crore** reflects a balanced approach to upgrading both land and maritime combat capabilities. The procurement has been undertaken in line with India's defence acquisition procedures, prioritising **domestic manufacturing and self-reliance**.

Induction of Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines

A major share of the contracts involves the procurement of **more than 4.25 lakh CQB Carbines** for frontline use by the Indian Army and Indian Navy. These carbines are designed for **high-intensity, short-range combat**, especially in **urban operations, counter-terrorism missions, ship-borne security tasks, and close-combat scenarios**. Compared to older rifles, CQB carbines offer **lighter weight, improved ergonomics, higher accuracy in confined spaces, faster target acquisition, and modularity** for accessories such as optics and tactical grips. The induction of these carbines addresses a **long-standing operational gap** caused by the continued use of outdated small arms, many of which were not optimised for modern combat environments. By replacing legacy rifles, the Armed Forces aim to enhance **soldier survivability, lethality, and situational responsiveness**, particularly in counter-insurgency and close-combat situations.

Advanced Naval Torpedoes

In addition to infantry weapons, the contracts include procurement of **advanced naval torpedoes**, aimed at strengthening the Navy's **anti-submarine warfare (ASW)** and **undersea combat capabilities**. Modern torpedoes significantly enhance a navy's ability to **detect, track, and neutralise hostile submarines**, which is crucial in the context of increasing undersea activity in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**. The induction supports India's broader maritime security strategy and reinforces deterrence in a region witnessing expanding naval footprints.

Role of Indigenous Defence Industry

- The selection of **Bharat Forge Ltd** and **PLR Systems Pvt Ltd** underscores India's emphasis on **indigenisation under the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative**. Bharat Forge, a major Indian defence manufacturer, has been increasingly involved in **small arms, artillery systems, and defence engineering**, while PLR Systems represents the growing ecosystem of **private Indian defence MSMEs**. Domestic sourcing ensures technology absorption, **supply-chain security, reduced import dependence, and long-term sustainment capability**, while also generating skilled employment and strengthening the national defence industrial base.

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HAL LAUNCHES DHRUV NG FOR CIVIL AVIATION

SCIENCE & TECH

IN FOCUS

The **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has formally launched the **Dhruv NG (Next Generation)** helicopter for the civil aviation market, marking a major step in India's effort to expand indigenous rotary-wing aircraft manufacturing beyond military use. The launch aligns with India's push to strengthen civil aviation infrastructure, regional connectivity, and Atmanirbhar Bharat in aerospace, while also positioning Indian-made helicopters as viable alternatives in the global civil helicopter market.

About the Dhruv NG Helicopter

The Dhruv NG is an advanced civil variant derived from the proven Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv platform, which has accumulated extensive operational experience with the Indian Armed Forces, paramilitary units, and foreign operators. The “**Next Generation**” version incorporates design refinements, upgraded avionics, enhanced safety systems, and improved performance parameters, tailored specifically to the requirements of civil aviation operators. The helicopter is designed to operate effectively in diverse terrains and climatic conditions, including high-altitude regions, coastal zones, islands, and urban environments. It is a twin-engine, multi-role helicopter, making it suitable for civilian missions such as passenger transport, air ambulance services, search and rescue, disaster response, law enforcement support, offshore operations, and corporate travel.

Key Features and Technological Improvements

The Dhruv NG integrates modern glass cockpit avionics, improved flight management systems, and enhanced situational awareness tools, ensuring compliance with evolving civil aviation safety and certification standards. The helicopter offers improved reliability and maintainability, with design changes aimed at reducing lifecycle costs and downtime a critical requirement for civil operators. The aircraft is equipped with advanced vibration control, better noise reduction measures, and improved cabin ergonomics, enhancing passenger comfort and operational efficiency. Its twin-engine configuration provides higher safety margins, particularly for operations over difficult terrain and densely populated areas. These improvements collectively position the Dhruv NG as a competitive indigenous alternative to imported civil helicopters in the light-utility segment.

Role in India's Civil Aviation Ecosystem

The launch of the Dhruv NG is significant in the context of India's expanding civil helicopter ecosystem, driven by growth in regional connectivity, emergency medical services, disaster management needs, and tourism. With increasing emphasis on UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) and helicopter connectivity to remote and hilly regions, the Dhruv NG is expected to support last-mile air connectivity where fixed-wing aircraft cannot operate. The helicopter also complements India's broader push to improve air ambulance networks, especially in geographically challenging regions such as the Himalayan belt, North-East, island territories, and coastal areas. Its adaptability makes it suitable for state governments, private operators, public sector undertakings, and emergency response agencies.

The Dhruv NG launch reinforces HAL's role as the flagship public sector enterprise in India's aerospace manufacturing ecosystem. Indigenous production reduces dependence on imported helicopters, lowers foreign exchange outflow, and ensures greater control over spares, maintenance, and upgrades. The programme also supports a large network of Indian MSMEs and suppliers, contributing to job creation, skill development, and technological capability within the country.

19

HOLY CITY STATUS AND SIKH HERITAGE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The issue of granting **“holy city” status** has re-emerged in public and political discourse in Punjab with renewed focus on **Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, and Talwandi Sabo**, three cities that occupy a **central and irreplaceable position in Sikh religious history and institutional development**. The discussion has gained prominence in the context of concerns over **urban governance, substance abuse, commercialization around sacred precincts, heritage preservation, and the protection of Sikh religious ethos**. Proposals and debates surrounding holy city recognition have highlighted the need to balance **religious sanctity, constitutional secularism, economic activity, and individual rights**, making it a significant contemporary governance and cultural issue.

Concept of Holy City Status in the Indian Context

The term **“holy city”** does not have a constitutional definition in India but refers to a **policy decision by a State government** to accord special regulatory and administrative treatment to a city of exceptional religious significance. In practice, such status generally involves **restrictions on activities considered inconsistent with the sanctity of the city**, including limits on the sale of alcohol, tobacco, and intoxicants, along with **special urban planning norms**, strengthened heritage conservation measures, and enhanced protection of religious sites. From a constitutional perspective, holy city status operates at the intersection of **Article 25 (freedom of religion)**, **Article 19(1)(g) (freedom of trade and occupation)**, and the Indian doctrine of secularism, which is based on equal respect for all religions rather than strict separation between religion and State. Consequently, any such declaration must satisfy the test of **reasonableness, proportionality, and non-discrimination**.

Sikh Sacred Geography and the Idea of the “Takht Cities”

- Sikhism accords particular significance to certain cities not merely as places of worship but as **sites of doctrinal articulation, institutional authority, and historical struggle**. Among these, **Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, and Talwandi Sabo** form a sacred triad associated with **three of the five** Takhts, which are the highest seats of temporal authority in Sikhism. These cities represent the spiritual, martial, and scriptural foundations of the Sikh tradition.

Amritsar: Spiritual and Temporal Core of Sikhism

- Amritsar holds unparalleled importance in **Sikh heritage as the location of Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple)** and the **Akal Takht**, the supreme seat of Sikh temporal authority. Founded by **Guru Ram Das Ji**, the city symbolises the Sikh principle of miri-piri, the inseparable union of spiritual authority and temporal responsibility.
- Debates around holy city status for Amritsar arise from the perception that **urban congestion, commercialization, drug abuse, and activities such as liquor sale** undermine the sanctity of Sikhism’s most sacred space. Advocates argue that special status would enable **better regulation of civic life around the Golden Temple complex**, promote heritage-sensitive urban development, and reinforce the city’s spiritual character. Critics, however, caution that Amritsar is also a **major commercial and tourism hub**, and blanket restrictions could disrupt livelihoods and raise constitutional concerns if not carefully calibrated.

Anandpur Sahib: Birthplace of the Khalsa

- Anandpur Sahib occupies a foundational place in Sikh history as the site where **Guru Gobind Singh Ji established the Khalsa Panth in 1699**, transforming Sikhism into a disciplined, collective order committed to righteousness, equality, and self-defence. The city is associated with major Sikh festivals, particularly **Hola Mohalla**, which reflects the synthesis of spirituality and martial tradition.
- Unlike Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib is primarily a **religious and pilgrimage centre**, with limited commercial activity. The argument for holy city status here is rooted in the need to **preserve its sacred landscape, protect historical gurdwaras, regulate pilgrimage-related development, and prevent cultural dilution**. The city's role in shaping Sikh collective identity makes it central to discussions on institutional recognition and heritage conservation.

Talwandi Sabo: The Seat of Scriptural Authority

- Talwandi Sabo, also known as **Guru Ki Kashi**, holds deep significance as the location of **Takht Sri Damdama Sahib**, where **Guru Gobind Singh Ji finalised the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib**. This city represents the **scriptural and intellectual culmination of Sikh doctrine**, marking the transition of spiritual authority to the holy scripture.
- The demand for holy city status for Talwandi Sabo is often framed around concerns of **protecting its contemplative character**, preventing unregulated urban expansion, and preserving its identity as a centre of Sikh learning. Given its comparatively smaller urban footprint, proponents argue that special status could be implemented with **minimal economic disruption**, while ensuring long-term preservation of its religious and cultural ethos.

Governance, Federalism, and Legal Considerations

- Since **local governance and public order fall within State jurisdiction**, the authority to grant holy city status lies with the **State government of Punjab**. However, such decisions must conform to constitutional principles, particularly the prohibition of arbitrary restrictions on trade and personal liberty.
- Judicial precedents suggest that **reasonable restrictions in the interest of public morality and order** are permissible, but policies must avoid coercive enforcement and ensure that regulations are **religiously neutral in intent, proportionate in scope, and non-discriminatory in application**. The issue therefore tests India's model of **accommodative secularism**, where cultural recognition is allowed without undermining constitutional equality.

20

INDIA TOPS GLOBAL DOPING
VIOLATIONS IN 2024

SPORTS & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- In 2024, India recorded the **highest number of anti-doping rule violations globally**, according to data released by the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** and the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) of India**. This unexpected outcome placed India above traditionally high-profile sporting nations in terms of the number of athletes and support personnel found to have violated anti-doping regulations. Media coverage and sports administration discussions have focused on the **causes, consequences, and remedial measures**, sparking debate on the state of anti-doping compliance, athlete education, and governance mechanisms in Indian sport.

Overview of the 2024 Doping Data

WADA's annual report for 2024 highlighted that India registered a significantly high tally of **Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs)** across disciplines including athletics, weightlifting, wrestling, and other competitive sports. ADRVs include **positive tests for prohibited substances, evading testing protocols, tampering with samples, and possession or trafficking of banned substances**. India's figures were especially notable for the number of **confirmed positive cases**, which outstripped more prominent sporting nations. The data indicated that violations occurred at various levels of competition – international, national championship events, and even in out-of-competition testing – underscoring both the **reach of testing** and the **prevalence of prohibited substance use or non-compliance** among Indian athletes.

What Constitutes a Doping Violation

Under the **World Anti-Doping Code (WADC)**, doping violations are not limited to simply testing positive for performance-enhancing substances. The definition extends to: **Use or attempted use** of prohibited substances or methods; **Refusing or failing to submit to sample collection**; **Tampering or attempted tampering** with any part of the doping control process; **Possession or trafficking** of prohibited substances or methods; **Administration** of a prohibited substance or method to an athlete; **Complicity** in assisting an athlete's violation. These rules apply to **athletes, athlete support personnel, and officials** bound by anti-doping regulations, whether in competition or in out-of-competition contexts.

Causes Behind High Violation Numbers

A combination of factors contributed to India's leading count of doping violations in 2024:

- **Expanded Testing Coverage:** India significantly increased both in-competition and out-of-competition testing under NADA's supervision. Greater coverage inevitably led to detection of more violations that might previously have gone unnoticed. Enhanced testing includes biological passport monitoring and targeted intelligence-based testing for high-risk sports.
- **Lack of Adequate Education and Awareness:** A recurring explanatory theme was inadequate awareness among athletes and coaches regarding the breadth of the prohibited list, the dangers of contamination, and the strict liability principle under WADA. Many violations stemmed from unintentional ingestion of banned substances via contaminated supplements or lack of knowledge about medication contents, rather than deliberate performance enhancement.
- **Supplement Use and Unregulated Products:** Athletes frequently use nutraceuticals and supplements. In the absence of stringent quality control and certification, many products are contaminated with prohibited substances, exposing athletes to inadvertent positive tests.

- **Training and Support System Gaps:** Uneven access to qualified sports medicine professionals, anti-doping education modules, and nutrition planning support, particularly outside elite sporting circles, has meant many athletes lack the guidance needed to navigate anti-doping compliance effectively.

Consequences of High Doping Violations

India topping the global doping violation chart in 2024 carries several significant implications:

- **Reputational Damage to Indian Sport:** High ADRV numbers undermine India's credibility in international sport and raise questions about systemic adherence to anti-doping norms.
- **Athlete Sanctions:** Individuals found guilty of ADRVs face sanctions including **disqualification from competitions, withdrawal of medals and records, and bans ranging from months to multiple years**, depending on severity, intent, and mitigating factors.
- **Impact on Funding and Qualification:** WADA compliance is crucial for participation in events like the **Olympics and World Championships**. Persistently high violation numbers may invite heightened scrutiny, stricter testing protocols, and, in extreme scenarios, could affect **quota allocations** or funding from international federations.
- **Administrative and Governance Pressures:** National federations and NADA face pressure from athletes, coaches, and policymakers to improve anti-doping infrastructure, education, and deterrence mechanisms.

National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) and Anti-Doping Framework in India

India's anti-doping regime operates under the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)**, established through a **2006 Notification by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**. NADA's mandate aligns with the global anti-doping system and WADA's standards, including:

- **Sample Collection and Testing:** Conducting both in-competition and out-of-competition tests, covering urine and blood samples, and collaborating with WADA-accredited laboratories.
- **Education and Outreach:** Running awareness programs for athletes, coaches, medical personnel, and sport administrators to improve understanding of WADC and risks associated with prohibited substances.
- **Disciplinary Process:** Investigating ADRVs, convening anti-doping panels, and imposing sanctions as per the WADA Code and NADA rules.
- **Intelligence and Risk Assessment:** Targeting testing based on performance trends, sport risk profiles, and analytical data, rather than random sampling alone.

Global Anti-Doping Context and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

The **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)**, established in 1999, oversees implementation of the **World Anti-Doping Code**, which is adopted by most national anti-doping agencies and international sport federations. WADA publishes an annual **Prohibited List** of substances and methods banned in sport. In its global reporting, WADA analyses ADRV data submitted by national agencies, categorises violations by sport and region, and highlights trends. India's position at the top in 2024 does not imply the highest **prevalence of intentional performance enhancement**, but rather the **highest number of reported and confirmed rule violations**, reflecting a complex interplay of detection, awareness, and compliance dynamics.

21 DHRUV64 MICROPROCESSOR

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

- The DHRUV64 microprocessor has gained prominence as part of India's sustained push towards indigenous semiconductor and computing capability, especially in the context of strategic autonomy, secure computing, and digital public infrastructure. Developed under national programmes focused on electronics and IT self-reliance, DHRUV64 represents a significant milestone in India's efforts to design and deploy home-grown processor architectures that reduce dependence on imported, proprietary chip technologies.

What is the DHRUV64 Microprocessor

DHRUV64 is a **64-bit indigenous microprocessor** based on the **open-source RISC-V instruction set architecture (ISA)**. It has been designed and developed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, under initiatives of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**. The processor is part of India's broader **strategic computing roadmap**, which aims to establish domestic capability across the entire value chain of computing systems, from processor design to system integration and deployment. The choice of RISC-V is deliberate, as it is a **royalty-free, open ISA**, allowing India to design processors without licensing constraints imposed by proprietary architectures such as x86 or ARM. This openness enables full design transparency, auditability, and long-term control over upgrades and security features.

Technical Architecture and Design Philosophy

DHRUV64 follows a **64-bit RISC-V architecture**, making it suitable for **modern computing workloads** that require larger address spaces, higher precision arithmetic, and compatibility with contemporary operating systems. The processor is designed to support **standard RISC-V extensions**, including those required for integer operations, memory management, and privileged execution modes. The design philosophy behind DHRUV64 emphasises **security, scalability, and flexibility**. By leveraging an open architecture, developers can inspect and modify the processor design to introduce **custom security features**, reduce attack surfaces, and ensure trustworthiness in sensitive applications. The microprocessor is intended to be compatible with **open-source software ecosystems**, including Linux-based operating systems and indigenous system software stacks.

Intended Applications and Use Cases

DHRUV64 is not positioned primarily as a consumer-grade processor but as a strategic and institutional computing platform. Its intended applications include government systems, defence and security applications, research and development platforms, high-performance embedded systems, and secure computing environments. In the context of national security and critical infrastructure, indigenous processors like DHRUV64 reduce risks associated with supply-chain vulnerabilities, hidden backdoors, and export control restrictions. The processor is therefore relevant for deployment in defence electronics, secure networks, public sector IT systems, and mission-critical installations.

Role in India's Semiconductor and Digital Sovereignty Strategy

The development of DHRUV64 aligns closely with India's emphasis on **digital sovereignty**, which involves retaining control over core digital technologies that underpin governance, defence, and economic systems. Semiconductors are a foundational technology, and dependence on foreign chip architectures has long been viewed as a strategic vulnerability.

22

NATIONAL CONSUMER DAY AND CONSUMER COMMISSIONS IN INDIA

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

National Consumer Day is observed every year on **24 December** in India. The date commemorates the enactment of the **Consumer Protection Act, 1986**, which received Presidential assent on 24 December 1986. The observance serves as a reminder of the legal recognition of consumer rights and the State's responsibility to protect consumers against exploitation in the marketplace.

The day is used to promote **consumer awareness**, encourage **ethical business practices**, and highlight the importance of informed decision-making by consumers. Government departments, consumer organisations, and regulatory bodies organise campaigns, workshops, and outreach programmes focusing on issues such as misleading advertisements, unfair contracts, product safety, digital commerce risks, and grievance redressal mechanisms. Over time, the focus of National Consumer Day has expanded from traditional goods and services to include **e-commerce, digital platforms, financial services, and data-driven consumer markets**, reflecting changes in the Indian economy.

Evolution of Consumer Protection Law in India

India's consumer protection framework has evolved significantly since 1986. The **Consumer Protection Act, 1986** was a landmark legislation that provided consumers with **simple, speedy, and inexpensive redressal** through quasi-judicial bodies. Recognising changes in market structures, technology, and consumption patterns, the law was comprehensively updated through the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which came into force in 2020. The 2019 Act expanded the scope of consumer rights by addressing e-commerce transactions, unfair contracts, product liability, misleading advertisements, and celebrity endorsements. It also strengthened enforcement by establishing a dedicated Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to regulate unfair trade practices and protect consumer interests proactively.

Consumer Commissions in India: Institutional Framework

Consumer dispute resolution in India operates through a **three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism**, designed to ensure accessibility and decentralisation. These bodies are collectively known as **Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions**. At the base of the structure are the **District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions**, which hear cases involving claims up to a specified pecuniary limit. These commissions are intended to provide **local and affordable access to justice**, especially for ordinary consumers who may lack the resources to approach higher courts. Above them are the **State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions**, which hear appeals against district commission orders and also have original jurisdiction over higher-value claims within the State. They play a crucial role in ensuring uniformity and consistency in consumer jurisprudence at the State level. At the apex is the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)**, which hears appeals from State Commissions and exercises original jurisdiction over high-value consumer disputes. The NCDRC also contributes to the development of consumer law through authoritative interpretations of statutory provisions.

23

US OPERATION HAWKEYE STRIKE IN SYRIA

INTERNATIONAL

IN FOCUS

The **United States** conducted **Operation Hawkeye Strike** in Syria as a series of coordinated airstrikes targeting infrastructure and operatives of the **Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)**. The operation attracted international attention due to its timing amid heightened instability in West Asia, continuing concerns over the resurgence of extremist groups, and ongoing debates regarding the legality and strategic effectiveness of foreign military operations on Syrian territory.

Background to US Military Presence in Syria

The United States has maintained a limited military presence in Syria since 2014 as part of the **Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS**, formed in response to ISIS's rapid territorial expansion across Iraq and Syria. Although ISIS lost its territorial "caliphate" by 2019, the group retained **clandestine cells, leadership networks, and logistical infrastructure**, particularly in eastern Syria and desert regions. The US presence has been justified primarily on **counter-terrorism grounds**, focusing on preventing ISIS's regrouping and protecting coalition partners operating in the region. The Syrian conflict's complexity – involving the Syrian government, Russia, Iran-backed militias, Kurdish-led forces, and various armed groups – has made counter-terrorism operations particularly sensitive from a diplomatic and legal standpoint.

Objectives and Nature of Operation Hawkeye Strike

Operation Hawkeye Strike was designed as a **targeted counter-terrorism operation**, rather than a broad military campaign. Its stated objectives included **degrading ISIS's operational capabilities**, disrupting leadership and command structures, and eliminating safe havens used for planning attacks. The strikes reportedly focused on **logistics hubs, weapons storage facilities, and movement corridors** used by ISIS fighters. The operation emphasised **precision airstrikes**, intelligence-driven targeting, and coordination with coalition partners. US officials stated that measures were taken to **minimise civilian casualties**, consistent with the US military's rules of engagement and international humanitarian law obligations.

Strategic Rationale Behind the Operation

From a strategic perspective, Operation Hawkeye Strike reflects the US assessment that ISIS remains a **persistent transnational security threat**, even without territorial control. Intelligence assessments have repeatedly warned that the group seeks to exploit **regional instability, porous borders, and governance vacuums** to regenerate its networks. The operation also serves a **deterrent function**, signalling continued US willingness to conduct kinetic actions against extremist groups in the region. In the broader West Asian context, it underscores Washington's attempt to balance **counter-terrorism priorities** with its stated objective of avoiding large-scale military re-engagement in Syria.

Legal and International Law Dimensions

The legality of US strikes in Syria remains contested. The US justifies such operations under the doctrine of **collective self-defence** and **individual self-defence**, arguing that ISIS poses a continuing threat to US interests and allies, and that the Syrian state is **unable or unwilling** to effectively address the threat in certain areas. However, critics argue that repeated unilateral strikes raise concerns regarding state sovereignty and the UN Charter, particularly Article 2(4), which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity of States without Security Council authorisation or clear self-defence justification. Operation Hawkeye Strike therefore fits into a broader debate on the evolution of international norms around counter-terrorism and cross-border use of force.

24

PMLA, 2002 AND ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

IN FOCUS

A **Delhi Special Court** has **declined to take cognisance** of the prosecution complaint filed by the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** in the alleged **₹2,000-crore National Herald case**. The court's order has brought renewed focus on the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**, particularly on the **threshold requirements for taking cognisance, the quality of evidence needed to establish "proceeds of crime"**, and the **procedural safeguards governing ED investigations and prosecutions**. The development has wider implications for how money-laundering cases are initiated, scrutinised, and sustained in courts.

Genesis and Objectives of the PMLA, 2002

The **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002** was enacted to combat the laundering of proceeds generated from criminal activity and to fulfil India's international obligations under global anti-money-laundering standards, including commitments aligned with the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** framework. The Act seeks to **prevent money laundering, provide for confiscation of property derived from or involved in money laundering, and punish offenders** through a specialised legal and institutional architecture. At its core, the PMLA targets the process by which illicit gains are **projected as untainted money** through concealment, possession, acquisition, or use, or by presenting them as legitimate property. The law is premised on the idea that **financial flows sustain organised crime and corruption**, and that disrupting these flows is essential for effective criminal justice.

Key Legal Architecture of the PMLA

A defining feature of the PMLA is that it is a **derivative offence statute**. Money laundering under the Act is contingent upon the existence of a **predicate or scheduled offence**, listed in the Schedule to the Act. These scheduled offences are drawn from various penal laws, including the Indian Penal Code, anti-corruption laws, narcotics law, and other special statutes. Only when proceeds are generated from a scheduled offence can the offence of money laundering be alleged. The Act empowers authorities to **provisionally attach property** believed to be "proceeds of crime", subject to confirmation by an **Adjudicating Authority**. It also provides for **search, seizure, arrest, and prosecution**, with trials conducted by Special Courts designated under the Act. Importantly, the PMLA reverses the traditional burden of proof to a limited extent by placing an obligation on the accused to explain the legitimacy of the property once certain foundational facts are established by the prosecution.

Role and Powers of the Enforcement Directorate

The Enforcement Directorate is the primary agency responsible for implementing the PMLA. Functioning under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, the ED conducts investigations into suspected money-laundering activities, identifies proceeds of crime, and files prosecution complaints before Special Courts. Under the PMLA, the ED is vested with wide investigative powers, including the authority to summon individuals, compel the production of documents, conduct searches and seizures, provisionally attach property, and arrest persons believed to be guilty of money laundering. Statements recorded by ED officers under the Act have been treated as admissible in evidence, a feature that has distinguished PMLA proceedings from ordinary criminal investigations.

VOICES VICTORIES



SIDDHANT ROHIT

AIR 4, AILET 2026

“I joined Nishant Prakash Law Classes in Class 11, and from that day, every stage of my preparation was guided by Nishant sir. I didn’t just learn how to study—I learned how to stay disciplined, how to believe, and how to keep pushing even when it got overwhelming. I followed exactly what sir told us, gave 150+ mocks, trusted the process, and that belief took me to AIR 4 in AILET. I genuinely don’t think I could have reached here without Nishant sir and NPLC.”



ARSHNOOR SINGH

(AIR 4, CLAT 2026

I started my CLAT journey without any law background in my family, and everything I know about this exam, I learned under the guidance of Nishant Sir at NPLC. What made the biggest difference for me was the personal attention—Sir knew every student, our strengths, our weaknesses, and our exact mistakes after each mock.

After every test, he would look at my OMR and guide me on how to change my strategy instead of following a one-size-fits-all approach. When the CLAT paper surprised everyone, Sir’s constant advice of staying calm and confident helped me push through without panicking. That mindset, combined with consistent practice and guidance, is what helped me secure AIR 4 in CLAT 2026.



DAIWIK AGARWALA

AIR 2, CLAT 2025

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.

“NPLC doesn’t shout excellence; it proves it every result season.”

VOICES VICTORIES



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!



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.

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

VOICES VICTORIES



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. This Question Booklet (QB) contains 120 (One hundred and twenty) Multiple Choice Questions across 36 (Thirty Six) pages including 2 (Two) blank pages for rough work. No additional sheet(s) of paper will be supplied for rough work.
2. You shall enter your Admit Card No. on the first page of the QB at the start of the test.
3. You have to answer ALL questions in the separate carbonised Optical Mark Reader (OMR) Response Sheet supplied along with this QB. You must READ the detailed instructions provided with the OMR Response Sheet on the reverse side of this packet BEFORE you start the test.
4. No clarification can be sought on the QB from anyone. In case of any discrepancy such as printing error or missing pages, in the OB, request the Invigilator to replace the QB and OMR Response Sheet. Do not use the previous OMR Response Sheet with the fresh QB.
5. You should write the QB Number, and the OMR Response Sheet Number, and sign in the space/column provided in the Attendance Sheet.
6. The QB for the Undergraduate Programme is for 120 marks. Every Right Answer secures 1 mark. Every Wrong Answer results in the deduction of 0.25 mark. There shall be no deductions for Unanswered Questions.
7. You may retain the QB and the Candidate's copy of the OMR Response Sheet after the test.
8. The use of any unfair means shall result in your disqualification. Possession of Electronic Devices such as mobile phones, headphones, digital watches etc., is/are strictly prohibited in the test premises. Impersonation or any other unlawful practice will lead to your disqualification and possibly, appropriate action under the law.

SECTION-A: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Passage: In his 2022 book “Grief: A Philosophical Guide”, Michael Cholbi suggests philosophers over the millennia have paid relatively little attention to grief. Part of this may be down to embarrassment: ancient philosophers from Greece and Rome, Cholbi tells us, generally champion reason over emotion. Grief for them is a manifestation of the latter: it’s a malady or weakness to be endured or, even better, reasoned away. Grief should be approached like all other suffering: we should rationally reframe our judgements until the (irrational) suffering is dissolved. “We may weep,” Seneca graciously informs us, “but we must not wail.” The prevailing idea from such traditions is that grief is a personal deficiency to overcome. Once we correct our ignorance about how the universe works, once we see our situation clearly, grief will loosen its grip. Cholbi thinks grief is much more complicated, nuanced, and interesting than this. Grief is not a sickness to be cured; it’s a universal and deeply human process that plays a distinctive role in a life well lived. But how can something as painful and debilitating as grief be valuable? To answer this question, Cholbi thinks we first need to understand grief’s true nature. Once we do so, we’ll see why our propensity for grief is not to be regretted but welcomed. Cholbi begins by distinguishing grief from mourning. Mourning consists of behaviors and rituals that publicly honor the ad, and is not necessarily bound to grief. We can participate in a minute’s silence, we can be saddened by death in a general way, we can feel pity for the deceased or their loved ones at a funeral, without strictly grieving for those who have passed. Grief, meanwhile, is self-concerning, Cholbi tells us. While mourning is public, grief is private and inwardly experienced. A paradigmatic case of grief is that we grieve when someone ‘close’ to us dies. We might typically frame this closeness in terms of love, intimacy, or contribution to our wellbeing: it seems the more we love someone, or the more intimate we are with someone, or the more someone contributes to our wellbeing, the more intense our grief at their passing will be.

Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://philosophybreak.com/articles/michael-cholbi-on-grief-identity-crisis-and-what-we-learn-from-loss/>

Q1. What view of grief do ancient philosophers appear to uphold, according to the passage?

- (a) They acknowledged grief as a natural emotion that enhances one’s moral understanding and spiritual development.
- (b) They regarded grief as an ethical necessity through which the mind acquires compassion and emotional balance.
- (c) They viewed grief as an emotional disorder that should be subdued through rational correction and disciplined thought.
- (d) They interpreted grief as a cultural expression of mortality that deepens awareness of human transience.

Q2. What central distinction does Cholbi make between grief and mourning in the passage?

- (a) Mourning is a socially observable act honoring the deceased, while grief is an inward experience of personal emotional significance.
- (b) Mourning and grief refer interchangeably to the same psychological process of adapting to the absence of a loved one.

(c) Mourning reflects private anguish over loss, whereas grief represents outward respect performed through formal ritual practice.

(d) Mourning and grief both indicate identical expressions of affection that differ only in intensity rather than in nature.

Q3. In the sentence “We may weep, but we must not wail,” what does Seneca most likely mean?

- (a) Sorrow should be hidden completely to demonstrate inner strength.
- (b) Emotional expression should be balanced with rational composure.
- (c) Emotional restraint is unnecessary because grief purifies the soul.
- (d) Mourning rituals must replace personal displays of emotion.

4. How does Cholbi reinterpret grief in contrast to earlier philosophical traditions?

- (a) He reframes grief as an essential emotional process that embodies human connection and contributes to a fulfilling moral life.
- (b) He considers grief a distorted reaction to loss that must be resolved through cultural and ceremonial practices of mourning.
- (c) He defines grief as an emotional disorder whose harmful impact should be mitigated by rational understanding of mortality.
- (d) He explains grief as a social mechanism through which individuals conform to collective expectations of sympathy and loss.

Q5. Which single word most suitably replaces the phrase “a malady or weakness to be endured”?

- (a) Catharsis
- (b) Obsession
- (c) Reflection
- (d) Deficiency

What conclusion about human attachment can be drawn from Cholbi’s final description of grief?

- (a) The intensity of grief reflects the magnitude of personal connection and underscores how emotional bonds define human life.
- (b) The persistence of grief indicates humanity’s inability to rationally accept the inevitability of death and separation.
- (c) The recurrence of grief in all societies proves that emotion always triumphs over reason in human decision-making.
- (d) The depth of grief shows that cultural rituals can completely heal the psychological effects of bereavement.

Passage:- 2 By eight o'clock the light was failing. The loud speakers in the tower of the Stoke Poges Club House began, in a more than human tenor, to announce the closing of the courses. Lenina and Henry abandoned their game and walked back towards the Club. From the grounds of the Internal and External Secretion Trust came the lowering of those thousands of cattle which provided, with their hormones and their milk, the raw materials for the great factory at Farnham Royal. An incessant buzzing of helicopters filled the twilight. Every two and a half minutes a bell and the screech of whistles announced the departure of one of the light monorail trains which carried the lower caste golfers back from their separate course to the metropolis.

Lenina and Henry climbed into their machine and started off. At eight hundred feet Henry slowed down the helicopter screws, and they hung for a minute or two poised above the fading landscape. The forest of Burnham Beeches stretched like a great pool of darkness towards the bright shore of the western sky. Crimson at the horizon, the last of the sunset faded, through orange, upwards into yellow and a pale watery green. Northwards, beyond and above the trees, the Internal and External Secretions factory glared with a fierce electric brilliance from every window of its twenty stories. Beneath them lay the buildings of the Golf Club—the huge Lower Caste barracks and, on the other side of a dividing wall, the smaller houses reserved for Alpha and Beta members. The approaches to the monorail station were black with the ant-like pullulation of lower-caste activity. From under the glass vault a lighted train shot out into the open. Following its southeasterly course across the dark plain their eyes were drawn to the majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium. For the safety of night-flying planes, its four tall chimneys were flood-lighted and tipped with crimson danger signals. It was a landmark.

Extracted with edits and revisions from: Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Q7. The author most likely presents the closing of the golf courses and the loudspeaker announcements to:

- (a) suggest that technological progress has improved leisure by combining order and satisfaction within everyday modern living.

(b) emphasize that human recreation operates under the same automated precision and rational control as industrial production.

(c) indicate that mechanical organization has allowed individuals to experience collective joy through regulated social activity.

(d) portray that the efficiency of communication systems ensures discipline while preserving emotional spontaneity among citizens.

Q8. Which statement best captures the central impression created by the description of the twilight landscape?

- (a) The shifting colors and gentle darkness represent a peaceful coexistence between human invention and the natural environment.
- (b) The evening imagery and industrial glare convey humanity's successful blending of aesthetic delight with technological comfort.
- (c) The serene transformation of the horizon symbolizes the unity of social order and natural calm within a stable modern world.
- (d) The fading sunset and the growing artificial light reveal how technology replaces nature's beauty with mechanical illumination.

Q9. The word "pullulation" in the phrase "the ant-like pullulation of lower-caste activity" most nearly means:

- (a) a ceaseless swarming of identical beings whose movements suggest mechanized uniformity within social hierarchy.
- (b) a restless disorderly gathering of confused workers lacking direction and organization in their collective behavior.
- (c) a deliberate and rhythmic procession of individuals demonstrating ceremonial respect toward their governing authorities.
- (d) a symbolic convergence of groups performing synchronized rituals designed to express unity and disciplined devotion.

Q10. According to the description, what does the illumination of the Internal and External Secretions factory most clearly reveal about this society?

- (a) It illustrates that technological efficiency ensures continuous productivity and prosperity across social institutions.

(b) It indicates that architectural brilliance stands as a celebration of creative progress within industrial civilization.

(c) It demonstrates that artificial energy has displaced natural light as the dominant and defining source of human existence.

(d) It suggests that mechanized development preserves humanity's connection to natural beauty through urban innovation.

Q11. The author would most likely disagree with which of the following interpretations of the society depicted?

- (a) That technological regulation has humanized work and leisure by creating equality and balance among all social groups.
- (b) That mechanical discipline governs every form of collective activity, including recreation and transportation systems.
- (c) That social stratification remains visibly entrenched through physical divisions separating the different castes.
- (d) That industrial machinery dominates the landscape both visually and psychologically, shaping the lives of its citizens.

Q12. In the final description, the word "landmark" most nearly conveys the idea of:

- (a) an ancient architectural monument preserved for heritage and representing humanity's long-standing cultural achievements.
- (b) a tall industrial structure providing guidance to aircraft and symbolizing the dominance of modern technology.
- (c) a solemn religious edifice recalling mortality and urging individuals toward faith and spiritual reflection.
- (d) an ornate civic structure admired for design and symbolizing public pride in urban architectural progress.

Passage:- 3 The scientists were inspired by natural fungi that emit a pleasant chemical known as longifolene, which they discovered could attract mosquitoes. Building on that idea, they created a fungus that acts like a lethal perfume for the pests, offering a promising tool against malaria, dengue, and other deadly diseases that are becoming increasingly resistant to chemical pesticides. Their findings were published in Nature Microbiology on October 24, 2025.

Mosquitoes need flowers because they provide nectar, a crucial source of food for them, and they are drawn to flowers through their scents. After observing that some types of fungi could trick mosquitoes into thinking they were flowers, we realized we could turbo-charge the attraction by engineering fungi to produce more

longifolene, a sweet-smelling compound that's already very common in nature. Before this study, longifolene wasn't known to attract mosquitoes. We're letting nature give us a hint to tell us what works against mosquitoes. The floral-scented fungus provides an easy and accessible method for controlling mosquito populations. The spores can simply be placed in containers indoors or outdoors, where they gradually release longifolene over several months. When mosquitoes come into contact with the fungus, they become infected and die within a few days. In laboratory tests, the fungus wiped out 90 to 100% of mosquitoes, even in environments filled with competing scents from people and real flowers. Despite its potency, the fungus is completely harmless to humans. The fungus is completely harmless to humans as longifolene is already commonly used in perfumes and has a long safety record. This makes it much safer than many chemical pesticides. We've also designed the fungus and its containers to target mosquitoes specifically rather than any other insects and longifolene breaks down naturally in the environment. In addition, unlike chemical alternatives that mosquitoes have gradually become resistant to, this biological approach may be nearly impossible for mosquitoes to outsmart or avoid.

Extracted with edits and revisions from:
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/10/251026021737.htm>

Q13. According to the passage, the scientists' primary motivation behind engineering the fungus was to:

- (a) design a biologically inspired solution that eradicates mosquitoes while remaining safe for humans and the environment.
- (b) identify a faster chemical pesticide that can instantly eliminate mosquito populations through synthetic compounds.
- (c) create a genetically modified organism capable of producing multiple insecticidal agents for commercial exploitation.
- (d) replace traditional ecological methods with laboratory-based chemical interventions for quicker pest management.

Q14. The fungus attracts mosquitoes effectively because it:

- (a) generates high-frequency vibrations that mimic the buzzing of flowers and disorient mosquito behavior.
- (b) emits synthetic pheromones that suppress mosquito reproduction and weaken their immune systems.
- (c) releases floral chemicals that resemble natural scents, deceiving mosquitoes even amid competing odors.
- (d) produces invisible gases that chemically neutralize the scent of real flowers and human perspiration.

Q15. The antonym of the word "harmless," as used in the passage, is:

- (a) fragile
- (b) subtle
- (c) delicate
- (d) toxic

Q16. Which of the following statements best reflects the scientists' guiding belief in developing the fungus?

- (a) Natural processes can reveal sustainable strategies for pest control when scientifically strengthened and responsibly applied.
- (b) Complete reliance on industrial chemical synthesis ensures long-term effectiveness in mosquito eradication efforts.
- (c) Environmental manipulation is necessary to overpower biological systems that naturally favor insect adaptation.
- (d) Evolutionary mechanisms are inadequate for addressing human health challenges and must be scientifically replaced.

Q17. Based on the passage, which analytical inference is most consistent with the researchers' findings?

- (a) The compound longifolene could soon lose potency once exposed to urban environments and air pollutants.
- (b) The fungus may remain effective because mosquitoes are unlikely to evolve resistance to its biological mechanism.
- (c) The fungus might inadvertently affect pollinators such as bees due to its high olfactory resemblance to flowers.
- (d) The biological design could endanger humans through airborne fungal spores over extended exposure periods.

Q18. Which single word best captures the nature of the chemical in the phrase "a pleasant chemical known as longifolene"?

- (a) poison
- (b) contaminant
- (c) fragrance
- (d) irritant

Passage:- 4 It's easy for us to think of the natural world (without human intervention) as unambiguously positive: to imagine that wild animals live harmoniously with one another in a natural 'balance.' But advocates for wild animal welfare argue that this attitude ignores the huge amounts of suffering present in nature. Moreover, the large, healthy, adult vertebrates we usually picture are a very small proportion of the overall wild animal population – almost all wild animals are actually juvenile invertebrates.

This means that the actual day-to-day lives of wild animals are pretty different to how we'd expect. Animal lives are mostly quite short – in some species, only one in millions of juveniles survive to adulthood – and are filled with disease, parasitism, hunger, thirst, fear of predators, and suffering from heat or cold. Wild animals often die in very drawn-out, painful ways, and most die at a fraction of their possible lifespan. We can't know for sure what it's like to be a wild animal, but we can observe that many or even most wild animals live in conditions that would be considered extremely cruel to inflict on a human, or a domesticated animal. Very little effort goes towards trying to reduce the suffering of wild animals, even within the broader field of animal welfare. There might be good reasons for this, as we'll discuss below, but at present the field is extremely neglected. Yes, it is. But something being natural doesn't necessarily mean it's good; for example, smallpox was natural, but it was good to eradicate it. Working on wild animal welfare challenges this common mistake of equating the natural with the good. And this might even be itself a reason to work on it: maybe wild animal advocacy helps us make moral progress by expanding our moral circle, and potentially even setting a precedent for work on digital sentience, which may become a pressing issue in the future. Wild animal welfare seems much less tractable than, for example, farmed animal welfare, where we've seen lots of wins recently and where humans are the unambiguous cause of the suffering. In the comparatively much newer and smaller field of wild animal welfare, it's much less clear what exactly we should do.

Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://80000hours.org/problem-profiles/wild-animal-welfare/>

Q19. Which of the following statements are true according to the passage about human assumptions regarding nature?

Statement I: People often perceive nature as peaceful and balanced, ignoring the pain it contains.

Statement II: Wild-animal welfare advocates highlight the vast and mostly unnoticed suffering among non-human creatures.

Statement III: Most animals in the wild live long, healthy lives without fear, hunger, or disease.

- (a) Statement I and II
- (b) Statement II and III
- (c) Statement I and III
- (d) All three statements

Q20. In the phrase “only one in millions of juveniles survive to adulthood,” the word “juveniles” most nearly means:

- (a) smaller species of invertebrates that naturally remain weak throughout their short lifespan.
- (b) animals that temporarily migrate before completing their natural growth cycle in the wild.
- (c) immature individuals that have not yet reached full development or reproductive maturity.
- (d) creatures invisible to humans due to their microscopic size and brief existence in ecosystems.

21. Which of the following statements best expresses the author's viewpoint about the relationship between nature and morality?

- (a) Humans often glorify nature as pure and harmonious, overlooking the extensive suffering that exists within it.
- (b) The cruelty of the natural world has been exaggerated by modern animal-rights groups to provoke emotional responses.
- (c) Nature functions through perfect equilibrium, ensuring that every creature ultimately experiences fairness and peace.
- (d) Human understanding of nature's morality has already advanced beyond the need for further ethical discussion.

Q22. The author's writing style throughout the passage can best be described as:

- (a) emotional and poetic, expressing sorrow through imaginative portrayals of animal suffering.
- (b) analytical and morally reflective, combining factual observation with philosophical reasoning.
- (c) persuasive and confrontational, demanding immediate reform through rhetorical exaggeration.
- (d) ironic and humorous, mocking human ignorance about the brutality of wildlife existence.

SECTION - B : CURRENT AFFAIRS INCLUDING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Passage:- 1 Global innovation systems are undergoing a shift: while cutting-edge technologies in AI and quantum computing are advancing rapidly, R&D growth has slowed down. Union Home Minister Amit Shah India's ranking on the Global Innovation Index has gone up from 91 in the last decade, and expressed that it would secure a position among the top 10 in the next three years. The Startup India campaign launched under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has started showing results as India now has the third largest startup ecosystem globally, and has made the country's youth job creators from job seekers. This indicates the potential that our people have.

The Startup India scheme is the Indian government's flagship initiative launched in 2016 to promote innovation and create a robust startup ecosystem, transforming India from a job-seeking to a job-creating nation. According to Mr. Shah in 2014, we just had 500 startups. Today, we have 1.92 lakh startups registered with DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade). In 2014, we had four unicorns and now we have 120 such establishments whose combined market value is over \$350 million. The startup ecosystem has employed 17.90 lakh people. On an average, 17,000 startups have been set up annually. The Startup India campaign has made our youth job creators from job seekers. Under the Prime Minister's leadership, financial, infrastructure, policy and banking support has been made available to startups across the country since 2014. A fund of funds of ₹10,000 crore has been created to help startups. To promote startups, the maximum loan limit has been increased from ₹10 crore to ₹20 crore, and various tax concessions have also been given.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.thehindu.com/business/india-will-be-among-top-10-countries-on-global-innovation-index-in-next-3-years-amit-shah/article70084509.ece#:~:text=Union%20Home%20Minister%20Amit%20Shah%20on%20Tuesday%20%28September,the%20top%2010%20in%20the%20next%20three%20years>]

Q25. Which of the following regions leads as the most innovative, with 15 countries in the global top 25, including six in the top 10, according to the Global Innovation Index 2025?
(a) Europe (b) Asia (c) North America (d) Latin America

Q26. Consider the following statements about India's performance in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025:
I. India ranks 38th globally in the Global Innovation Index 2025.
II. India ranks 1st among lower-middle-income economies.
III. India ranks 2nd in the Central and Southern Asia region.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a) Only I and II (b) Only II and III
(c) Only I and III (d) Only I, II, and III

Q27. Which of the following organisations publishes the Global Innovation Index 2025, ranking countries based on their innovation performance?
(a) World Economic Forum (WEF)
(b) World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)
(c) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
(d) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Q28. Which of the following editions does the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025 represent, published in collaboration with the Portulans Institute?
(a) 15th edition (b) 18th edition
(c) 20th edition (d) 17th edition

Q29. Which of the following statements about Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania (SEAO) according to the Global Innovation Index 2025, is correct?
(a) SEAO economies have shown a decline in innovation performance, with only two economies in the top 25.
(b) SEAO economies have maintained the same innovation ranking as in previous years, with no major improvement.
(c) SEAO economies have fallen behind Europe and North America in innovation growth, with fewer countries in the top 25.
(d) SEAO continues to emerge as a global innovation hub, with six economies ranked among the world's top 25 innovators.

Q30. How many indicators are used by the Global Innovation Index (GII) to evaluate the innovative performance of world economies?
(a) 78 indicators (b) 50 indicators
(c) 100 indicators (d) 60 indicators

Passage: - 2 The second phase of the Khilafat Movement (August 1920–March 1922) was the phase of coercion and carnage. The Non-cooperation movement provided the coercion part while the violence that accompanied and followed it constituted the carnage. A common misconception is that the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements played out in that order or were launched simultaneously, and that the former was launched to secure freedom.

Ambedkar writes, “... the connection between the Khilafat agitation and the Non-cooperation Movement has become obscure by the reason of the fact that most people believed that it was the Congress which initiated the Non-cooperation Movement and it was done as a means for winning Swaraj. That such a view should prevail is quite understandable because most people content themselves with noting the connection between the Non-cooperation Movement and the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta on 7th and 8th September 1920. But anyone, who cares to go behind September 1920 and examines the situation as it then stood, will find that this view is not true.

The truth is that the Non-co-operation has its origin in the Khilafat agitation and not in the Congress movement for Swaraj: that it was started by the Khilafatists to help Turkey and adopted by the Congress only to help the Khilafatists: that Swaraj was not its primary object, but its primary object was Khilafat and that Swaraj was added as a secondary object, to induce the Hindus to join it will be evident from the following facts.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.news18.com/news/opinion/opinion-khilafat-movement-and-non-cooperation-2714151.html>]

Q31. Which of the following items became a national symbol of the Swadeshi spirit and was widely used in Indian households during the Non-Cooperation Movement?

- (a) Khadi cloth (b) Wooden plough
(c) Charkha (d) Salt

Q32. Which of the following statements about the Ottoman Empire according to historical developments following World War I is correct?

- (a) The Ottoman Empire was dismembered after the War, Turkey was divided, and the Khalifa lost his position of authority.
(b) The Ottoman Empire expanded its borders after the War, Turkey was unified, and the Khalifa gained complete authority.
(c) The Ottoman Empire remained unchanged after the War, Turkey retained unity, and the Khalifa continued his authority.
(d) The Ottoman Empire strengthened its rule after the War, Turkey was reorganized, and the Khalifa restored full authority.

Q33. In which of the following places did a violent clash in February 1922 result in the death of twenty-two policemen, leading Mahatma Gandhi to suspend the Non-Cooperation Movement?

- (a) Kakori (b) Chauri Chaura
(c) Dandi (d) Jallianwala Bagh

Q34. Which of the following is NOT among the leaders who joined the Non-Cooperation Movement?

- (a) C. Rajagopalachari (b) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
(c) Jawaharlal Nehru (d) Mohammad Ali Jinnah

Q35. Consider the following statements regarding the Khilafat Movement and the formation of the All India Khilafat Committee:

- I. The Khilafat Movement was started by the Ali brothers, Shoukat Ali and Mohammad Ali, against the British government.
II. The All India Khilafat Committee was established in early 1919 under the leadership of the Ali brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ajmal Khan, and Hasrat Mohani.
III. The Khilafat Movement was primarily launched in 1922 after the Non-Cooperation Movement had ended.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only I and III (b) Only II and III
(c) Only I and II (d) All I, II, and III

Passage:- 3 Retailing for as little as \$10, India's beloved Kolhapuri sandals are a staple in wardrobes across the sub-continent. So when luxury brand Prada SpA debuted a new type of footwear at Milan Fashion Week that bore a stark resemblance to them, it didn't take long for the fury to build online. The saga underscores how much power the South Asian giant's digital tribe holds, where online outrage regularly influences public debate especially when citizens perceive their heritage is under attack. International firms eyeing one of the world's fastest-growing markets should weigh the risks of these cultural missteps. The Italian fashion house's troubles began when it introduced its menswear collection. The sandals, described as "leather footwear," displayed an open-toe braided pattern that was strikingly similar to Kolhapuri sandals.

Historically, the sandals were produced for specific communities. For farmers who worked in the fields, they were robust and able to withstand wear-and-tear; for the courtier class and nobles they were more delicate and ostentatious. In 2019, the footwear was awarded the Geographical Indication status, viewed as a mark of authenticity.

But Prada didn't credit India for the designs, prompting a brutal social media backlash. The nationalistic sentiment whipped up by this controversy boosted sales of the traditional sandals. The country's online community is renowned for its digital ferocity – it accused the brand of cultural appropriation, and the furor forced the fashion house into damage control mode. It issued a statement saying it recognized the sandals were inspired by traditional Indian footwear.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fashion/-/cosmetics/-/jewellery/prada-kolhapuri-sandals-scandal-proves-the-power-of-indias-troll-army/articleshow/122871162.cms?from=mdr>]

Q36. Which of the following international organizations is primarily involved in developing frameworks to safeguard traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and geographical indications?

- (a) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- (b) World Trade Organization (WTO)
- (c) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- (d) World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Q37. What is the approximate price at which Prada is reportedly planning to sell its version of the product that sparked criticism over price disparity?

- (a) Rs 1.5 lakh
- (b) Rs 1.2 lakh
- (c) Rs 2.5 lakh
- (d) Rs 3.2 lakh

Q38. Consider the following statements regarding the Geographical Indication (GI) tag granted to Kolhapuri chappals:

- I. Kolhapuri chappals were granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2019.
- II. The GI tag was conferred under India's Handicrafts Recognition Act of 2005.
- III. The GI tag was granted under India's Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only I and II
- (b) Only II and III
- (c) Only I and III
- (d) AI, II, II and III

Q39. Which of the following statements about a Geographical Indication (GI) tag according to global intellectual property frameworks is correct?

- (a) A GI tag promotes exports by certifying industrial products made through modern innovation and production systems.
- (b) A GI tag protects region-specific products based on unique geographical, material, and traditional qualities of their origin.
- (c) A GI tag regulates trade tariffs for handicraft and agricultural goods across all participating nations of the world.
- (d) A GI tag establishes international standards for the certification of industrial and commercial export products.

Q40. Which of the following states are traditionally known for the handcrafted production of Kolhapuri chappals?

- (a) Maharashtra and Karnataka
- (b) Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- (c) Punjab and Himachal Pradesh
- (d) Assam and West Bengal

Passage:- 4 India accepted France's invitation to co-chair the AI Action Summit on February in Paris. In addition to AI safety, the agenda at Paris is to focus on innovation, public interest AI, future of work, and AI governance issues presenting India an opportunity to continue its global engagement on AI safety and also amplify the voice of the Global South on broader AI issues. Doing this well could also strongly position India to host the next such summit, which brings together decision makers on AI policy, industry at the forefront of AI development, and civil society representatives for an inclusive dialogue on AI. With ministerial and high-level bureaucratic representation through the meetings, India has actively engaged in the global discourse on AI safety. As a next step, India's IT Minister recently announced plans of setting up an AI Safety Institute. In other multilateral fora with leadership roles, India has championed the cause for the Global South, which has not leveraged the transformative potential of AI as much as more developed parts of the world have. Under India's presidency in 2023, the G20 endorsed a "pro-innovation regulatory/governance approach" to balance AI innovation and the need to develop guardrails for AI. Soon after, the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) meeting hosted by India in December 2023 emphasised the need for "equitable access to critical resources for AI research and innovation" to underscore the need for enabling AI infrastructure for developing AI applications. India's vision for the Global South could now benefit from the broad agenda of the Paris meeting. India must advocate for democratising access to AI resources across the entire AI value chain. While India's domestic initiative of establishing a common computing facility with over 18,600 GPUs and 40% government subsidy sets a compelling example, the scope must expand beyond computing hardware.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/indias-opportunity-at-the-ai-action-summit/article69199145.ece>]

Q41. Consider the following statements about the Paris AI Action Summit and earlier global AI safety meetings:

- I. The Paris AI Action Summit builds upon the AI Safety Summit held in the United Kingdom in 2023 and the follow-up meeting in Seoul, South Korea.
- II. The U.K. Summit focused on the debate over the 'doomsday' concerns associated with artificial intelligence.
- III. The U.K. Summit resulted in the signing of the Bletchley Declaration on AI Safety by all 29 participating nations, including the United States, China, and India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only I and II
- (b) Only II and III
- (c) Only I and III
- (d) All I, II and III

Q42. Which of the following joint military exercises was recently conducted between the Indian and French Armies in France, focusing on sub-conventional and modern warfare drills?

- (a) Mitra Shakti-VIII
- (b) Garuda Shakti-VIII
- (c) Shakti-VIII
- (d) Varuna-VIII

Q43. How many countries signed the joint statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet at the AI Action Summit in Paris?

- (a) 48 countries
- (b) 58 countries
- (c) 68 countries
- (d) 78 countries

Q44. Which of the following statements about global AI safety commitments according to the Seoul AI Summit, is correct?

- (a) Sixteen leading AI companies made voluntary pledges to develop AI systems in a transparent and responsible manner at the Seoul Summit.
- (b) Twelve global AI corporations announced a joint moratorium on frontier model research until international safety laws were implemented.
- (c) Eighteen multinational technology firms established a formal alliance to regulate AI-generated data through coordinated international frameworks.
- (d) Twenty-five major AI organizations from key economies signed a multilateral treaty to oversee and restrict the use of high-risk AI applications.

45. Which of the following companies has announced an investment of \$15 billion over five years to establish an artificial intelligence (AI) data centre in Andhra Pradesh, marking its largest investment in India to date?

- (a) Google
- (b) Microsoft
- (c) Amazon Web Services
- (d) Meta

46. Which of the following Bengaluru-based companies has partnered with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to enhance Aadhaar services using generative AI technologies?

- (a) Mindtree
- (b) LTIMindtree
- (c) Sarvam AI
- (d) Zoho Corporation

Passage:- 5 Hailing inclusion of manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra as a proud moment for every Indian across the world, as stated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Gita and Natyashastra have nurtured civilisation, and consciousness for centuries. Their insights continue to inspire the world. Memory of the World (MoW) Programme has the aim of guarding against the collective amnesia, calling upon the preservation of the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world, and ensuring their wide dissemination. The programme website states the world's documentary heritage belongs to all, [it] should be fully preserved and protected for all and, with due recognition of cultural mores and practicalities, should be permanently accessible to all without hindrance.

Collections are added to the register by a decision of the UNESCO's Executive Board, following the evaluation of nominations by an independent international advisory committee.

Documentary heritage is an essential yet fragile element of the memory of the world. This is why UNESCO invests in safeguarding, such as the libraries of Chinguetti in Mauritania or the archives of Amadou Hampate Ba in Cote d'Ivoire, shares best practices, and maintains this register that records the broadest threads of human history. With the latest additions, the Register now contains entries include Books or collections of works (eg. Mahavamsa, the meticulously kept historical chronicle of Sri Lanka); Drawings (eg. Meiji-era collection of Sakubei Yamamoto of Japan); Manuscripts (eg. collection of more than 11,000 Shaiva Siddhanta manuscripts); Audio recordings (eg. 430 hours of recordings of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, 1963-65); and Video recordings (eg. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7, 1971 speech).

[Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-culture/bhagavad-gita-natyashastra-unesco-memory-of-world-register-9951786/>]

Q47. Consider the following statements about UNESCO's Memory of the World (MoW) Programme:

- I. The Memory of the World Programme was launched by UNESCO in 1990 to preserve and promote the world's documentary heritage.
- II. UNESCO has supported the creation of four regional registers under the programme.
- III. The programme currently operates in more than 100 countries through National "Memory of the World" Committees.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only I and II
- (b) Only II and III
- (c) Only I and III
- (d) All I, II, and III

48. How many inscriptions from India are currently included in the Memory of the World Register?

- (a) 10 inscriptions
- (b) 14 inscriptions
- (c) 18 inscriptions
- (d) 20 inscriptions

Q49. What is the maximum number of submissions from a single country that can be added to the Memory of the World Register in any given year?

- (a) One submission
- (b) Three submissions
- (c) Four submissions
- (d) Two submissions

Q50. Which of the following statements according to UNESCO's latest update on the Memory of the World Register is correct?

- a) UNESCO removed 74 heritage collections, bringing the total number of entries down to 470 worldwide.
- (b) UNESCO added 50 heritage collections, bringing the total number of entries recorded to 520 worldwide.
- (c) UNESCO added 74 heritage collections, bringing the total number of entries recorded to 570 worldwide.
- (d) UNESCO revised 100 heritage collections, bringing the total number of entries registered to 600 worldwide.

51. Which institution currently houses and preserves the ancient manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra that were recently added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register?

- (a) Asiatic Society of Mumbai
- (b) Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune
- (c) Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur
- (d) National Manuscripts Repository, New Delhi

52. Which of the following sages is traditionally credited with composing the Natyashastra, the ancient Sanskrit treatise on performing arts?

- (a) Sage Bharata
- (b) Sage Panini
- (c) Sage Valmiki
- (d) Sage Vishwamitra

SECTION C: - LEGAL REASONING

Passage:- 1 A contract of guarantee (Section 126, Indian Contract Act, 1872) is a promise to perform the promise or discharge the liability of a third person in case of his default; the parties are the creditor, the principal debtor, and the surety. In effect, the principal debtor bears primary liability, and the surety bears secondary, stepping in only on the debtor's default. This differs from indemnity, where the promisor's liability is primary and the arrangement is typically bipartite. Essentials include agreement among all three parties; the existence of a lawful, enforceable debt; consideration (any benefit to the principal debtor suffices); capacity and free consent; disclosure of material facts affecting the surety's risk (Section 143) and absence of misrepresentation (Section 142); and that a guarantee may be oral or written.

The surety's liability is, by default, coextensive with that of the principal debtor (Section 128), unless the contract limits it; thus, absent a contrary term, the surety answers for principal, interest, and costs to the same extent as the debtor. A continuing guarantee (Section 129) extends to a series of transactions and endures until revoked for the future: by notice (Section 130), by the surety's death as to future dealings (Section 131), or by variance in the underlying contract without the surety's consent (Section 133), which discharges the surety for subsequent transactions. Duration tracks the contract itself: a specific guarantee ends with the single transaction; a continuing one lasts through the covered series or until valid revocation. The surety's rights include, against the principal debtor: subrogation to the creditor's position upon payment (Section 140), indemnity (the debtor must reimburse what the surety rightfully paid), and recourse to every remedy and security the creditor had (Section 141). Against the creditor, the surety is entitled to the benefit of all securities existing when suretyship was undertaken, whether known or unknown; loss or release of such securities without the surety's consent discharges the surety pro tanto (Section 141).

Co-suretyship is recognised; discharge of one does not discharge others (Section 138); absent agreement, co-sureties contribute equally (Sections 146-147), and if bound in different sums, they contribute up to their respective limits. Discharge may occur by creditor-debtor release (Section 134), composition/time/not to sue agreements (Section 135) unless the surety assents, mere forbearance being insufficient to discharge (Section 137), or acts of the creditor impairing the surety's eventual remedy (Section 139). Section 144 recognises conditions precedent to suretyship (e.g., joining of co-sureties): if unmet, the guarantee is inoperative. Overall, the law favours strict construction in the surety's favour while preserving commercial certainty for creditors.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://thelegalschool.in/blog/rights-of-principal-debtor-in-contract-of-guarantee>

Q53. Rajat obtained a ₹40 lakh working-capital loan from Zenith Bank. His friend Meera signed as surety, with no cap stated in the guarantee. Rajat defaulted, and the Bank sued for principal, contractual interest, and litigation costs. Meera accepts liability for principal but denies responsibility for interest and costs, arguing her promise was merely to "help Rajat in case of default" and should be read narrowly. The Bank points to the absence of any limiting term and seeks a decree against Meera for the full decretal amount alongside Rajat. How should the court resolve Meera's scope of liability under the guarantee?

(a) Meera is liable only for the principal sum because a surety's promise is secondary in nature and must be

strictly construed against expansive monetary claims.

(b) Meera is liable coextensively with the principal debtor for principal, interest, and costs because no contractual cap narrows Section 128's default rule in this guarantee.

(c) Meera is liable only for interest and costs since those arise from default; the principal remains the primary debtor's exclusive burden unless the surety separately covenantes.

(d) Meera is not liable at all because the Bank should first exhaust every remedy against Rajat before proceeding against a secondary promisor like a gratuitous surety.

54. Nova Distributors obtained a revolving credit line guaranteed by Anil as a “continuing guarantee” for supplies on 30-day terms with a ₹25 lakh cap. Six months later, the creditor, without informing Anil, enlarged Nova’s credit limit to ₹50 lakh and shifted payment terms to 90 days. Nova then defaulted on later consignments. The creditor sues Anil for all dues under the enlarged arrangement. Anil contends his guarantee stands discharged for subsequent transactions because the underlying terms were varied without his consent. Should the creditor recover from Anil for the enlarged, later supplies?

- (a) Yes, because a continuing guarantee automatically adapts to commercial changes, and the surety’s silence signifies implied consent to reasonable credit variations in trade.
- (b) Yes, because the surety is always liable for all future transactions until a written revocation, regardless of unilateral changes made by the creditor and debtor.
- (c) No, because any default even on earlier supplies discharges the entire guarantee, releasing the surety from all past and future liabilities instantly.
- (d) No, because variance in the underlying contract without the surety’s consent discharges the surety for subsequent transactions under a continuing guarantee.

55. Apex Finance held a hypothecation over Arko Ltd.’s finished goods when Pooja signed as surety. Later, through Apex’s negligence, the warehouse pledge lapsed and stock was released to Arko without substitution. Arko defaulted, and Apex turned to Pooja for the entire balance. Pooja argues that losing the security without her consent prejudiced her eventual remedy and should discharge her at least to the value of the released stock. Apex responds that the surety’s promise is independent of collateral administration.

What is the correct position?

- (a) Pooja is discharged pro tanto because the surety is entitled to the benefit existing at the time of suretyship, and their loss without consent reduces her liability.
- (b) Pooja remains fully liable since the creditor’s collateral management is irrelevant; the surety undertook personal liability unaffected by any release of security.
- (c) Pooja is entirely discharged because any creditor lapse annihilates the guarantee, leaving no residual claim against the surety whatsoever in law.
- (d) Pooja’s liability increases to cover collateral loss because the surety must bear commercial risks that motivated the creditor to extend facilities initially.

56. Bank Orion chose not to sue its defaulting borrower for six months while negotiating restructure terms. No binding agreement was executed; the Bank simply

waited and kept sending reminders. The surety, Rakesh, claims he is discharged because the Bank “gave time” to the debtor. The Bank answers that it merely forbore to sue and never entered a composition or time contract. When sued, Rakesh presses that any delay prejudices him and should release his promise.

How should the court treat this defence?

- (a) Rakesh is discharged because any delay in suing is equivalent to giving time to the debtor and destroys the surety’s secondary obligations in law.
- (b) Rakesh is discharged because negotiations for restructure always imply a binding promise to grant time, making the surety’s liability extinguish automatically.
- (c) Rakesh is not discharged by mere forbearance; only a composition, binding time contract, or not-to-sue agreement without surety’s assent would trigger discharge.
- (d) Rakesh is discharged unless the Bank first liquidates collateral; otherwise, waiting to sue alone unlawfully enlarges the surety’s business risk and terminates the guarantee.

57. CreditCo solicited Leena to guarantee her cousin’s loan, assuring her the cousin had “no prior defaults.” In fact, the creditor’s internal report showed multiple bounced EMIs and a pending demand notice, never disclosed. Relying on the assurance, Leena signed. After default, CreditCo sues Leena; she pleads that the guarantee is avoided due to material misrepresentation and non-disclosure affecting her risk. CreditCo contends that guarantees are commercial instruments and caveat emptor applies to sureties.

How should the court decide?

- (a) Enforce the guarantee because a surety must independently investigate; creditor statements are only sales talk and cannot invalidate a commercial promise.
- (b) Enforce the guarantee unless Leena proves fraud beyond reasonable doubt; civil misstatements do not affect binding suretyship in sophisticated finance.
- (c) Avoid the guarantee only if the debtor colluded with the creditor; absent joint deceit, creditor misstatements are immaterial to the surety’s contract.
- (d) Avoid the guarantee because material facts affecting the surety’s risk must be disclosed and misrepresentation vitiates suretyship under Sections 142 and 143.

58. A supplier sought two directors to sign as co-sureties for a buyer’s credit. Ritu signed a guarantee expressly “subject to Aditya also signing as co-surety within seven days.” Aditya never signed; the supplier nevertheless delivered goods and, after default, sued Ritu as the sole surety. Ritu argues the guarantee never

took effect because the stated condition precedent was unmet. The supplier replies that delivery shows acceptance and the condition should be treated as minor formality.

What is the correct legal result?

- (a) The guarantee is inoperative because conditions precedent to suretyship such as the joining of named co-sureties must be satisfied before liability can attach.
- (b) The guarantee binds Ritu because performance by the creditor substitutes for missing signatures; delivery of goods perfects the suretyship retrospectively.

(c) The guarantee binds Ritu for half the loss only; absence of the co-surety merely reduces her contribution but does not defeat the instrument's operation.

(d) The guarantee binds Ritu since she is a director; fiduciary status overrides conditions and ensures credit support for the company's trade obligations.

Passage:- 2 Trespass to person is an unreasonable interference with an individual's body, committed with malafide intent, either by causing physical harm or by creating apprehension of force. It is divided into assault, battery, and false imprisonment. Assault refers to the wrongful apprehension of fear in the mind of another person without actual physical contact. In *R v. St. George*, pointing an unloaded gun at someone constituted assault as it caused reasonable fear, though no harm occurred. Similarly, in *R v. Constanza*, sending threatening letters that caused psychological harm was held to be assault. Battery involves intentional and unlawful use of force causing physical injury. In *Stanley v. Powell*, the defendant was not liable when a bullet accidentally hit the plaintiff, as the act was unintentional. The use of force against a trespasser is justified, as in *Pratap Daji v. B.B.& C.I. Rly.*, where ejecting a ticketless passenger was not battery. Mere obstruction, however, does not constitute battery, as held in *Innes v. Wylie*. Mayhem, or aggravated battery, refers to injury disabling the victim from self-defence, as seen in *Fetter v. Beale*, where permanent injury led to liability.

False imprisonment occurs when a person is intentionally restrained from exercising liberty without lawful justification. In *Herring v. Boyle*, the teacher was not liable as the boy was unaware of restraint, whereas in *Meering v. Graham White Aviation*, confinement with guards outside amounted to false imprisonment despite the plaintiff's ignorance.

Defences to trespass to person include valid arrest, consent, probable cause, and self-defence. Lawful arrest made on reasonable grounds does not amount to false imprisonment. Consent negates trespass, as in *Robinson v. Balmain New Ferry Co.*, where refusal to repay entry fees did not constitute detention. Self-defence allows reasonable force to protect oneself or property, as upheld in *Cresswell v. Sirl*, where killing a dog to protect livestock was justified.

Remedies for trespass to person include an action for damages, self-help, and the writ of habeas corpus. Compensation may cover injury to body or liberty. In *Rudal Shah v. State of Bihar* and *Bhim Singh v. State of Jammu & Kashmir*, the Supreme Court granted compensation for unlawful detention.

Trespass to property or goods means wrongful physical interference with another's possession without lawful justification. It focuses on possession rather than ownership. In *Madhav Vithal Kudwa v. Madhavdas Vallabhdas*, parking in a shared compound was not trespass. In *Basely v. Clarkson*, crossing a boundary while cutting grass amounted to trespass, but involuntary entry, as in *Smith v. Stone*, did not. Trespass may occur by land, air, or animals. In *Bernstein v. Skyviews*, aerial photography from a high altitude was not trespass.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://www.lawyersnjurists.com/article/trespass-to-person/>]

Q59. A film crew rehearses a street scene in Pune. Aarav, in realistic costume, points a blank-fire prop pistol at passerby Zoya from six feet away, shouting "Freeze!" The prop is unloaded and safety-checked, but no one tells Zoya; startled, she believes it is a real gun and staggers back in fear. No physical contact occurs and the crew immediately lowers the prop when she screams. Zoya sues Aarav for assault, claiming wrongful apprehension of imminent force despite the absence of injury. Aarav argues that an unloaded prop cannot constitute assault because no harm was possible and no touching occurred.

Is civil liability for assault made out?

- (a) No, because absence of contact defeats assault and fear alone without touching never creates a trespass to the person in civil law.
- (b) Yes, because wrongful apprehension of immediate force without contact is assault where a reasonable person would fear violence.
- (c) No, because only threatening words can constitute assault; silent gestures with props do not satisfy the elements without explicit verbal menaces.
- (d) Yes, because any theatrical rehearsal on a public street automatically amounts to assault regardless of what a bystander reasonably apprehends.

Q60. Outside a mall in Indore, security officer Mira stands immobile across a wide doorway, arms folded, saying nothing. Rishi attempts to pass; Mira does not touch him but blocks the center line of travel. Two other unobstructed exits and side space remain. Irritated, Rishi files a civil claim for battery, asserting that blocking his path was a hostile application of force. The mall denies contact and says mere obstruction without physical impact is not battery. Rishi insists obstruction is itself force. On these facts, has a battery been committed?

- (a) Yes, because deliberate obstruction of a pedestrian's chosen path is force per se and therefore qualifies as battery in tort law.
- (b) Yes, because standing across a doorway creates apprehension; fear of collision turns an obstruction into battery regardless of actual touching.
- (c) No, because the claim should be false imprisonment; blocking any doorway automatically constitutes total restraint and not a battery claim.
- (d) No, because mere obstruction without physical contact does not constitute battery, particularly where alternative routes permit free passage.

Q61. On a suburban train near Mumbai, Kavita is found travelling without a ticket after repeated warnings.

When she refuses to alight, the guard and station staff take hold of her arms and guide her off the carriage onto the platform using steady, non-violent pressure; no injury results. Kavita sues the railway for battery, arguing that any non-consensual touch is unlawful. The railway replies that reasonable force may be used to remove a trespasser and that a ticketless rider has no right to remain onboard.

Should the court find the touching to be actionable battery?

- (a) No, because reasonable force to remove a trespasser is justified; ejecting a ticketless passenger with minimal force is not an unlawful battery.
- (b) Yes, because any physical contact without express consent is a battery, regardless of context or the target's legal status on the premises.
- (c) No, because the conduct may amount to assault only; battery requires substantial harm or visible injury to be actionable at common law.
- (d) Yes, because railway staff must seek a police escort; lay employees cannot touch passengers even to enforce ticketing rules.

Q62. In a duty-free shop at Delhi airport, staff suspect Priyanka of shoplifting. A manager politely asks her to "wait in the lounge," where the door remains unlocked. Unbeknownst to Priyanka, two security guards stand outside the only exit with instructions not to let her leave; for twenty minutes they quietly block anyone who tries to exit without clearance. Priyanka later learns of this arrangement and sues for false imprisonment. The shop argues she never knew of any restraint and thus could not have been confined.

On these facts, does the tort of false imprisonment arise?

- (a) No, because a claimant must know of restraint; without awareness, detention is not actionable false imprisonment in civil proceedings.
- (b) No, because the door was unlocked; physical barriers are required for any claim of confinement in a commercial setting.
- (c) Yes, because intentional restraint exists where guards prevent exit; confinement is actionable even if the plaintiff was unaware.
- (d) Yes, but only if the shop verbally threatened her; mere stationing of guards cannot create restraint without explicit words of compulsion.

Q63. Rohan enters Riverside Ferry Pier through a turnstile displaying "Exit fee ₹10 payable on return; no exit without payment." After ten minutes, he decides to leave, refuses to pay the exit fee, and is stopped at the turnstile until he agrees to pay or exits via a free alternative gate located beyond a staffed kiosk that also

requires the ₹10. He sues the operator for false imprisonment, arguing that conditioning exit on payment is coercive detention. The operator relies on posted conditions and Rohan's voluntary entry.

Is the operator liable for false imprisonment?

- (a) Yes, because conditioning exit on payment is coercive restraint; monetary barriers cannot lawfully confine a person within private premises.
- (b) No, because consent to posted terms negates trespass; refusal to comply with agreed exit fees does not convert conditional access into unlawful detention.
- (c) Yes, because once a person decides to leave, any further requirement is detention; exit terms are unenforceable without police involvement.
- (d) No, because the operator offered a refund; detention is lawful whenever a proprietor offers to unwind the transaction and waive the posted terms.

Q64. Acting on a victim's detailed complaint and CCTV stills, police arrest Tanvi near her office, hold her for five hours for questioning, then release her without charge after verifying an alibi. Tanvi sues the State for false imprisonment, arguing that detention without eventual prosecution shows the arrest lacked basis.

The State pleads reasonable grounds: matching clothing, proximity to the scene, and a prompt identification. Tanvi answers that only a warrant or formal charge can justify restraint. On these facts, does false imprisonment lie against the State?

- (a) Yes, because absence of a charge proves detention was unlawful; civil liability follows whenever release occurs without prosecution on the same day.
- (b) No, because a lawful arrest made on reasonable grounds does not amount to false imprisonment.
- (c) Yes, because warrantless arrests are per se unlawful; police must secure judicial leave before restraining a person suspected of any offence.
- (d) No, because the State is absolutely immune in tort; false imprisonment claims cannot be brought against public authorities acting in good faith.

Passage:- 3 Article 39A of the Constitution of India, located in Part IV under the Directive Principles of State Policy, reflects the vision of promoting justice on the basis of equal opportunity. Although non-justiciable, Directive Principles guide the State in establishing a welfare framework ensuring equality and social justice. The text of Article 39A provides that "The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities." This imposes a positive obligation on the State to make justice accessible and affordable for all citizens, especially the economically or socially disadvantaged.

The objectives of Article 39A are to promote equal opportunity, provide free legal aid, remove barriers to justice, simplify legal procedures, and safeguard fundamental rights particularly the right to life and liberty under Article 21. To operationalise this constitutional mandate, Parliament enacted the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which established the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) as the apex body responsible for policy formulation, fund allocation, legal literacy, and monitoring of schemes. State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) implement legal aid programmes, while District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) and Taluk Legal Services Committees (TLSCs) ensure delivery at the local level. Legal aid clinics in law schools and communities provide counselling and assistance.

Citizens may apply for free legal aid in person, in writing, or online through NALSA's portal. Eligible categories include women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, industrial workmen, persons in custody, victims of disasters or human trafficking, disabled persons, and individuals with income below ₹1 lakh (₹1.25 lakh for Supreme Court cases). Lok Adalats, functioning as Alternative Dispute Resolution forums under the 1987 Act, resolve disputes amicably at pre-litigation or pending stages. Their awards hold the same status as civil court decrees and are final and binding.

Judicial interpretation has strengthened Article 39A. In *Hussainara Khatoun v. State of Bihar* (1979), the Supreme Court declared free legal aid and speedy trial as part of Article 21. *Sukh Das v. Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh* (1986) expanded legal aid to include drafting assistance, and *Khatri v. State of Bihar* (1981) directed judges to inform accused persons of this right. Later cases such as *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India* (1987) and *State of Punjab v. Jagdev Singh Talwandi* (2003) further reinforced State obligations.

Despite progress, challenges persist, including low awareness, underfunding, inconsistent quality, and administrative delays. Measures such as the Pro Bono Legal Services Portal, digital legal aid platforms, legal literacy campaigns, and training programmes are being pursued. Strengthening funding, awareness, advocate remuneration, and digital accessibility remains vital to realising Article 39A's vision of equal justice for all.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://doonlawmentor.com/directive-principles-of-state-policy-guiding-indias-governance/>]

Q67. At a late-night remand, the magistrate takes cognisance of an FIR against migrant worker Babu. He is unrepresented. Neither the police nor the court informs him of free legal aid. Bail is refused and Babu remains in custody for three weeks until a DLSA lawyer is appointed. He files a petition alleging violation of his fundamental rights due to the State's failure to ensure legal assistance at the earliest stage. The State replies that legal aid is a Directive Principle and hence non-justiciable.

What is the correct constitutional position?

- (a) The claim fails because Directive Principles are non-justiciable; legal aid cannot ground enforceable relief absent statutory breach proved by the petitioner.
- (b) The claim succeeds because free legal aid and speedy trial are part of Article 21, and courts have located enforceability within the right to life.
- (c) The claim fails unless Babu proves actual trial prejudice; without a conviction, lack of early legal aid is at most a procedural irregularity.
- (d) The claim succeeds only if DLSA funds were available; in resource-scarce periods, Article 39A expectations stand suspended for individual detainees.

Q68. During a sessions trial in Guwahati, the presiding judge notices that the unrepresented accused, a daily-wage labourer, is about to cross-examine a key eyewitness without assistance. The record shows no intimation to him of legal-aid availability. After conviction, appellate counsel argues that the judge had a positive duty to inform the accused of the right to free legal aid, and non-compliance impaired a fair trial. The State replies that the court's role is passive unless an accused explicitly asks for counsel. How should the appellate court view the judge's duty?

- (a) There is no judicial duty to inform; the adversarial system places onus on the accused to request representation if desired.

- (b) The duty arises only at charge framing; once the trial begins, the court cannot interfere with counsel choices or lack thereof.

- (c) The duty exists only when the accused is juvenile; adults are presumed to understand courtroom entitlements without judicial prompting.

- (d) Judges must inform accused persons of the right to free legal aid; failure to do so undermines fair-trial guarantees.

Q69. A DLSA office in Ranchi returns an indigent litigant's physical application for aid, stating that "applications are accepted online only via NALSA portal." The litigant, a senior-citizen tenant without internet access, challenges the refusal. The Authority argues that digital filing improves efficiency and transparency and that staff shortages preclude walk-in processing. The petitioner asserts that modes of application include in-person and written formats and that a digital-only rule defeats access. Which view is legally sound on application modalities?

- (a) Digital exclusivity is valid; an online pipeline is a reasonable administrative filter consistent with modernisation mandates.

- (b) Digital exclusivity is invalid; citizens may apply in person, in writing, or online through NALSA's portal.

- (c) Digital exclusivity is valid if kiosks are offered once weekly; limited physical assistance cures any exclusionary effects.

- (d) Digital exclusivity is invalid only for women and SC/ST; other categories must adapt to portal-based intake for caseload management.

Passage:- 4 A divorce decree, also known as a decree of dissolution of marriage, is a court-issued legal document that officially terminates a marriage. It is granted after the court has concluded the divorce proceedings and decided on matters like property division, alimony, custody, and maintenance. Issued under the Family Courts Act, 1984, it is legally binding on both parties and contains essential details such as the names of the spouses, case number, court details, and the judge’s final order. Once signed and sealed by the judge, the decree legally dissolves the marriage; without it, the parties remain married in the eyes of the law, even if separated.

A divorce decree is distinct from a divorce certificate. The decree is a comprehensive judgment from the court, including all terms of settlement such as maintenance and child custody, whereas the certificate is a brief administrative record issued by the registrar, confirming the dissolution of marriage on a specific date. The decree is the authoritative legal order, while the certificate serves as an official summary for documentation purposes.

The decree is necessary for multiple reasons. It provides legal proof of divorce, establishing the person’s single status and eligibility to remarry, ensuring protection against bigamy under Indian law. It also defines property and financial settlements, recording the division of assets and liabilities to prevent future disputes. In cases involving children, it specifies custody, visitation rights, and support in accordance with the child’s best interest. Furthermore, it sets out alimony arrangements, detailing the amount, frequency, and duration of spousal support. Beyond family law, the decree is often required for visa applications, immigration processes, name changes, and updates in official records such as Aadhaar, PAN, or passports.

A typical divorce decree includes case details, the declaration of divorce, rulings on property division, child custody, spousal support, name change permissions, the effective date, and the judge’s signature and court seal. To obtain one, a spouse files a petition in the appropriate Family Court under relevant laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 or Special Marriage Act, 1954. After filing, the court issues a notice, may direct counselling, records evidence, and then passes judgment. A certified copy of the decree can be collected from the court clerk. Some decrees can be viewed or downloaded online via the eCourts portal, though official use generally requires a certified copy.

A divorce decree can be challenged through an appeal if obtained through fraud, coercion, procedural error, or lack of jurisdiction. The aggrieved party must file an appeal within 30–90 days, and the higher court may reverse, modify, or order a retrial depending on the merits. Thus, the divorce decree not only ends a marriage but also ensures legal clarity, protection, and enforceability of the parties’ rights and obligations.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://restthecase.com/knowledge-bank/divorce-legal-guide/divorce-decree>]

Q70. Aparna finalises her marital break-up and approaches a travel agent for spouse-visa cancellation and a bank for KYC updates. She carries a “divorce certificate” issued by the registrar and a photocopy of a signed court order. The bank insists on seeing the “authoritative” instrument that actually adjudicated custody and maintenance; the travel agent wants a concise record for file proof. Aparna argues both documents are equivalent and that institutions cannot demand more than one. The question is which document legally decides the divorce’s substantive

terms and which merely records dissolution for administrative purposes in third-party files.

Which document has the authoritative, adjudicatory status under the passage?

(a) The certificate alone controls all legal consequences, since registrars issue official records binding on every third party.

(b) The certificate combined with an affidavit equals a decree and dispenses with the need for a certified court copy.

(c) A police non-objection letter can replace judicial findings where neither side disputes property, custody, or alimony issues.

(d) The decree is the authoritative legal order, while the certificate functions as an administrative summary for documentation.

Q71. After two years of living apart, Rakesh and Mira sign a notarised “separation-cum-settlement” MoU dividing furniture and bank balances. They announce on social media that their marriage has “ended,” but neither files a case. Six months later, Rakesh marries Priya, producing the MoU and a neighbourhood panchayat’s endorsement as “proof of divorce.” When Mira lodges a complaint alleging bigamy, Rakesh claims that mutual separation plus a community attestation is sufficient and that courts should respect private settlement in family matters. The police ask whether any judicial decree exists or whether the parties only executed private papers without court involvement and seal. What determines Rakesh’s legal capacity to remarry on these facts?

(a) A community attestation with a notarised MoU replaces judicial dissolution, allowing remarriage without any further formal process.

(b) Only a court’s signed and sealed decree dissolves the marriage; without it, the parties remain legally married despite separation.

(c) Either a divorce certificate or a settlement MoU suffices, because both record intent to end the marriage with finality.

(d) An eCourts portal printout alone establishes dissolution where parties have mutually settled all financial and domestic issues.

Q72. After an ex-parte decree, Neha downloads a PDF of her order from the eCourts portal and emails it to her HR team for a name-change request and to the bank for KYC. HR replies that a certified copy is mandatory for personnel files and rejects the printout. Neha argues the portal’s PDF bears the digital emblem and should suffice, especially because turnaround is time-sensitive. The compliance officer explains that policies mirror legal practice requiring sealed judicial copies for sensitive status changes in employee and financial records. Neha asks whether the institution is justified in insisting on a certified court copy instead of a web download.

What documentary standard does the passage contemplate for formal reliance?

(a) Accept portal printouts for all purposes; digital access replaces the need for sealed judicial copies in official workflows.

(b) Accept a registrar’s letter; administrative correspondence validates status in lieu of a certified decree copy for compliance.

(c) Require a certified copy for official use, even though viewing or downloading is possible through the eCourts portal.

(d) Rely on a lawyer’s undertaking; professional assurances substitute for court-sealed documents in time-bound transactions.

Q73. An ex-husband discovers six weeks after judgment that the decree recites a custody consent he never gave because he was abroad and unrepresented. He claims a procedural lapse: service was faulty and the signature page mismatches his specimen. Ninety-five days have now elapsed since the decree. He files an appeal alleging fraud and procedural error, asking the appellate court to reopen custody and maintenance. The respondent counters that no appeal lies against a decree absent criminality and that timelines preclude scrutiny. The appellate registry queries the maintainability and the time window indicated in the materials you studied.

How does the passage describe appellate challenge to a decree?

(a) Appeals are never available against decrees; only review before the same court can examine procedural lapses or consent errors.

(b) Appeals may proceed only for criminal offences; civil family judgments cannot be reopened on documentary irregularities alone.

(c) Appeals lie solely for jurisdictional defects; allegations of fraud or procedure cannot ground a merits reconsideration.

(d) Appeals can challenge decrees for fraud, coercion, procedural error, or lack of jurisdiction, within a 30–90 day period.

Q74. Following mediation, Lata and Imran finalise a settlement on property division, custody schedules, and spousal support. The Family Court pronounces a decree incorporating their terms. Later, a sub-registrar refuses to mutate a flat solely on the basis of a “divorce certificate,” asking for the order that actually contains the property and custody rulings. Lata insists the certificate should be adequate for all purposes because it records dissolution and a date. The mutation officer explains that administrative records need the instrument specifying rights and obligations, not just a dissolution entry.

Which instrument carries the operative rulings for enforcement and records?

(a) The decree includes rulings on property division, child custody, spousal support, and takes effect when signed and sealed.

(b) The certificate alone suffices, because it summarises dissolution and binds agencies to implement financial and custody terms.

- (c) A private MoU is enough; once notarised, it compels registries to honour asset transfers without court involvement.
(d) A court notice of hearing is binding; scheduling orders can be used to mutate property and update custody records.

Passage:- 5 The development of copyright law in India began during the colonial period and evolved through successive reforms to meet modern creative and technological needs. The first Indian Copyright Act was enacted in 1847 under the East India Company, applying English principles to India. The Imperial Copyright Act, 1911, extended British copyright law uniformly across colonies. Later, the Indian Copyright Act, 1914, adapted the 1911 law for Indian conditions and remained operative until independence. After independence, the Copyright Act, 1957, was enacted as India's first comprehensive legislation, effective from January 1958. The Act was subsequently amended in 1983, 1984, 1992, 1994, 1999, and 2012, addressing performers' rights, broadcasting, digital piracy, and international treaty compliance.

The objectives of copyright law include rewarding creators for their labour and creativity, encouraging innovation, balancing public interest through fair dealing provisions, and promoting cultural and intellectual growth. Copyright serves not just private interests but also broader public welfare by harmonising creativity with access to knowledge. The nature of copyright is distinct from physical property as it protects intangible creations. It is an incorporeal property granting a bundle of rights reproduction, communication, adaptation, and translation and operates as a negative right allowing the owner to prevent unauthorised use. Protection is time-bound, after which the work enters the public domain.

The Copyright Act, 1957, covers literary, dramatic, musical, artistic works, films, and sound recordings. Protection is automatic upon creation, with registration serving as proof. It recognises both economic rights (commercial exploitation) and moral rights (author's personal connection to work), aligning India with the Berne Convention, TRIPS, and WIPO treaties. Under Section 13, eligible works include literary (books, programs), dramatic (plays), musical (notations), artistic (paintings, architecture), cinematograph films, and sound recordings. Copyright generally lasts for the author's lifetime plus 60 years, with variations for films, sound recordings, and government works.

Ownership under Section 17 rests with the author unless exceptions apply, such as employer-created or commissioned works. Rights include reproduction, distribution, adaptation, and performance; moral rights under Section 57 ensure authorship and integrity. Copyright may be assigned or licensed, with specific rules on duration, territory, and revocation. Infringement occurs when these rights are used without permission through unauthorised copying, broadcasting, or sale. Exceptions under Section 52 allow fair dealing for research, education, criticism, and reporting. Remedies include civil (injunctions, damages), criminal (imprisonment and fines), and administrative (customs seizures). Institutions like the Copyright Office and Appellate Board ensure implementation. India participates in international treaties like the Berne and TRIPS Agreements, ensuring reciprocity. Landmark cases such as *R.G. Anand v. Deluxe Films* (1978) and *Tips Industries v. Wynk* (2019) shaped interpretation. However, challenges remain piracy, AI-generated works, and judicial delays necessitating future reforms to keep pace with digital innovation.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://blog.ipleaders.in/an-overview-of-the-copyright-act-1957/>]

Q75. A freelance photographer, Meera, uploads an original photo-essay on urban wetlands to her website and social pages. A city magazine lifts ten images, adds a logo watermark, and publishes them in its weekend edition. When Meera issues a takedown notice, the editor replies that she cannot enforce copyright because she never

registered the photo-essay with the Copyright Office, and that registration is a mandatory pre-condition for asserting rights. Meera considers suing for injunction and damages while simultaneously applying for voluntary registration to strengthen evidentiary proof of authorship and publication date.

What governs Meera's ability to enforce copyright before registration?

- (a) Rights arise only after registration; until then, the work lacks legal protection against unauthorised publication or use.
- (b) Rights arise on publication; an online upload grants protection from the first physical circulation to the public or press.
- (c) Rights arise automatically upon creation; registration is evidentiary proof and not a pre-condition for enforcement.
- (d) Rights arise after a cease-and-desist; formal notice is necessary to crystallise claims against derivative reuse.

Q76. A fintech startup hires Devika as a full-time software engineer to build an AML rules engine. Her employment contract is silent on IP. After launch, Devika claims to be the first owner of the engine's source code and demands a separate licence fee. The company argues that the software was created in the course of employment and that, under the statute, ownership rests with the employer as an exception to the general rule. A consultant who contributed a UI theme under a commissioned invoice also asserts first ownership unless expressly assigned.

Whose claim aligns with the default ownership framework?

- (a) Devika owns by default; employers never qualify for first ownership absent an express IP assignment clause.
- (b) The employer owns works made in employment, while commissioned contributors may retain ownership absent a transfer.
- (c) First ownership always follows the most substantial creative input, regardless of employment or commissioning.
- (d) All contributors are joint owners by default; employment and commissioning do not alter the equal-shares presumption.

Q77. Professor Asha uploads two chapters from her own purchased textbook and a short, low-resolution extract from a journal article to the university's password-protected LMS for a one-week class module. Access is limited to 60 enrolled students and blocked to the public; the extracts are used with lecture notes for classroom discussion and a quiz. The publisher sends a takedown letter claiming infringement and demanding statutory licence fees, asserting that any digital copy is actionable. The faculty union argues the use is pedagogic and within statutory fair dealing.

How does the passage characterise the exception?

- (a) No exception covers digital excerpts; fair dealing applies only to printed handouts physically distributed in class.
- (b) Fair dealing for research, education, criticism, and reporting may shield limited instructional uses of extracts.
- (c) Only criticism by reviewers qualifies; educational use requires a paid collective licence in every circumstance.

(d) Fair dealing protects whole-book uploads so long as access is restricted to enrolled students and term-time only.

78. A museum plans to digitise and stream readings of a 1956 Hindi novel to accompany an exhibition on mid-century literature. The novelist died in 1960. The publisher warns that any online streaming requires a licence because the work remains protected, while the museum's curator believes the book has now entered the public domain. The museum intends to proceed with caution, avoiding derivative adaptations and limiting itself to faithful readings and original commentary by scholars.

What is the status of the novel's copyright today?

- (a) Protection ended on first publication; works older than fifty years are automatically in the public domain.
- (b) Protection lasts for the author's life plus sixty years; a 1960 death generally points to expiry after that period.
- (c) Protection endures indefinitely for canonical literary works; celebrated novels do not enter the public domain.
- (d) Protection ends only with a court declaration; absent litigation, no literary work becomes public domain.

79. A language-tech startup scrapes a news portal's original investigative series and auto-generates translated and lightly "adapted" versions for its app without permission. It argues no verbatim copying occurred and claims the app merely promotes wider access. The publisher demands an injunction, citing exclusive rights over non-literal uses like translation and adaptation, and emphasising that copyright protects intangible expression through a negative right to restrain unauthorised exploitation.

Which articulation reflects the controlling legal character of the right asserted here?

- (a) Copyright is purely a claim to royalties; non-literal uses like translation cannot be restrained absent verbatim copying.
- (b) Copyright protects only the physical copy; intangible expression cannot ground an action against non-identical outputs.
- (c) Copyright comprises a bundle of rights including translation and adaptation, operating as a negative right to prevent unauthorised use.
- (d) Copyright applies only to reproduction; communication and adaptation fall exclusively under media-regulatory statutes to prevent unauthorised use.

Passage:- 5 Three men who were previously sentenced to death and later acquitted are now before the Supreme Court of India seeking compensation for wrongful conviction and incarceration. In one of the writ petitions, the lead petitioner, Ramkirat Munilal Goud, 41 years old, seeks damages from the State of Maharashtra for a grave violation of his fundamental rights protected under Article 21 of the Constitution. His case reflects that he spent twelve years in prison six of them on death row before his acquittal. According to the Court's judgment, his conviction was based on a "flawed and tainted investigation." The petitioner's plea states that false charges, illegal arrest, fabricated evidence, and suppression of forensic reports demolished his life, reputation and family, which was reduced to destitution.

Similarly, the second petitioner, Kattavellai (name given in brief), convicted and later acquitted in Tamil Nadu, and the third petitioner, Sanjay (from Uttar Pradesh), convicted and sentenced to death for sexual offences against a three-year-old, were acquitted by the Supreme Court which found that the prosecution had failed to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt. In Kattavellai's case, the Court observed that there should be a law for awarding compensation in cases of wrongful incarceration. The Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the states and requested that the R. Venkataramani (Attorney General of India) or the Tushar Mehta (Solicitor General of India) assist the Court in these matters.

In Goud's petition, it is contended that his fundamental rights under Article 21 life and personal liberty were violated on account of illegal arrest, a fabricated investigation, wrongful conviction on heinous charges under IPC and the POCSO Act. He was arrested on October 3, 2013, in Thane and remained in custody until his release on May 19, 2025. During incarceration, he received no parole or furlough; his family suffered economically and socially: his wife mortgaged land and jewellery, their children left school, and they lived in a hut with a plastic roof. After release, he is reportedly earning irregular daily-wage work and struggling with debt. The petition argues that mere release does not rectify the wrong and seeks monetary compensation for both pecuniary and non-pecuniary losses, and rehabilitation, citing the Law Commission of India's 277th Report on Wrongful Prosecution (2018) which recommended a statutory scheme for compensation.

The Supreme Court's involvement raises key questions: whether the State is liable in law to compensate for wrongful conviction and incarceration, how large the compensation should be, and how to ensure accountability of investigation and prosecution agencies. By issuing notice and seeking assistance of the AG/SG, the Court signals its readiness to frame guiding principles or directions for compensation in such cases.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/after-acquittal-in-death-penalty-cases-3-men-see-compensation-for-wrongful-incarceration-supreme-court-seeks-assistance-of-ag-sg-308056>]

Q80. After his acquittal, Harish is freed from prison after eleven years, including five on death row. The State files a short affidavit saying it "respects the verdict" but owes no compensation, because liberty has already been restored. Harish's writ details loss of income, trauma, family displacement, and stigma from fabricated charges and suppressed forensic reports. He seeks monetary damages for pecuniary and non-pecuniary losses, plus rehabilitation assistance to restart his life. The State argues courts should avoid "opening the floodgates" by awarding money in public law, insisting that post-acquittal liberty fully cures the wrong.

In this posture, which relief principle from the passage best applies?

- (a) Discharge from custody cures all consequences; money claims are inappropriate where liberty has been restored by acquittal.
- (b) Compensation for pecuniary and non-pecuniary losses with rehabilitation may be pursued; mere release does not rectify the wrong endured.
- (c) Only narrow reimbursement for legal costs is possible; intangible injuries cannot be recognized in public law remedies.

Q81. A cluster of acquitted ex-prisoners files writs seeking compensation for wrongful incarceration. Recognizing systemic issues, the Supreme Court consolidates matters, issues notice to affected States, and requests assistance from the Attorney General or Solicitor General. The States ask the Court to dispose of the petitions individually without broader directions. Petitioners respond that the Court's procedural moves indicate a willingness to articulate guiding principles for compensation and accountability.

Which procedural signal from the passage most clearly reflects that intent?

- (a) Listing the cases after two weeks, since frequent listings typically imply readiness to settle normative doctrine quickly.
- (b) Transferring the cases to High Courts, because decentralisation is usually a prelude to uniform guidelines in federal systems.
- (c) Issuing notice and seeking AG/SG assistance, which signals readiness to frame guiding principles or directions in such cases.
- (d) Fixing an outer timeline for affidavits, because scheduling orders alone show the Court's aim to craft doctrinal remedies.

Q82. Assertion (A): Illegal arrest, fabricated investigation, and wrongful conviction amount to a direct violation of an individual's fundamental rights under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Reason (R): Article 21 protects only against deprivation of life, not personal liberty, and therefore does not extend to cases of wrongful conviction.

- (a) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- (b) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- (c) Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- (d) Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Q83. Nihal spent nine years incarcerated before his conviction was overturned. The acquittal judgment records that investigators withheld exculpatory forensic findings, relied on fabricated statements, and ignored chain-of-custody gaps. When he sues for compensation, the State claims "mere investigative irregularities" cannot ground public-law damages. Nihal replies that the very conviction rested on a defective investigative foundation described in the appellate ruling.

Which characterisation best matches the passage's description of such a case?

- (a) The conviction was based on a "flawed and tainted investigation," warranting compensatory scrutiny post-acquittal.
- (b) The conviction was a routine error at trial, unrelated to investigative quality or prosecutorial conduct.

(c) The conviction was upheld in substance; only the sentence was questioned, so damages are unavailable as a matter of law.

(d) The conviction was vacated on technical limitation only; investigative integrity was never a factor in the appellate court's view.

84. A State argues there is no legal liability to pay compensation after acquittal because criminal law already provides appeals and revisions, and civil suits exist for individual grievances. Petitioners counter that Article 21 violations through illegal arrest, fabricated investigation, and wrongful conviction require public-law compensation to vindicate fundamental rights. The Bench notes that any framework must address who pays and on what juridical basis.

Which core question from passage is squarely implicated here?

- (a) Whether disciplinary rules for prosecutors can be refined to improve training and reduce investigation errors going forward.
- (b) Whether individual police officers may be personally sued for tort damages in parallel with writ remedies against the State.
- (c) Whether compensation should include structured annuities or lump-sum awards based on indices like years spent in custody.
- (d) Whether the State is liable in law to compensate for wrongful conviction and incarceration, and how large such compensation should be.

SECTION D: - CRITICAL REASONING

Passage:- 1 There are few things in the legal universe more ambitious and more tragic than the compendium. In theory, it is supposed to be the neat little booklet that gathers every precedent your case may need. In practice, it is a jungle safari through judgments running into hundreds of pages, with annexures, photocopies and more highlights than a Delhi wedding album. By the time it lands on the judge's desk, it looks less like a legal aid and more like a family heirloom - something to be preserved, not read. Somewhere between the 47th and 93rd page, you realise this is not advocacy, this is archaeology with a stapler!

It only gets funnier when you step outside the court. Conventional magazines, once fat with stories, are now thinner than a summer novel, having quietly traded substance for full page ads of universities nobody has ever seen in a ranking list. Most of them are No. 1 in categories no one asked for, certified by committees no one has heard of. If magazines can sell you universities you've never heard of, placement brochures can sell you salaries you'll never see. Four lakh a year is confidently dressed up as "₹7.5 LPA", a number most students suspect they will not see even after ten years of practice. Then comes the staged metaphor-CV, every law student's tragicomedy. Mandatory NGO internship, always there. Whether the NGO is alive, dead, or just filing RTI applications from a Gmail account, nobody can say.

The classroom adds its own humour. For years, students are made to mug up section after section as if law were a list of ingredients, not the recipe. Then in the last semester, just as you are packing your bags, the subject called Interpretation of Statutes is dropped casually on the table. Suddenly, there is the literal rule, the golden rule, the purposive rule - to teach how you were actually supposed to read the law that you had once memorised but have now forgotten. Like realising after years of swinging a bat that cricket is not just about holding it, but knowing which end to hold. The court has its own script, though none of it is written. Interns are the invisible bloodstream of the court ecosystem. You see them scurrying around with bulging files, sprinting to the copy shop and practicing the art of balancing dignity with desperation. Their place in court is always the back row, a kind of unpaid balcony seat to the theatre of law. And should they dare to sit beside advocates, they're reminded that premium seating isn't part of the internship.

Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://www.barandbench.com/columns/classrooms-compendiums-coffee-and-coma-addendums-of-an-advocate>

85. Which of the following can be most reasonably inferred from the author's portrayal of courtroom compendiums?

- (a) The format of legal documentation often prioritises tradition over efficiency in judicial proceedings.
- (b) Judges tend to disregard compendiums due to their excessive bulk and poor organisation.
- (c) Lawyers deliberately overpopulate compendiums to obscure the weakness of their arguments.
- (d) The court's reliance on precedents limits innovation in the presentation of legal arguments.

86. Which of the following statements, if true, would most strongly support the author's criticism of commercialisation in legal academia?

- (a) Law school rankings often fail to account for academic rigour and faculty qualifications.

(b) Institutional advertising increasingly shapes student perception of academic credibility.

(c) Regulatory oversight of private legal institutions has significantly weakened in recent years.

(d) Students often select colleges based on tuition affordability rather than academic performance.

87. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's critique of rote learning in legal education?

(a) Legal curricula often require students to recite statutory provisions verbatim during assessments.

(b) Students who fail to internalise legal philosophy still manage to achieve high academic scores.

(c) Interpretive reasoning is treated as an elective rather than a foundational part of legal training.

(d) Examiners assess legal aptitude by evaluating memorised knowledge over applied reasoning.

Q88. Which of the following statements would necessarily be false based on the author's depiction of internship culture?

- (a) Interns are granted limited authority but are entrusted with high-stakes responsibilities.
- (b) The court treats interns as peripheral figures with restricted access to the legal process.
- (c) The physical placement of interns in courtrooms reflects their hierarchical status.
- (d) Interns are expected to manage logistical tasks that support court proceedings indirectly.

Q89. Which of the following assumptions most plausibly underlies the author's scepticism toward legal CVs and placement claims?

- (a) Students knowingly exaggerate achievements in order to compete for limited job opportunities.
- (b) Legal employers primarily judge candidates based on practical experience and institutional prestige.

- (c) Resume-building activities are shaped more by perceived expectations than by educational outcomes.
- (d) Authentic experiences hold less symbolic value than standardised entries like NGO internships.

Q90. Which of the following best captures the author's central critique in the passage?

- (a) The legal education system undervalues institutional prestige in favour of archaic pedagogical rituals.
- (b) Legal culture encourages a reliance on symbolic performance rather than substantive engagement.
- (c) Systemic overregulation of legal academia has led to a collapse of innovative thinking in court practice.
- (d) A lack of student-driven reform has perpetuated the status quo in legal learning and practice.

Passage:- 2 Keeping a peaceful, clutter-free home doesn't come naturally to most of us. But in Japan, simplicity is more a way of living than just an aesthetic. Even the smallest spaces feel open, organised, and calming in Japanese homes. If you've ever walked into a Japanese-style home and wondered why it feels so restful, it's the intention behind it. These five time-honoured principles can gently guide you toward a minimalist space that supports calm, clarity, and connection.

The first rule is deceptively simple: every object should have a home of its own. Where do your keys go when you arrive home? Now imagine a small dish near your entrance. It's not about strict organisation. It's about kindness. You shouldn't have to search for everyday things. When your keys, your mail, or your chargers live in the same place, it's as if your home is looking after you. Start with three items you use daily: give each one a proper, designated spot. You'll be surprised how this tiny habit softens the day. In Japanese aesthetics, there's a beautiful concept called *ma*, the space between things. Think of the silence between notes in music; without the pauses, there's no melody. A shelf might have just one vase. A table might have just one plant. The rest is space to breathe. Japanese minimalism doesn't chase emptiness; it embraces presence. Empty space isn't a lack of decoration; it's a conscious pause. It invites your mind to rest. Cleaning in Japan is less of a weekend burden and more of a daily rhythm. It's almost meditative. You're not scrubbing because your home is dirty. You're caring for it, like watering a plant, not out of necessity, but out of love. It's a dialogue between you and the space that holds you. Next time you wipe a counter or fold a towel, slow down. Turn it into a mindful pause. It doesn't have to be perfect, just intentional.

Japanese interiors often use low furniture, sliding doors, and multipurpose items. Imagine your living room as a river. Furniture pieces are the stones. If there are too many stones, the water can't flow. Ask yourself: is there any furniture you walk around awkwardly every day? If something blocks your path or clutters your mind, maybe it's time to let it go, or move it. Minimalism in Japan isn't about having less for the sake of it. It's about allowing space to move, breathe, and support your daily life.

Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/art-and-culture/5-ways-you-can-create-a-japanese-style-minimal-home-10222206/>

Q91. Which of the following best expresses the author's main argument in the passage?

- (a) The mood of a home is shaped less by how it looks and more by how much it demands from its people.
- (b) Mental peace in a space depends less on what is removed and more on how thoughtfully things are placed.
- (c) Cultural design often helps people disguise the chaos and distraction present in modern environments.
- (d) Home organisation efforts tend to fail when driven by urgency instead of by visual coherence or balance.

Q92. If a policymaker were to act consistently with the author's reasoning, which policy would they most likely implement?

- (a) Launching national programs to help citizens regularly remove non-essential household belongings.
- (b) Promoting public seminars that help people explore how space affects emotions and daily routines.
- (c) Requiring new buildings to limit visual clutter through regulated decor standards and layout rules.
- (d) Offering financial support for furniture companies that manufacture efficient and compact solutions.

Q93. Which of the following, if true, would most significantly weaken the author's argument that Japanese minimalism fosters emotional clarity?

- (a) Minimalist homes are often perceived as cold and cause anxiety due to their overly restrained design.
- (b) Japanese home architecture is shaped more by tradition and geography than by mindful intention.
- (c) Some studies suggest that having a variety of objects may actually reduce mental fatigue and stress.
- (d) Many people in small homes say their design choices are guided more by cost than by philosophy.

Q94. Which of the following must necessarily be true if the author's claims about space and stillness are valid?

- (a) A room with few objects can still provide comfort if its arrangement supports emotional well-being.
- (b) Homes that use fewer decorative items always produce more mental clarity for their inhabitants.
- (c) Minimalist layouts are essential for small homes to feel restful and functionally organised.
- (d) People who maintain tidy homes are more emotionally grounded than those who don't organise.

Q95. Which of the following actions would most closely align with the author's suggestion on creating supportive habits?

- (a) Sorting belongings weekly and removing anything not used in the past thirty days or more.
- (b) Organising the house by colour and shape to create visual symmetry across all furniture areas.
- (c) Creating fixed routines for placing key items like chargers, glasses, and wallets each day.
- (d) Buying identical containers for storage so that every item in the house has a matching label.

Q96. Which of the following conclusions can be most reasonably drawn from the passage?

- (a) Being emotionally mindful while cleaning can change small acts into moments of quiet awareness.
- (b) Cluttered rooms with unused objects are the greatest source of psychological distress at home.
- (c) Japanese architecture, when copied exactly, creates similar results in any cultural environment.
- (d) People who clean and organise regularly tend to be more disciplined and emotionally resilient.

Passage:- 3 For decades, Bihar has been trapped in a pattern established during colonial rule: the systematic extraction of its wealth, the exploitation of its people, and the deliberate neglect of its development. Once the cradle of Indian civilization, home to the world's first universities at Nalanda and Vikramashila, and the birthplace of Buddhism and Jainism, Bihar was reduced to a mere resource colony under British rule. This transformation from a centre of learning and enlightenment to a zone of extraction represents one of history's starkest reversals of fortune, a decline that was neither accidental nor inevitable but engineered through deliberate policy choices that prioritised metropolitan interests over local development. As part of the Bengal Presidency, Bihar experienced what the Guyanese historian, political activist, and academic Walter Rodney characterised as the fundamental dynamic of colonialism: underdevelopment by design. The British colonial administration viewed Bihar primarily through the lens of revenue generation rather than as a place to be developed. The Permanent Settlement of 1793 established the zamindari system, designed to ensure a steady flow of revenue to colonial coffers. It created a class of intermediaries whose only function was extraction without the responsibility for investment or improvement.

The exploitation by zamindars became a textbook example of Rodney's observation that colonialism deliberately blocked the circulation of wealth within colonised territories. The wealth generated from Bihar's

fertile plains was not reinvested into building schools, hospitals, roads, or industries in Bihar. Instead, it flowed to Calcutta, then to London, enriching distant metropolises while the region that produced the wealth remained starved of capital and opportunity. Bihar represented structural exploitation, where the government prioritised revenue extraction over local development and actively limited the opportunities for capital accumulation or productive reinvestment in the region.

The forced cultivation of indigo was one particularly brutal example of this form of exploitation. Farmers were compelled to grow indigo on their best lands, receiving a pittance in revenue while facing violence for any resistance. The British planters wielded extraordinary power, backed by colonial courts and police, to enforce the manifestly unjust contracts. The extreme exploitation sparked Mahatma Gandhi's first major intervention in Indian politics, the Champaran Satyagraha of 1917. Yet, indigo was merely the most visible manifestation of the broader pattern of wealth flowing outwards and neglect flowing into Bihar. The colonial period also witnessed the systematic dismantling of Bihar's traditional crafts and industries. Weavers, artisans, and craftspeople who had sustained vibrant local economies for centuries found their markets destroyed by cheap manufactured imports from Britain. The de-industrialisation that Rodney described in Africa found its parallel in Bihar, with colonial policy actively destroying the land's existing productive capacity and creating in its place captive markets for British goods. This pattern, unfortunately, did not end with Independence in 1947.

Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/bihar-assembly-election-2025-exploitation-renewal-development-justice/article70162568.ece>

Q97. Which of the following, if true, would best serve as a counter-argument to the author's claim that Bihar's decline was "engineered through deliberate policy choices"?

- (a) Archival evidence shows that the British invested in irrigation and educational projects in Bihar, though results were inconsistent.
- (b) Several Indian provinces exposed to identical land settlements displayed similar stagnation without targeted neglect.
- (c) Bihar's population density and fragmented landholdings made equitable reinvestment nearly impossible during colonial rule.
- (d) Indigenous elites in Bihar often resisted economic reforms proposed by colonial administrators on political grounds.

Q98. Which of the following presents the most compelling paradox in the colonial situation described by the author?

- (a) A region celebrated for its ancient wisdom became a centre of systemic economic exploitation and deliberate neglect.
- (b) A colonial legal system built on rule of law was used to enforce unjust and violent economic contracts.
- (c) Indigo cultivation enriched foreign markets while pushing local farmers into cycles of debt and impoverishment.
- (d) Bihar's fertile lands yielded agricultural surpluses, yet its local population remained economically marginalised.

Q99. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that Bihar's colonial underdevelopment was structurally engineered?

- (a) Correspondences between British officials reveal long-term plans to suppress local industries and discourage capital accumulation in Bihar.
- (b) Bihar's neighbouring regions experienced similar patterns of neglect and economic stagnation under identical colonial structures.
- (c) The majority of zamindars in Bihar reinvested heavily in their own estates, improving productivity and education access.
- (d) Certain British provinces received higher tax revenues from Bihar than from much larger, more industrialized regions.

Q100. Which of the following statements would the author most likely disagree with?

- (a) The Permanent Settlement incentivised intermediaries who extracted wealth without obligation to improve local infrastructure.
- (b) Post-independence India took effective steps to reverse the exploitative systems left behind by colonial administrators.
- (c) Colonialism not only redirected capital but also dismantled local industries, damaging long-standing economic ecosystems.
- (d) Bihar's historical decline under colonial rule cannot be understood without considering both economic and institutional policies.

Q101. Which of the following, if used as a justification for colonial economic policy in Bihar, would most clearly exhibit flawed reasoning as per the author's account?

- (a) The extraction of resources from colonies was essential for building modern infrastructure in the British Empire.
- (b) Economic underdevelopment in Bihar was a natural outcome of its geographic and demographic limitations.
- (c) The introduction of permanent land settlements was meant to create a stable revenue system for all parties involved.
- (d) Colonial policies benefited Bihar in the long run by integrating it into global markets and formal economic systems.

Q102. Which of the following best summarises the central argument of the passage?

- (a) Bihar's decline resulted from a colonial system that extracted wealth without investing back, a pattern that later continued.
- (b) Colonial policies in Bihar created land intermediaries whose actions unintentionally weakened the local economy.
- (c) Bihar's cultural legacy was undermined by policy failures in the years following Indian independence.
- (d) Exploitative land and labour practices hurt Bihar early on, though reforms later addressed some of these issues.

Passage:- 4 Study the following information carefully and answer the questions given beside.

Eight persons Arjun, Binod, Chiranjevi, Dhruw, Esha, Fawad, Gautam and Hrithik are sitting on a square table and all are facing outside but not necessarily in the same order. Some are sitting at corners and some are sitting at the middle of the sides. Two of them like Cold Drinks of Coke and Sprite flavor.

Dhruw sits at one of the corners but does not like any Cold Drinks. Gautam sits immediate right of Dhruw. Binod sits opposite to Fawad who likes Cold Drinks but not Coke. Chiranjevi sits third to the left of Fawad. Arjun sits at one of the corners but Arjun is not the immediate neighbor of Esha and Fawad. Hrithik and Esha are immediate neighbors of each other. Gautam does not like any of the Cold Drinks. Hrithik sits opposite to the one who like Coke. Neither Binod nor Fawad sits at the corner.

103. Who among the following like Coke Cold Drinks?

- (a) Arjun
- (b) Binod
- (c) Chiranjevi
- (d) Esha

104. Three of the following four are alike in a certain way and so form a group. Find the one who does not belong to that group?

- (a) Arjun
- (b) Dhruw
- (c) Chiranjevi
- (d) Esha

105. What is the position of Esha with respect to Gautam?

- (a) Second to left
- (b) Fourth to the right
- (c) Immediate right
- (d) Third to the right

106. How many persons sit between Dhruw and Esha when counted from left of Dhruw?

- (a) One
- (b) Two
- (c) More than Four
- (d) Three

107. Who among the following sits exactly between Gautam and Binod?

- (a) Arjun
- (b) Dhruw
- (c) Chiranjevi
- (d) Esha

108. Who sits opposite to Chiranjevi?

- (a) Arjun
- (b) Fawad
- (c) Dhruw
- (d) Gautam

SECTION E: - QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

[Directions for Q.109-Q114]: At the annual Eco-Fest in Pune, three friends- Riya, Kabir, and Aman decided to run a stall selling organic fruit juice blends. They wanted to offer customers a unique taste using a mix of mango, orange, and guava juices. Riya brought 30 litres of mango juice costing ₹80 per litre, while Kabir arranged 20 litres of orange juice at ₹60 per litre. Aman, the creative one, added 10 litres of guava juice that he had sourced for ₹50 per litre. Together, they planned to mix the juices in different proportions to create two signature blends:

Blend A: A summer special for school kids, containing mango and orange juice in a ratio of 3:2.

Blend B: A tropical delight for adults, prepared by mixing mango, orange, and guava juices in the ratio 2:1:1.

They decided to price each blend based on its cost per litre plus a 20% profit margin. However, as sales increased, they realised they were running short on mango juice. To meet the demand, Kabir suggested buying an extra 10 litres of mango juice from another supplier at ₹100 per litre.

Q109. What is the initial average cost per litre of the entire stock before any sales?

- (a) ₹66.50 (b) ₹68.33 (c) ₹70.00 (d) ₹72.66

Q110. (Using only the initial stock) If they sell 40 L of Blend A and 20 L of Blend B at 20% profit, what is the average selling price per litre across the 60 L sold?

- (a) ₹83.70 (b) ₹85.20 (c) ₹86.40 (d) ₹84.60

Q111. After buying an extra 10 L of mango at ₹100/L, by how much does the overall average cost per litre of inventory increase (rounded to two decimals)?

- (a) ₹4.52 (b) ₹3.67 (c) ₹4.83 (d) ₹5.00

Q112. After replenishment, assume mango used in blends is costed at the average of both lots (earlier and later procured). What is the revised selling price per litre of Blend A (20% margin)?

- (a) ₹88.00 (b) ₹89.00 (c) ₹90.00 (d) ₹91.20

Q113. After replenishment (use average mango cost), they give a 5% discount on Blend B only. If they sell 30 L of A and 10 L of B (discounted), what is the average realised selling price per litre across these 40 L?

- (a) ₹86.70 (b) ₹87.00 (c) ₹88.20 (d) ₹87.45

Q114. What is the average cost per litre of Blend A before adding the new mango stock?

- (a) ₹70 (b) ₹72 (c) ₹74 (d) ₹75

[Directions for Q.115-Q120]: At a community entrepreneurship fair in Indore, three young innovators: Aarav, Megha, and Tanish, set up a booth to promote their eco-friendly startup, GreenSpark. To fund the expansion of their recycling unit, they each arranged finances differently.

Aarav took a loan of ₹20,000 from the local cooperative bank at 10% simple interest per annum for 3 years, planning to repay it after launching the new product. Megha borrowed ₹15,000 from her uncle at 12% compound interest per annum, compounded annually, for 2 years. She intended to use the profits from her sales to pay it off.

Meanwhile, Tanish invested ₹10,000 in a fixed deposit that offered 8% compound interest per annum, compounded half-yearly. He hoped the returns would help them purchase new recycling equipment. After a year, Aarav decided to repay part of his loan early, reducing his remaining principal to ₹12,000, while Megha reinvested ₹5,000 of her profit in another short-term deposit earning 10% simple interest per annum for 1 year.

By the end of the project's second year, they compared their total interest earned or paid to calculate who gained the most and whose borrowing cost was higher.

115. What total amount (principal + interest) will Megha owe after 2 years on ₹15,000 at 12% p.a., compounded annually?

- (a) ₹18,485
- (b) ₹18,816
- (c) ₹19,216
- (d) ₹16,800

116. If Aarav had not prepaid any amount, what simple interest would he pay on ₹20,000 at 10% p.a. for 3 years?

- (a) ₹6,000
- (b) ₹5,400
- (c) ₹6,600
- (d) ₹4,800

117. Tanish invests ₹10,000 at 8% p.a., compounded half-yearly. What interest does he earn in 2 years?

- (a) ₹1,664.44
- (b) ₹1,680.00
- (c) ₹1,728.89
- (d) ₹1,698.59

118. Assume interest is charged and settled annually. Aarav prepays after Year 1 to reduce principal from ₹20,000 to ₹12,000 (rate 10% p.a. simple). What total interest does he pay by end of Year 2?

- (a) ₹2,800
- (b) ₹3,000
- (c) ₹3,200
- (d) ₹3,400

119. Megha's loan interest for 2 years is at 12% p.a. compounded annually. She also invests ₹5,000 (from profit) at 10% p.a. simple for 1 year. By end of Year 2, what is her net interest outflow (loan interest paid - deposit interest earned)?

- (a) ₹3,116
- (b) ₹3,316
- (c) ₹3,516
- (d) ₹3,286

120. What annual simple interest rate would give the same interest on ₹10,000 for 2 years as Tanish's FD at 8% p.a., compounded half-yearly?

- (a) 8.00% p.a.
- (b) 8.49% p.a.
- (c) 8.80% p.a.
- (d) 9.00% p.a.

SECTION A: - ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. Correct Answer: (c) They viewed grief as an emotional disorder that should be subdued through rational correction and disciplined thought.

Reference Line: “Grief should be approached like all other suffering: we should rationally reframe our judgements until the (irrational) suffering is dissolved.”

Explanation: Option (a): The text never credits ancient thinkers with viewing grief as morally or spiritually enriching; that evaluative turn belongs to Cholbi’s modern reinterpretation. The ancients are portrayed as suspicious of emotion and committed to overcoming it, not learning from it. By importing a positive moral vocabulary to the ancient view, this option misreads the contrast the author has drawn. Its premise conflicts with the description of grief as a weakness. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

Option (b): Casting grief as an “ethical necessity” reverses the argumentative polarity of the passage, which associates ancient thought with reduction and control of emotion. There is no suggestion that compassion or balance is cultivated by grieving in the ancient frame; rather, equilibrium is sought through reasoned detachment. The option therefore attributes a constructive function that the text explicitly withholds from the ancient account. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

Option (c): The passage explicitly presents the ancient stance as privileging reason over emotion and treating grief as a “malady or weakness.” The prescription to “reframe our judgements” until the suffering is “dissolved” signals a program of rational correction rather than acceptance. This matches the idea of neutralizing grief through disciplined cognition, not honoring it as insight. The phrasing in the text makes this the closest paraphrase of the ancient approach. Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Option (d): Nothing in the ancient portrayal here turns on cultural symbolism or meditations on mortality; the emphasis is methodological and psychological. The passage anchors the ancient view in rational reframing, not in anthropological meanings of death or communal identity. By shifting to a cultural lens, the option detaches from the text’s clear reason–emotion axis and introduces claims not present. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

2. Correct Answer: (a) Mourning is a socially observable act honoring the deceased, while grief is an inward experience of personal emotional significance.

Reference Line: “Mourning consists of behaviors and rituals that publicly honor the dead... Grief, meanwhile, is self-concerning... While mourning is public, grief is private.”

Explanation: Option (a): The passage draws a categorical public–private line, naming mourning as “behaviors and rituals” that are visible and communal, while defining grief as “self-concerning” and inward. It even allows that one may participate in mourning without strictly grieving, confirming that these are distinct kinds, not degrees. This option preserves both that directional contrast and the role of personal significance in grief. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Option (b): The author’s careful separation of terms rules out interchangeability; he explicitly states one can mourn without grieving. Treating them as the same “psychological process” erases the ritual dimension of mourning and the interiority of grief. The claim also ignores the passage’s insistence that their functions differ. As a result, the option collapses a central distinction the text labors to construct. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

Option (c): This option swaps the terms’ roles, calling mourning private anguish and grief outward ritual, which the passage expressly denies. Mourning belongs to public, codified practices like silence or funerary ceremony; grief is an interior response tied to closeness. The inversion not only contradicts definitions but also undermines the illustrative examples of public mourning without personal grief. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

Option (d): The author’s differentiation is qualitative rather than quantitative; it is about what they are, not how much of them one feels. By saying they “differ only in intensity,” the option sidesteps the text’s ontological contrast and the possibility of mourning in the absence of grief. It thereby misrepresents both the structure and implications of the distinction. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

3. Correct Answer: (b) Emotional expression should be balanced with rational composure.

Reference Line: “‘We may weep,’ Seneca graciously informs us, ‘but we must not wail.’”

Explanation: Option (a): Total concealment is inconsistent with “we may weep,” which licenses a bounded expression of sorrow. A rule demanding complete suppression would disallow any tears and contradict the text’s explicit allowance. While Stoicism prizes self-command, the quotation endorses measured, not zero, expression. The option therefore overstates the demand of restraint beyond what Seneca permits. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

Option (b): The concessive structure permits a measured form of expression (“weep”) while prohibiting its excess (“wail”), which accords with Stoic moderation. The statement signals that reason must curate the volume and shape of feeling rather than eradicate all

affect. This balanced posture is consistent with the broader ancient framing in the passage that targets excess as irrational. The option accurately captures that calibrated restraint. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

Option (c): The idea that grief “purifies the soul” imposes a redemptive theology absent from the passage and foreign to its portrayal of ancient suspicion toward emotion. The surrounding argument portrays grief as something to be controlled or reasoned away, not as a sanctifying ordeal. Consequently, removing restraint would undermine the very rational governance emphasized by the ancients. This reverses the text’s evaluative logic. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

Option (d): Seneca’s line is about inner conduct rather than substituting ritual forms for personal affect. The public rituals belong to the domain of mourning, which the passage distinguishes from grief; nothing in the quotation prescribes exchanging emotion for ceremony. The required discipline is one of intensity and demeanor, not attendance at rites. The option thus mislocates the prescribed response. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

4. Correct Answer: (a) He reframes grief as an essential emotional process that embodies human connection and contributes to a fulfilling moral life.

Reference Line: “Grief is not a sickness to be cured; it’s a universal and deeply human process that plays a distinctive role in a life well lived.”

Explanation: Option (a): Cholbi denies the medicalizing frame by rejecting “sickness to be cured” and assigns grief a constructive place within “a life well lived.” He marks it as “universal” and “deeply human,” which implies that grief articulates attachment and value rather than dysfunction. This reading also coheres with his promise that understanding grief will show it is “to be... welcomed,” not regretted. The option stays closest to these commitments. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Option (b): Folding grief into ritual solutions confuses it with mourning, which the passage isolates as public behaviors one may perform without privately grieving. The author resists equating inward experience with outward ceremony and never suggests ritual resolves grief’s essence. This option therefore mistakes the structural distinction the text considers central. It attaches the wrong remedy to the wrong phenomenon. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

Option (c): Calling grief a disorder reprises the ancient deficit model that Cholbi explicitly opposes; he insists grief should not be “cured.” While rational understanding matters for the ancients, Cholbi’s project

is to interpret rather than mitigate grief’s value. The option thereby reinstates the very pathology lens he seeks to dislodge. It contradicts the quoted thesis about grief’s positive role. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

Option (d): Defining grief as social conformity misreads the passage’s identification of grief as “private” and “self-concerning.” Though mourning reflects communal expectation, grief is anchored in personal ties and inward significance. By externalizing grief into a social performance, the option erases that inwardness and imports motives foreign to the author’s account. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

5. Correct Answer: (d) Deficiency

Reference Line: “Grief for them is a manifestation of the latter: it’s a malady or weakness to be endured or, even better, reasoned away.”

Explanation: Option (a): “Catharsis” implies a beneficial release or cleansing effect that yields emotional clarity, which clashes with the ancients’ devaluing of grief. Nothing in the quoted line hints at purification or positive aftermath; it stresses removal by reason. Substituting a term with favorable connotations would invert the passage’s evaluative orientation. The mismatch in tone and function is decisive. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

Option (b): “Obsession” denotes fixation or intrusive preoccupation, which is neither entailed nor suggested by the quoted description. The ancient verdict concerns the quality of the emotion, not its persistence or compulsive character. As such, it mischaracterizes the kind of fault the passage attributes to grief. The semantic scope diverges from “malady” and “weakness.” Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

Option (c): “Reflection” suggests thoughtful contemplation, a positive cognitive act that the ancients would not equate with an emotional ailment. Choosing this term would flip the valence from deficit to virtue and thereby misrepresent the stance. The quoted line does not sanction reflection as grief’s essence; it calls for reframing to dissolve grief. The lexical register is therefore incompatible. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

Option (d): “Deficiency” properly conveys a perceived shortfall in rational fortitude, aligning with the ancient judgment that grief is a weakness. The phrase “to be endured” underscores a negative burden rather than a resource, which “deficiency” captures without suggesting transformation. It preserves the evaluative tone of fault rather than function. The semantic fit with “malady or weakness” is therefore precise. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

6. Correct Answer: (a) The intensity of grief reflects the magnitude of personal connection and underscores how emotional bonds define human life.

Reference Line: “We might typically frame this closeness in terms of love, intimacy, or contribution to our wellbeing... the more we love someone... the more intense our grief.”

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation: Option (a): The passage explicitly links grief’s intensity to degrees of “closeness” defined by love, intimacy, and contribution to wellbeing. The proportionality claim that “the more we love... the more intense our grief” demonstrates grief as an index of attachment rather than irrationality. This conclusion also aligns with Cholbi’s valuation of grief as part of a life well lived. It integrates the descriptive and normative strands of the text. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Option (b): Framing grief’s persistence as cognitive failure reverts to the ancient pathology model the author challenges; Cholbi treats grief as meaningful, not as a symptom of ignorance. The text nowhere imputes an inability to “accept” death as the driver of grief’s endurance. Instead, it grounds intensity in relational value. This option therefore imposes a deficit analysis the passage rejects. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

Option (c): The passage does not erect a universal rule that emotion “always triumphs” over reason; its focus is on the significance of bonds, not a meta-claim about decision theory. Such a sweeping assertion goes beyond the evidence and changes the argumentative register. It converts an account of attachment into a thesis about dominance between faculties. The inference is overbroad and untextual. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

Option (d): The author distinguishes grief from mourning and never claims rituals can “completely heal” inner grief; he even allows mourning without grief. Treating cultural practice as curative for an inward state contradicts that structural separation. The option therefore promises an efficacy that the passage neither states nor implies. It conflates outward observance with inward transformation. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

7. Correct Answer: (b) emphasize that human recreation operates under the same automated precision and rational control as industrial production.

Reference Line: “The loud speakers in the tower ... began, in a more than human tenor, to announce the closing of the courses.”

Explanation:

(a) The scene lacks any sense of enrichment or freedom; the mechanical announcement conveys submission to impersonal authority. The author’s tone is functional, showing that people’s leisure ends when machines command it rather than when desire ceases. This mechanized closure reflects regulation, not enjoyment or improved living. The word choice evokes discipline and suppression, not satisfaction or progress. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The “more than human tenor” and the synchronized obedience to the loudspeakers capture a world where precision replaces spontaneity. Recreation mirrors industrial efficiency as every action follows a programmed signal rather than natural rhythm. The impersonality of tone reveals that even rest is an extension of labor’s order. The author portrays how technological governance converts leisure into a production-like process devoid of freedom. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) The description of “bells” and “whistles” implies compulsion, not community celebration. Individuals respond like automatons to mechanical cues, their movements stripped of feeling or choice. There is no evidence of shared delight or social harmony, only the hum of obedience. The author’s diction transforms play into routine, highlighting loss of individuality under mass control. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The communication system here enforces control rather than sustaining emotional expression. The loudspeakers replace human voices with artificial commands, suppressing spontaneity through constant surveillance. The society values discipline, not freedom of feeling, and this precision erases individuality. The emotional tone of the scene remains sterile and dutiful rather than balanced or expressive. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

8. Correct Answer: (d) The fading sunset and the growing artificial light reveal how technology replaces nature’s beauty with mechanical illumination.

Reference Line: “Crimson at the horizon, the last of the sunset faded, through orange, upwards into yellow and a pale watery green.”

Explanation:

(a) The fading hues evoke not harmony but decline, where the natural world retreats before artificial power. The “pale watery green” conveys weakness and loss rather than peace, showing technology’s intrusion on nature’s last glow. The visual shift is one of erosion, not balance or coexistence. The imagery builds an atmosphere of suffocation under mechanized brightness, not serenity. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The tone is not appreciative but unsettling; “fierce electric brilliance” replaces beauty with intensity. No comfort or aesthetic blending exists because light becomes an instrument of domination. The industrial glare erases subtlety, transforming evening calm into mechanical hardness. The author’s contrast underscores dissonance between human invention and natural wonder. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) Nothing in the passage suggests order or calm; the visual transition is harsh and abrupt. The fading of sunset into electric glare symbolizes displacement, not unity. The industrial imagery reveals conquest rather than peace, indicating nature’s subjugation to technological order. The world appears controlled yet lifeless, devoid of harmony. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The gradual extinction of natural color and the emergence of artificial light symbolize the technological seizure of beauty. The factory’s “fierce brilliance” functions as an artificial sun, asserting human dominance over the environment. This imagery shows a civilization where machinery defines perception, not nature. The author mourns this replacement, making the tone quietly tragic and reflective. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

9. Correct Answer: (a) a ceaseless swarming of identical beings whose movements suggest mechanized uniformity within social hierarchy.

Reference Line: “The approaches to the monorail station were black with the ant-like pullulation of lower-caste activity.”

Explanation:

(a) “Pullulation” conveys teeming abundance, and combined with “ant-like,” it paints a picture of endless, mechanical motion. The individuals blend into a single mass, each movement precise and automatic, symbolizing loss of self. The workers’ swarm embodies the efficiency and dehumanization of caste hierarchy. The word suggests tireless repetition within a rigidly structured social mechanism. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) The imagery of ants suggests structure and coordination, not chaos. Their motion is instinctive and controlled, not random or confused. The author’s focus is on the uniformity of behavior imposed by conditioning, not on disorder. The tone stresses regulation and obedience rather than frantic disorganization. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The workers’ movements are industrial, not ceremonial; there is no reverence or symbolic intent.

The rhythm arises from systemic compulsion, not deliberate ritual. Their behavior shows biological automation within social machinery, devoid of spiritual or cultural meaning. The tone lacks dignity or respectfulness, only efficiency. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The description presents motion serving production, not ritual unity. There is no emotional purpose, only physical obedience to external control. The workers operate as parts of an economic mechanism, not as participants in a shared act of devotion. Their uniformity is mechanical rather than expressive. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

10. Correct Answer: (c) It demonstrates that artificial energy has displaced natural light as the dominant and defining source of human existence.

Reference Line: “The Internal and External Secretions factory glared with a fierce electric brilliance from every window of its twenty stories.”

Explanation:

(a) The phrase “glared with fierce brilliance” implies hostility rather than prosperity. Light becomes oppressive, signifying domination by mechanization, not well-being. The author’s diction portrays an inhuman environment of control, devoid of comfort or pride. The glow represents servitude to production rather than communal benefit. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The description carries no artistic admiration; the illumination is functional and excessive, symbolizing uniformity rather than creativity. The factory’s brightness overwhelms rather than beautifies, reducing architecture to mechanical purpose. It glorifies power, not design, showing dehumanization through spectacle. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The “fierce electric brilliance” acts as a new sun dominating the twilight, symbolizing the substitution of natural rhythm by industrial permanence. Artificial light dictates perception and marks the human world’s dependence on machinery. Nature’s cycle is erased, and existence becomes sustained by synthetic energy. This imagery reveals a civilization illuminated only by production. Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

(d) There is no preservation of natural connection; the glow conceals and annihilates natural beauty. The mechanized illumination creates sterility, erasing all organic softness of the evening. The author’s tone emphasizes alienation, not harmony, as technology replaces rather than complements nature. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

11. Correct Answer: (a) That technological regulation has humanized work and leisure by creating equality and

balance among all social groups.

Reference Line: "The huge Lower Caste barracks and, on the other side of a dividing wall, the smaller houses reserved for Alpha and Beta members."

Explanation:

(a) The clear architectural segregation contradicts any notion of equality; walls separate castes and reinforce hierarchy. Technology serves division rather than humanization, assigning roles with mechanical precision. The author's tone suggests alienation and control, not harmony or fairness. Leisure and labor both operate within rigidly maintained inequality. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) The uniform timing of trains and automated closure of recreation perfectly illustrate mechanical discipline. Every form of social activity runs by regulated signals rather than free human rhythm. The author's depiction confirms pervasive control through precision and synchronization. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The "barracks" for lower castes and "smaller houses" for elites indicate strict social demarcation. Physical walls become metaphors for mental and institutional division. The society is visibly structured by rank, with architecture manifesting class identity. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The recurring imagery of glowing factories and floodlit chimneys shows industrial power dominating sight and thought. Technology saturates the environment and imagination, shaping collective consciousness. The author criticizes how such visual control transforms citizens into extensions of the machine. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

12. Correct Answer: (b) a tall industrial structure providing guidance to aircraft and symbolizing the dominance of modern technology.

Reference Line: "For the safety of night-flying planes, its four tall chimneys were flood-lighted and tipped with crimson danger signals. It was a landmark."

Explanation:

(a) The crematorium described is functional, not historical or revered; its purpose is to signal airplanes, not preserve human legacy. The lights and danger signals evoke precision and utility, not heritage or artistic preservation. The author's portrayal eliminates sentiment, portraying the structure as a tool of modern control rather than a vessel of culture. Its visibility stems from necessity, not from commemoration or beauty. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The flood-lit chimneys stand tall, acting as navigational guides for aircraft, representing the supremacy of machine-made visibility over natural

reference points. The word "landmark" thus transforms into an emblem of technological authority, where even a crematorium becomes an instrument of mechanical regulation. Its illumination ensures safety through artificial command, turning death into part of the industrial order. The red warning lights and glare symbolize the dominance of modern engineering, showing that every structure serves function over feeling. The term reflects technology's triumph in redefining meaning and memory. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) The crematorium bears no aura of sanctity; it is stripped of spiritual depth and repurposed for logistical efficiency. The floodlights and danger signals replace reverence with surveillance, reducing mortality to another mechanical necessity. There is no tone of faith, mourning, or introspection; the structure's illumination removes the mystery of death, replacing it with procedural control. The author deliberately denies emotional resonance, emphasizing sterile functionality. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The building's description shows no civic admiration or aesthetic design; it is harsh, bright, and unfeeling. Its significance lies in its artificial illumination for safety, not in architectural pride or collective achievement. The atmosphere lacks grandeur or artistry, depicting a utilitarian landscape dominated by machinery. The author's tone erases any notion of beauty, focusing entirely on technological precision. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

13. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "They created a fungus that acts like a lethal perfume for the pests, offering a promising tool against malaria, dengue, and other deadly diseases."

Explanation:

(a) The researchers' goal was to merge the intelligence of natural processes with scientific precision to develop a safe yet powerful alternative to pesticides. The phrase "lethal perfume" signifies a blend of nature's attraction and fatal control, showing the innovation is rooted in ecology rather than synthetic chemistry. The repeated emphasis on human safety and environmental harmlessness further confirms their biological and ethical intent. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) The passage makes it clear that chemical pesticides have become ineffective because of growing mosquito resistance. The scientists deliberately moved away from such synthetic approaches, choosing biological engineering instead of chemical acceleration. There is no mention of speed being prioritized over safety, which invalidates this interpretation entirely. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The fungus was engineered to emit longifolene, a single natural attractant, not multiple insecticidal agents. The researchers were motivated by disease control and ecological harmony, not by financial or commercial exploitation. The absence of any mention of profit-driven or compound-diversifying goals makes this reasoning inconsistent with the text. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The study originates in the imitation of natural fungi, which refutes any claim of rejecting ecological methods. Instead of substituting nature with laboratory chemicals, the scientists enhanced nature's own defense mechanisms to maintain ecological balance. Therefore, this choice distorts the researchers' philosophy. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

14. Correct Answer: (c) releases floral chemicals that resemble natural scents, deceiving mosquitoes even amid competing odors.

Reference Line: "In laboratory tests, the fungus wiped out 90 to 100% of mosquitoes, even in environments filled with competing scents from people and real flowers."

Explanation:

(a) The passage attributes attraction entirely to olfactory cues rather than auditory ones. Mosquitoes are drawn to scent-based signals that suggest nectar, not to sound frequencies. There is no indication that vibrations play any role in mosquito orientation, which makes this explanation biologically implausible. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The compound longifolene merely attracts mosquitoes through smell; it has no physiological impact before infection occurs. The fungus kills only after physical contact, not through pheromonal suppression or hormonal interference. Thus, this option fabricates mechanisms unrelated to the passage's description. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The fungus cleverly imitates floral scents that mosquitoes naturally associate with food sources. Even when surrounded by real flowers or human odors, the longifolene concentration successfully lures mosquitoes, proving the mimicry's precision. The passage explicitly credits this chemical resemblance for the fungus's success, affirming its olfactory deception as the central factor. Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

(d) The study mentions no neutralization or gas production that diminishes other odors. The fungus functions by attraction, not by suppressing competing scents; it strengthens appeal rather than masking alternatives. This reversal of mechanism contradicts the passage's evidence. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

15. Correct Answer: (d) toxic

Reference Line: "Despite its potency, the fungus is completely harmless to humans ... much safer than many chemical pesticides."

Explanation:

(a) The term "fragile" refers to physical weakness or susceptibility to breakage, which bears no relation to danger or harm. The context contrasts the fungus's safety with chemical toxicity, not with physical durability, rendering this word semantically irrelevant. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The adjective "subtle" implies a quality that is fine, faint, or understated, lacking any association with threat or safety. Since the passage centers around harmlessness as freedom from danger, "subtle" does not convey any oppositional sense to that concept. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) "Delicate" indicates fineness or sensitivity, often used for fragile materials or emotions. It does not signify harm or risk, and therefore cannot serve as the opposite of "harmless," which refers to safety and non-toxicity. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) "Toxic" perfectly opposes "harmless," as it denotes the property of being poisonous or capable of causing injury. The passage emphasizes that the fungus is safe for humans and compares it to toxic pesticides, establishing a direct antonymic contrast between the two. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

16. Correct Answer: (a) Natural processes can reveal sustainable strategies for pest control when scientifically strengthened and responsibly applied.

Reference Line: "We're letting nature give us a hint to tell us what works against mosquitoes."

Explanation:

(a) The statement captures the essence of the researchers' philosophy: harnessing natural cues to create environmentally compatible innovations. Their success depended on amplifying what already works in nature rather than dominating or altering it. This union of ecology and engineering mirrors responsible scientific creativity grounded in sustainability. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) The passage repeatedly contrasts biological safety with the failures of chemical pesticides, showing deliberate movement away from synthetic reliance. The scientists sought resilience through nature's adaptive intelligence, not industrial chemistry, which disqualifies this interpretation. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The tone of the passage emphasizes cooperation with nature, not control or manipulation of it. The fungus's design depends on mimicry and natural attraction rather than forceful alteration of ecological.

(d) The scientists never dismiss evolution or natural mechanisms; rather, they depend on them to inform their experiment. Their work builds upon evolution's strategies instead of replacing them, making this statement fundamentally inaccurate. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

17. Correct Answer: (b) The fungus may remain effective because mosquitoes are unlikely to evolve resistance to its biological mechanism.

Reference Line: "Unlike chemical alternatives that mosquitoes have gradually become resistant to, this biological approach may be nearly impossible for mosquitoes to outsmart or avoid."

Explanation:

(a) The passage mentions that longifolene is gradually released from containers "over several months," implying stability and persistence rather than vulnerability to environmental degradation. There is no evidence that air pollutants or urban conditions would weaken its scent or reduce its effectiveness. Since the compound has a natural origin and is already used safely in perfumes, its potency is unlikely to fade through ordinary exposure. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The researchers' confidence lies in the evolutionary logic that mosquitoes cannot easily escape behavioral instincts that lead them to flowers for nectar. Because the fungus exploits these ingrained preferences rather than a temporary chemical reaction, resistance would require fundamental changes in mosquito biology. The infection works by hijacking a natural attraction, making adaptation nearly impossible, which directly aligns with the study's conclusion of durable effectiveness. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) The scientists emphasize that both the fungus and its container are designed to specifically target mosquitoes, indicating deliberate precision to prevent ecological interference. Pollinators such as bees are not mentioned as victims, and longifolene's controlled release suggests spatially limited impact. The intent of the project was ecological harmony, not collateral harm, which invalidates this assumption about unintended effects. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The passage highlights the fungus's complete harmlessness to humans, repeatedly stressing its use in perfumes and its long safety record. Since the compound has been widely handled and inhaled through cosmetic products without health hazards, there is no reason to suspect danger from airborne spores. The research's emphasis on non-toxicity and selective infection confirms that this claim contradicts the text's assurances. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

18. Correct Answer: (c) fragrance

Reference Line: "Natural fungi ... emit a pleasant chemical known as longifolene, which they discovered could attract mosquitoes."

Explanation:

(a) The passage characterizes longifolene as "pleasant" and "harmless," showing it evokes a sensory appeal rather than harm. A poison implies toxicity and potential for injury, both of which contradict the compound's described safety and common use in perfumes. Its role as an attractant demonstrates functionality rooted in scent, not in lethality, so this interpretation distorts the author's meaning. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) A contaminant denotes something impure or undesirable that pollutes an environment, but the compound here is portrayed as natural and environmentally safe. The researchers even emphasize that it breaks down naturally and has ecological compatibility. Calling it a contaminant reverses the connotation from beneficial to harmful, which is inconsistent with the text's portrayal. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The adjective "pleasant" directly signals a positive olfactory experience, and since longifolene's role is to emit a floral aroma that attracts mosquitoes, the closest single word capturing this quality is "fragrance." The term harmonizes with its natural origin, its perfume usage, and its gentle sensory profile that evokes sweetness rather than harm. It also aligns with the passage's focus on scent as the mechanism of attraction. Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

(d) The word "irritant" implies something that causes discomfort or allergic reaction, which contradicts the description of longifolene's safety and fragrance use. The compound has a "long safety record" and is already present in human environments without negative effects. Describing it as irritating misrepresents both the tone and factual basis of the passage's claims. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

19. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "It's easy for us to think of the natural world ... as unambiguously positive ... but advocates ... argue that this attitude ignores the huge amounts of suffering present in nature."

Explanation:

(a) Statement I captures the misguided belief in a peaceful and balanced natural order, while Statement II reflects how advocates challenge this myth by emphasizing real suffering in ecosystems. Together they summarize the author's contrast between human imagination and ecological cruelty, revealing moral ignorance that hides behind romanticized views of

nature. Both align with the text's explicit claims, establishing their accuracy and complementarity. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) Statement II is valid since it recognizes the advocates' focus on unnoticed pain, yet Statement III completely contradicts the description of disease, fear, and premature death. The author details how only one in millions of animals survive to maturity, which proves that lives in nature are short and filled with suffering. Because the second statement is true but the third is false, this combination is inconsistent with the author's argument. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) While Statement I accurately portrays human sentimentalism toward nature, Statement III falsely presents the wild as a space of long, safe lives. The author highlights mortality and cruelty as normal experiences, undermining any suggestion of harmony or comfort. This pairing mixes one accurate and one inaccurate statement, leading to a logically flawed conclusion about the author's position. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The author's evidence about parasitism, hunger, and fear explicitly denies that wild animals live peacefully, so including Statement III among the true statements misrepresents the essence of the passage. Accepting all three implies that the author views nature as good and stable, which is the opposite of the central argument. Therefore, the inclusion of a clearly false statement invalidates this option. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

20. Correct Answer: (c) immature individuals that have not yet reached full development or reproductive maturity.

Reference Line: "In some species, only one in millions of juveniles survive to adulthood."

Explanation:

(a) The author never confines the term to a particular size or species group. Juveniles are described across species boundaries as young organisms at risk, not merely weak or small ones. Reducing them to "smaller invertebrates" neglects the broader biological meaning that includes all immature forms, making this interpretation both incomplete and inaccurate. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) There is no mention of seasonal migration or movement in the passage. The word "juvenile" is used strictly to mark a stage of life rather than a behavioral pattern. Associating it with migration inserts an unrelated concept into a context purely about survival and development, distorting the author's intended meaning. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The contrast between "juveniles" and "adulthood" clearly defines juveniles as undeveloped or immature

(d) The author never refers to visibility or microscopic life but rather to suffering observable in common ecosystems. Suggesting juveniles are invisible shifts attention from survival challenges to visual perception, which misinterprets the sentence entirely. The emphasis is on age and vulnerability, not on the human ability to see them. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

21. Correct Answer: (a) Humans often glorify nature as pure and harmonious, overlooking the extensive suffering that exists within it.

Reference Line: "Advocates for wild-animal welfare argue that this attitude ignores the huge amounts of suffering present in nature."

Explanation:

(a) The author exposes a moral contradiction: people equate naturalness with goodness, ignoring the widespread pain within ecosystems. The statement mirrors this critique by showing how idealized visions of nature blind humanity to its cruelty. This aligns directly with the passage's call to rethink morality by recognizing suffering where we once saw purity. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) The author never portrays animal-rights advocates as exaggerators. Instead, they are presented as reasoned voices inviting ethical awareness of neglected suffering. Framing them as manipulative misreads the balanced tone, which is investigative rather than accusatory. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The idea of perfect equilibrium contradicts the numerous examples of disease, hunger, and fear discussed in the text. The author specifically refutes the notion of harmony by explaining that "only one in millions survive," which reveals nature's harsh asymmetry rather than balance. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The passage urges humans to rethink and expand moral concern, proving that the debate is ongoing rather than resolved. Declaring moral understanding "advanced" contradicts the author's view that wild-animal welfare remains a new and neglected frontier of ethics. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

22. Correct Answer: (b) analytical and morally reflective, combining factual observation with philosophical reasoning.

Reference Line: "We can't know for sure what it's like to be a wild animal, but we can observe that many or even most wild animals live in conditions that would be considered extremely cruel to inflict on a human."

Explanation:

(a) The author refrains from emotional dramatization or figurative embellishment; the prose is grounded in

rational observation, not poetic sorrow. The argument's strength lies in clarity, not sentimentality, as the writer seeks to educate moral reflection rather than evoke tears. Descriptions of suffering are factual and detached, aiming to make readers think rather than feel. This restrained tone eliminates any trace of lyrical grief or aesthetic sadness. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The passage merges empirical insight with ethical contemplation, using logical progression and balanced diction to build a moral argument. It first establishes factual suffering in nature and then transitions into philosophical questioning about morality, progress, and moral expansion. The style's emphasis on reasoning, precision, and reflection underscores its analytical character. The absence of rhetorical appeals reinforces an academic and introspective tone, aligning it closely with moral philosophy. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) The passage is not written in an urgent or aggressive tone that demands immediate reform. Instead, it calmly acknowledges uncertainty—phrases like “we can't know for sure” and “there might be good reasons” reflect caution and open-mindedness. The author invites discussion rather than confrontation and avoids emotional intensifiers or accusatory rhetoric. Such moderation in tone proves that persuasion occurs through reflection, not exaggeration. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) There is no trace of humor, ridicule, or irony; the argument is solemn and philosophical in nature. The writer treats animal suffering and moral ignorance with seriousness, suggesting that levity would be morally inappropriate here. The goal is to expose complacency, not to mock it, through reasoned analysis and ethical clarity. The tone's gravity eliminates any possibility of ironic intent or comic detachment. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

23. Correct Answer: (d) including previously neglected beings, such as wild animals or digital entities, within our ethical concern.

Reference Line: “Maybe wild animal advocacy helps us make moral progress by expanding our moral circle, and potentially even setting a precedent for work on digital sentience.”

Explanation:

(a) The author's idea of moral expansion has nothing to do with education or the intellectual study of environmental issues. Instead, it deals with enlarging the range of beings we consider morally considerable, moving from humans to animals and possibly digital consciousness. This choice mistakes moral inclusion for academic reform, missing the depth of ethical empathy

discussed. Sustainability and reasoning are peripheral compared to the central moral concern of sentient suffering. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The phrase “moral circle” does not invoke religion or cultural uniformity; it belongs to secular moral philosophy emphasizing empathy, not theological unity. The author advocates ethical inclusivity without appealing to doctrines or scriptures. By turning it into a religious or cultural project, this interpretation wrongly substitutes communal faith for universal compassion. The writer's focus is moral progress grounded in sentience rather than divine authority. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The idea of restricting ethics only to rational or reciprocating beings contradicts the passage's moral expansion beyond such limits. The author calls for inclusion of wild animals and potential digital minds, neither of which fit the criterion of human-like reasoning. This restrictive interpretation reflects the very anthropocentric bias the author seeks to overcome. Therefore, it opposes the principle of inclusion central to the moral circle metaphor. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The author's notion of “expanding our moral circle” clearly means broadening compassion to cover beings that society has historically excluded, such as wild animals and digital entities. This interpretation captures the ethical ambition to acknowledge suffering beyond human or familiar domains. It ties moral progress to recognition of sentience wherever it exists, emphasizing inclusivity as the foundation of a more evolved moral understanding. Thus, the phrase embodies the forward-looking, humanitarian core of the passage. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

24. Correct Answer: (a) Nature is not always good, and caring for wild animals can expand human moral understanding.

Reference Line: “Something being natural doesn't necessarily mean it's good ... maybe wild-animal advocacy helps us make moral progress by expanding our moral circle.”

Explanation:

(a) The author's central thesis dismantles the illusion that the natural world is automatically moral or harmonious and proposes that acknowledging suffering within it deepens our ethical maturity. The passage connects factual suffering to philosophical reflection, urging humans to recognize moral responsibility even in untouched ecosystems. It also presents wild-animal advocacy as a means of broadening moral horizons rather than an impossible pursuit. This synthesis of realism and ethical growth encapsulates the essence of the discussion. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) The author states that wild-animal welfare is “extremely neglected,” showing that progress is minimal, not widespread. This choice falsely portrays moral achievement where the author instead calls for exploration and ethical attention. The tone of inquiry and moral urgency contrasts sharply with this assumption of success, making the option incompatible with textual evidence. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The argument never claims that suffering is unchangeable; rather, it raises open-ended questions about how humans might ethically intervene. The author criticizes equating “natural” with “good,”

implying that action can indeed improve conditions. Suggesting inevitable cruelty erases the passage’s moral optimism and curiosity, contradicting its very premise of progress. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The passage explicitly argues that wild-animal welfare deserves attention because it broadens human empathy and moral capacity. Far from being a distraction, it is framed as a vital ethical frontier alongside farm-animal welfare. This statement dismisses the author’s entire philosophical rationale, thereby opposing both tone and purpose. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

SECTION B: - CURRENT AFFAIRS (INCLUDING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE)

25. Correct Answer: (a) Europe

Explanation: According to the Global Innovation Index 2025, Europe stands as the world’s most innovative region, with 15 countries ranked in the global top 25 and six among the top 10. This dominance reflects the continent’s long-term investment in research and development, advanced education systems, and strong public-private innovation frameworks. Other regions such as Asia and North America follow but with fewer countries achieving comparable global rankings.

26. Correct Answer: (a) Only I and II

Explanation: In the Global Innovation Index 2025, India achieved the 38th position globally, marking a steady improvement from 48th in 2020, reflecting significant progress in innovation capacity, start-up ecosystem, and research output. India also ranks 1st among lower-middle-income economies, highlighting its leadership in cost-effective innovation and digital transformation. India ranks 1st, not 2nd, in the Central and Southern Asia region, maintaining its position as the region’s innovation leader. This consistent upward trajectory underscores India’s growing focus on innovation-driven growth, technology, and human capital development.

27. Correct Answer: (b) World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

Explanation: The Global Innovation Index 2025 is released annually by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). It evaluates innovation capabilities and outcomes across economies using indicators such as R&D investment, human capital, technology infrastructure, and creative outputs. WIPO, a specialised UN agency, promotes intellectual property rights and supports innovation-driven growth worldwide.

28. Correct Answer: (b) 18th edition

Explanation: The Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025 represents the 18th edition of this annual report, prepared in partnership with the Portulans Institute and coordinated by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Over the years, the GII has evolved into a globally recognised tool that tracks innovation performance across nations, assessing them through comprehensive indicators covering research, technology, infrastructure, and institutional excellence.

29. Correct Answer: (d) SEAO continues to emerge as a global innovation hub, with six economies ranked among the world’s top 25 innovators.

Explanation: According to the Global Innovation Index 2025, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania (SEAO) have strengthened their position as key global innovation hubs. The region includes six economies in the top 25—such as Singapore, China, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and Hong Kong (China)—reflecting rapid advances in research, technology, and innovation-led economic growth.

30. Correct Answer: (a) 78 indicators

Explanation: The Global Innovation Index (GII) employs around 78 diverse indicators to assess and compare the innovation performance of nearly 140 economies across the world. These indicators span multiple dimensions — such as research and development (R&D) expenditure, venture capital activity, high-technology exports, intellectual property filings, education quality, and infrastructure readiness. By integrating economic, institutional, and technological factors, the GII serves as a comprehensive global benchmark that guides governments, businesses, and policymakers in building strong, innovation-driven ecosystems and shaping evidence-based innovation strategies.

31. Correct Answer: (c) Charkha

Explanation: The Charkha, or spinning wheel, became the most prominent symbol of Swadeshi and economic independence during the Non-Cooperation Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. It represented the idea of self-reliance by encouraging Indians to spin and wear Khadi instead of British-made textiles. The widespread use of the Charkha fostered unity among the people, revived rural industries, and stood as both an economic and moral weapon against colonial exploitation—embodying the ideals of dignity, simplicity, and national pride.

32. Correct Answer: (a) The Ottoman Empire was dismembered after the War, Turkey was divided, and the Khalifa lost his position of authority.

Explanation: After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was dismantled under the terms of the postwar treaties, particularly the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). Its vast territories in the Middle East and Europe were divided among the Allied powers, leading to the formation of several new nations. The Caliphate (Khilafat), symbolizing Islamic unity and leadership, was abolished in 1924 under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secular reforms. This marked the definitive end of Ottoman authority and the beginning of the modern Republic of Turkey.

34. Correct Answer: (d) Mohammad Ali Jinnah

Explanation: Prominent leaders such as C. Rajagopalachari, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Ajmal Khan, Gopabandhu Das, Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, and Jawaharlal Nehru actively took part in the Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. However, (d) Jinnah was against the policy, resigned from the Congress, and opposed the movement outright.

35. Correct Answer: (c) Only I and II

Explanation : The Khilafat Movement was launched by Shoukat Ali and Mohammad Ali to protest British actions against the Ottoman Caliph after World War I. The All India Khilafat Committee was established in 1919 under the leadership of the Ali brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ajmal Khan, and Hasrat Mohani. Statement III is incorrect because the movement began in 1919, before the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22), and both later became interlinked under Gandhi's leadership.

36. Correct Answer: (d) World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Explanation: The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the leading global agency working to establish international standards for the

protection of traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and geographical indications. Its Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) actively negotiates to address gaps in global intellectual property frameworks. While progress continues, no binding international treaty has yet been finalized. WIPO's efforts aim to ensure that indigenous communities and nations receive fair recognition, ownership, and benefit-sharing for their cultural and creative heritage.

37. Correct Answer: (b) Rs 1.2 lakh

Explanation : Reports indicate that Prada plans to sell its version of the product for around Rs 1.2 lakh, drawing widespread criticism due to the vast price gap with Indian artisans, who sell authentic handmade pairs for under Rs 1,000. The controversy reignited debates on cultural appropriation and economic inequity, highlighting how global luxury brands often profit from traditional crafts without acknowledging or adequately compensating the indigenous communities whose heritage and skill form the foundation of such designs.

38. Correct Answer: (c) Only I and III

Explanation: Kolhapuri chappals received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2019, recognizing their unique regional craftsmanship and heritage. The tag was granted under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which legally protects region-specific products. Statement II is incorrect because there is no Handicrafts Recognition Act of 2005; this incorrect attribution misstates the legal framework governing GI registrations in India.

39. Correct Answer: (b) A GI tag protects region-specific products based on unique geographical, material, and traditional qualities of their origin.

Explanation: A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is an intellectual property right that safeguards products closely linked to their geographical origin, where local climate, resources, and craftsmanship contribute to their uniqueness. It ensures that only authorized producers from the designated area can use the name, preventing misrepresentation by outsiders. GI tags enhance the market value of traditional goods like Darjeeling Tea, Kanchipuram Sarees, or Nagaland Chillies, while supporting rural livelihoods, preserving cultural identity, and promoting sustainable regional development through authenticity and recognition.

40. Correct Answer: (a) Maharashtra and Karnataka

Explanation : Kolhapuri chappals are traditional handcrafted leather sandals made by artisans

from Maharashtra's Kolhapur district and nearby regions of Karnataka. Known for their durability, distinctive designs, and natural tanning process, these chappals are produced entirely by hand using locally sourced leather and natural dyes. The craft has been passed down through generations, representing the cultural identity and artisanal heritage of western India, and continues to hold a strong presence in domestic and international markets.

41. Correct Answer: (d) All I, II and III

Explanation: The Paris AI Action Summit continues the global dialogue initiated at the AI Safety Summit held at Bletchley Park, United Kingdom, in 2023, and the subsequent gathering in Seoul, South Korea. The U.K. summit focused on discussions surrounding potential catastrophic or 'doomsday' risks posed by advanced AI systems and produced the landmark Bletchley Declaration on AI Safety, signed by 29 nations, including major powers like the U.S., China, and India. Together, these summits represent a growing international consensus on the need for coordinated governance and responsible AI development.

42. Correct Answer: (c) Shakti-VIII

Explanation: The Indo-French Joint Military Exercise Shakti-VIII was held in France under realistic battlefield conditions, covering mission-specific drills related to sub-conventional and modern warfare. The exercise aimed to enhance interoperability, coordination, and mutual understanding between the Indian and French Armies. It also focused on sharing tactical expertise, improving joint operational capabilities, and strengthening defence cooperation as part of the growing India-France strategic partnership.

43. Correct Answer: (b) 58 countries

Explanation: A total of 58 countries, including major global players such as India, China, Brazil, France, and Australia, signed a joint statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet at the AI Action Summit in Paris. The statement emphasized the shared commitment of these nations to promote AI development that is ethical, inclusive, and environmentally responsible, ensuring that technological progress benefits humanity while addressing global challenges such as inequality and climate change.

44. Correct Answer: (a) Sixteen leading AI companies made voluntary pledges to develop AI systems in a transparent and responsible manner at the Seoul Summit.

Explanation: At the Seoul AI Summit, sixteen major AI companies—including OpenAI, Google, Meta, Microsoft, and others from China, South Korea, and the UAE—made voluntary commitments to advance artificial intelligence transparently and responsibly. These pledges emphasize ethical governance, accountability, and openness in AI development. The initiative seeks to strengthen global cooperation to ensure innovation in frontier AI aligns with human values, safety standards, and international trust frameworks.

45. Correct Answer: (a) Google

Explanation: Google has announced a massive \$15 billion investment over the next five years to establish an AI data centre in Andhra Pradesh, making it the company's largest investment in India so far. The project is being developed in partnership with the Adani Group and Airtel, focusing on building robust AI infrastructure, including a new international subsea gateway. This initiative will enhance India's digital capacity, strengthen data connectivity, and contribute to advancing AI-driven innovation and cloud technologies across the region.

46. Correct Answer: (c) Sarvam AI

Explanation: Sarvam AI, a Bengaluru-based artificial intelligence firm, has collaborated with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to make Aadhaar services smarter and more secure using generative AI tools. In April 2025, it also received approval to develop India's Sovereign LLM Ecosystem, an open-source language model framework to strengthen public service delivery, improve governance transparency, and build digital trust. This partnership marks a major step in India's goal to advance AI-driven innovation in citizen services through indigenous technology.

47. Correct Answer: (b) Only II and III

Explanation: UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme has facilitated the establishment of four regional registers and encouraged the formation of National "Memory of the World" Committees in over 100 countries to safeguard and promote access to documentary heritage. Launched in 1992, the programme's focus extends beyond preservation to include enhancing accessibility and awareness of global documentary heritage.

48. Correct Answer: (b) 14 inscriptions

Explanation: UNESCO's Memory of the World Register now includes 14 inscriptions from India, representing the nation's extraordinary documentary and archival legacy.

These inscriptions cover a wide range of materials—ancient manuscripts, historical documents, maps, and rare archival records—that reflect India’s civilizational depth and cultural continuity. The inclusion of Indian heritage in this global register reinforces the country’s commitment to preserving knowledge systems, linguistic diversity, and historical narratives for future generations while promoting global recognition of its documentary treasures.

49. Correct Answer: (d) Two submissions

Explanation: Under UNESCO’s Memory of the World Programme, a maximum of two submissions from any single country can be inscribed in the Register in a given year. This rule ensures balanced global representation and diversity in the selection process. Since 1997, the Register has been updated biennially, with 2017 marking the year of the highest number of new additions since its inception. The two-entry limit per country helps maintain equitable recognition of documentary heritage from all regions of the world.

50. Correct Answer: (c) UNESCO added 74 heritage collections, bringing the total number of entries recorded to 570 worldwide.

Explanation: According to UNESCO’s latest update, 74 new documentary heritage collections were added to the Memory of the World Register, increasing the total to 570 entries. This inclusion highlights UNESCO’s continued efforts to safeguard and promote access to the world’s documentary heritage, ensuring that significant historical records are preserved for future generations across diverse regions and cultures.

51. Correct Answer: (b) Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune

Explanation: The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), Pune, serves as the custodian of the rare manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata’s Natyashastra recognized by UNESCO under its Memory of the World Register. Founded in 1917, BORI is one of India’s oldest centers of Indological research and manuscript preservation. It houses thousands of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts covering Sanskrit, Prakrit, and other classical languages. The inclusion of these manuscripts in UNESCO’s register highlights their global significance in documenting India’s intellectual, philosophical, and artistic heritage, as well as BORI’s vital role in safeguarding this legacy through scientific conservation and scholarly archiving

52. Correct Answer: (a) Sage Bharata

Explanation: The Natyashastra is traditionally attributed to Sage Bharata, who is regarded as the father of Indian dramaturgy and performance theory. Comprising around 36,000 verses, this ancient Sanskrit text provides a comprehensive framework for natya (drama), abhinaya (acting), rasa (aesthetic emotion), bhava (feeling), and sangita (music). UNESCO’s recognition highlights its universal significance as one of the earliest and most detailed works on theatre and performing traditions in the world.

Section C: Legal Reasoning

53. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: “The surety’s liability is, by default, coextensive with that of the principal debtor (Section 128), unless the contract limits it; thus, absent a contrary term, the surety answers for principal, interest, and costs to the same extent as the debtor.”

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: While it is true that a surety’s promise is secondary in nature and that guarantees should be construed strictly, this principle of strict construction does not permit courts to arbitrarily truncate the scope of liability where the contracting parties themselves have used no limiting or restrictive words. Section 128 establishes a clear default rule that the surety’s liability is coextensive with the principal debtor’s liability, and this default rule continues to

govern the relationship absent any contrary stipulation or express limitation in the guarantee contract itself.

Option (b) Correct: The statutory framework under Section 128 unambiguously establishes that a surety’s liability mirrors that of the principal debtor in its entirety, encompassing principal amount, contractual interest, and litigation costs, unless the guarantee contract itself contains specific language that narrows or limits this coextensive liability. Since Meera’s guarantee contained no such contractual cap, limitation clause, or restrictive language of any kind, she remains liable for the full decretal amount to the same extent as Rajat under the default coextensive liability rule.

Option (c) Incorrect: This option attempts to artificially split liability between different categories of monetary obligations principal versus interest and costs but such a division finds absolutely no support or foundation

in the language or structure of Section 128. The provision expressly aligns and equates the surety's total exposure with the debtor's whole and entire liability, making no distinction between types of sums owed. There is no legal basis for treating interest and costs differently from the principal amount in determining the surety's obligations.

Option (d) Incorrect: This option fundamentally misunderstands the nature of coextensive liability established under the guarantee of contract framework. The Bank is under no legal obligation whatsoever to first exhaust every possible remedy against the principal debtor Rajat before proceeding to enforce the guarantee against the surety. Coextensive liability expressly permits and authorizes the creditor to sue the surety immediately upon the occurrence of default, unless the specific guarantee contract itself contains language that expressly postpones or delays such recourse to the surety.

54. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "A continuing guarantee (Section 129) extends to a series of transactions and endures until revoked for the future: by notice (Section 130), by the surety's death as to future dealings (Section 131), or by variance in the underlying contract without the surety's consent (Section 133), which discharges the surety for subsequent transactions."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: The concept of "implied consent" to material contractual changes cannot simply be invented or presumed by courts without any factual foundation showing actual knowledge and agreement. Section 133 specifically treats any variance or modification in the underlying contract terms made without the surety's express consent as an event that automatically discharges the surety from liability for all subsequent transactions that occur after such unauthorized variance. The silence of a surety in the face of undisclosed changes cannot be construed as implied consent to commercially significant alterations.

Option (b) Incorrect: While it is true that a continuing guarantee generally remains operative for future transactions until formally revoked, this principle is not absolute and does not operate irrespective of all circumstances. A continuing guarantee is not rendered irrevocable or immune in the face of material unilateral alterations made by the creditor and debtor without the surety's knowledge or assent. Statutory discharge under Section 133 automatically follows when the core terms and conditions of the underlying contract are materially varied without obtaining the surety's consent to such changes.

Option (c) Incorrect: This option grossly overstates the consequences of default and incorrectly suggests that any default event immediately and automatically discharges the entire guarantee in its entirety, releasing the surety from all past obligations as well as future ones. In reality, when discharge occurs due to variance under Section 133, earlier liabilities that arose and crystallized under the original, unvaried terms typically remain enforceable against the surety. The statutory discharge operates prospectively for subsequent transactions occurring after the variance, not retroactively to extinguish past liabilities already within the old contractual terms.

Option (d) Correct: The referenced statutory rule in Section 133 precisely and directly covers this exact factual situation presented in the question. When there is a material variance or modification in the terms of the underlying contract such as enlargement of credit limits and extension of payment terms made without obtaining the surety's prior consent, the law treats this as automatically discharging and releasing the surety from liability for all subsequent transactions that occur under the continuing guarantee after such unauthorized variance, while preserving liability for earlier transactions.

55. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "the surety is entitled to the benefit of all securities existing when suretyship was undertaken, whether known or unknown; loss or release of such securities without the surety's consent discharges the surety pro tanto (Section 141)."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Correct: The statutory passage expressly and unambiguously grants the surety a legal entitlement to claim the benefit of all securities, collateral, and charges that existed at the time when the suretyship was originally undertaken, regardless of whether the surety had actual knowledge of such securities or remained unaware of their existence. When such securities are lost, released, or impaired through the creditor's negligence or deliberate action without obtaining the surety's prior consent, the law provides that the surety shall be discharged proportionally that is, pro tanto to the extent of the value represented by such lost or released security.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option fundamentally mischaracterizes the relationship between collateral security management and surety liability by suggesting that collateral treatment is entirely irrelevant to the surety's obligations. In reality, the creditor's handling and preservation of collateral is absolutely central and material to determining the surety's exposure under the

guarantee. Section 141 explicitly and directly ties the extent of the surety's liability to the creditor's duty to preserve and maintain all securities that were available at the inception and commencement of the suretyship arrangement, making collateral management highly relevant.

Option (c) Incorrect: This option dramatically overstates the legal consequences of creditor impairment of securities by suggesting that any creditor lapse whatsoever completely annihilates and extinguishes the entire guarantee, leaving absolutely no residual claim against the surety. The reality is quite different: the statutory discharge provided under Section 141 is carefully calibrated to be proportional rather than total in nature. Only the specific value of the lost or released security operates to reduce the surety's liability on a pro tanto basis, unless there exist other independent and separate discharging grounds that might affect the entire guarantee.

Option (d) Incorrect: This option completely inverts and reverses the statutory scheme by suggesting that the surety must somehow bear the commercial risks and consequences arising from the creditor's own impairment or mishandling of collateral securities. Such an interpretation is fundamentally contrary to Section 141's protective framework. The creditor's impairment, negligence, or release of securities cannot and does not operate to enlarge or increase the surety's original obligation; rather, it operates in precisely the opposite direction to reduce the surety's liability on a proportional, pro tanto basis to the extent of the security value lost.

56. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "Discharge may occur by creditor-debtor release (Section 134), composition/time/not to sue agreements (Section 135) unless the surety assents, mere forbearance being insufficient to discharge (Section 137)"

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option fundamentally conflates and confuses two entirely distinct legal concepts by erroneously equating any mere delay or forbearance in initiating suit with the formal, legally binding act of "giving time" to the debtor through a contractual agreement. Section 137 makes abundantly clear and explicit that mere forbearance that is, simply choosing to wait before suing or temporarily refraining from enforcement action does not constitute giving time in the legal sense and therefore does not operate to discharge the surety from his secondary obligations and promises under the guarantee contract.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option incorrectly assumes and presumes that preliminary negotiations or ongoing discussions aimed at potential restructure of debt obligations always and automatically imply the existence of a binding, enforceable promise or contractual commitment to grant additional time to the debtor. However, negotiations alone, absent the conclusion and execution of a definitive and binding agreement, simply do not amount to or constitute a Section 135 "time" contract that would trigger discharge of the surety. No automatic discharge can follow merely from preliminary talks, discussions, or negotiations that have not yet crystallized into concluded agreements.

Option (c) Correct: The cited statutory language draws and establishes a precise and critical distinction between different types of creditor conduct and their respective legal consequences. Binding, enforceable agreements to give time, enter into compositions, or contract not to sue do operate to discharge the surety unless the surety has expressly assented to such arrangements. However, mere forbearance simply choosing to delay filing suit or temporarily holding back from enforcement while sending reminders is expressly stated to be insufficient to trigger any discharge of the surety's continuing liability under the guarantee contract.

Option (d) Incorrect: This option inverts and introduces an entirely fictitious legal requirement that has absolutely no basis or foundation in the relevant statutory provisions of Sections 135 through 137. There exists no prerequisite or mandatory condition requiring the creditor to first liquidate, realize, or exhaust available collateral securities as a precondition to initiating suit against the surety for recovery. The manufactured defense articulated in this option suggesting that waiting to sue alone somehow unlawfully enlarges the surety's business risk and automatically terminates the guarantee finds no support whatsoever in the applicable legal framework.

57. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "disclosure of material facts affecting the surety's risk (Section 143) and absence of misrepresentation (Section 142)"

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: While commercial parties generally have duties to investigate and conduct due diligence, the statutory framework explicitly imposes specific affirmative duties upon creditors regarding the disclosure of material facts when soliciting guarantees from sureties. The doctrine of caveat emptor does not apply in its pure form where the creditor has made specific assurances or representations that induced the

surety to sign. Creditor statements, particularly regarding material matters like the debtor's prior default history, cannot be casually dismissed as mere "sales talk" and can indeed invalidate an otherwise commercial promise when they constitute actionable misrepresentations.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option erroneously imports the heightened criminal standard of proof "beyond reasonable doubt" into what is fundamentally a civil contractual matter governed by civil evidentiary standards and burdens of proof. In civil matters involving misrepresentation and non-disclosure in the context of suretyship contracts, the ordinary civil standard of proof on a balance of probabilities applies. Misrepresentation of material facts and material non-disclosure by themselves suffice to vitiate and avoid suretyship arrangements under the statutory framework, without any requirement to establish fraud to the demanding criminal standard of proof.

Option (c) Incorrect: This option artificially and incorrectly introduces a requirement of collusion or joint deceit between the debtor and creditor as a necessary precondition to avoiding the guarantee based on misrepresentation. However, collusion between the parties is simply unnecessary under the statutory scheme. The creditor's own independent misrepresentation or deliberate concealment of material facts known to the creditor can, by itself, suffice to vitiate and render unenforceable the guarantee contract against the surety, entirely irrespective of whether the debtor had any knowledge, participation, or role in such misstatements or omissions.

Option (d) Correct: The statutory passage explicitly identifies and makes disclosure of material facts affecting the surety's risk assessment and the absence of misrepresentation essential prerequisites and foundational requirements for the formation and enforceability of valid suretyship contracts under Sections 142 and 143. When these essential requirements are breached whether through affirmative misrepresentation of existing facts or through material non-disclosure of information within the creditor's knowledge such breach renders the guarantee contract inoperative, unenforceable, and voidable at the instance of the prejudiced surety who relied upon the misstatements or suffered from the concealment.

58. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "Section 144 recognises conditions precedent to suretyship (e.g., joining of co-sureties): if unmet, the guarantee is inoperative."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Correct: Section 144 expressly recognizes and gives full legal effect to conditions precedent that parties may incorporate into suretyship arrangements, including specifically the condition requiring the joining or signature of named co-sureties within a specified timeframe. Such conditions precedent function as gateway requirements that must be fully satisfied before any liability can legally attach to the conditional surety. When such an expressly stated condition precedent remains unmet as where a named co-surety never signs as required the guarantee simply never becomes operative or enforceable, and no liability attaches to the conditional surety regardless of subsequent events.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option incorrectly suggests that the creditor's performance of its obligations under the underlying contract such as delivering goods to the buyer can somehow substitute for, replace, or cure the non-fulfillment of an express condition precedent requiring a co-surety's signature. Performance by the creditor and satisfaction of conditions precedent are entirely separate and independent legal requirements. Delivery of goods cannot retroactively or retrospectively create, manufacture, or perfect the missing assent and signature from the named co-surety whose joinder was made an explicit precondition to the guarantee's effectiveness and operation.

Option (c) Incorrect: This option fundamentally misconstrues and mischaracterizes the legal nature and effect of a condition precedent by treating it merely as a contribution term or apportionment clause that affects only the quantum or proportion of liability among multiple sureties. However, Section 144 recognizes conditions precedent as threshold gateway requirements to the very existence and operation of liability itself, not as mere divisible apportionment provisions. When the condition joining of a named co-surety fails to be satisfied, the consequence is that the guarantee never becomes operative at all, rather than simply creating a different contribution ratio among sureties.

Option (d) Incorrect: This option attempts to invoke the surety's status as a company director and her fiduciary position to somehow override, supersede, or abolish explicitly agreed contractual conditions precedent in the guarantee instrument. However, director status and fiduciary obligations to the company do not operate to eliminate or nullify conditions that the parties have expressly negotiated and incorporated into their contractual arrangements. The enforceability and operability of the guarantee instrument necessarily and properly hinges upon the satisfaction of the agreed precedent event the co-surety's joinder regardless of the surety's corporate role or fiduciary status within the company structure.

59. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Assault refers to the wrongful apprehension of fear in the mind of another person without actual physical contact."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option fundamentally misunderstands the distinct nature of assault as a separate and independent tort from battery. Contact or physical touching is completely unnecessary for the tort of assault to be established; rather, assault specifically protects the distinct legal interest against reasonable apprehension of imminent harmful or offensive contact, not merely against completed force or actual battery. Denying liability on the basis of absence of contact essentially collapses and conflates assault entirely into battery, which fundamentally misstates the well-established doctrine and eliminates assault's independent protective function in tort law.

Option (b) Correct: The stated legal principle fits this factual situation squarely and precisely: when a realistic gun-pointing gesture objectively and reasonably induces genuine fear of imminent violence in the mind of a reasonable person standing in the victim's position, the tort of assault is complete and actionable even if the weapon happens to be unloaded, incapable of causing harm, or is merely a theatrical prop, and even though no actual physical touching or contact occurs. Classic common law authority consistently recognizes and establishes this fundamental rule governing assault liability.

Option (c) Incorrect: The tort of assault may be committed and established through overt acts, threatening gestures, or menacing conduct that creates reasonable apprehension of imminent harmful contact in the victim's mind; it is absolutely not confined or restricted solely to threatening words or explicit verbal menaces directed at the victim. Silent yet objectively menacing conduct such as pointing what appears to be a loaded firearm at someone from close range suffices completely to constitute actionable assault when such conduct reasonably causes fear of imminent violence, regardless of absence of accompanying verbal threats.

Option (d) Incorrect: The theatrical or rehearsal context of the conduct does not automatically create strict liability or guarantee that assault will be found in every instance; rather, the proper legal test remains whether a reasonable person standing in the plaintiff's position would experience genuine apprehension of imminent harmful contact in the specific moment and circumstances presented. Liability is not automatic for any and all rehearsal activities conducted in public spaces; the determination depends entirely on whether reasonable fear was objectively induced by the

defendant's conduct toward the particular plaintiff under all the circumstances.

60. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "Mere obstruction, however, does not constitute battery, as held in *Innes v. Wylie*."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: The tort of battery fundamentally and necessarily requires intentional, unlawful physical touching or contact with another person's body; merely equating deliberate obstruction of a person's chosen path with "force per se" inappropriately erases and eliminates the essential contact element that defines and distinguishes battery from other torts. This expansive interpretation directly contradicts the clearly stated legal principle that expressly excludes mere obstruction from the scope of battery liability, as such obstruction involves no actual physical touching or application of force to the plaintiff's person whatsoever.

Option (b) Incorrect: The creation of apprehension of imminent force or harmful contact properly falls within the distinct domain of the separate tort of assault, not battery; without actual physical contact or touching occurring between the defendant and plaintiff, the specific tort of battery simply is not and cannot be made out on the facts presented. Moreover, in this particular scenario, reasonable apprehension of collision or contact is not even plausibly shown, since the security officer remained stationary and immobile, making no threatening movements toward the plaintiff, and multiple alternative routes remained available for passage.

Option (c) Incorrect: The tort of false imprisonment necessarily requires proof of total and complete restraint of the plaintiff's liberty of movement in all directions; the clear presence of multiple unobstructed exits, alternative doorways, and available side space around the security officer definitively negates any element of complete confinement or total restraint of movement. Therefore, attempting to re-characterize this obstruction claim as false imprisonment necessarily fails on the essential element of total restraint, making this alternative theory of liability equally unavailable to the plaintiff as a basis for recovery in this case.

Option (d) Correct: The cited reference line from the established precedent of *Innes v. Wylie* is absolutely decisive and controlling on these facts: an unmoving human barrier or stationary person who engages in no physical touch or contact does not constitute the tort of battery under any circumstances, especially and particularly when other reasonable avenues, alternative routes, and unobstructed pathways exist and remain available to permit the plaintiff to pass freely without

any interference or complete restraint of movement in all directions.

61. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "The use of force against a trespasser is justified, as in *Pratap Daji v. B.B.& C.I. Rly.*, where ejecting a ticketless passenger was not battery."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Correct: The established legal principle clearly recognizes and establishes a qualified privilege for property owners, controllers, and common carriers: the use of reasonable and proportionate force to remove a trespasser who has no legal right to remain on the premises defeats and negates the element of unlawfulness that is essential and necessary for establishing battery liability. The specific facts presented demonstrate only minimal, controlled, non-violent physical contact used to guide the ticketless passenger off the train, which falls well within the scope of justified and privileged force under the circumstances.

Option (b) Incorrect: While consent is generally required for lawful touching, treating all non-consensual physical contact as automatically unlawful battery inappropriately ignores and eliminates well-established legal privileges and defenses that apply where property controllers, possessors, and common carriers exercise their recognized rights. Legal privileges for the use of reasonable force exist independently of consent in certain defined situations, such as removing trespassers, and these privileges provide complete justification that defeats battery claims even when the touching was not consented to by the person being removed.

Option (c) Incorrect: The tort of battery absolutely does not require serious harm, substantial injury, or visible damage to be actionable in civil proceedings; rather, battery requires only intentional unlawful touching of another person, regardless of the degree of harm caused or whether any injury results. However, in this particular case, the physical touching involved is not unlawful at all because it is specifically privileged and justified by the railway's right to remove trespassers using reasonable force; the defense succeeds not because "no harm was done" but because the touching was legally justified and privileged.

Option (d) Incorrect: Established tort law does not mandate or require police intermediation, intervention, or escort for all ejections of trespassers from private property or common carriers; insisting on such a blanket requirement as a precondition to any physical removal would effectively and completely extinguish the long-recognized privilege of property possessors and

carriers to use reasonable force themselves. The law expressly permits controllers of property to exercise reasonable self-help through measured force to protect their possessory rights and enforce lawful rules without first seeking police assistance in every instance.

62. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "confinement with guards outside amounted to false imprisonment despite the plaintiff's ignorance."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: Following more recent and progressive judicial authority such as the *Meering* decision, actual awareness or subjective knowledge of the restraint is not treated as a strict or essential element of the tort of false imprisonment in all circumstances. A deliberately imposed hidden cordon, barrier, or restraint created through human guards can still constitute total and complete restraint of liberty, thereby making the detention actionable as false imprisonment despite the plaintiff's complete ignorance or lack of awareness of the confinement at the time it was occurring.

Option (b) Incorrect: The fact that a door remains technically unlocked is entirely immaterial and irrelevant where human barriers, stationed guards, or other means render exit practically impossible or effectively prevented; physical locks, bolted doors, and mechanical keys are not the only recognized method of creating restraint for purposes of false imprisonment. Total restraint can be accomplished and established through human agents who prevent passage just as effectively as through locked doors or physical barriers, making the unlocked status of the door completely beside the point in determining liability.

Option (c) Correct: The specifically cited reference line from relevant case law is directly on point and controlling for this factual situation: guard-enforced confinement, where security personnel are stationed with instructions to prevent exit, amounts to actionable false imprisonment even if and when the detainee did not realize, know about, or become aware of the restraint at the time it was actually occurring. The intentional creation of total restraint through human barriers is sufficient to establish the tort regardless of the plaintiff's contemporaneous knowledge or subjective awareness.

Option (d) Incorrect: Total restraint of liberty may properly arise from either physical acts or verbal commands and threats; quiet human barriers, silently stationed guards with instructions to prevent passage, or physical blocking can create complete and total restraint without any accompanying verbal threats,

explicit words of compulsion, or spoken commands being necessary. The tort focuses on the objective fact of total restraint of the plaintiff's liberty of movement, not on the particular means verbal versus physical by which that complete restraint is accomplished or communicated.

63. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Consent negates trespass, as in *Robinson v. Balmain New Ferry Co.*, where refusal to repay entry fees did not constitute detention."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: When the plaintiff voluntarily accepted and consented to the clearly posted conditions upon entry into the premises, conditioning subsequent exit on payment of the stated fee is not coercive restraint but rather legitimate enforcement of contractually agreed terms that bounded and defined the conditional nature of access from the outset. Treating such agreed and disclosed terms as unlawful coercion inappropriately re-writes and transforms contractually bounded and conditional access arrangements into a tort of detention, despite the plaintiff's initial voluntary consent and acceptance of the posted conditions.

Option (b) Correct: The specifically cited rule from the leading precedent of *Robinson v. Balmain New Ferry Co.* directly applies and controls this situation: where entry onto premises is expressly conditional and clearly posted as such, and the patron voluntarily consents to and accepts those stated conditions, the subsequent enforcement of the agreed condition is not false imprisonment merely because the patron later changes their mind and refuses to comply with the payment term they initially accepted when entering the premises under those disclosed conditional terms.

Option (c) Incorrect: A patron's unilateral subjective wish or decision to leave the premises at a later time does not retroactively erase, invalidate, or nullify the clearly posted conditions of entry and exit that the patron voluntarily accepted and agreed to when initially entering the property. Insisting on mandatory police involvement or intervention for every disagreement over exit payment terms would severely distort fundamental property rights, eliminate the enforceability of conditional access arrangements, and undermine basic consent doctrine that permits property owners to impose reasonable conditions on entry to their premises.

Option (d) Incorrect: Tort liability for false imprisonment does not hinge on, depend upon, or turn on whether the property operator offers a refund,

monetary compensation, or opportunity to unwind the transaction after the patron's entry; conversely, the absence of any refund offer does not somehow transform previously agreed and validly accepted conditional access terms into unlawful confinement. The determinative factor is the plaintiff's initial voluntary consent to the posted conditions, not subsequent offers or refusals regarding refunds, which are irrelevant to whether the original detention was lawful or unlawful.

64. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Lawful arrest made on reasonable grounds does not amount to false imprisonment."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: Applying outcome-based tests that look to whether charges were ultimately filed is fundamentally wrong in principle and misstates the proper legal analysis; the legality and lawfulness of an arrest necessarily turns on whether reasonable grounds existed to support the arrest at the specific time it was made, not on whether criminal charges later ensue, proceed to trial, or result in conviction. The fact that a suspect is subsequently released without prosecution does not retroactively render an initially lawful arrest made on reasonable grounds into false imprisonment.

Option (b) Correct: The cited reference line is controlling and dispositive: when reasonable grounds exist to support and justify a lawful arrest at the time police take the suspect into custody, no tort of false imprisonment lies or can be established merely because the suspect is later released without charges being filed or prosecution being initiated. The existence of reasonable suspicion and grounds at the moment of arrest provides complete justification and defeats any claim of unlawful detention, regardless of the ultimate outcome or disposition of the investigation.

Option (c) Incorrect: Criminal procedure law expressly permits and authorizes warrantless arrests to be made on reasonable suspicion of involvement in criminal activity in specifically defined circumstances and for certain categories of offenses; a blanket requirement that police must always secure a judicial warrant before restraining any person suspected of any offense fundamentally misstates and misrepresents the actual scope of arrest powers conferred on law enforcement. Warrantless arrests based on reasonable grounds are lawful and do not constitute false imprisonment when proper justification exists.

Option (d) Incorrect: There is no absolute, blanket tort immunity that shields the State or public authorities from all false imprisonment claims simply by virtue of their governmental status; rather, liability properly

depends on whether the specific restraint was lawful or unlawful based on whether reasonable grounds existed, not on a generic "good faith" defense that automatically trumps the essential elements of the tort. Public authorities can be held liable for false imprisonment when arrests are made without reasonable grounds, even if officers subjectively believed they were acting properly.

65. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "Eligible categories include women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, industrial workmen, persons in custody, victims of disasters or human trafficking, disabled persons, and individuals with income below ₹1 lakh (₹1.25 lakh for Supreme Court cases)."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option fundamentally mischaracterizes the legal aid eligibility framework by asserting that income considerations universally control and gate-keep every single application without exception. The statutory passage and scheme explicitly list and enumerate multiple categorical eligibilities including women, children, disabled persons, SC/ST members, and others in addition to and completely independent of the income-based class of beneficiaries. Treating income as a universal and absolute gatekeeping threshold directly contradicts the deliberately inclusive and multi-faceted eligibility scheme established by the Legal Services Authorities Act and constitutional access-to-justice policies under Article 39A.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option incorrectly suggests that women alone enjoy exemption from income limits while simultaneously imposing an additional requirement that disabled persons must provide further proof of indigence or financial hardship to justify and qualify for free legal representation in court proceedings. However, the authoritative text and statutory framework does not impose any such indigence add-on, additional financial burden, or supplementary proof requirement specifically for disability-based eligibility. Both women and disabled persons appear and are recognized as completely independent categorical classes or status-based categories for obtaining legal-aid access, without any income verification overlay or additional financial demonstration requirements.

Option (c) Incorrect: This option impermissibly and artificially limits the scope of categorical exemptions from income thresholds to only persons in custody and members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, thereby severely truncating and cutting down the much broader list of enumerated vulnerable classes

specifically identified and protected by statute, scheme rules, and constitutional policy. The legal aid eligibility policy framework deliberately and intentionally extends categorical access to a considerably broader and more comprehensive vulnerable population list that includes women, children, disabled persons, industrial workmen, disaster victims, trafficking survivors, and other marginalized groups beyond just custody and SC/ST status.

Option (d) Correct: The specifically quoted reference line from the authoritative source material clearly and unambiguously recognizes parallel, alternative, and independent routes to legal aid eligibility both status-based categorical qualifications such as being a woman or disabled person, and a separate monetary income threshold for general applicants set at below ₹1 lakh annually (or ₹1.25 lakh for Supreme Court matters). Therefore, Neelam plainly qualifies for free legal aid through her status as both a woman and a disabled person, despite her annual income of ₹1.6 lakh crossing and exceeding the income ceiling that would otherwise apply to non-categorical general applicants seeking legal assistance.

66. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "Lok Adalats, functioning as Alternative Dispute Resolution forums under the 1987 Act, resolve disputes amicably at pre-litigation or pending stages. Their awards hold the same status as civil court decrees and are final and binding."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: The governing statute expressly and deliberately elevates Lok Adalat outcomes and awards to the full legal status of civil court decrees, conferring upon them complete finality and binding effect regardless of their consensual or negotiated origin and character. Conducting merits re-appraisal and factual review by a first appellate civil court would be fundamentally inconsistent with and directly contrary to the statutorily conferred finality that Parliament has expressly attached to Lok Adalat awards. The fact that awards reflect compromised figures reached through facilitated negotiation rather than adversarial adjudication does not diminish or reduce their decree-like legal effect, enforceability, and immunity from ordinary appellate challenge.

Option (b) Incorrect: A Lok Adalat is fundamentally not structured as or intended to function as a merits-adjudicating tribunal whose factual findings and legal determinations are subject to appellate or tribunal-style review for errors of fact or law. Rather, Lok Adalat awards are grounded in and derive their legitimacy from the voluntary consent and mutual agreement of the

disputing parties, and these awards receive statutory decree-equivalence and finality by parliamentary command, not tribunal-style reviewability. Treating Lok Adalat awards as tribunal decisions requiring or permitting factual error review fundamentally misconstrues their consensual nature, constitutional role, and the statutory framework governing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Option (c) Correct: The authoritative passage from the governing statute expressly and unambiguously grants Lok Adalat awards the identical legal status as civil court decrees, making them final and binding without any provision for or possibility of filing a standard civil first appeal challenging their correctness, adequacy, or fairness. This statutory conferral of decree status and finality operates to completely foreclose and bar the filing of any regular civil appellate challenge, making the appellant's attempt to "set aside" the award as erroneous on merits wholly not maintainable. The registry's concerns about maintainability are entirely well-founded and legally correct under the statutory scheme.

Option (d) Incorrect: There is no statutory provision, legal mechanism, or procedural rule that provides for or mandates the automatic conversion of a barred or non-maintainable civil appeal against a Lok Adalat award into a writ petition by default operation. Extraordinary constitutional jurisdiction through writ remedies under Articles 226 or 32 is entirely discretionary in nature, available only in exceptional circumstances, and is certainly not intended to function as a built-in or automatic substitute avenue for barred ordinary appeals. Converting every blocked appeal into writ review would fundamentally subvert and defeat the statutory finality Parliament deliberately conferred on Lok Adalat awards to promote alternative dispute resolution and reduce litigation.

67. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "In Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979), the Supreme Court declared free legal aid and speedy trial as part of Article 21."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: While it is doctrinally true that Directive Principles of State Policy contained in Part IV of the Constitution are formally classified as non-justiciable and do not by themselves create directly enforceable legal rights in courts, the Supreme Court has explicitly and deliberately constitutionalized the right to free legal aid by embedding it within the fundamental right to life and personal liberty under Article 21. This constitutional transformation and elevation means that legal aid can indeed ground

enforceable relief and remedies in courts without requiring the petitioner to prove any separate statutory breach or violation, as the right now flows directly from an enforceable fundamental right rather than remaining merely an aspirational directive.

Option (b) Correct: The specifically quoted landmark holding in Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar unambiguously declared and embedded free legal aid and the right to speedy trial as integral, inseparable components of the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21, thereby making these rights fully enforceable in courts through constitutional remedies. This judicial pronouncement allows Babu to successfully obtain meaningful relief and redress for the State's failure to ensure legal assistance at the earliest remand stage, even before any actual trial prejudice can be quantified, demonstrated, or proven, because the denial itself constitutes a violation of his constitutionally protected fundamental right to life and liberty with procedural fairness.

Option (c) Incorrect: The constitutional right to free legal aid at the earliest stages of criminal proceedings does not hinge upon, depend on, or require the accused to subsequently prove actual prejudice to the trial outcome or demonstrate that lack of early representation led to a wrongful conviction. Rather, the deprivation of legal assistance at the very outset at first appearance, remand hearing, or initial custody stage itself directly contravenes and violates Article 21's comprehensive fair-procedure guarantee and due process content, making relief available regardless of whether the petitioner can quantify downstream trial prejudice or point to specific adverse consequences that flowed from the initial denial.

Option (d) Incorrect: Fiscal constraints, budgetary limitations, or resource scarcity in particular periods cannot operate to suspend, eliminate, or temporarily switch off the State's fundamental constitutional obligations to protect and effectuate citizens' fundamental rights, including the Article 21 right to legal aid. The duty to secure and provide meaningful legal representation for indigent accused persons at the earliest stage is a core constitutional obligation that cannot be made contingent upon, subordinated to, or defeated by prevailing budgetary shortfalls, DLSA fund availability, or resource allocation challenges. Fundamental rights remain constant obligations regardless of the State's financial circumstances or administrative convenience.

68. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "Khatri v. State of Bihar (1981) directed judges to inform accused persons of this right."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: The governing passage and authoritative Supreme Court precedent expressly impose a clear, affirmative, and proactive judicial duty on trial judges to inform unrepresented accused persons of their constitutional and statutory right to obtain free legal aid, rather than adopting a passive or reactive stance. A purely passive approach that places the entire onus and burden on the accused to independently discover and explicitly request legal representation if desired would be fundamentally inconsistent with and directly contrary to the Court's protective directive designed to secure effective representation for indigent and vulnerable accused persons who may be unaware of available entitlements, rights, and assistance programs.

Option (b) Incorrect: The judicial obligation to inform accused persons about legal aid rights and ensure access to counsel is not artificially confined to, limited to, or triggered only at the specific procedural stage of charge framing, after which the court supposedly cannot or should not interfere with counsel choices or the accused's lack of representation. Rather, this duty is properly understood as a continuing, ongoing safeguard that operates and remains active throughout the criminal proceedings whenever and at whatever stage the lack of legal counsel for an indigent accused becomes apparent or emerges, ensuring fair trial protection at every critical juncture from initial appearance through final disposition.

Option (c) Incorrect: The Supreme Court's directive establishing the judicial duty to inform accused persons of legal aid rights is absolutely not age-limited, juvenile-specific, or confined only to minor defendants, with adult accused persons being somehow presumed to independently understand courtroom entitlements, procedural rights, and available assistance programs without any judicial prompting or information. On the contrary, adult indigent accused persons particularly those who are illiterate, unsophisticated in legal matters, or from marginalized backgrounds are squarely and centrally within the protective ambit and intended beneficiaries of the judicial intimation requirement designed to effectuate Article 21 and Article 39A's access-to-justice guarantees.

Option (d) Correct: The specifically cited landmark precedent *Khatri v. State of Bihar* unambiguously establishes and mandates a clear, affirmative obligation on trial judges to proactively inform unrepresented accused persons of their constitutional and statutory right to obtain free legal aid and assistance from legal services authorities. Failure to discharge this judicial duty and provide such information undermines and impairs fundamental fair-trial guarantees embedded in

Article 21, compromises the accused's ability to effectively defend against criminal charges, and conflicts with the constitutional mandate under Article 39A to ensure equal access to justice for economically disadvantaged persons facing the coercive power of the criminal justice system.

69. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Citizens may apply for free legal aid in person, in writing, or online through NALSA's portal."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: While digital filing systems and online portals may legitimately improve administrative efficiency, reduce paperwork, and enhance transparency in legal aid delivery, imposing digital exclusivity as the sole permissible mode of application cannot override or eliminate the expressly permitted, statutorily authorized multiple modes of application that citizens are entitled to use. A digital-only gate or pipeline directly contradicts and unlawfully restricts the deliberately inclusive, multi-channel access framework envisaged by the statutory scheme, which intentionally provides alternative pathways to accommodate diverse populations with varying levels of digital literacy, internet connectivity, and technological access across India's heterogeneous society.

Option (b) Correct: The authoritative passage from the governing framework explicitly and clearly enumerates three equally valid and permitted routes for citizens to apply for free legal aid: in person through physical walk-in applications, in writing through postal or courier submission, or online through NALSA's dedicated web portal. Excluding or refusing to accept physical and written applications on the pretext of administrative efficiency or staff shortages unlawfully and unconstitutionally restricts and impairs access to constitutional access-to-justice initiatives and legal services programs, particularly disadvantaging elderly persons, rural populations, digitally illiterate citizens, and others lacking internet connectivity or technological familiarity.

Option (c) Incorrect: Offering token assistance through limited weekly kiosks or periodic physical filing windows does not cure, remedy, or legitimize an otherwise fundamentally exclusionary and unlawful digital-only rule that contravenes the express statutory multi-modal framework. The legal entitlement that citizens possess is not to a narrow, restricted weekly window or occasional accommodation but rather to continuous access through multiple concurrent modes in-person, written, and online at all times during regular business hours. Limiting physical access to a single day weekly or providing minimal kiosk support does not

satisfy the statutory requirement to maintain all three application avenues simultaneously and equally.

Option (d) Incorrect: The authoritative text and statutory framework does not create, establish, or contemplate any group-specific, category-based, or demographic-specific exceptions where certain vulnerable classes like women and SC/ST members receive multi-modal application privileges while other categories or general citizens must mandatorily adapt to portal-based digital intake for caseload management efficiency. Rather, all citizens regardless of gender, caste, disability status, or other categorical classifications share exactly the same tri-modal application avenues and entitlements, and no hierarchy of access modes exists based on applicant demographics or vulnerability categories under the inclusive constitutional and statutory framework.

70. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "The decree is the authoritative legal order, while the certificate serves as an official summary for documentation purposes."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: A divorce certificate issued by a marriage registrar or court registry is fundamentally a ministerial record or administrative document that memorializes the fact of dissolution, not the adjudicatory instrument that legally determines and decides the substantive rights, obligations, and entitlements of the parties. The authoritative passage clearly and explicitly differentiates the administrative certificate from the judicial decree, with only the latter containing the court's actual substantive determinations, findings of fact, legal conclusions, and dispositive orders regarding contested matters such as property division, custody arrangements, maintenance obligations, and other ancillary relief, which bind the parties and third parties dealing with them.

Option (b) Incorrect: An affidavit executed by one or both parties, regardless of how solemnly sworn or notarized, simply cannot elevate, transform, or upgrade an administrative divorce certificate to the superior legal status of a judicial decree with its attendant dispositive authority over contested rights and obligations. The judicial judgment or decree, not unilateral or even bilateral party statements contained in affidavits, carries the exclusive dispositive legal authority over substantive family-law entitlements, property rights, custody arrangements, and support obligations because it represents the court's adjudication after notice, hearing, evidence, and legal determination rather than merely the parties' own characterizations or assertions.

Option (c) Incorrect: Police no-objection certificates, clearance letters, or similar law-enforcement documents have absolutely no role whatsoever in adjudicating, determining, or resolving family-law entitlements such as property division, custody rights, maintenance obligations, or other ancillary relief in matrimonial proceedings. The authoritative passage assigns the adjudicatory function the actual legal determination of contested rights and obligations arising from marital dissolution solely and exclusively to the decree embodying the Family Court's reasoned decision after proper adversarial or consensual proceedings, findings of fact, application of law, and formal pronouncement, not to any administrative or police documentation that may exist in the parties' files.

Option (d) Correct: The cited text is completely explicit and unambiguous on this critical distinction: the decree represents the authoritative legal order issued by the Family Court that actually adjudicates all contested issues, determines substantive rights and obligations, and legally binds the parties and third parties with respect to property, custody, support, and all other ancillary matters; meanwhile, the certificate merely serves as an official administrative summary or ministerial record memorializing the fact of marital dissolution for documentation purposes, third-party verification, file maintenance, and routine administrative uses such as updating civil status records with various governmental and private institutions.

71. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Once signed and sealed by the judge, the decree legally dissolves the marriage; without it, the parties remain married in the eyes of the law, even if separated."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: Private documents such as notarised memoranda of understanding or community-level attestations and panchayat endorsements, regardless of how formally they may be executed or witnessed, simply do not possess the legal force or capacity to effect marital dissolution under Indian family law. The authoritative passage consistently and unambiguously centres the entire concept of legal dissolution exclusively on the issuance of a formal judicial decree by a competent court, not on community approvals, local endorsements, or any form of informal settlement arrangements between spouses, however detailed or well-documented they may be through notarization or witness signatures.

Option (b) Correct: The cited text establishes with absolute clarity that only a judge-signed and court-sealed decree issued by a competent Family Court

possesses the legal authority and capacity to dissolve a marriage under Indian matrimonial law; in the complete absence of such a formal judicial decree, the parties necessarily and inevitably remain legally married in the eyes of the law, notwithstanding any period of physical separation they may have undergone, any private arrangements or settlements they may have executed regarding property or finances, or any public announcements or social media declarations they may have made about the purported end of their marital relationship.

Option (c) Incorrect: A private settlement agreement, memorandum of understanding, or any form of divorce certificate issued by administrative authorities cannot legally substitute for or replace the fundamentally adjudicatory character and dispositive legal force of a formal judicial decree issued by a Family Court after proper proceedings. Treating these diverse documents as functionally interchangeable or legally equivalent directly contradicts and undermines the passage's clear decree-centric rule that exclusively assigns the power of legal marital dissolution to judicial pronouncements rather than to private contracts, administrative records, or unilateral party declarations of intent to terminate the marriage relationship.

Option (d) Incorrect: A mere printout, screenshot, or digital display of case information obtained from the eCourts online portal is absolutely not the constitutive legal act or instrument that accomplishes marital dissolution under family law. The authoritative passage specifically and deliberately emphasizes the critical importance of the decree's formal issuance through proper judicial proceedings and its authentication through the court's official seal and judge's signature; simply viewing divorce-related data, case status, or order information online through a web portal does not itself terminate or alter marital status or create legal capacity to remarry, as these are consequences that flow exclusively from the formal decree.

72. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "Some decrees can be viewed or downloaded online via the eCourts portal, though official use generally requires a certified copy."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: While digital access to case records and judicial orders through online portals like eCourts represents significant progress in transparency and public access to court information, the authoritative passage deliberately and explicitly draws a critical distinction between mere online viewing or downloading of case information for general reference purposes and official reliance or formal use for sensitive

status changes, legal proceedings, or institutional compliance requirements. A downloaded printout or PDF file lacking proper court certification and authentication does not universally satisfy all formal proof needs, particularly for personnel files, financial institution records, governmental status updates, and other contexts where sealed judicial copies bearing official certification remain the established documentary standard.

Option (b) Incorrect: A marriage registrar's letter, administrative correspondence, or ministerial communication, regardless of its official character or source, is not and cannot be treated as equivalent to the adjudicatory decree itself or to a properly certified judicial extract bearing the court's seal and clerk's attestation. Administrative notes, registrar communications, or ministerial letters simply cannot replace or substitute for court-sealed proof where institutional policies, regulatory requirements, legal practice standards, or evidentiary rules properly demand authenticated judicial documentation demonstrating that proper proceedings occurred, a competent court adjudicated the matter, and a formal decree was issued following due process and legal determination of rights.

Option (c) Correct: The cited text from the passage explicitly and unambiguously states that although online access to case information, order viewing, and PDF downloading is increasingly possible and available through digital platforms such as the eCourts portal for public transparency and convenience, official reliance or formal use for sensitive purposes such as employment records, financial institution compliance, governmental status changes, immigration applications, or legal proceedings generally and typically requires a properly certified copy bearing the court's official seal and clerk's certification of authenticity. This documentary standard aligns precisely with the HR department's and bank's compliance practices described in the scenario, which properly insist on sealed judicial copies rather than informal web downloads.

Option (d) Incorrect: Lawyer undertakings, professional assurances, attorney certifications, or representative statements regarding the existence, content, or effect of judicial orders, regardless of the lawyer's reputation, standing, or good faith, simply cannot substitute for or replace actual judicial certification and authentication of court documents through the proper institutional mechanisms of court seals and clerk attestations. The authoritative passage specifically emphasizes the critical importance of documentary formality, authentication, and institutional certification for official records, legal proceedings, and sensitive status changes,

not merely representative assurances, professional undertakings, or attorney statements that a particular order exists or contains particular terms, however reliable such professionals may generally be.

73. Correct Answer: (d)

Reference Line: "A divorce decree can be challenged through an appeal if obtained through fraud, coercion, procedural error, or lack of jurisdiction. The aggrieved party must file an appeal within 30–90 days..."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: The authoritative passage affirmatively and explicitly recognizes that appellate challenges are indeed available against divorce decrees under specified circumstances and within prescribed timeframes; artificially limiting an aggrieved party solely to review proceedings before the same trial court that issued the contested decree would directly contradict the passage's clear statement of an appellate avenue for challenging decrees obtained through fraud, coercion, procedural error, or jurisdictional defects. Review before the issuing court and appellate reconsideration by a higher court serve distinct functions in the judicial hierarchy, and the passage specifically contemplates the latter remedy for the enumerated defects rather than confining all post-decree challenges to internal review.

Option (b) Incorrect: The appellate challenge described in the scenario and contemplated by the passage is fundamentally civil in nature, arising from alleged procedural irregularities, consent fabrication, and service defects in a matrimonial dissolution proceeding, and the passage's enumerated grounds for appeal fraud, coercion, procedural error, and jurisdictional defects are explicitly and quintessentially civil bases for seeking appellate reconsideration of family-law judgments. Criminal culpability, prosecution, or conviction is absolutely not required as a prerequisite to mounting a civil appeal challenging a divorce decree; treating criminality as a necessary condition would improperly exclude the vast majority of legitimate appellate challenges based on procedural irregularities, jurisdictional defects, or other civil grounds that do not involve criminal conduct.

Option (c) Incorrect: The authoritative text explicitly lists and enumerates multiple distinct grounds beyond mere lack of jurisdiction that can properly support an appellate challenge to a divorce decree, specifically including fraud in obtaining the decree, coercion of a party's consent or participation, and procedural error in the conduct of the trial court proceedings leading to judgment. Artificially treating jurisdiction as the exclusive or only permissible basis for appellate review would improperly and dramatically narrow the

recognized scope of appellate scrutiny, excluding legitimate challenges based on trial court procedural errors, fabricated consent, fraudulent misrepresentations, service defects, or coerced participation all of which the passage expressly and explicitly recognizes as valid grounds for appellate intervention.

Option (d) Correct: The specific appeal described in the scenario alleging faulty service, fabricated consent signatures, and procedural lapses during trial court proceedings conducted while the party was abroad and unrepresented fits squarely and precisely within the enumerated grounds that the passage specifies for challenging divorce decrees through the appellate process: fraud, coercion, procedural error, or lack of jurisdiction. Additionally, the 95-day elapsed period since the decree falls within the 30-to-90-day window that the passage explicitly prescribes for filing such appellate challenges, meaning both the substantive grounds (fraud and procedural error) and the temporal timing (within the prescribed window) align with and satisfy the passage's stated requirements for maintaining an appeal.

74. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "A typical divorce decree includes case details, the declaration of divorce, rulings on property division, child custody, spousal support, name change permissions, the effective date, and the judge's signature and court seal."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Correct: The authoritative passage provides an explicit and comprehensive enumeration of the typical contents included in a divorce decree: case identification details and party information; the formal declaration of marital dissolution; substantive rulings and determinations on property division and asset distribution; detailed orders regarding child custody arrangements and visitation schedules; provisions for spousal support or maintenance obligations; permissions for name changes if requested; specification of the effective date when dissolution becomes final; and critically, the judge's personal signature and the court's official seal authenticating the document. This complete decree, bearing all required signatures and seals, constitutes the operative instrument enabling enforcement of its terms and facilitating administrative updates at registries, financial institutions, and governmental agencies.

Option (b) Incorrect: The divorce certificate, as repeatedly emphasized throughout the passage, serves merely as an administrative summary or ministerial record that memorializes the bare fact that marital

dissolution has occurred and provides a date of dissolution for civil status records; it does not embody, contain, or communicate the granular substantive rulings, detailed determinations, specific allocations, and enforceable orders that governmental agencies, financial institutions, property registries, and custody enforcement authorities actually need for implementing asset mutations, updating ownership records, establishing custody schedules, computing support obligations, and performing other administrative actions that depend upon knowing the decree's specific substantive terms rather than merely knowing that dissolution occurred at some point.

Option (c) Incorrect: A private memorandum of understanding or settlement agreement between the parties, even when formally notarized and witnessed, fundamentally lacks the adjudicatory legal force, judicial authority, and enforcement machinery that only a court decree possesses under the civil procedure framework. It is specifically the judicial decree not the underlying private agreement that gives the parties' settlement terms their full legal effect, judicial enforceability, contempt-enforcement backing, execution authority, and binding force upon third parties such as registries, financial institutions, and governmental agencies. These authorities and institutions properly rely upon the decree itself when implementing changes to property records, custody arrangements, and other legal relationships because only the decree, not private contracts, carries dispositive judicial authority.

Option (d) Incorrect: Court notices of hearing, scheduling orders, or procedural directions issued during the pendency of matrimonial proceedings merely schedule future court appearances, set deadlines for pleadings or discovery, or manage the procedural progression of the case toward final judgment; they are absolutely not judgments, adjudications, or dispositive determinations of the parties' substantive rights and obligations. Using such interlocutory procedural notices as dispositive proof for asset mutation, custody enforcement, support calculations, or other substantive purposes would completely ignore and bypass the decree's critical formal and substantive content its actual adjudication of rights, its binding determinations, its enforceable orders, and its authentication through judicial signature and court seal.

75. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "Protection is automatic upon creation, with registration serving as proof."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: Treating registration as a constitutive requirement that creates or generates

copyright protection fundamentally contradicts the passage's clear articulation of the statutory framework under Indian copyright law. The statute protects original literary, artistic, musical, and other creative expression automatically from the moment of creation without requiring any prior filing, application, or registration with the Copyright Office. Registration serves an important function as evidentiary proof of authorship, date of creation, and publication details, particularly in litigation contexts, but it absolutely does not create, generate, or constitute the underlying copyright itself, which exists independently from the moment original expression is fixed in tangible form. Option (b) Incorrect: The authoritative passage explicitly and unambiguously anchors copyright protection to the moment of creation of the original work, not to the subsequent act of first publication, public circulation, dissemination to the press, or commercial release. While publication may carry significance for certain evidentiary purposes, limitation period calculations, or notice requirements under specific provisions of the Copyright Act, it is definitively not the genesis, origin, or moment of birth of the copyright itself. Protection vests immediately when the author creates the original work and fixes it in some tangible medium, whether that work is subsequently published, circulated, kept private, or never released to the public at all. Option (c) Correct: The cited text from the passage is completely explicit and unambiguous on this fundamental principle of copyright law: automatic protection attaches immediately upon creation of the original work without any requirement of registration, filing, notice, or other formality as a precondition to enforceability; registration with the Copyright Office serves as valuable evidentiary aid and creates beneficial presumptions regarding authorship and dates in litigation. Therefore, Meera possesses enforceable copyright from the moment she created her original photo-essay and may immediately sue for injunction and damages based on unauthorized use, while optionally and strategically pursuing registration simultaneously to bolster evidentiary proof and strengthen her case. Option (d) Incorrect: Cease-and-desist notices or formal warning letters can certainly be useful strategic and practical tools for putting infringers on notice of claims, establishing knowledge of infringement, demonstrating attempts at informal resolution, and creating evidence of willfulness for enhanced damages, but copyright itself and the legal rights it confers absolutely do not spring into existence or crystallize only upon sending such notice. Unauthorized use of protected copyrighted material is legally actionable as infringement from the moment it occurs, regardless of whether the copyright owner has

sent any prior warning, demand letter, takedown notice, or other communication to the infringing party before initiating legal proceedings.

76. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Ownership under Section 17 rests with the author unless exceptions apply, such as employer-created or commissioned works."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option overstates the requirement for express contractual assignment language and incorrectly suggests that employers can never qualify for first ownership in the absence of explicit IP assignment clauses in employment contracts. The authoritative passage clearly and explicitly recognizes statutory exceptions to the general author-as-owner rule where employer-created works meaning works created by employees in the course of their employment vest first ownership directly in the employer by operation of law under Section 17. While an express IP assignment clause certainly helps clarify ownership, avoid disputes, and provide additional contractual certainty, the statutory exception exists and operates automatically even without such explicit contractual language, subject to proof of employment relationship and work scope.

Option (b) Correct: This option accurately captures and reflects the dual exception structure that the passage articulates regarding first ownership departures from the baseline author-as-owner rule: employer-created works those produced by employees during the course of their employment generally vest first ownership directly in the employer by statutory operation under Section 17's exceptions; meanwhile, commissioned works created by independent contractors or consultants under specific commissioned arrangements can start ownership either with the commissioner who paid for the work or with the creator who produced it, depending on the specific contractual terms, agreements, and circumstances, meaning that absent an express written transfer or assignment, the commissioned contributor may well retain first ownership of their creative contribution.

Option (c) Incorrect: The suggestion that first ownership always follows or tracks the party contributing "the most substantial creative input" regardless of employment status or commissioning relationships is not the legal test or analytical framework that the passage articulates or that Section 17 establishes. Rather, the authoritative passage speaks in clear categorical terms about employment and commission exceptions as specific, defined departures from the general rule, not in comparative or qualitative

terms about measuring, weighing, or assessing the relative creativity, artistic merit, or substantive contribution of different parties. The statutory framework creates categorical rules based on the nature of the relationship and work circumstances, not a sliding scale based on comparative creative input assessment.

Option (d) Incorrect: The assertion that joint ownership automatically applies and operates as the default presumption across all collaborative or multi-party creative scenarios regardless of employment or commissioning relationships fundamentally misstates the ownership framework the passage describes. Joint ownership is a specific doctrine that applies under particular circumstances where multiple authors contribute inseparable or interdependent creative expression with shared intent, but it is not a universal default that overrides all other ownership rules. Employment and commissioning contexts represent recognized statutory departures from the foundational "author as first owner" rule under Section 17, creating distinct ownership allocations that do not default to equal-shares joint ownership but rather vest ownership according to the specific statutory exceptions for these relationships.

77. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Exceptions under Section 52 allow fair dealing for research, education, criticism, and reporting."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option improperly and artificially confines the scope of fair dealing exclusively to printed handouts that are physically distributed in traditional classroom settings, suggesting that digital excerpts uploaded to online learning platforms or distributed through electronic means fall entirely outside the exception's protective scope. However, the authoritative passage does not impose any such medium-specific limitation, restriction, or distinction between print and digital formats in articulating the fair dealing principle. The legal analysis under fair dealing properly concerns the purpose of the use, the nature and extent of what was taken, and the fairness of the dealing in context, not the particular medium, format, or technology of reproduction employed to facilitate the educational use.

Option (b) Correct: The cited text from Section 52 expressly and explicitly lists both education and research among the recognized purposes that may qualify for fair dealing protection, alongside criticism and reporting, creating a protective ambit for certain limited instructional uses. A brief, low-resolution

extract from copyrighted material uploaded to a password-protected learning management system with access strictly limited to enrolled students for a specific one-week class module, used in conjunction with original lecture notes and for purposes of classroom discussion and assessment, potentially falls within that statutorily recognized protective scope of fair dealing for educational purposes, subject to case-specific fairness analysis considering amount taken, effect on market, and pedagogical necessity.

Option (c) Incorrect: While criticism by reviewers certainly constitutes one recognized head or category of fair dealing protection, the authoritative passage separately and additionally includes education as a distinct and independent basis for invoking the fair dealing exception, making clear that the statutory framework does not impose a universal pay-to-teach requirement or mandate paid collective licensing arrangements for every small educational extract in every circumstance. This option incorrectly treats criticism as the exclusive qualifying purpose while denying the independent status that education holds within the Section 52 exception framework. Fair dealing analysis examines whether the specific educational use is fair in its particular context, purpose, extent, and effect, not whether a license was purchased.

Option (d) Incorrect: Fair dealing is an inherently contextual, fact-sensitive doctrine that requires careful examination of the nature and amount of the work used, the purpose and character of the use, and the effect on the copyright owner's market, meaning that uploading an entire textbook for an entire academic term even behind a password-protected login restricted to enrolled students would very likely exceed the boundaries of fairness regardless of access restrictions. The authoritative passage certainly does not bless or approve whole-work uploads or sanction making complete copyrighted works available digitally for extended periods simply because technical access controls limit the audience to registered students. Fair dealing typically contemplates limited excerpts for specific pedagogical purposes, not wholesale reproduction of entire works.

78. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "Copyright generally lasts for the author's lifetime plus 60 years, with variations for films, sound recordings, and government works."

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option incorrectly suggests that copyright protection terminates and expires upon first publication and that works older than fifty years automatically enter the public domain as a universal

rule regardless of other factors. However, the authoritative passage explicitly ties copyright duration to the author's lifetime plus sixty years, not to years elapsed since initial publication date or first commercial release. While publication date may carry significance for certain evidentiary purposes, limitation calculations, or specific categories like anonymous works or government publications under particular provisions, it does not establish or fix the basic term of protection for ordinary literary works authored by identified individuals under the general duration rule articulated in the passage.

Option (b) Correct: The passage clearly articulates the general rule that copyright protection lasts and endures for the author's entire lifetime plus sixty years following death, with certain variations and exceptions for specific categories such as cinematographic films, sound recordings, photographs, government works, and works of international organizations. With the novelist's death occurring in 1960, straightforward application of the general life-plus-sixty-years rule strongly suggests that copyright protection expired and the work entered the public domain after that sixty-year post-mortem period elapsed, which would have occurred around 2020, subject to standard term-calculation nuances, transition provisions, and potential complexities regarding publication dates, posthumous works, or amendments to the Copyright Act over the intervening decades.

Option (c) Incorrect: The suggestion that copyright protection endures indefinitely, perpetually, or without time limitation for canonical, celebrated, or culturally significant literary works directly contradicts the fundamental principle of limited-term protection that underlies copyright law's constitutional and policy foundations. Fame, literary merit, cultural significance, canonical status, or critical acclaim of a particular novel, poem, or other work does not extend, prolong, or alter the finite statutory term of protection that the Copyright Act establishes. The authoritative passage explicitly recognizes time-bound protection after which works enter the public domain and become freely available for reproduction, adaptation, and cultural reuse regardless of their artistic significance, ensuring that copyright serves its purpose of balancing creator incentives with public access.

Option (d) Incorrect: Public domain status flows and results automatically and by operation of law from the expiration of the statutory term of copyright protection once the life-plus-sixty-years period or other applicable duration concludes; absolutely no court declaration, judicial order, administrative determination, or litigation is required to "release" a work, pronounce it in the public domain, or authorize its free use once the

statutory duration ends.

Copyright terms are matters of legislative calculation and automatic legal operation, not matters requiring individual judicial adjudication for each work. Once protection expires by statutory operation, works become freely available for any use without permission or payment, and anyone may rely on expired copyright without seeking court confirmation or approval.

79. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "It is an incorporeal property granting a bundle of rights reproduction, communication, adaptation, and translation and operates as a negative right allowing the owner to prevent unauthorised use."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option fundamentally mischaracterizes copyright as purely a claim to monetary royalties or payment obligations while suggesting that non-literal uses like translation, adaptation, or derivative works somehow cannot be restrained, enjoined, or prevented absent precise verbatim copying or character-for-character reproduction. However, the authoritative passage squarely and explicitly lists translation and adaptation within the protected bundle of exclusive rights that copyright confers upon owners, making absolutely clear that the right holder possesses legal authority to restrain, prevent, and enjoin such unauthorized uses even when no literal, verbatim copying has occurred. Copyright protection extends beyond mere reproduction to encompass the full range of derivative and transformative exploitations enumerated in the statutory bundle of rights.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of copyright's nature by suggesting it protects only physical copies, tangible objects, or material embodiments while asserting that intangible expression somehow cannot ground legal action against non-identical outputs or derivative works. In reality, copyright explicitly protects intangible creative expression as a form of incorporeal or intellectual property, not merely physical objects or material copies. The entire conceptual foundation of copyright law rests on protecting the underlying creative expression the ideas as expressed, the arrangement, the authorial choices, the original elements which exists independently of any particular physical embodiment and which can be infringed through various forms of unauthorized exploitation beyond mere reproduction of identical physical copies.

Option (c) Correct: This articulation precisely tracks and mirrors the passage's explicit language verbatim: copyright comprises and consists of a bundle of

distinct exclusive rights including reproduction of the work, public communication or performance, adaptation and derivative use, and translation into other languages or media, and this bundle of rights operates fundamentally as a negative right meaning the owner's primary entitlement is the legal authority and power to prevent, restrain, or block unauthorized use, exploitation, or dealings by others rather than merely an affirmative right to personally exploit. This negative character means copyright owners may enjoin the startup's unauthorized auto-generated translations and lightly adapted versions despite absence of verbatim copying, because translation and adaptation fall squarely within the protected bundle.

Option (d) Incorrect: This option artificially and incorrectly carves out or separates communication and adaptation from the copyright bundle by asserting they fall exclusively under media-regulatory statutes, broadcasting regulations, or telecommunications law rather than within copyright's protective scope. However, the authoritative passage you studied expressly and unambiguously includes both communication and adaptation within the enumerated bundle of exclusive rights that copyright itself confers and protects, making them integral components of copyright protection rather than matters governed exclusively by separate regulatory frameworks. While broadcasting and media regulations may impose additional obligations or create overlapping rights in certain contexts, the fundamental right to control communication and adaptation of copyrighted works resides within copyright law itself as articulated in the passage.

80. Correct Answer: (b)

Reference Line: "The petition argues that mere release does not rectify the wrong and seeks monetary compensation for both pecuniary and non-pecuniary losses, and rehabilitation, citing the Law Commission of India's 277th Report on Wrongful Prosecution (2018) which recommended a statutory scheme for compensation."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: This option fundamentally mischaracterizes the remedial framework by suggesting that discharge from custody and physical release automatically and completely cures all legal, economic, psychological, and social consequences flowing from wrongful incarceration, making monetary claims inappropriate or unnecessary once liberty has been physically restored through acquittal. However, the authoritative passage explicitly and unambiguously rejects this reductionist approach, recognizing that

mere release from prison does not and cannot repair, remedy, or compensate for the profound multi-dimensional injury that flows from years of wrongful imprisonment, including lost income, shattered families, psychological trauma, social stigma, and destroyed life opportunities that persist long after the prison gates open.

Option (b) Correct: The cited text from the passage directly and explicitly states that "mere release does not rectify the wrong" suffered during wrongful incarceration and specifically contemplates and endorses seeking monetary compensation for both pecuniary losses such as lost wages and earning capacity and non-pecuniary losses such as mental trauma and reputational harm, plus comprehensive rehabilitation assistance to help the wrongfully convicted person rebuild their shattered life and reintegrate into society. This formulation precisely matches Harish's prayer for relief, which details income loss, trauma, family displacement, stigma, and the need for rehabilitation support, and finds strong support in the Law Commission's 277th Report recommendations for a structured statutory compensation scheme.

Option (c) Incorrect: Artificially limiting available relief to narrow reimbursement for legal costs, attorney fees, and court expenses fundamentally misreads and dramatically understates the remedial horizon and compensatory scope that the passage articulates and envisions for victims of wrongful prosecution and incarceration. The authoritative text explicitly embraces and contemplates much broader heads of compensable loss extending well beyond mere litigation expenses, specifically including intangible psychological harm, emotional suffering, reputational injury, social stigma, and dignitary harms that cannot be captured in receipts or invoices but nonetheless represent profound violations of constitutional rights and human dignity that warrant recognition and monetary redress in public law remedies.

Option (d) Incorrect: Suggesting that a bare declaration of innocence or judicial pronouncement clearing the petitioner's name constitutes sufficient relief fundamentally fails to provide material redress, tangible compensation, or practical assistance for the devastating real-world consequences of years spent wrongfully imprisoned. Furthermore, the question of whether prosecution authorities subjectively believed the original charges were arguable or maintained good faith in pursuing the case is not the proper legal test or analytical framework for determining compensability; rather, the critical inquiry properly focuses on whether fundamental rights were violated during investigation, prosecution, and incarceration, and what consequences flowed from those violations requiring remedy and redress.

81. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "By issuing notice and seeking assistance of the AG/SG, the Court signals its readiness to frame guiding principles or directions for compensation in such cases."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: Frequent listings, rapid scheduling, or short adjournment periods between hearing dates are primarily administrative and case-management measures designed to expedite disposition, maintain momentum, and prevent unnecessary delays in resolving pending matters; they do not by themselves signify or demonstrate doctrinal intent to craft broader normative principles or issue systemic directions. The authoritative passage specifically and explicitly ties the Court's intention to frame guiding principles not to mere scheduling frequency or listing patterns, but rather to the substantive procedural step of issuing formal notice to affected parties and specifically seeking the assistance of the Attorney General or Solicitor General as top law officers representing governmental interests.

Option (b) Incorrect: The authoritative passage does not establish or suggest any connection between transferring cases to High Courts for disposal and the Supreme Court's intention to articulate uniform guidelines, compensation frameworks, or systemic directions applicable across jurisdictions in a federal system. The specific institutional indicator that the passage identifies and highlights as demonstrating readiness to craft guiding principles is not decentralization of adjudication through transfers, but rather the Supreme Court's deliberate request for assistance from the highest law officers of the Union the Attorney General or Solicitor General whose participation signals the constitutional and policy significance the Court attaches to framing norms in the consolidated matters.

Option (c) Correct: This formulation is taken verbatim and directly from the authoritative text of the passage: the Supreme Court's decision to issue formal notice to affected States and parties, combined with its specific request seeking the assistance and participation of the Attorney General or Solicitor General as the Union's senior-most legal representatives, constitutes a clear and unmistakable procedural signal of the Court's readiness, willingness, and intention to frame guiding legal principles, articulate compensatory standards, or issue systemic directions for addressing compensation claims in wrongful incarceration cases, rather than simply disposing of individual petitions on their isolated facts without broader normative pronouncements.

Option (d) Incorrect: While fixing outer timelines, scheduling deadlines, or establishing time-bound procedures for filing counter-affidavits and written

submissions certainly helps manage case progress, maintain procedural discipline, and ensure orderly adjudication, such scheduling orders and timeline directions do not, by themselves and standing alone, evidence or demonstrate the Court's substantive intention to frame doctrinal remedies, articulate constitutional norms, or issue systemic directions with precedential effect. The passage specifically identifies the combination of notice issuance and AG/SG assistance as the meaningful institutional signal of norm-framing intent, not mere timeline management or procedural scheduling.

82. Correct Answer: (c)

Reference Line: "In Goud's petition, it is contended that his fundamental rights under Article 21 life and personal liberty were violated on account of illegal arrest, a fabricated investigation, wrongful conviction on heinous charges under IPC and the POCSO Act."

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Incorrect: The Reason is fundamentally false because Article 21 protects both life AND personal liberty, not life alone. Since the Reason is false, both statements cannot be true, and a false reason cannot explain a true assertion. This option is doubly wrong.

Option (b) Incorrect: This option incorrectly treats Reason (R) as true when it is demonstrably false. Article 21's protection extends explicitly to both life and personal liberty, not life alone as the Reason claims. The reference line from the passage confirms Article 21 protects "life and personal liberty," directly contradicting Reason (R)'s limitation.

Option (c) Correct: Assertion (A) is unquestionably true based on the passage illegal arrest, fabricated investigation, and wrongful conviction constitute Article 21 violations. However, Reason (R) is false because it incorrectly restricts Article 21's protection to life only, when the Constitution and the reference line explicitly protect both life and personal liberty, making wrongful conviction clearly within Article 21's ambit.

Option (d) Incorrect: The Assertion is clearly true as established by the passage's reference to Goud's petition alleging Article 21 violations through illegal arrest, fabricated investigation, and wrongful conviction. The Reason is false for misstating Article 21's scope. Therefore, this option inverts the correct truth values of both statements.

83. Correct Answer: (a)

Reference Line: "According to the Court's judgment, his conviction was based on a 'flawed and tainted investigation.'"

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Explanation:

Option (a) Correct: The authoritative passage employs precisely this explicit phrasing and exact characterization to describe and capture the nature of the investigative defect that formed the foundation of Nihal's wrongful conviction: that "his conviction was based on a 'flawed and tainted investigation'" marked by suppression of exculpatory forensic evidence, fabrication of witness statements, and systematic chain-of-custody failures. This specific characterization as "flawed and tainted" rather than merely erroneous or negligent strongly supports and substantiates a compensation plea by establishing that the conviction resulted not from innocent mistakes or reasonable investigative misjudgments but from fundamentally compromised investigative processes that violated constitutional safeguards and due process requirements.

Option (b) Incorrect: This characterization as a "routine error at trial" completely disconnects and separates the acquittal from investigative quality, prosecutorial conduct, and pre-trial investigative defects, suggesting that the wrongful conviction resulted merely from generic trial-stage mistakes unrelated to how evidence was gathered, preserved, or presented. However, the authoritative text explicitly and directly ties the acquittal and compensation claim to systemic investigative taint and prosecutorial misconduct during the investigation phase, not to routine trial errors, evidentiary rulings, or courtroom mistakes, making this characterization fundamentally inconsistent with the passage's account of how and why the conviction was ultimately overturned on appeal.

Option (c) Incorrect: This characterization suggesting that the conviction was upheld in substance with only the sentence being questioned or modified directly contradicts the fundamental premise of the compensation claim and the passage's entire narrative, which centers on complete acquittal following appellate recognition of investigative defects, not on conviction affirmance with sentence reduction. The passage describes a case where wrongful conviction was overturned entirely based on flawed investigation, making damages legally and factually available; treating the conviction as substantially intact with only sentencing concerns would eliminate any basis whatsoever for wrongful incarceration compensation as a matter of law and fact.

Option (d) Incorrect: Suggesting that the conviction was vacated solely on technical procedural limitation grounds such as statute of limitations, jurisdictional defects, or other purely procedural bars, with investigative integrity never being a factor or consideration in the appellate court's analysis and decision, fundamentally mischaracterizes the basis for acquittal as presented in

Option (c) Incorrect: Questions about compensation structure whether awards should take the form of structured annuities with periodic payments or lump-sum amounts, and what indices such as years in custody, severity of charges, or lost earning capacity should guide quantum calculation certainly represent important implementation details that must be addressed in crafting a workable compensation framework. However, these quantum structure and calculation methodology questions are subsidiary to and dependent upon resolving the prior threshold question that the passage identifies: whether State liability exists in the first place and what the overall appropriate measure or scale of compensation should be, which must be answered before addressing payment structure.

Option (d) Correct: This formulation precisely and completely reproduces the passage's articulation of the core threshold inquiry that the Supreme Court's involvement necessarily raises and must address: whether the State bears legal liability and responsibility in law to compensate victims for wrongful conviction and incarceration resulting from investigative defects and prosecutorial failures; what the appropriate quantum, scale, or magnitude of such compensation should be to adequately address pecuniary and non-pecuniary losses; and how to ensure meaningful accountability of investigation and prosecution agencies to prevent future violations. This comprehensive framing exactly matches the fundamental dispute between Harish and the State regarding compensability.

SECTION D: - LOGICAL REASONING

85. Correct Answer: (a) The format of legal documentation often prioritises tradition over efficiency in judicial proceedings.

Reference Line: "By the time it lands on the judge's desk, it looks less like a legal aid and more like a family heirloom."

Explanation:

(a) This option interprets the metaphor of the "family heirloom" as a criticism of how the compendium, rather than being a practical tool for advocacy, has become ceremonial or ornamental in function. The passage humorously suggests that the compendium, once designed for ease of reference, is now bloated with unnecessary material. This implies a legal culture that clings to habitual over-preparation and elaborate documentation as a matter of form, even when it no longer serves its original purpose. This idea supports the notion that procedural traditions are upheld at the expense of courtroom efficiency. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) This option goes beyond the text by speculating about how judges behave in response to compendiums, a topic the author never addresses. The author does not claim that judges disregard or ignore the compendiums, only that the documents are overstuffed and comically oversized. While it is possible that judges find such documents cumbersome, the passage does not offer any commentary on judicial reception or use of them. Therefore, this choice is based on an unsupported inference about courtroom dynamics. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This choice suggests that lawyers intentionally include excessive material to confuse or distract, but the author's tone does not accuse any party of malice or deception. Rather, the tone is satirical and critical of a broader legal culture that tolerates inefficiency. There is no evidence that compendiums are used strategically to mislead or conceal weak arguments. The humor lies in their absurdity and excess, not in manipulation. As this option introduces a deliberate motive not implied by the passage, it misrepresents the author's critique. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) While the author does reflect on the nature of legal culture, this option introduces a conceptual argument not present in the passage. The criticism is focused on the physical and functional absurdity of the compendium, not on the role of precedent or how it might stifle innovation. The reliance on precedent as a legal norm is not questioned in this context, nor is it described as a hindrance to new approaches. Thus, this answer shifts the focus from the compendium's form and

purpose to a broader jurisprudential debate that the author does not initiate. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

86. Correct Answer: (b) Institutional advertising increasingly shapes student perception of academic credibility.

Reference Line: "...full page ads of universities nobody has ever seen in a ranking list. Most of them are No. 1 in categories no one asked for, certified by committees no one has heard of."

Explanation:

(a) While this option touches on the integrity of law school rankings, it does not strengthen the author's key concern about how advertising replaces substance in public discourse around education. The author is not critiquing the technical flaws in ranking systems but is instead mocking the use of fabricated accolades and marketing claims that create the illusion of quality. Therefore, although rankings may be methodologically weak, this issue is tangential to the author's satirical attack on advertising gimmicks used to artificially enhance institutional image. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This choice supports the author's central claim that law schools are increasingly relying on marketing strategies to shape their reputation. The passage mocks full-page ads that promote unverifiable accolades and meaningless distinctions, suggesting that perception, not performance, is what drives credibility in legal academia. If advertising indeed influences how students assess academic merit, this would validate the author's critique that law schools substitute branding for genuine achievement. It directly reinforces the satirical example provided in the passage. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) This option introduces a claim about systemic failure in regulation, which may be plausible in real-world discussions, but it does not support the author's specific argument. The passage does not reference government oversight, accreditation bodies, or regulatory frameworks. The critique is centered around institutional behavior, particularly the absurdity of marketing strategies, not regulatory collapse. Introducing this element shifts the focus to an area the author does not explore or imply. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) This choice raises a financial concern about students choosing institutions based on affordability, which may be an important factor in educational access, but it does not support the author's criticism. The passage does not

explore student decision-making processes; it critiques the misleading ways in which institutions present themselves. The concern is not about why students choose colleges but how those colleges manipulate perception. Therefore, this option introduces a dimension unrelated to the author's argument. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

87. Correct Answer: (d) Examiners assess legal aptitude by evaluating memorised knowledge over applied reasoning.

Reference Line: "For years, students are made to mug up section after section as if law were a list of ingredients, not the recipe."

Explanation:

(a) While this option illustrates an instance of rote learning, it describes only a surface-level feature of legal education without addressing the evaluative mechanism that sustains it. Memorising provisions is problematic only to the extent that it is rewarded academically, and this option does not make that connection. As a result, it falls short of reinforcing the author's systemic critique of the pedagogical approach. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This option focuses on a side effect of the current system, namely that academic performance can be achieved without true understanding. While this outcome supports the author's general dissatisfaction with the system, it does not explain why rote learning persists. The author's argument would be better supported by evidence of institutional practices that promote this behaviour, which this option does not provide. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This is a plausible observation, and it partially aligns with the author's concern that interpretation is taught too late. However, the emphasis here is on course structure, not on the assessment method, which is more central to why rote learning becomes dominant. The author's satire suggests that the system rewards memorisation, not just that interpretation is marginalised. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) This option goes to the heart of the issue by pointing out that if examinations reward memorisation rather than reasoning, then rote learning becomes a logical and perhaps even necessary response by students. It directly supports the author's analogy of law being treated like a list of "ingredients" rather than a "recipe," and explains the systemic reinforcement of that flawed educational model. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

88. Correct Answer: (a) Interns are granted limited authority but are entrusted with high-stakes responsibilities.

Reference Line: "Their place in court is always the back

row, a kind of unpaid balcony seat to the theatre of law." Explanation:

(a) The author paints a vivid picture of interns as marginalised figures—positioned at the "back row," handling menial tasks, and treated as symbolic presences rather than active participants. Nowhere in the passage is there any suggestion that they are given substantive responsibilities, let alone high-stakes ones. In fact, the opposite is emphasized: their contributions are invisible and their learning passive. Therefore, this claim flatly contradicts the passage and must be false. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) This option accurately reflects the author's portrayal. Interns are described as an "invisible bloodstream," a metaphor that emphasizes their peripheral, unnoticed presence within the system. They are not portrayed as meaningful contributors to court deliberations or strategy, but as invisible support units whose value is more symbolic than professional. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The author's use of spatial metaphor—"back row"—is not just literal but also symbolic of interns' place in the legal hierarchy. Their physical exclusion mirrors their professional marginalisation, reinforcing the point that they are denied proximity to the centres of power or learning in court. This aligns with the author's argument about how interns are socially positioned. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The passage refers to interns "sprinting to the copy shop" and balancing "dignity with desperation," clearly implying that they are burdened with routine, behind-the-scenes tasks. This depiction confirms that their duties are logistical and largely unrecognised. These are not glamorous or impactful roles but are crucial in an administrative sense. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

89. Correct Answer: (c) Resume-building activities are shaped more by perceived expectations than by educational outcomes.

Reference Line: "Mandatory NGO internship, always there. Whether the NGO is alive, dead, or just filing RTI applications from a Gmail account, nobody can say."

Explanation:

(a) This option assumes that students are engaging in conscious exaggeration or deceit, which the author does not argue. His tone critiques the structure that pressures students into performative behaviours, rather than accusing them of dishonesty. The problem lies in the performative expectations created by institutions, not the individual ethics of students. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This option shifts the focus to employer preferences, which is not addressed in the passage. The author is

critiquing the academic and professional training ecosystem, not how hiring panels make decisions. Even if this were true, it does not underpin the author's argument about why CV-building has become symbolic and hollow. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This assumption explains why students continue to include empty internships and token activities on their CVs. If students are responding to perceived external expectations—be it from colleges, recruiters, or peers—rather than pursuing meaningful educational experiences, then the author's claim that CV-building is “staged” and “tragicomic” makes sense. This unstated belief provides the logical foundation for the author's critique. Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

(d) This option makes an observation about symbolic value, but it doesn't qualify as a necessary assumption. The author's argument is not built on a comparison between authentic and standardised experiences, but rather on the motivation behind students' choices. While the passage may imply standardisation, it does not rely on the symbolic devaluation of genuine experience to make its case. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

90. Correct Answer: (b) Legal culture encourages a reliance on symbolic performance rather than substantive engagement.

Reference Line: “Somewhere between the 47th and 93rd page, you realise this is not advocacy, this is archaeology with a stapler!”

Explanation:

(a) The passage does not discuss institutional prestige at all, nor does it present it as something undervalued. The critique is not about which institutions are better regarded but about the rituals, performances, and superficiality embedded in legal academia and practice. Hence, this option introduces a red herring that distracts from the author's real concern. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This choice accurately reflects the central theme running through the passage. The author critiques everything from bloated compendiums to fake internships to rote memorisation as examples of a profession that is more concerned with appearances than understanding. His tone implies that law, as practiced and taught, has become a theatre of performative rituals lacking meaningful engagement. This option best captures that critique. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) There is no mention in the passage of regulation or bureaucratic interference in academic innovation. The author is not concerned with government intervention or lack of freedom but with how the legal culture itself

perpetuates hollow practices.

This introduces an idea unrelated to the central critique, making it an off-topic distractor. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) While students are part of the system, the author does not blame them or suggest that reform should come from their side. Instead, he describes them as caught in a structure that demands superficial performances for professional survival. The passage critiques institutions and systems, not the reformative responsibility of students. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

91. Correct Answer: (b) Mental peace in a space depends less on what is removed and more on how thoughtfully things are placed.

Reference Line: “Japanese minimalism doesn't chase emptiness; it embraces presence.”

Explanation:

(a) This option introduces a contrast between aesthetics and personal effort but misrepresents the author's tone and intention. The passage does not characterize homes as demanding or draining environments. Instead, it presents the home as a gentle and reciprocal space that supports the individual. The notion that a home makes demands on its people contradicts the core idea that the home can be nurturing when its space is thoughtfully designed. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This option best captures the author's main argument that peace and emotional clarity in a home are not achieved simply by reducing material possessions. Rather, they emerge from intentionality in how items are arranged and how space is experienced. The author repeatedly emphasizes mindfulness, ritual, and care in the relationship between people and their environment. This view aligns with the central message about presence, not absence. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) This option distorts the author's perspective by implying that cultural design serves to hide chaos, which is not suggested anywhere in the text. The author reveres Japanese design for its transparency, simplicity, and ability to cultivate calm. He presents Japanese interiors as environments that invite mindfulness and emotional rest, not as facades concealing inner disorder. Framing design as deceptive directly opposes the tone of admiration that permeates the passage. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) While the author critiques unconscious and hectic lifestyles, the issue is not urgency or lack of visual symmetry. The passage does not suggest that home organization fails due to hasty implementation or lack of aesthetic coordination. Instead, the emphasis is on the absence of intention and emotional awareness. The passage is more concerned with internal alignment than

external design logic. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

92. Correct Answer: (b) Promoting public seminars that help people explore how space affects emotions and daily routines.

Reference Line: “It’s a dialogue between you and the space that holds you.”

Explanation:

(a) This policy relies on a reductionist understanding of minimalism by interpreting it purely as a process of elimination. The author, however, consistently resists equating minimalism with material scarcity or decluttering alone. His focus is on cultivating an emotional relationship with space and finding peace through mindful arrangement rather than through forced reduction. A program encouraging people to discard possessions would therefore misrepresent the reflective tone and gentle mindfulness that the author advocates. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) The passage repeatedly frames the home as an active participant in one’s emotional life, describing the relationship between human beings and their environment as reciprocal and nurturing. Public seminars aimed at exploring this emotional-spatial dialogue would embody the author’s call for mindfulness, awareness, and intentional living. Such an initiative would not impose rigid minimalism but encourage understanding and introspection about how space influences well-being. It perfectly matches the passage’s suggestion that calm arises from conscious interaction with surroundings. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) Regulating household aesthetics or imposing uniform decor standards runs counter to the author’s message of individual mindfulness. The author’s description of Japanese minimalism celebrates the internal spirit of simplicity rather than enforcing it through law or structural uniformity. He treats minimalism as a personal philosophy, not a civic obligation, so a government-imposed regulation would strip the practice of its voluntary and emotional essence. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) Although the passage mentions low furniture and multipurpose items, it does so only to illustrate adaptability and flow within a space. It does not portray industrial or technological efficiency as the root of minimalist peace. A state subsidy for furniture companies would commodify the idea of simplicity, transforming a reflective practice into a consumer-driven industry. Such a measure would therefore undermine the sincerity and quiet mindfulness that the author associates with Japanese minimalism. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

93. Correct Answer: (a) Minimalist homes are often perceived as cold and cause anxiety due to their overly restrained design.

Reference Line: “Even the smallest spaces feel open, organised, and calming in Japanese homes.”

Explanation:

(a) The author’s central premise is that minimalist Japanese interiors create a soothing psychological effect through intention and calm. If research revealed that these spaces instead evoke discomfort or anxiety because of their restraint, it would directly contradict the author’s assertion that they produce openness and emotional clarity. This evidence would dismantle the claimed link between spatial simplicity and inner peace, undermining the emotional foundation of his argument. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) This statement concerns the historical origins of Japanese architectural principles rather than their psychological outcomes. Even if minimalism arose due to geography or tradition rather than intention, it would not necessarily negate the author’s claim that such spaces have emotional benefits. The passage deals with current emotional resonance, not historical causation. Therefore, the relevance of this statement to the author’s argument is minimal. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The passage’s focus lies in emotional clarity and mindful living rather than cognitive fatigue or mental performance. A study claiming that object variety reduces fatigue deals with intellectual stimulation, not emotional grounding. These are separate psychological dimensions, and therefore such evidence would not weaken the claim about the emotional peace generated by minimalist living. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) While this statement challenges the motivation behind adopting minimalism, it does not undermine the result. Even if minimalism is driven by economic necessity rather than philosophy, the outcomes—spatial openness and calm—may still be valid. The author’s claim is experiential, not motivational. Therefore, this information does not threaten the logical foundation of his argument. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

94. Correct Answer: (a) A room with few objects can still provide comfort if its arrangement supports emotional well-being.

Reference Line: “Empty space isn’t a lack of decoration; it’s a conscious pause... it invites your mind to rest.”

Explanation:

(a) The author repeatedly links the quality of emotional experience to intention rather than material abundance. He treats the quiet space between objects as essential to creating mental calm and comfort. Therefore, if his

reasoning holds true, one must accept that a room can remain comforting and alive even when sparsely furnished, provided its arrangement carries thoughtful intention. This principle forms the logical base of the author's idea of mindful design. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) This option converts a conditional truth into a universal rule by asserting that fewer decorations always ensure clarity. The author never advances an absolute claim. Instead, he stresses that minimalism works only when accompanied by emotional presence and awareness. Removing objects without thought may yield sterility, not serenity. The overgeneralisation makes this statement inconsistent with the passage's tone. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This option incorrectly equates minimalism with necessity. The author mentions small homes only to illustrate how intention and flow can make them feel open and calm. He does not argue that minimalist layouts are a structural requirement. Emotional spaciousness arises from mindfulness, not from geometry or reduced furniture. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The author frames tidiness as an act of love and care, not as a psychological trait that defines emotional superiority. Linking cleanliness to groundedness introduces a moral hierarchy absent in the text. Emotional stability, in the author's philosophy, comes from sensitivity to one's surroundings, not from rigid maintenance. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

95. Correct Answer: (c) Creating fixed routines for placing key items like chargers, glasses, and wallets each day.

Reference Line: "Start with three items you use daily: give each one a proper, designated spot."

Explanation:

(a) This action reflects a decluttering checklist mentality rather than the emotional mindfulness promoted by the author. The goal of weekly sorting and elimination reflects efficiency and order but lacks the deeper relational awareness that defines Japanese minimalism. The author values gentle consistency and care, not constant purging of possessions. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) While arranging items by colour or symmetry might appeal aesthetically, it misunderstands the author's focus on purpose and emotional comfort. The author never defines beauty through pattern or visual uniformity; he locates it in meaning and stillness. A symmetrical layout is a stylistic preference, not a spiritual or mindful practice. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This habit embodies the author's concept of emotional attentiveness in everyday actions. Establishing consistent, intentional places for daily-use objects cultivates a quiet relationship with one's space and reduces unnecessary friction in routine life. It reflects the passage's message that mindfulness arises through repeated small gestures that create harmony between environment and mind. Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

(d) Labelling and uniform storage containers introduce an industrial notion of order inconsistent with the warmth of the passage. Such mechanical systems prioritise control over sensitivity, while the author champions human engagement with space through simple, intuitive habits. His minimalism is relational, not procedural. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

96. Correct Answer: (a) Being emotionally mindful while cleaning can change small acts into moments of quiet awareness.

Reference Line: "Next time you wipe a counter or fold a towel, slow down. Turn it into a mindful pause."

Explanation:

(a) The author elevates ordinary acts like cleaning into opportunities for mindfulness and emotional presence. He compares such acts to watering a plant—done not from necessity but from affection. The passage implies that awareness transforms even mundane routines into meditative, restorative practices that align one's emotions with the environment. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) Although clutter is discussed, the author never identifies it as the chief source of distress. His focus lies on inner stillness achieved through attention rather than on external disorder. Declaring clutter as the "greatest source" overstates the argument and imposes a judgmental framework inconsistent with his tone of gentleness and acceptance. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The author never proposes replicating Japanese architecture as a universal solution. He treats Japanese minimalism as a philosophical model that can inspire mindful living across contexts, not as an architectural formula. Copying structures cannot replicate cultural meaning or personal intention. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The passage does not link emotional balance to discipline or resilience. Cleaning is framed as care, not as moral strength or productivity. Associating mindfulness with discipline converts a reflective practice into a self-improvement regimen, distorting the author's compassionate tone. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

97. Correct Answer: (b) Several Indian provinces exposed to identical land settlements displayed similar stagnation without targeted neglect.

Reference Line: "The decline... was neither accidental nor inevitable but engineered through deliberate policy choices..."

Explanation:

(a) This option introduces the idea that there were attempts to invest in Bihar, which appears to contradict the author's claim of total neglect. However, the author's argument centers on systemic and strategic underdevelopment, not isolated investments. If anything, sporadic efforts that yielded little progress could be viewed as ineffective implementation rather than evidence refuting deliberate neglect. The author might still argue that these attempts were superficial or poorly designed. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This option presents a structural critique of the author's claim by showing that similar policies produced similar outcomes in regions not singled out for deliberate exploitation. If stagnation occurred in multiple provinces under the same economic frameworks, then Bihar's decline might be attributed to larger systemic failures rather than targeted engineering. This weakens the idea of intentional neglect unique to Bihar and suggests a more generalized policy flaw. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) This option introduces demographic and agricultural challenges as alternative causes for underdevelopment. While these could have contributed to slow growth, they do not directly challenge the author's core argument that colonial decisions were motivated by revenue extraction rather than development. The author might concede these difficulties existed but argue they were exacerbated—not caused—by colonial policy. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) Although indigenous resistance may have influenced the success of certain reforms, it shifts the responsibility away from the colonial state and toward the colonized population. The author's main claim is that colonial underdevelopment was a top-down, policy-driven strategy, so local elite resistance would not necessarily undermine that. Moreover, the author portrays zamindars as complicit in extraction, not as reform-blockers. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

98. Correct Answer: (d) Bihar's fertile lands yielded agricultural surpluses, yet its local population remained economically marginalised.

Reference Line: "The wealth generated from Bihar's fertile plains was not reinvested... while the region that produced the wealth remained starved of capital and

opportunity."

Explanation:

(a) This option expresses a historical irony, not a paradox in the logical sense. The transformation from a centre of enlightenment to a site of exploitation shows a stark reversal, but it does not involve two seemingly contradictory realities coexisting at the same time. It is a narrative of decline rather than a paradox in structure or outcome. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This example highlights moral hypocrisy within colonial institutions but does not present an internal contradiction. A legal system enforcing unjust outcomes is unjust by design in a colonial context, so its role in upholding exploitation aligns with the author's framework rather than contradicting it. There's no paradox because the system was functioning according to colonial objectives. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) While this situation reflects economic injustice, it still follows a consistent logic within an exploitative colonial system. The fact that exports benefitted external powers while impoverishing producers is troubling, but it does not contain a contradiction. The suffering of farmers and the enrichment of foreign markets both serve the same imperial agenda, making it unjust but not paradoxical. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) This is the most compelling paradox because it juxtaposes abundance and deprivation in a single space and time. Bihar was agriculturally rich, producing surplus wealth, yet its people remained impoverished due to the systematic outflow of capital. This contradiction—between resource productivity and human marginalisation—is central to the author's critique of colonial economics. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

99. Correct Answer: (a) Correspondences between British officials reveal long-term plans to suppress local industries and discourage capital accumulation in Bihar.

Reference Line: "The decline... was neither accidental nor inevitable but engineered through deliberate policy choices that prioritised metropolitan interests over local development."

Explanation:

(a) This option offers strong documentary support for the author's argument by providing intentionality behind British actions. If internal communications demonstrate that British officials actively designed policies to prevent Bihar's development, it directly supports the claim that underdevelopment was structured, deliberate, and rooted in planning rather than negligence or coincidence. The presence of written intent confirms that the exploitation was not incidental

but systemic. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

(b) While this might seem to validate the broader claim of colonial neglect, it actually weakens the author's argument that Bihar's exploitation was specifically engineered. If similar patterns of decline occurred elsewhere without unique targeting, it suggests a more general administrative failure rather than an intentional campaign against Bihar. The author focuses on Bihar's particular historical trajectory, which this option undermines. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This option challenges the author's narrative by suggesting local elites were actively investing in Bihar's progress. If zamindars were improving land and education, the idea that wealth was entirely extracted without reinvestment becomes weaker. This would suggest that the issue may not have been structural policy design alone, but perhaps other factors like administrative inefficiency. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) This option provides data suggesting Bihar was economically productive, but it does not prove that underdevelopment was intentionally engineered. It supports the idea of exploitation but not necessarily its structural planning. The author's key claim is about deliberate policy design, not just about where money was extracted from. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

100. Correct Answer: (b) Post-independence India took effective steps to reverse the exploitative systems left behind by colonial administrators.

Reference Line: "This pattern, unfortunately, did not end with Independence in 1947."

Explanation:

(a) This statement aligns precisely with the author's detailed critique of the zamindari system. The passage emphasizes how zamindars, empowered by the British under the Permanent Settlement, were tasked only with collecting revenue and had no responsibility to improve schools, hospitals, or roads. This directly supports the author's claim that colonial systems created economic stagnation by design. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This statement runs counter to the author's core argument, especially the line which notes that the structural pattern of underdevelopment persisted even after 1947. The author's use of "unfortunately" in that line underscores a sense of disappointment or critique about independent India's failure to break from colonial frameworks. As such, the author would likely reject the idea that post-independence reforms were effective in undoing past harm. Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

(c) The author makes multiple references to how colonial policies led to the de-industrialisation of Bihar, particularly through the destruction of its artisan and craft economies. The case of imported British goods displacing indigenous industries is provided as a central example. Therefore, this statement reinforces rather than contradicts the author's position. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) The author's argument rests heavily on the interaction between economic decisions (such as forced cultivation and taxation) and the institutional mechanisms (like courts and police) that enforced those decisions. He draws upon Rodney's framework of "under development by design," which encompasses both domains. Thus, the author would likely agree with this holistic analytical lens. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

101. Correct Answer: (d) Colonial policies benefited Bihar in the long run by integrating it into global markets and formal economic systems.

Reference Line: "...while the region that produced the wealth remained starved of capital and opportunity."

Explanation:

(a) Although this argument may appear morally objectionable, it is logically consistent within a colonial framework. If an empire justifies the exploitation of colonies as necessary for its growth, the reasoning is aligned with imperial priorities. The author critiques this value system, but he does not highlight a contradiction in the logic itself. Rather, he focuses on the cost to the colonised, not the rationale of the coloniser. Hence, option (a) is not the correct answer.

(b) This reasoning attempts to explain Bihar's decline as inevitable due to internal limitations, but the author goes to great lengths to argue the opposite. He clearly asserts that underdevelopment was engineered through deliberate policy rather than dictated by geography or demography. While this explanation is incorrect in the author's view, it is not logically flawed—just based on a different assumption. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) The claim that the Permanent Settlement was intended to provide revenue stability may be plausible from an administrative standpoint. However, the author's critique lies in how the design of the system encouraged extraction without reinvestment. That does not make the initial reasoning behind the policy structurally illogical, only harmful in its consequences. Thus, the reasoning is flawed ethically but not in terms of internal logic. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) This option presents the most flawed reasoning because it converts systemic harm into a claimed long-

term benefit, which the author repeatedly disproves. The author argues that Bihar was left depleted, its industries dismantled, and its people impoverished, showing no signs of integration benefiting the local economy. To suggest the policies were helpful because they linked Bihar to the global economy is a clear case of rationalising harm by ignoring actual outcomes, which is exactly the kind of fallacy the author seeks to expose. Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

102. Correct Answer: (a) Bihar's decline resulted from a colonial system that extracted wealth without investing back, a pattern that later continued.

Reference Line: "This pattern, unfortunately, did not end with Independence in 1947."

Explanation:

(a) This option captures the essence of the author's argument by linking both colonial and post-colonial underdevelopment. The passage stresses that Bihar's economic stagnation was not accidental but designed through a policy framework of extraction without reinvestment. The author also notes that this dynamic persisted beyond colonial rule, making this summary comprehensive and aligned with the full thrust of the passage. Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

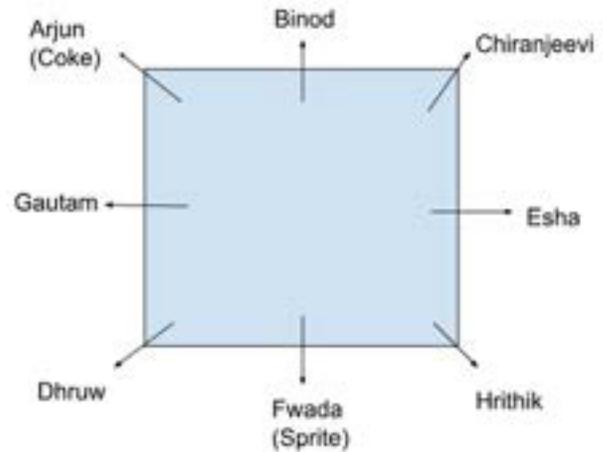
(b) This option inaccurately implies that the colonial damage was unintended. The author argues quite the opposite—that colonial underdevelopment was systemic and strategic. Referring to intermediary landowners (zamindars) is valid, but describing their impact as unintentional contradicts the assertion that British policies were deliberately exploitative. Hence, option (b) is not the correct answer.

(c) This option misrepresents the author's focus by shifting it toward post-independence cultural erosion. The passage does reference Bihar's rich heritage, but only to contrast its historic significance with colonial decline. The main thrust is economic and structural, not cultural, and certainly not focused on post-1947 cultural policy. Hence, option (c) is not the correct answer.

(d) This option wrongly suggests that the British implemented corrective reforms. The passage portrays British rule as consistently extractive and explicitly states that the same patterns continued even after independence. There is no mention of reform efforts that mitigated colonial harm, making this option factually and conceptually misaligned. Hence, option (d) is not the correct answer.

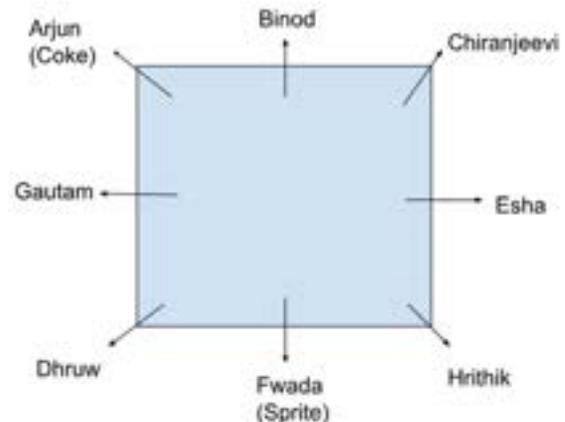
103. Correct Answer: (a) Arjun

Explanation:



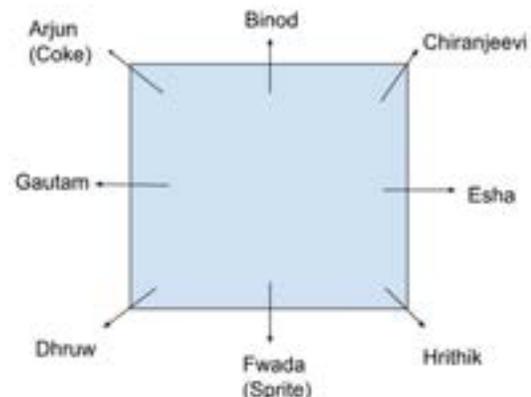
104. Correct Answer: (d) Esha

Explanation:

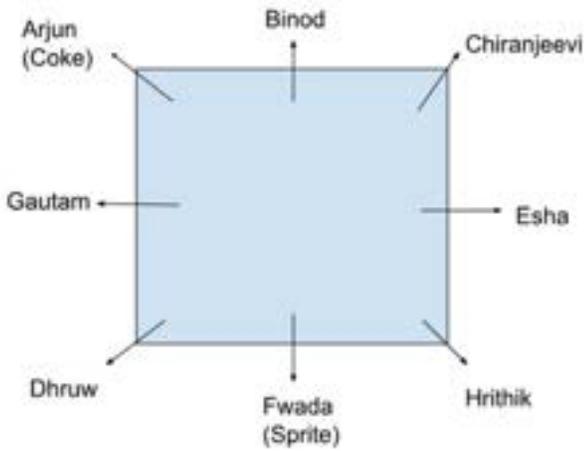


105. Correct Answer: (b) Fourth to the right

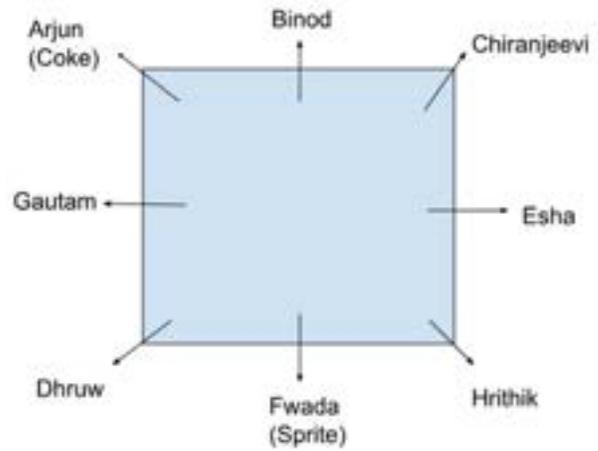
Explanation:



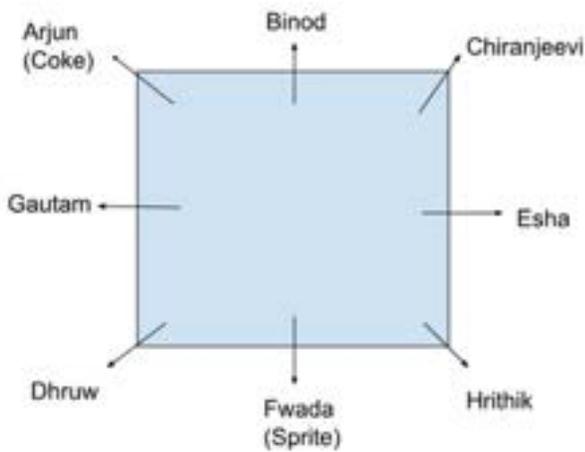
106. Correct Answer: (b) Two
Explanation:



108. Correct Answer: (c) Dhruw
Explanation:



107. Correct Answer: (a) Arjun
Explanation:



Section E: Quantitative Aptitude

109. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Total cost = $30 \times 80 + 20 \times 60 + 10 \times 50 = ₹4,100$;
total litres = 60.

Average cost = $4,100 : 60 = ₹68.33$.

110. Correct Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Cost/L of A = $(3 \times 80 + 2 \times 60) / 5 = ₹72$

Selling price $\Rightarrow SP_A = 1.2 \times 72 = ₹86.40$.

Cost/L of B = $(2 \times 80 + 60 + 50) / 4 = ₹67.50$

Selling price $\Rightarrow SP_B = 1.2 \times 67.5 = ₹81.00$.

Average SP = $(86.4 \times 40 + 81 \times 20) / 60 = ₹84.60$.

111. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Initial avg = $4,100 / 60 = ₹68.33$.

New avg = $(4,100 + 1,000) / (60 + 10) = 5,100 / 70 = ₹72.86$.

Increase = $72.86 - 68.33 = ₹4.52$ (approx).

112. Correct Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Avg mango cost = $(30 \times 80 + 10 \times 100) / 40 = ₹85$.

Blend A cost/L = $(3 \times 85 + 2 \times 60) / 5 = (255 + 120) / 5 = ₹75$.

SP = $1.2 \times 75 = ₹90.00$.

113. Correct Answer: (d)

Explanation:

After replenishment: $SP_A = ₹90$;

Cost/L of B = $(2 \times 85 + 60 + 50) / 4 = ₹70$

$SP_B = 70 \times 1.2 = ₹84$.

Discounted $SP_B = 84 \times 0.95 = ₹79.80$.

Average realised SP = $(90 \times 30 + 79.8 \times 10) / 40 = (2,700 + 798) / 40 = ₹87.45$.

114. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Blend A contains mango and orange juice in a 3:2 ratio.

Average cost = $(3 \times 80 + 2 \times 60) / 5 = (240 + 120) / 5 = ₹72$
per litre.

115. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

$A = P(1 + r/100)^n$

$= 15,000 \times (1.12)^2$

$= 15,000 \times 1.2544 = ₹18,816$.

116. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

$SI = (P \times r \times t) / 100$

$= 20,000 \times 0.10 \times 3$

$= ₹6,000$.

117. Correct Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Half-year rate = $8\% / 2 = 4\%$; periods = $2 \times 2 = 4$.

$A = 10,000 \times (1.04)^4$

$= 10,000 \times 1.16985856 = ₹11,698.5856$.

Interest = $11,698.5856 - 10,000 = ₹1,698.5856 \approx ₹1,698.59$.

118. Correct Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Year 1 SI on 20,000 = $20,000 \times 0.10 = ₹2,000$.

Year 2 SI on 12,000 = $12,000 \times 0.10 = ₹1,200$.

Total interest (2 years) = $2,000 + 1,200 = ₹3,200$.

119. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Loan amount after 2 years = $15,000 \times (1.12)^2 = ₹18,816$

\rightarrow interest = $18,816 - 15,000 = ₹3,816$.

Deposit interest = $5,000 \times 0.10 \times 1 = ₹500$.

Net outflow = $3,816 - 500 = ₹3,316$.

120. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

From previous question, CI interest over 2 years = $₹1,698.5856$.

For SI: Interest = $P \times r \times t$

$\Rightarrow r = 1,698.5856 : (10,000 \times 2) = 0.08492856 \approx 8.49\%$ p.a.



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