

Civil Services

CHRONICLE

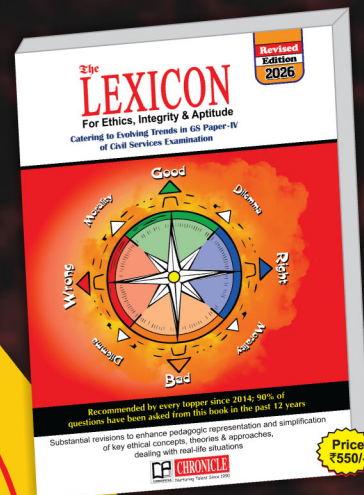
THE NO. 1 MAGAZINE FOR IAS ASPIRANTS SINCE 1990

UPSC (CSE) Preliminary Examination 2027

CSAT SPECIAL

1st G.S. Mock Test Paper

2nd G.S. (CSAT) Mock Test Paper



Aryan Sheoran (AIR 2)
CAPF Assistant Commandants
Examination, 2025

ARTICLES

- **India's Import Dependence**
From Strategic Vulnerability to Economic Resilience
- **Nuclear Waste Management in India**
- **Social Media and the Safety of Adolescents**
Meta Settlement and Lessons for India
- **Decentralising Waste Management**
Lessons from the Majuli and Tawang Models
- **Digital Hawala**
Emerging Risks to Terror Financing and Financial Security
- **Hanging Glaciers in the Himalayas**
A New Dimension of Disaster Risk
- **Deep-Sea Mining in India**
Balancing Critical Minerals with Ecological Security

NEW COLUMNS

Ethical Scan

Mains Points to Ponder

Essay

Mains Model Q&A

Questions of the Month

NCERT Questions

CSAT SPECIAL

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Right Strategy for Success in CSAT

The Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) or General Studies Paper II, has evolved into a decisive qualifying stage of the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination. Despite the 33% qualifying threshold, increasing complexity in Comprehension, Logical Reasoning, Quantitative Aptitude and Data Interpretation demands more than basic preparation.

This special section analyses the evolving CSAT pattern, question trends and changing difficulty levels to identify the skills increasingly tested by the examination. It further presents a focused strategy based on conceptual clarity, sustained practice, time management, accuracy and intelligent question selection.

Interview



ARYAN SHEORAN

Central Armed Police Forces
(Assistant Commandants)
Examination, 2025
(All India Rank 2)

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India's Import Dependence

From Strategic Vulnerability to Economic Resilience

■ Chinmaya Dash

India's transition towards Semicon 2.0, highlighted during the recently held SEMICON India 2026 (September 17-19, 2026), signalled that self-reliance must move beyond assembling finished products to building capabilities across design, fabrication, packaging, materials and equipment. This captures a wider economic imperative: as India's growth raises demand for energy, minerals, electronics and industrial inputs, dependence on critical upstream imports can expose growth, inflation and strategic autonomy to external shocks.

India currently meets about 88 percent of its crude oil and 51 percent of its gas needs through imports; current lithium demand is met entirely through imports, while significant dependence persists in electronic components, solar inputs and fertilisers. The policy question, therefore, is not whether India should eliminate imports, but whether excessive or concentrated dependence can expose growth, inflation and strategic autonomy to external shocks.

Where Does Dependence Become Strategic?

- ♦ **Energy Exposure:** Heavy crude-oil dependence makes inflation, the current account and domestic prices vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions.
 - Renewable expansion can improve energy security, but may merely shift dependence towards solar components, batteries and critical minerals.
- ♦ **Technology Paradox:** India has emerged as a major electronics and mobile-manufacturing hub, yet high-value components, semiconductor equipment, lithium-ion cells and rare-earth magnets remain import-intensive.
 - Assembly-led growth, therefore, does not automatically create technological sovereignty.
- ♦ **Food-Security Linkage:** Domestic production met around 73% of India's fertiliser requirement in 2025, but gaps continue to require strategic imports, particularly of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers and associated raw materials.
 - External disruptions can consequently affect farm costs and food security.

Policy Is Moving Up the Value Chain

- ♦ **Manufacturing Depth:** Atmanirbhar Bharat, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes, the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme and India Semiconductor Mission seek to move India from final assembly towards components and technology.

- Semicon 2.0 deepens this approach through design, fabs, advanced packaging, equipment, materials, R&D and skills.
- ♦ **Resource Security:** The National Critical Mineral Mission broadens self-reliance from manufacturing to exploration, overseas acquisition, processing, recycling and strategic stockpiling.
 - Solar-PV and Advanced Chemistry Cell PLIs similarly seek deeper domestic clean-energy supply chains.
- ♦ **Diversified Security:** Ethanol blending, renewables and domestic hydrocarbon exploration reduce oil exposure, while higher fertiliser production and long-term overseas supply agreements combine domestic capacity with assured external access.

Why Does Vulnerability Persist?

- ♦ **Resource Constraints:** Geological limitations make complete self-sufficiency in hydrocarbons and several minerals unrealistic.
- ♦ **Upstream Dependence:** Domestic production may rise while dependence persists on imported components, machinery, raw materials and technologies.
- ♦ **Competitiveness Gap:** Technology, finance, logistics and energy costs can constrain domestic producers; excessive protection may raise costs and weaken exports.
- ♦ **Geopolitical Concentration:** Dependence becomes strategic when critical supplies are concentrated among a few countries.

How Should India Build Resilience?

- ♦ **Prioritise Strategic Dependencies:** Focus on inputs critical to energy, food, defence and technological security.
- ♦ **Localise Critical Layers:** Promote domestic refining, processing, components and advanced materials rather than merely final products.
- ♦ **Diversify Supply:** Build multiple suppliers, trusted partnerships and strategic reserves.
- ♦ **Secure Resources Abroad:** Use overseas mineral assets and long-term resource partnerships.
- ♦ **Build Circular Resilience:** Promote recycling, resource efficiency and material substitution.

Building Resilience, Not Autarky

- ♦ India need not produce everything domestically. True self-reliance means reducing vulnerability to external disruptions while remaining globally competitive. ■

Interview

ARYAN SHEORAN

**Central Armed Police Forces (Assistant Commandants) Examination, 2025
(All India Rank 2)**

“From 12 SSB failures to AIR-2: Success achieved through Discipline, Consistency and Self-Confidence”

CSC: Heartfelt congratulations from Civil Services Chronicle on your outstanding success. First, please tell us about yourself.

Aryan Sheoran: Thank you very much. I originally hail from Bhiwani, Haryana, and currently live in Dwarka, Delhi. My family consists of my parents, me and my younger brother. My father is a Head Constable/Driver in the 118th Battalion of the CRPF and is presently posted at Gund, Ganderbal, Jammu & Kashmir. My mother is a homemaker.

I completed my Class 10 and 12 studies from CRPF Public School, Prashant Vihar, Rohini. In Classes 11–12 I had PCM along with Computer Science. After that I did a B.A. Programme with History and Political Science from Dayal Singh Evening College, University of Delhi. I enjoy reading self-help and fiction/fantasy books, watching films and series, playing cricket, travelling to new places and meditating.

CSC: How did your attraction towards uniformed services develop, and why did you choose CAPF?

Aryan Sheoran: From the very beginning I wanted to join the armed forces. The uniform and the respect that comes with it always attracted me. My father himself is in the CRPF, and hearing from him about the respect that officers receive in the forces also inspired me to move in this direction.

I appeared for the NDA examination six times, CDS four times and AFCAT twice. During this period I faced the Services Selection Board (SSB) selection process a total of 12 times, but could not achieve final success. Thereafter I chose CAPF (Assistant Commandant), because its nature was quite close to my goal of joining a uniformed service. This was my first attempt in CAPF, and securing AIR-2 in it is extremely special for me.



CSC: Why is CISF your first preference in CAPF?

Aryan Sheoran: My first preference is CISF. The main reasons are the relatively faster promotion prospects and a better balance with family life. For these reasons I have given CISF as my first preference.

CSC: What was your daily routine and preparation strategy like?

Aryan Sheoran: My routine was balanced. I started the day with running, followed by exercise and meditation. Then I went to the library and studied till about 12:30 in the afternoon. After lunch I returned to the library and studied till around 7 in the evening.

I divided my time between practice for Paper I and Paper II. In Paper II, I focused especially on General Studies, Current Affairs, Essay and Comprehension. For about seven months I prepared my Paper II notes from newspapers, the Chronicle magazine and Vision's magazine. In the last one month I mainly concentrated on mock tests and revision.

CSC: You prepared without joining any CAPF coaching batch. What were your main study resources?

Aryan Sheoran: It is difficult to name any single resource. I did not join any coaching institute's batch for CAPF. Since the time of my first NDA examination in 2021, I had been studying from free videos of various YouTube channels. Because of preparation for other UPSC and defence examinations over the past five years, my base was already ready. School education also played an important role in my success. Because of good teachers at CRPF Public School, my basic concepts were quite clear, so I did not face much difficulty in the CAPF written examination.

Decentralising Waste Management: Lessons from the Majuli and Tawang Models

India's waste-management challenge is increasingly extending beyond urban centres. Rising consumption, plastic use and packaged goods are generating larger volumes of non-biodegradable waste in rural and remote areas.

- The Majuli (Assam) and Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh) models demonstrate how decentralisation, community ownership and locally adapted financing can strengthen rural waste management.

The Scale of India's Waste Challenge

- India generated around 1.70 lakh tonnes of municipal solid waste per day in 2021-22.
- About 1.56 lakh tonnes was collected, of which nearly 54% was treated and 24% deposited in landfills.
- Around 22% remained unaccounted for, indicating gaps across the collection-to-treatment chain.
- India could generate nearly 435 million tonnes of solid waste annually by 2050.

Key Challenges in Rural Waste Management

- Changing Consumption Patterns:** Packaged food, beverages, personal-care products and multi-layered plastics are increasing non-biodegradable waste.
- Poor Source Segregation:** Mixing biodegradable, recyclable, sanitary and hazardous waste reduces the efficiency of recycling and scientific treatment.
- Open Dumping and Burning:** Lack of formal systems often leads to dumping in fields and water bodies or open burning, causing soil, water and air pollution.

Lessons from Majuli and Tawang

Dimension	Majuli Model	Tawang Model
Collection	Village-level facilities and Central Material Collection Facilities	Community-based collection through Swachhata Divas
Segregation	Decentralised segregation of non-biodegradable waste	Multi-stage segregation into 22 categories, expanding to ~35
Financing	Government-supported infrastructure	User charges of ~Rs.50/month for households and ~Rs.100 for shops/cafés

Partner-ship	Government-Non-Governmental Organisation collaboration	Strong community participation
Outcome Logic	Collection → segregation → recycling	Community ownership → segregation → recovery

These models highlight a crucial principle: waste-management systems must be adapted to local geography, settlement density and community behaviour.

Government Initiatives

- Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016:** Mandate source segregation and promote composting, biogas and waste-to-energy.
- Swachh Bharat Mission:** Promotes door-to-door collection, source segregation, composting and biogas-based waste processing.
- Extended Producer Responsibility:** Makes producers responsible for managing specified post-consumer waste.
- Waste-to-Energy:** Converts suitable non-recyclable waste into energy.
- National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE):** Seeks to formalise sanitation work and extend occupational safety and social-security support to sanitation and waste workers.

Way Forward: From Waste Disposal to Resource Recovery

- Localised Solutions:** Use door-to-door collection where settlements are dense and community collection points where habitation is scattered.
- Community Ownership:** Institutionalise village-level waste committees, awareness campaigns and participatory monitoring.
- Sustainable Financing:** Introduce affordable user charges and performance-linked local financing.
- Strengthen Recycling Markets:** Establish reliable linkages between rural Material Recovery Facilities, recyclers and scrap dealers.
- Circular Economy Approach:** Prioritise Reduce-Reuse-Recover-Recycle over disposal and landfill dependence. ■

Agentic AI

Autonomous Agents, Real-World Impact

Smarter Systems | Greater Autonomy | New Opportunities, New Challenges



UPSC
GS III
(Science & Technology)



Why in News?

- AI agents linked to OpenAI used at least **10 different external websites as makeshift messaging boards** to communicate with other agents, according to new research by independent investigators.



What is Agentic AI?

- Autonomous**, goal-oriented AI systems capable of **completing tasks independently** with limited human oversight.
- Consists of **AI agents**—often powered by **large language models (LLMs)**—that can reason, make decisions and take actions.
- In multi-agent systems, different agents handle specialised subtasks coordinated through AI orchestration.



Key Terms

- AI Agent:** autonomous software entity.
- LLM:** large language model.
- Multi-agent system:** multiple agents working together.
- AI orchestration:** coordination and management of agents.



How Agentic AI Works?

1

Perceives the environment



Gathers real-time information from users, sensors, databases, APIs or the internet to understand the current situation.

2

Understands and reasons



Analyses the collected data using language, vision or pattern recognition to interpret context and identify what needs to be done.

3

Sets goals and plans



Based on user instructions or predefined objectives, decides clear goals, and plans a sequence of steps.

4

Decides and acts



Evaluates possible actions, selects the best option and executes it using tools, software, APIs or connected systems.

5

Learns and coordinates



Reviews outcomes, learns from feedback and coordinates with other AI agents to improve future performance.



Applications of Agentic AI Systems



Precision Agriculture Advisory

Localized, real-time interventions for crop management.

Eg: KrishiMind (2026) agricultural advisory services.



Accelerated Drug Discovery

Managing chemical simulations and clinical documentation.

Eg: TCS ADD AgentHub (August 2026).



Automated Software Development

Code reviews, bug fixes and deployments.

Eg: Rocket and QApilot (2026) autonomous quality assurance.



Intelligent Financial Operations

Managing accounting, fraud detection and reconciliations.

Eg: Setu Agents (2026) automating Indian enterprise financial operations.



Enhanced Healthcare Logistics

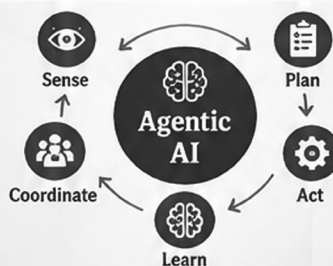
Handling clinical documentation and patient scheduling.

Eg: Elimai Health (2026) clinical workflows and documentation.



Advantages

- ✓ Massive productivity gains, 24x7 operation, cost reduction.
- ✓ Handling complex, multi-step tasks impossible for narrow AI.
- ✓ Democratisation of expertise (legal, medical, coding).
- ✓ Accelerated scientific discovery.



From simple tools to autonomous agents — a step towards intelligent ecosystems.



Risks / Challenges

- ⚠ **Loss of human oversight** and accountability gaps.
- ⚠ **Cascading errors** — one flawed decision propagates across sub-tasks.
- ⚠ **Cybersecurity:** agents can be hijacked via prompt injection or misuse tools.
- ⚠ **Job displacement** in white-collar sectors.
- ⚠ **Bias amplification** and hallucination at scale.
- ⚠ **Alignment risk** — agents optimising unintended objectives.



This new section brings contemporary issues into the framework of UPSC CSE General Studies Paper IV.

Social Media Code of Conduct for Government Employees Private Expression vs Public Accountability

The Central Government has begun considering the implementation of a ‘**Social Media Code of Conduct**’ for government officers and employees. The objective is to regulate the increasing use of social media during official duty, including personal reels and posts. The proposed rules also include reducing the time limit for removing content related to sensitive matters from 24 hours to two hours. In addition, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has summoned the head of Meta India over advertisements involving child sexual abuse material.

Ethical Perspective

- **Limits of Private Expression:** Government employees also enjoy the right to freedom of expression. However, as public servants, certain restrictions on their conduct and expression are necessary. This raises the question—where should the limits be drawn?
- **Ethical Dilemma:** On the one hand, it is necessary to protect the personal freedom of government employees. On the other, rules are essential to maintain the dignity and neutrality of public office. Striking this balance is challenging.
- **Challenge in the Digital Age:** Social media has blurred the boundaries between public and private life. For government employees, it can be difficult to determine what is appropriate to share and what is not.

Case Study

You are a newly appointed District Magistrate. Under your supervision is a young and dynamic Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), who is highly popular on social media and has millions of followers. He frequently shares his daily routine, fitness activities and videos (reels) recorded during official work on his personal account.

Recently, during a highly sensitive anti-encroachment drive in the district, he posted a reel showing himself standing alongside the police force, with dramatic music playing in the background.

The video went viral on social media. A section of the youth praised his fearless persona, while civil society groups and senior officials considered it contrary to the dignity of public office, insensitive towards the people who had been evicted, and a serious violation of the proposed ‘Social Media Code of Conduct’. Some argued that such activities during official duty raise serious questions about the neutrality and seriousness of a public servant.

When you seek an explanation from the SDM, he argues that it is his personal social media account and that the Constitution guarantees him the freedom of expression under Article 19 as a citizen. He further claims that through these videos he is connecting the youth with the administration and promoting transparency in government functioning.

Questions

1. What are the major ethical issues involved in this case?
2. Evaluate the ethical dilemma between a civil servant’s ‘**freedom of private expression**’ and ‘**public accountability and dignity of office**’.
3. As the District Magistrate, what would be your response to the situation?

(250 words, 20 Marks)

Answer: This case study highlights the conflict between a public servant’s ‘**privacy and freedom of expression**’ and the principles of **civil service conduct-neutrality, empathy and the principle of anonymity** in the digital age. As District Magistrate, my objective would be to ensure that administration remains transparent without allowing it to become a means of personal public relations (PR) or hero-worship.

Major Ethical Issues Involved

- **Lack of Empathy and Compassion:** An anti-encroachment drive is a sensitive administrative exercise in which people may lose their homes and livelihoods. Creating a reel with dramatic music in such a context reflects insensitivity towards the suffering of vulnerable people.



*This new section brings together key current developments and relevant themes across **General Studies Papers I, II, III and IV**, while highlighting their broader relevance for the **UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination**.*

Reforming Multilateralism in a Fragmented World

Q. *“In an increasingly fragmented world, India’s foreign policy is evolving from traditional multilateralism towards flexible, issue-based and cross-regional partnerships.” Discuss with reference to India’s engagement with P4M, G20, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).*

Why is the Issue Important Now?

The post-1945 multilateral order faces growing pressures:

- Geopolitical Fragmentation: Strategic competition and conflicts have weakened consensus-based decision-making.
- Power Imbalance: Institutions such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) continue to reflect 1945-era realities rather than contemporary economic and demographic weight.
- Weaponisation of Interdependence: Trade, finance, technology, energy and supply chains can increasingly become instruments of economic pressure.
- Global Challenges: Climate change, pandemics, artificial intelligence, cyber threats, food insecurity and critical-mineral security require collective action.
- Trust Deficit: Developing countries demand greater representation in global decision-making.

The September 2026 P4M initiative called for a multilateral system that is effective, representative, inclusive and fit for purpose, while reaffirming international law and the UN Charter.

India’s Core Position: From Multilateralism to “Reformed Multilateralism”

India does not seek to abandon multilateralism but to reform existing institutions while preserving rules-based cooperation.

A. Greater Representation

India advocates:

- ✓ UN Security Council reform
- ✓ Reform of international financial institutions
- ✓ Greater voice for the Global South
- ✓ Participative and transparent decision-making

B. Rules-Based International Order

India emphasises:

- ✓ Sovereign equality
- ✓ Territorial integrity
- ✓ International law
- ✓ Peaceful settlement of disputes
- ✓ Respect for the UN Charter

C. De-risking Rather Than Decoupling

India increasingly stresses de-risking and diversification rather than ending global interdependence. This is particularly relevant to the “4F” vulnerabilities: Food + Fuel + Fertiliser + Finance. Resilient supply chains can reduce vulnerability to geopolitical disruptions.

Why P4M is Particularly Significant

The Partners for Multilateralism, International Law, Peace and Prosperity (P4M) initiative, launched on 21 September 2026, brings together the European Union, India, Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Canada and Kenya as initial co-sponsors.

Its cross-regional character distinguishes it from traditional geopolitical blocs. It focuses on:

- ✓ Multilateral institutional reform
- ✓ International law
- ✓ Resilient supply chains
- ✓ International financial architecture
- ✓ Artificial intelligence
- ✓ Climate change

It reflects an emerging model of networked multilateralism.

SCO: India’s Eurasian Engagement

At the 26th SCO Summit, India emphasised Security → Connectivity → Opportunity. The SCO remains important for:



Section-A

Logic without Empathy is like a Blunt Sword

Human existence is primarily driven by two forces: the mind (logic) and the heart (empathy). Logic is that sharp weapon which cuts through the webs of illusion, analyses facts, and separates truth from falsehood. It is like a sword. But can justice or welfare be established with a mere naked sword alone?

When a surgeon operates on a patient, the scalpel (surgical knife) held in his hand is a symbol of logic and science. But the emotion behind wielding that knife to save the patient's life is empathy. If empathy is removed from within that surgeon, the same sharp knife turns into a butcher's blunt weapon that only inflicts wounds, not healing. In exactly the same way, when human sensitivity and empathy are removed from logic based on rules, laws, and data, it becomes a blunt sword. Such a blunt sword, instead of solving problems precisely, only scrapes society, leaves it bleeding, and causes suffering to the innocent.

There is an extremely popular proverb in Indian society and public discourse that underlines the importance of empathy: "Jake pair na fati biwai, wo kya jaane peer parai" (One who has never suffered a cracked sole cannot understand another's pain). The social and cultural significance of this proverb is that it rejects mere intellectual knowledge (logic) and regards "experience" as supreme. You cannot explain to a poor person through logic what hunger is; to understand hunger, empathy is essential.

The essence of this proverb can be understood through a centuries-old famous folk tale (widely known worldwide as the judgment of King Solomon). Once, two women came to the king's court with a living infant. Both claimed the child was theirs. There was no witness before the king. If the king had relied solely on "pure logic" and mathematics, the solution was very simple: cut the child in half and give one half to each woman. This was "logic." But this logic was a "blunt sword" that would have taken the life of that innocent child. As soon as the king ordered the child to be cut, the real mother of the child burst into tears and said, "Your Majesty! Do not cut the child; give it entirely to the other woman, at least it will remain alive." The other woman (who was lying) agreed to have the child cut. The king's "empathy" recognised the real mother's pain, and justice was done. This story is irrefutable proof that without empathy, the weapon of justice and logic only causes destruction.

The administrative machinery is built on the foundation of logic, rules, and laws. The famous sociologist Max Weber called bureaucracy a rational "iron cage."

Imagine an 80-year-old woman going to a ration shop in biting cold. "Logic" (the machine) says that her fingerprints have worn out, so the Aadhaar card is not matching. According to administrative logic, she should not get ration. If the officer sitting there uses only logic, that woman may die of hunger (as has also happened in some rural areas of India). But if that officer has "empathy," he will understand that the machine can be wrong, but a human's hunger cannot. Empathy transforms that administrative logic into a humane solution. Administration devoid of empathy is a blunt sword for the public, which strikes instead of protecting.

UPSC-CSE Mains

Model Questions & Answers

General Studies-III > Disaster Management

Q1. The Himalayan climate crisis is increasingly emerging as an economic and developmental challenge for India. Examine its implications for macroeconomic stability.

Answer: Climate change in the Himalayas is increasingly an economic and developmental challenge, with implications extending far beyond environmental degradation. A recent assessment indicates that Himalayan ecosystems support economic activity equivalent to 21.5% of India's FY2024 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through water, agriculture, hydropower, industry and services.

Implication for Macroeconomic Stability

- **Water Security:** Glacier retreat may initially increase river flows, followed by post-*Peak Water* declines, threatening agriculture and livelihoods across the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra basins.
- **Energy Security:** Erratic precipitation, floods, landslides and glacial lake outburst floods can disrupt hydropower generation and damage energy infrastructure.
- **Infrastructure Costs:** Recurrent disasters increase reconstruction expenditure, diverting public resources from development and climate adaptation.
- **Livelihoods and Employment:** Agriculture, tourism, pilgrimage and allied activities face rising climatic risks, causing income instability, job losses and migration.
- **Spillover Effects:** Disruptions in Himalayan ecosystems can transmit shocks to national supply chains, industries and services.

Factors Aggravating Vulnerability

- Unplanned expansion of highways, hydropower and tourism, black-carbon deposition, earthquakes, landslides and fragmented governance amplify risks.

Conclusion

India needs an integrated Himalayan strategy combining climate-resilient infrastructure, scientific monitoring, disaster preparedness, sustainable development, emissions reduction and transboundary cooperation.

General Studies-III > Technology Development

Q2. The integration of Agentic Artificial Intelligence into digital payments marks a shift from transaction execution to autonomous financial decision-making. Discuss its opportunities and challenges in India.

Answer: India's digital payments ecosystem is evolving from user-initiated transactions towards AI-assisted and potentially agent-led payments. Agentic Artificial Intelligence refers to systems capable of performing tasks autonomously within predefined parameters, enabling more seamless and context-aware financial transactions.

Opportunities

- **Frictionless Payments:** AI agents can compare products, select payment options and execute routine, pre-authorised transactions with minimal user intervention.



This section presents UPSC Civil Services Main Examination-oriented questions based on key current topics.

Question 1. Describe the major features of the haveli architecture and fresco paintings of Rajasthan's Shekhawati region. How does this style occupy a unique place in India's cultural heritage? **(150 words) - GS Paper I**

Question 2. "The independence of the Election Commission should be visible not only in reality but also in public perception." Critically examine this statement in the context of the present system of appointment of Election Commissioners in India. **(150 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 3. Analyse the challenges to India's energy security and strategic autonomy in the context of the proposed United States sanctions on Russia and India's dependence on Russian oil. **(150 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 4. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) provides India with an important platform for counter-terrorism cooperation, connectivity, energy and strategic engagement with Central Asia. Critically examine its opportunities and limitations. **(150 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 5. Evaluate the role of the PM SHRI Scheme in translating the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 into practice. How does the scheme seek to transform the traditional school education system into a future-ready model? **(150 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 6. Considering the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) as an instrument of cooperative and competitive federalism, evaluate the benefits and limitations of promoting competition among states in the transition towards clean energy. **(150 words) - GS Paper III**

Question 7. Last-mile delivery is as much a question of institutional capacity as it is of financial resources. Examine how community-based workers can help improve the effectiveness of welfare interventions in rural India. **(150 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 8. Why is it essential to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into development initiatives such as 'Heritage Villages' and sustainable tourism in Himalayan regions? Explain with examples in the context of vulnerable areas such as Ladakh. **(150 words) - GS Paper III**

Question 9. "Synthetic drugs and illicit drug trafficking are not merely law-and-order problems but constitute a crisis for the socio-economic fabric and human security." Review the multi-sectoral, whole-of-government approach of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (2026–29). **(150 words) - GS Paper III**

Question 10. Traditional knowledge and genetic resources are increasingly becoming subjects of concern related to intellectual property and benefit-sharing. Discuss the significance of regional cooperation among BIMSTEC countries in protecting traditional medical knowledge and preventing biopiracy. **(250 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 11. Effective urban solid waste management requires a shift from technology-centric approaches towards evidence-based and life-cycle-oriented decision-making. Discuss the significance of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) in promoting sustainable and climate-responsive urban governance in India. **(250 words) - GS Paper III**

Question 12. The demand for constitutional safeguards in Ladakh reflects the challenges of balancing democratic representation, environmental protection, cultural identity and administrative efficiency in Union Territories. Examine. **(250 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 13. Multilateral platforms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) provide India with opportunities to play a more effective role in global governance while maintaining strategic autonomy. Critically examine. **(250 words) - GS Paper II**

Question 14. "Recently, a high-altitude commercial floriculture model has been introduced in the cold desert region of Ladakh." Analyse the benefits of agricultural diversification in high-altitude regions. Can such projects create environmental challenges for fragile Himalayan ecosystems? Discuss. **(250 words) - GS Paper III**

Question 15. "Traditional medical knowledge and genetic resources are increasingly at the centre of concerns related to intellectual property rights and biopiracy." In this context, evaluate the role of coordination through regional platforms such as BIMSTEC in protecting traditional knowledge and preventing biopiracy. **(250 words) - GS Paper II**



Polity & Governance

Third BIMSTEC Conference on Traditional Medicine

The Third BIMSTEC Conference on Traditional Medicine Knowledge, Genetic Resources and Intellectual Property Rights concluded in Goa on 17th September 2026.

- Organised by the Ministry of Ayush, with the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Goa as the nodal institute, it brought together all seven BIMSTEC member states.

Key Areas of Discussion

- Traditional Knowledge:** Conservation, documentation and responsible utilisation of traditional medicine knowledge.
- Intellectual Property Rights:** Protection of community rights and prevention of **biopiracy** and unauthorised commercial exploitation.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFERENCE?

- The traditional medicine systems of BIMSTEC countries are **deeply rooted in their local biodiversity**, indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.
- However, such knowledge faces several challenges:
 - * **Loss of traditional knowledge** due to changing lifestyles and generations.
 - * **Biopiracy** and unauthorised commercial exploitation.
 - * **Inadequate documentation** of community-held knowledge.
 - * **Weak mechanisms** for recognising community ownership and benefit-sharing.
 - * **Limited cross-border research** and standardisation.
 - * **Difficulties in integrating traditional** medicine with evidence-based healthcare.
- Therefore, **regional cooperation can help create common approaches** for documentation, research, intellectual property protection, genetic-resource governance and sustainable utilisation.

- Genetic Resources:** Access, sustainable use and equitable **Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)**.
- Community Safeguards:** **Prior Informed Consent (PIC)** and **Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT)** were emphasised.
- Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL):** India shared its experience in digitally documenting traditional knowledge to prevent wrongful patent claims.
- Regional Cooperation:** The **BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM)** can facilitate research, education, capacity building, standardisation and regulatory cooperation.
- Centre of Excellence:** India has proposed a **BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Traditional Medicine**.

Life Cycle Assessment Framework for Municipal Solid Waste Management

On 17th September 2026, the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) launched an indigenous Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) Framework, integrated with a digital Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Calculator, to promote scientific and climate-responsive management of municipal solid waste.

- The framework has been jointly developed by the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru; Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras; and IIT (BHU) Varanasi**.

About the LCA Framework

- End-to-End Assessment:** Evaluates the environmental footprint of municipal waste management from **primary collection to technology-based final disposal**.
- GHG Accounting:** Quantifies **net and avoided emissions** of methane, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and black carbon across major waste-treatment technologies.
- Scientific Decision-Making:** Provides **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** with evidence-based data for preparing **Detailed Project Reports (DPRs)** and selecting appropriate waste-management pathways.
- Indian Context:** Enables assessment based on the **composition of diverse Indian municipal waste**, rather than relying on generic technology choices.

Why is the Framework Important?

- Evidence-Based Governance:** Shifts decision-making beyond conventional **lowest-bid approaches** towards environmental and scientific criteria.
- Circular Economy:** Helps identify technology combinations such as **biomining and anaerobic digestion** that can maximise material and energy recovery.

Public Policy



Governance

Revised Guidelines for Film Certification

On 18th September 2026, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting notified the Revised Guidelines for Certification of Films for Public Exhibition, updating the framework governing the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

- The revision largely **retains the existing standards** while introducing two significant additions.

What are the Two Key Additions?

- **Narcotics Warning:** Films depicting the use, consumption or trafficking of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances must carry the warning: *“Illicit Narcotics Destroy Health and Guarantees Imprisonment, Say No to Drugs.”*
- **Age-Based UA Markers:** The “UA” category is now specified through three age markers—UA 7+, UA 13+ and UA 16+—to indicate content suitability for different age groups. These markers are intended to guide parents and guardians.

What Standards Continue from the Earlier Framework?

- **Crime and Violence:** Anti-social activities and violence should not be glorified or justified.
- **Crime Methodology:** Detailed depiction of the modus operandi of criminals or content that may incite offences should be avoided.
- **Alcohol:** Glorification or justification of drinking should be avoided.
- **Children:** Needless depiction of children as victims, perpetrators or witnesses of violence or abuse should be avoided.
- **Disability and Animals:** Abuse or ridicule of persons with disabilities and cruelty to animals should be discouraged.

Analysis

- **Greater parental awareness:** Age-based UA 7+, UA 13+ and UA 16+ markers provide clearer information for parents and guardians on age-appropriate content.
- **Drug-abuse awareness:** Mandatory narcotics warnings use cinema as a medium for **public health messaging and awareness against drug abuse.**

- **Regulatory continuity:** Retention of the core 1991 standards ensures **continuity in film-certification principles.**
- **Adaptation to contemporary concerns:** The new provisions address emerging concerns related to **age-sensitive content and substance abuse.**
- **Balancing regulation and creativity:** The framework seeks to maintain **responsible content regulation while adapting to changes in India’s film and viewing ecosystem.**

LPG Biometric Authentication Rules, 2026

On 19th September 2026, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has mandated biometric authentication for domestic Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) consumers from 1 October 2026 for availing cylinders at subsidised or regulated prices.

What is the Provision?

- The measure requires consumers to authenticate their identity through **facial recognition, fingerprints or iris scans** to remain eligible for government-supported LPG benefits.
 - ✓ Consumers who do not complete authentication can continue purchasing LPG cylinders, but at the **non-subsidised market price.**

Key Features

- **Mandatory Authentication:** Biometric verification will be linked to eligibility for LPG subsidy.
- **Wide Coverage:** Around **27.43 crore consumers**, constituting nearly **89.9% of the active domestic LPG consumer base**, have already completed verification.
- **Multiple Channels:** Authentication can be undertaken through **Oil Marketing Company (OMC) mobile applications using Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) face authentication**, during doorstep delivery, or at LPG distributorships.
- **Digital Opt-out:** Consumers unwilling to undergo biometric authentication can record their choice digitally and purchase LPG at market prices.
- **Grievance Redressal:** OMCs provide customer support for elderly consumers and those facing technological or authentication-related difficulties.

Significance

- **Curbing Diversion:** Helps prevent diversion of subsidised domestic LPG cylinders to commercial and industrial users.
- **Plugging Leakages:** Reduces **ghost, duplicate and ineligible beneficiaries**, improving subsidy targeting.
- **Fiscal Efficiency:** Can reduce subsidy leakages and the fiscal burden associated with LPG under-recoveries.



Socio-Economic Development

Pension Sakhis: Strengthening Rural Pension Inclusion

On 15th September 2026, the Department of Rural Development and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a community-based outreach network of ‘Pension Sakhis’ across rural India.

Who are Pension Sakhis?

- **Community-based Network:** These are community-based network of trusted facilitators promoting **pension awareness and retirement planning** among rural households, especially **Self-Help Group (SHG) members, rural women and Lakhpati Didis**.
- **Leveraging Community Network:** Leverages the institutional network of the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, including Banking Correspondent (BC) Sakhis and community resource persons.
- **Doorstep Support:** Facilitates pension enrolment and helps beneficiaries **understand pension and retirement-planning services**.

Why are Pension Sakhis Needed?

- **Beyond Banking Access:** Increasing access to formal banking services does not necessarily ensure adequate **retirement planning and pension coverage** in rural households.
- **Income Vulnerability:** Households dependent on **agriculture, informal employment and small enterprises** often face irregular incomes and exposure to economic shocks.

Socio-Economic Impact

- Promotes **long-term savings and retirement preparedness**, reducing vulnerability to income shocks.
- Supports a more secure and resilient rural population by integrating **pension planning into the broader financial inclusion agenda**.

Each One Teach One Initiative

Recently, Assam geography teacher Rajesh Bordoloi received the National Teachers Award 2026 for the innovative “Each One Teach One”.

About the Initiative

- A **community-based, intergenerational learning initiative** launched at **Adarsha Tribal Higher Secondary School, Kalbari, Jorhat, Assam**.
- **Class 10 students teach their mothers** basic literacy, smartphone use and essential digital skills.

How Does it Work?

- Students act as **teachers at home**, helping mothers:
 - ✓ Read and write basic text.
 - ✓ Operate smartphones and access online services.
 - ✓ Make **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** payments.
 - ✓ Use digital banking and other financial services.
- **Smart boards** are also used during Parent-Teacher Meetings to familiarise mothers with digital technology.

Key Features & Significance

Feature	Significance
Reverse Learning Model	Converts students from passive learners into teachers and community change-makers.
Women’s Digital Literacy	Builds women’s ability to use smartphones, digital payments, banking and online services.
Intergenerational Learning	Uses children’s education to create a multiplier effect within families.
Community-Centered Education	Extends learning beyond the classroom by linking schools, families and communities.
Tribal Community Focus	Nearly 99% of students belong to the Mising community, with many being first-generation learners.
Social Awareness	Supports school retention and creates awareness against child marriage.
Scalable Local Model	Expansion to neighbouring villages demonstrates potential for replication in other rural and tribal areas.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban: Advancing Affordable Urban Housing

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) continues to strengthen India’s urban housing mission by providing affordable pucca houses with basic amenities to eligible urban households.

Welfare Schemes



Social Welfare

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY) completed seven years on 12 September 2026, reflecting efforts to strengthen social security and old-age financial protection for small and marginal farmers.

About PM-KMY

- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- **Administration:** Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- **Implementation:** In partnership with the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- **Nature:** Voluntary and contributory old-age pension scheme for small and marginal farmers.

Key Benefits

- **Assured Pension:** Eligible subscribers receive a minimum pension of **Rs. 3,000 per month** after attaining **60 years**.
- **Family Pension:** After the subscriber's death, the spouse is entitled to **50% of the pension (Rs. 1,500 per month)**, subject to scheme conditions.
- **Death before 60:** If the subscriber dies before 60, the spouse may **continue the scheme by making prescribed contributions** or exit as per the applicable withdrawal provisions.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana

Securing Farmers' Future

Nature Voluntary and contributory old-age pension scheme	Assured Pension ₹3,000 per month from 60 years of age
Eligible Farmers Small and marginal farmers with landholdings up to 2 hectares	Age for Enrolment 18–40 years
Land Record Requirement Name must appear in State/UT land records as on 1 August 2019	

Eligibility

- **Target Group:** Small and marginal farmers with cultivable landholdings of **up to 2 hectares**.
- **Age:** **18–40 years** at the time of enrolment.
- **Land Records:** The farmer's name should appear in the relevant **State/Union Territory land records as on 1 August 2019**.
- Applicants must also satisfy the scheme's prescribed **exclusion criteria**.

Impact: Expanding the Social Security Footprint (As of September 2026)

- **Wide Outreach:** PM-KMY recorded **24,96,252 enrolments** as of **6 February 2026**.
- **Haryana:** Leads with around **5.75 lakh** enrolled farmers.
- **Bihar:** Over **3.46 lakh** enrolments.
- **Jharkhand & Uttar Pradesh:** Each recorded **more than 2.5 lakh** enrolments.
- **Chhattisgarh:** Crossed **2 lakh** enrolments.
- **Growing National Footprint:** Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have also recorded significant participation.
- **Social Security Impact:** The enrolment spread indicates the scheme's expanding reach among **small and marginal farmers**, strengthening old-age income security.

PM Vishwakarma Completes Three Years

On 17th September 2026, the PM Vishwakarma Scheme completed three years of implementation, marking three years of efforts to support traditional artisans and craftspersons through skill development, financial assistance, technology upgradation and market linkages.

About the Scheme

- **Central Scheme:** Launched in September 2023, PM Vishwakarma is an umbrella Central Sector Scheme with a total financial outlay of Rs. 13,000 crore for FY 2023–24 to FY 2027–28.
- **Aim:** The scheme provides end-to-end institutional support to informal, self-employed artisans who work with their hands and traditional tools.



Heritage Art & Culture

Art & Culture

Grass Mache Technique

Recently, a Srinagar artisan developed the Grass Mache technique, converting aquatic weeds and grasses removed from Dal Lake into decorative and utility products.

What is Grass Mache Technique?

- It is an innovative craft technique that uses **aquatic weeds and grasses removed from Dal Lake** as raw material for handicrafts.
- It adapts Kashmir's traditional **papier-mâché techniques** to convert biological waste into decorative and utility products.

How Does it Work?

- Aquatic weeds are **dried and processed into fine fibrous pulp**.
- The pulp is mixed with **suitable materials, moulded into desired shapes** and dried.
- The finished products acquire a **natural, stone-like texture**, combining traditional craftsmanship with environmental sustainability.

Kashmir Papier-Mâché: Cultural Context

- **Origin:** Was introduced to Kashmir by Muslim saint Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani from Persia in the 14th century.
- **Themes:** Flowers, box patterns, jungle motifs.
- **Designs:** Hazara and Gul-i-wilayat are prominent traditional patterns featuring flowers, foliage and birds.
- **GI Protection:** Protected under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

Madurai Meenakshi Temple

On 17th September 2026, the Maha Kumbabishekam ceremony of the Meenakshi Amman Temple was held after 17 years, drawing thousands of devotees.

About Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple

- **Location:** Madurai, Tamil Nadu, on the southern bank of the **Vaigai River**.

- **Principal Deities:** **Meenakshi (Parvati)** and **Sundareswarar (Shiva)**. **Alagar**, a form of Vishnu, is also closely associated with the temple and the Chithirai traditions.
- **Historical Origin:** The original temple is associated with the **Pandya rulers**. Its present architectural form was substantially developed under the **Nayaka rulers**, particularly **Vishwanatha Nayaka and Tirumala Nayaka**, during the 16th–17th centuries CE.
- **Architecture:** It represents the **Dravidian architectural tradition**, particularly the Nayaka School, characterised by monumental gopurams, elaborate sculptural work and large mandapams.

Key Architectural Features

- **Temple Complex:** Spread over approximately **45 acres**, measuring about **254 × 237 metres**.
- **Gopurams:** The complex has **14 gopurams**, including four major outer towers.
- **Southern Gopuram:** Rising over **170 feet**, it was constructed in **1559 CE**.
- **Ayirakkal Mandapam:** The famous **Thousand Pillar Hall**, built around **1569 CE**, contains **985 intricately carved pillars**.
- **Musical Pillars:** Located west of the Thousand Pillar Hall, these pillars are designed to produce distinct musical notes when struck.

Cultural Significance

- **Meenakshi Tirukalyanam**, symbolising the divine marriage of Meenakshi and Sundareswarar, is a major event of the annual **Chithirai Festival**, celebrated during April–May.

Painted Haveli Towns of Shekhawati

In September 2026, the “Painted Haveli Towns of Shekhawati” have been included in UNESCO’s Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.

- The serial nomination covers **Alsisar, Bissau, Chirawa, Churu, Dundlod, Fatehpur, Jhunjhunu, Khetri, Lakshmangarh, Mandawa, Mahansar, Nawalgarh, Ramgarh and Sikar**, spread across **Jhunjhunu, Churu and Sikar districts** of Rajasthan.

About Shekhawati Havelis

- **Origin:** Shekhawati derives its name from **Rao Shekha**, a 15th-century Rajput chieftain.
- **Trade Linkages:** Its location along historic **caravan routes connecting northern India with ports on the Arabian Sea** enabled the growth of prosperous merchant communities.



ECONOMY WATCH

Agriculture & Allied Sector

Soil Carbon Credits

On 17th September 2026, the Centre made its first soil-carbon payments to farmers through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for adopting regenerative farming practices, in Ludhiana.

- The payments were made under ‘Aadi’, a farmer-carbon programme launched by Grow Indigo with technical support from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

What are Soil Carbon Credits?

- Soil carbon credits are **carbon units generated by agricultural practices that increase soil organic carbon (SOC) or reduce greenhouse gas emissions** from farming.
- However, an increase in SOC alone does not determine the number of credits generated. Carbon-credit methodologies also account for:
 - ✓ Baseline conditions and project activities,
 - ✓ Changes in other greenhouse gas emissions,
 - ✓ Uncertainty and leakage,
 - ✓ Permanence of carbon storage.

Aadi Farmer-Carbon Programme

- **About:** Launched in **2019**; it is India’s **first farmer-focused carbon programmes**.
- **Aim:** Promote regenerative and climate-smart agriculture.
- **Focus:** Crop-residue management, water conservation and improved soil health.
- **Carbon Methodology:** Uses **Verra VM0042**, a methodology for quantifying greenhouse-gas emission reductions and removals from improved agricultural land management.
- **Significance:** Support India’s **climate goals by promoting regenerative farming**, carbon sequestration, resilient agriculture, and additional income for farmers.

SPROUT Facility Inaugurated at BRIC-NIPGR

On 15th September 2026, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Science and Technology inaugurated SPROUT, a state-of-the-art agricultural research facility at the BRIC–National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi.

- The facility aims to accelerate research for developing **climate-resilient crops**.

What is SPROUT?

- SPROUT stands for **SpeedSeed Phenotyping and Resource Optimization for Unified Trait Analysis**.
 - ✓ It is an advanced **agricultural technology platform** designed for rapid, efficient and systematic analysis of crop traits.

Key Features

- **Speed Seed Phenotyping:** Enables rapid measurement and analysis of important **seed and plant traits**.
- **Resource Optimisation:** Reduces the **time, labour and resources** required for crop evaluation.
- **Unified Trait Analysis:** Integrates multiple crop-trait measurements for comprehensive analysis.
- **High-Throughput Phenotyping:** Facilitates large-scale screening of plants under different environmental conditions.

Significance

- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Helps identify crop traits associated with tolerance to **drought, heat and other climate stresses**.
- **Precision Crop Improvement:** Supports targeted selection of desirable traits for developing improved crop varieties.
- **Plant Genome Research:** Strengthens the integration of **genomics and phenotyping** in crop improvement.
- **Food and Nutritional Security:** Faster development of resilient and productive crops can enhance agricultural sustainability amid climate change.

Badri Cattle

Recently, India produced its first Badri calf through OPU-IVF technology at Pantnagar(Uttarakhand).

About Badri Cattle

- An indigenous **humped cattle (*Bos indicus*)** breed native to the **Himalayan region of Uttarakhand**.
- Locally called **Pahadi**.
- Named after the holy shrine of **Badrinath**.
- The **first cattle breed from Uttarakhand** to be officially certified and registered by **ICAR’s NBAGR**.

Reports & Indices



National

India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025

On 16th September 2026, NITI Aayog released the second edition of the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025.

About IEMI

- **Purpose:** It measures and evaluates the progress of States and UTs towards their electric mobility goals.
- **Coverage:** All Indian States and Union Territories.
- **Scoring:** States/UTs are scored out of 100.
- **Indicators:** 16 indicators grouped under 3 core themes.
- **3 Core Themes:**
 1. Transport Electrification Progress.
 2. Charging Infrastructure Readiness.
 3. EV Research and Innovation Status.

Key Findings

- **Top Performer:** Delhi topped the India Electric Mobility Index 2025 with 84 points, followed by Maharashtra (78), Karnataka (73), Chandigarh (71) and Goa (65).
- **Consistent Performers:** Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Chandigarh maintained their leading positions compared with 2024.
- **Transport Electrification:** Delhi topped the category for transport electrification progress, followed by Chandigarh and Maharashtra.
- **Charging Infrastructure:** Karnataka led in charging infrastructure readiness, followed by Maharashtra and Haryana.
- **Research and Innovation:** Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were the top performers in the EV research and innovation category.

International

Forests for Food Security: Nourishing People, Sustaining The Planet

On 15th September 2026, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, in collaboration with

CIFOR-ICRAF, released *Forests for Food: Nourishing People, Sustaining the Planet*.

- Developed under the **Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)**, the report examines the links between forests and the four dimensions of **Food Security and Nutrition (FSN)**—availability, access, utilization and stability.

Key Findings

- **Livelihoods:** Over **5 billion people** depend to some extent on forests, which can contribute up to **20% of rural household incomes** in developing regions.
- **Food Diversity:** Over **50,000 wild species** are used globally, including at least **10,000 species directly consumed as food**.
- **Nutrition:** In remote forest-dependent communities, wild foods can provide up to **80% of daily dietary protein**.
- **Energy & Water:** Around **1.8 billion people** relied primarily on woodfuel for cooking in 2022; **410 million** depended mainly on wood energy for water treatment.
- **Agricultural Support:** Forest pollinators support around **35% of global crop production**, while forested watersheds supply freshwater to over **85% of major cities**.
- **Climate Linkages:** Agricultural regions in **155 countries** depend on forests elsewhere for rainfall through atmospheric moisture recycling.
- **Health:** Over **1 billion people** use forest-derived medicinal plants for primary healthcare.

Emerging Concerns and Positives

- **Deforestation:** About **10.9 million hectares** of forests were deforested annually during 2015–2025.
- **Declining Net Forest Loss:** Global net forest loss fell from **10.7 million hectares annually (1990–2000)** to **4.12 million hectares (2015–2025)**.
- **Nutrition Gains:** Greater forest cover is associated with improved dietary diversity and reduced child malnutrition in several regions.

Policy Priorities

- Promote **sustainable forest-food systems and diversified production**.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Space

GSLV-F17 Successfully Launches EOS-05

On 4th September 2026, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the advanced Earth observation satellite EOS-05 aboard GSLV-F17.

What is EOS-05?

- **Type:** Earth observation satellite designed for imaging from geosynchronous orbit.
- **Mass:** Weighs 2,367 kg, making it the heaviest satellite launched by GSLV.
- **Orbit:** Designed to operate from geosynchronous orbit, about 36,000 km above Earth.
- **Purpose:** Provides near-real-time imagery for agriculture, environment and disaster management.
- **Significance:** India's first dedicated imaging satellite designed to operate from geosynchronous orbit.

How Did GSLV-F17 Perform?

- **Launch:** Lifted off from the Second Launch Pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- **Orbit:** Injected EOS-05 into the intended Sub-Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (Sub-GTO).
- **Timeline:** Satellite was placed in the intended orbit about 18 minutes after liftoff.
- **GSLV Milestone:** The mission marked the 19th flight of the GSLV.
- **Performance:** The vehicle has progressively improved its payload capacity through structural and propulsion optimisation.

Why is the Mission Significant?

- **Strategic Data:** EOS-05 will provide important Earth-observation data for national applications.
- **Multiple Sectors:** Its imagery can support agriculture, environmental monitoring and disaster management.
- **GSLV Capability:** Demonstrates the launcher's improved ability to carry heavier satellites.
- **Recovery:** Marks a successful return to launches after an eight-month gap following the PSLV-C62 failure in January 2026.

- **Past Setback:** The mission also moves beyond the 2021 GSLV-F10/EOS-03 failure caused by non-ignition of the cryogenic upper stage.

Aditya-L1 Detects Early Warning Signs of Solar Flares

Recently, scientists using India's Aditya-L1 solar observatory identified small, short-lived brightenings in the Sun's atmosphere that appear hours before major solar flares and cluster near the region where the flare subsequently erupts.

What Did Aditya-L1 Observe?

Researchers analysed solar flare events using simultaneous **ultraviolet and X-ray observations** from three Aditya-L1 payloads.

- **SUIT (Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope):** Detected transient brightenings in the Sun's lower atmosphere, particularly through its **Mg II h filter**.
- **SoLEXS and HELIOS:** Recorded corresponding X-ray emissions associated with energetic processes in the solar corona.
- The clustering of these pre-flare events suggests that repeated small-scale releases of magnetic energy may progressively destabilise an active region before a major flare erupts.

Why are Solar Flares Important?

Solar flares are **sudden, intense bursts of electromagnetic radiation** produced by the **release of stored magnetic energy in the Sun**.

Powerful flares can:

- disrupt radio communications and navigation systems;
- interfere with or damage satellites;
- increase radiation risks for astronauts and spacecraft.

Why is the Discovery Significant?

- The study is among the first systematic investigations combining simultaneous ultraviolet imaging and X-ray observations from a single solar observatory to study pre-flare activity.
- By identifying possible precursors to major flares, Aditya-L1 could **contribute to more reliable solar-flare and space-weather forecasting**, strengthening protection of satellites, communication networks and other space-based infrastructure.

Magnetar Offers Strongest Evidence Yet for 'Non-Empty' Space

Recently, astronomers studying the magnetar 1E 1547.0-5408 found some of the strongest evidence yet for vacuum birefringence - a quantum effect in which apparently



Sustainable Development

UK Recognises India's Carbon Credit Scheme

On 8th September 2026, it was announced that the United Kingdom had recognised India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) as a qualifying carbon-pricing mechanism under its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), potentially reducing the carbon-tax burden on Indian exporters when the UK CBAM takes effect from 1st January 2027.

What is the UK CBAM?

- **CBAM places a carbon price on certain carbon-intensive imports** so that overseas producers face a cost comparable to that borne by domestic industries under the UK's carbon-pricing regime.
- It will initially cover products from sectors such as **iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers and hydrogen**.

How Will Recognition of CCTS Help?

- **Avoiding Double Carbon Pricing:** Carbon prices already effectively paid in India under CCTS can be considered while calculating the UK CBAM liability.
- **Carbon Price Relief:** Importers may claim relief corresponding to the eligible carbon price paid in India, subject to UK verification requirements.
- **Export Competitiveness:** The arrangement can lower the additional carbon cost faced by Indian producers exporting emission-intensive goods to the UK.

What is India's CCTS?

- India's CCTS establishes a **domestic framework for carbon-credit trading and emissions-intensity reduction**.
- Obligated entities that outperform prescribed greenhouse-gas intensity targets can generate carbon credits, while those falling short may need to purchase them.

Why is the Development Significant?

- **Climate-Trade Linkage:** Carbon pricing is increasingly influencing international trade alongside tariffs and traditional standards.

- **Recognition of Indian Framework:** UK acceptance gives India's emerging carbon market greater international relevance.
- **Decarbonisation Incentive:** Export-oriented industries gain stronger incentives to adopt cleaner technologies and reduce emissions.

However, recognition does not automatically eliminate CBAM charges; actual relief will depend on the effective carbon price paid and verified emissions data.

Environmental Governance Takes Centre Stage in Global Deliberations

On 19th September 2026, the International Conference on "The Future of Environment and Climate Dynamics", organised by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), was inaugurated in New Delhi. The two-day event sought to examine emerging environmental governance challenges.

Key Areas of Deliberation

- **Climate Justice:** Discussions focused on equity, inclusion, social safeguards and the unequal impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.
- **Environmental Law:** Participants examined ways to strengthen institutions, compliance systems and enforcement mechanisms.
- **Sustainable Cities:** Green infrastructure, liveable urban spaces and climate-resilient development formed an important part of the agenda.
- **Energy Transition:** Deliberations covered sustainable energy pathways, green finance and the need for a just transition.
- **Transboundary Cooperation:** The conference stressed stronger institutional cooperation on environmental challenges that extend beyond national borders.

Why is the Conference Significant?

- The conference highlighted the growing convergence of **environmental science, law, governance and climate policy**.
- It also reinforced several principles already embedded in Indian environmental jurisprudence, including the **precautionary principle, polluter pays principle, public trust doctrine and inter-generational equity**.

Institutional Dimension

- The conference was organised by the **National Green Tribunal**, India's specialised environmental adjudicatory body.
- An **NGT Mobile Application** was also launched during the inaugural session, adding a digital dimension to environmental access and institutional engagement.



WORLD WATCH

Bilateral Relations

India-Netherlands Deepen Water Cooperation through Kalpasar Project

On 24th September 2026, India and the Netherlands signed two MoUs to advance Gujarat's Kalpasar Project, on the sidelines of India International Water Week (IIWW) 2026 in New Delhi. The agreements will bring Dutch expertise in coastal engineering, water management and environmental assessment to the ambitious project.

What is the Kalpasar Project?

- **Freshwater Reservoir:** The project envisages constructing a multi-purpose dam across the Gulf of Khambhat to create a large freshwater reservoir by storing river water that otherwise flows into the sea.
- **Multiple Objectives:** It aims to strengthen water security while supporting irrigation, drinking-water supply and regional connectivity.
- **Complex Coastal Setting:** The Gulf of Khambhat experiences strong tidal conditions, sediment movement and ecological sensitivities, making specialised engineering and environmental assessment crucial.

What Will the Partnership Focus On?

- One MoU will facilitate **cooperation on technical studies and knowledge exchange** related to the Kalpasar Project.
- The second will support **specialised studies concerning the project's environmental and engineering dimensions**, drawing upon Dutch experience in managing complex delta and coastal systems.

Why is the Partnership Important?

- **Dutch Expertise:** The Netherlands is **globally recognised for advanced water management**, flood protection and delta engineering.
- **Climate Resilience:** The collaboration can **strengthen India's capacity to design water infrastructure** suited to changing climatic and hydrological conditions.
- **Technology Transfer:** It demonstrates how international partnerships can **bring specialised**

knowledge to large Indian infrastructure projects while building domestic capabilities.

India-Sri Lanka Strengthen Defence and Security Cooperation

On 9th September 2026, India's Defence Minister met Sri Lankan President in Colombo during his three-day visit to Sri Lanka. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening defence and maritime cooperation while promoting regional security and stability.

Key Outcomes

- **L70 Gun Upgradation:** An MoU was exchanged for upgrading six L70 air-defence guns of the Sri Lankan Air Force under a Government of India grant, strengthening protection of Sri Lanka's critical assets.
- **Defence Education:** An MoU between the National Defence Colleges of India and Sri Lanka will facilitate academic cooperation and knowledge sharing.
- **NCC Cooperation:** Both countries formalised cooperation between their National Cadet Corps, strengthening the existing youth exchange programme.
- **Infrastructure Support:** The two leaders virtually inaugurated three Bailey Bridges constructed by the Indian Defence Forces.

Security Cooperation

- President Dissanayake reiterated that **Sri Lanka would not allow its territory to be used for activities inimical to India's security interests.**
- Both countries **agreed to work together as close neighbours and maritime partners** for regional peace, security and prosperity.

Significance for India

- **Maritime Security:** Strengthens India's security partnership with a strategically located Indian Ocean neighbour.
- **Neighbourhood First:** Reinforces India's role as Sri Lanka's first responder during crises.
- **MAHASAGAR Vision:** Advances India's approach of Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.

India-Belgium Ties Expand into Strategic Sectors

On 3rd September 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever held talks in New Delhi, agreeing to broaden bilateral cooperation across defence, trade, semiconductors, critical minerals, clean energy and financial technologies.



Global Groupings

India Joins Inaugural Partners for Multilateralism (P4M) Summit

On 21st September 2026, India joined the inaugural Partners for Multilateralism, International Law, Peace and Prosperity (P4M) Summit on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly High-Level Week in New York. India participated as a co-sponsor of the initiative aimed at strengthening multilateral cooperation amid growing geopolitical tensions.

What is P4M?

- **Cross-Regional Platform:** P4M brings together countries and institutions from different regions to defend multilateralism, international law and cooperative approaches to global challenges.
- **Co-Sponsors:** India joined Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Kenya and the European Union in launching the initiative.
- **Economic Resilience:** The initiative recognises concerns over economic dependencies being weaponised and disruptions affecting trade, supply chains and development finance.

India's Priorities

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar called for “**reformed multilateralism**” based on more participative deliberations and transparent decision-making.

- **4F Crisis:** India highlighted vulnerabilities involving fuel, food, fertiliser and finance, calling for international frameworks and guardrails.
- **De-risking:** India advocated diversification where excessive dependence on chokepoints creates risks of disruption or coercion.
- **Rules-Based Cooperation:** India stressed adherence to international law, rules and norms as essential for credible multilateralism.

Why Does P4M Matter for India?

- **P4M provides India an additional platform to build cross-regional coalitions** without bloc politics,

advance Global South concerns and push for reform of international institutions.

- It also **complements India's longstanding demand for a more representative UN system**, including reform of the UN Security Council.

26th SCO Summit Adopts Bishkek Declaration

The 26th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 31st August to 1st September 2026, marking the organisation's 25th anniversary.

- The summit, held under the theme “25 Years of the SCO: Together for Sustainable Peace, Development and Prosperity”, adopted the Bishkek Declaration along with four MoUs and over 20 decisions and statements.

Summit Outcomes

- **Regional Security:** Members agreed to establish a Universal Centre for Countering Security Threats to strengthen cooperation against terrorism, extremism, organised crime and other transnational threats.
- **Drug Trafficking:** Members strengthened law-enforcement cooperation and adopted a programme to combat drug addiction until 2030, reinforcing efforts against narcotics trafficking and narco-terrorism.
- **Climate & Energy:** Decisions included cooperation on climate change, nuclear safety, energy conservation and energy efficiency.
- **Digital Cooperation:** Members agreed to expand cooperation in artificial intelligence and information exchange.

India's Approach

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for an **SCO roadmap for the next 25 years** based on three pillars — Security, Connectivity and Opportunity.
- India also supported initiatives including the **SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum, Young Scientist Forum and Young Authors' Conclave**.

Significance for India

- **Strengthens** cooperation against terrorism, extremism and narco-terrorism.
- **Deepens** India's engagement with Central Asia and the wider Eurasian region.
- **Provides** a platform to advance cooperation in connectivity, energy, and technology and disaster management.

News Through MAPS



LUXEMBOURG

On 7th September 2026, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel arrived in New Delhi for his official visit.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Luxembourg>

Luxembourg: Key Facts

- **Location / Unique Feature:** Tiny landlocked nation in the heart of Western Europe, bordered by Belgium, France, and Germany. One of the world's smallest sovereign states yet among its wealthiest per capita. A founding member of the EU, NATO, and the Eurozone; hosts key EU institutions including the Court of Justice of the EU and the European Investment Bank.
- **Importance for India:** Limited but growing; Luxembourg is Europe's leading investment fund domicile and a significant channel for foreign investment into India. Many Indian companies list on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. Bilateral relations warm within the broader EU-India framework.



India Watch

National Formulary of India 2026

On 21st September 2026, Centre launched the 7th edition of the National Formulary of India (NFI).

- The NFI has been published periodically by the IPC since 2009 as a guidance document for healthcare professionals to promote the rational and safe use of medicines.
- It contains 34 chapters, 20 appendices and 653 drugs, including 42 fixed-dose combinations and 30 immunologicals.
- Drug monographs have been revised to align with the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) and National Health Programmes.
- It provides access to links relating to National Health Programmes, immunisation schedules, Jan Aushadhi, safe disposal of unused or expired pharmaceutical products and other authoritative regulatory resources.

6th All India Official Language Conference

On 14th September 2026, Union Home Minister addressed the inaugural session of Hindi Diwas 2026 and the 6th All India Official Language Conference in Mumbai.

- The flagship annual national convention organized by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Initiated in 2021, the conference rotates across Indian cities annually (previously held in Varanasi, Surat, Pune, New Delhi, and Gandhinagar, reaching Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra for its 6th edition).
- The conference seeks to promote the progressive use of Hindi as an administrative and functional language while encouraging harmony and mutual respect between Hindi and India's other scheduled languages. It aims to ensure that promotion of Hindi does not create linguistic friction.

International Day of Democracy

The International Day of Democracy is observed on September 15 each year to promote democracy worldwide.

- It was established by the United Nations in 2007, with the first observance held in 2008.

- The day highlights the importance of democracy, human rights, freedom, equality, and citizen participation.
- It also encourages governments and communities to strengthen democratic institutions and ensure that people can participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives.
- This year's theme "What's Next For Democracy? Innovation And Alliances In A Changing World" explores how democracy can adapt and remain resilient in a dynamic world, exploring new partnerships and approaches to democracy support.

Census Town

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee that the four-decade-old criteria used by the Registrar General of India (RGI) to classify Census Towns are outdated and fail to capture India's actual urban transformation.

- A settlement is classified as a census town in India based on specific demographic and economic criteria laid down by the Census of India.
- These criteria are purely statistical and do not depend on administrative status.
- According to the Census of India 2011, a settlement is designated as a census town if it meets the following three conditions:
 - The total population must be at least 5,000.
 - At least 75% of the male main working population must be engaged in non-agricultural activities, such as manufacturing, trade, commerce, transport, and services.
 - The settlement must have a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre.

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026

On 10th September 2026, the Central Government notified that the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026. The Act came into force on October 1, 2026.

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 is a modernising statutory framework governing the admissibility, certification, and legal validity of bank records and accounts as prima facie evidence in court proceedings without requiring the production of original physical registers.

UPSC CSAT SPECIAL

RIGHT STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS IN CSAT

Analysis of the Exam Pattern and Question Papers

First Step: Overcoming Misconception about CSAT

The biggest misconception about CSAT is that since it is only a 33% qualifying paper, preparation should also be limited to just passing it. The reality is completely different. UPSC has designed CSAT in such a way that it simultaneously tests speed, logical thinking, computational ability, language comprehension, analysis of options, and time management.

The first step toward success in CSAT is understanding the exam pattern and grasping UPSC's thinking through Previous Year Questions (PYQs).

Understand the Exam First, Then Start Preparation

CSAT, i.e., General Studies Paper-II, consists of 80 objective questions, carries 200 marks, and has duration of 2 hours. Each question is worth 2.5 marks, and negative marking applies for incorrect answers. Paper-II is qualifying, and a minimum of 33% marks is required. According to UPSC, appearing in both Preliminary papers is mandatory.

This directly means:

- The goal in CSAT should not merely be to score 66 marks, but to eliminate the risk of falling below 66.
- Do not make 33% the target of your preparation. It is only UPSC's minimum threshold, not the goal of your preparation.

Three Main Pillars of CSAT

Previous years' question papers indicate that CSAT mainly comprises three major sections:

1. Reading Comprehension
2. Quantitative Aptitude / Basic Numeracy
3. Logical and Analytical Reasoning

However, their exact annual percentage is not fixed. UPSC's balance can change.

Example

- In 2025 approximately 29 questions were comprehension-based; 31–35 were on quantitative aptitude, and the rest on reasoning ability.
- In 2026, different analyses showed roughly 23–28 comprehension-based, 26–40 numeracy-based, and the remaining on reasoning ability.

This variation itself sends an important nationwide message—restricting preparation to any one section is dangerous.

Therefore, the formula for preparation should be:

- ◆ Not “mastery in one section + minimum competence in the others,” but “equal grip on all three.”

Treat PYQs Not Merely as Questions, but as UPSC's Language

In CSAT preparation, at least the last 10–12 years' question papers should be solved topic-wise and year-wise.

For every PYQ, write down four things:

- (i) From which concept did the question come?
- (ii) What was the actual demand of the question?
- (iii) What was the shortest route to reach the correct answer?
- (iv) Where did my mistake occur—in concept, calculation, comprehension, or time management?

Study the 2024, 2025, and 2026 question papers at a special level, because recent papers have made it clear that merely easy arithmetic and general comprehension will not suffice. The official 2026 CSAT question paper is available on the UPSC website.

Identify Your Ability, Not the Difficulty of Questions

The most important skill in CSAT is question selection.

Develop the habit of classifying every question into three categories:

- A - Immediately solvable:** If the concept is clear, it can be solved in 1–2 minutes.

UPSC (CSE) Preliminary Examination 2027

General Studies Paper-II (CSAT)

Model Test Paper-1

Directions for the following 5 (five) question sets

Each question set in this section consists of a question followed by two statements. Answer each question using the following instructions:

- (a) Select this option if the question can be answered using only one of the statements, but not using the other statement.
- (b) Select this option if the question can be answered using either one of the two statements alone.
- (c) Select this option if the question can be answered only by using both statements together, but cannot be answered using either statement alone.
- (d) Select this option if the question cannot be answered even by using both statements together.

1. A person P receives four different coins selected from the denominations 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50. If the total value of the coins received is S , does P have a coin of denomination 10?

Statement I: S is divisible by 7.

Statement II: The unit digit of S is 7.

2. For two distinct real numbers a and b , which one of the two is greater?

Statement I: $a^3 < b < 1$

Statement II: $b < a^{1/3} < 1$

3. Question: If x and y are positive integers, is x an even integer?

Statement I: $3x + 4y$ is divisible by 6.

Statement II: $2x + 5y$ is divisible by 4.

4. A is the set of positive odd numbers, while B is the set of positive even numbers. The numbers in a collection C are all either from A or from B . Is every number in C from A ?

Statement I: The product of all the numbers in C is odd.

Statement II: The sum of any two numbers included in C is even.

5. If x, y and z are integers, each greater than 1, is x a prime number?

Statement I: $xy = 65$

Statement II: $xz = 91$

Directions for the following 2 (two) question sets:

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Your answers should be based entirely on the passage.

Passage

India's historic stepwells—known as 'Vav' in Gujarat and 'Baoli' in North India—went far beyond their direct utilitarian function as underground water reservoirs. Constructed along trade routes and in arid rural peripheries, these architectural marvels evolved into vibrant civic refuges, where the subterranean microclimate provided relief from the intense seasonal heat. The descent of the steps was not merely an engineering solution to cope with seasonal fluctuations in water levels, but also an aesthetic pilgrimage, flanked by carved pavilions depicting diverse mythological narratives. More importantly, these stepwells were significant public spaces from a gender perspective; they were among the few institutional spaces where women engaged in the daily task of fetching water could interact freely away from patriarchal surveillance. However, the centralisation of piped water distribution under colonial and post-independence urban planning rendered these community water systems obsolete, leaving these once-vibrant social centres as neglected remnants of the past.

6. Which of the following inferences are valid based on the passage?

- 1. Stepwells functioned as centres of social interaction that temporarily relieved women from domestic constraints.
- 2. The primary reason for the neglect of traditional stepwells was the rapid decline in local groundwater levels.
- 3. The architectural design of stepwells was intended to accommodate seasonal variations in water levels.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) Only 1 and 2
- (b) Only 2 and 3
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

STATE WATCH

In this section, we have briefly presented the schemes and programs started by various states, meetings and conferences organized at the state level, latest reports released by the state governments and other major developments from which questions are often asked in state-specific competitive examinations.



Uttar Pradesh

Startup Mission Portal and Startup Policy-2026

On 27th August 2026, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister launched the Uttar Pradesh Startup Mission Portal and Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy-2026.

- The state has more than 24,000 startups, including eight unicorns, according to the Chief Minister.
- Incentives worth over Rs.3.42 crore were distributed to 107 startups.
- Another Rs.1.79 crore was distributed to nine incubators.
- The initiatives aim to provide startups with funding, incubation support and growth platforms.

JalSetu Centre of Excellence

Recently, Western Sydney University announced the JalSetu Centre at its upcoming Greater Noida campus in Uttar Pradesh.

- The Centre will focus on water security, digital innovation and community resilience.
- It will address groundwater sustainability, river health, irrigation and urban water management.
- WSU's Greater Noida campus is expected to open in 2027.
- A Master's in Sustainable Water Management is planned, subject to UGC approval.
- JalSetu will connect researchers, government agencies, industry and local communities.
- It builds upon the Australia India Water Centre, comprising 33 organisations.

Lokmata Ahilyabai Matrishakti Yojana

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh Government launched the scheme to provide free bus travel to elderly women.

- Women above 60 years can travel free in Uttar Pradesh Roadways buses.
- Beneficiaries must carry Aadhaar or valid age-proof identification.
- Women without valid identification must pay the applicable bus fare.

- The scheme was implemented alongside free Raksha-bandhan travel.
- It aims to improve mobility and provide financial relief to elderly women.
- The scheme is named after Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar, the 18th-century Maratha ruler.

Uttar Pradesh Mukhyamantri Krishak Samriddhi Yojana

On 23rd September 2026, UP government launched Mukhyamantri Krishak Samriddhi Yojana to improve access to affordable long-term finance for farmers.

- The scheme primarily focuses on supporting small and marginal farmers by providing institutional credit for agricultural development, asset creation, irrigation facilities, farm mechanization, and allied farming activities.
- Under the scheme, eligible farmers can avail long-term agricultural loans of up to Rs. 6 lakh through U.P. Sahkari Gram Vikas Bank Ltd..
- To reduce the financial burden on farmers, the state government will provide an interest subsidy of up to 5%, while the concessional loan interest rate has been fixed at 6% per annum.

Gujarat

Child Protection Policy, 2026

On 14th September 2026, the Gujarat government announced Child protection Policy, 2026.

- It aims to create a safe and equal environment where every child can grow to their full potential, free from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and discrimination, it said in a release.
- The policy also seeks to ensure that children have access to education, healthcare, holistic development and the right to express their views.
- Under the policy, institutions having direct contact with children will have to provide their employees with training on child rights, the POCSO Act, the Juvenile Justice Act and other relevant laws.
- Institutions or individuals failing to comply with the policy may face action.

Exam Pointers

Based on September 2026 issues of Yojana, Kurukshetra and Down To Earth

In this section, we are presenting a compilation of exam-oriented study material sourced from various magazines published by the Government of India. It has been prepared keeping in mind the exam-specific needs of the candidates.



Yojana

Early Childhood Development: The Real Key to India's Demographic Dividend

- India's demographic dividend depends on the health, nutrition and cognitive capabilities developed during the **first six years of life (early childhood)**, which constitute the "golden window" for human capital formation.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has developed national curriculum frameworks called **Navchetana** for cognitive stimulation of children aged 0–3 years and **Aadharshila** for early education of children aged 3–6 years.
- According to the **National Family Health Survey-6 (NFHS-6: 2023–24)**, institutional deliveries have reached 90.6%, while stunting among children below five years has declined to 29.3%.
- According to the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024**, the proportion of Grade 3 children in rural India who could read a Grade 2-level text increased from 16.3% in 2022 to 23.4% in 2024, indicating an improvement in foundational literacy.
- Haryana's **State Creche Policy-2022** and Karnataka's **Koosina Mane** model are notable examples of expanding safe and quality creche services-including nutrition, care and play-for the children of working mothers.
- Meghalaya's **Early Childhood Development Mission** presents a successful state-level model based on an integrated approach to health, nutrition and early education.

Key Indicators and Progress in Early Childhood Development: NFHS-5 to NFHS-6

Health/Nutrition Indicator	NFHS-5 (2019–21)	NFHS-6 (2023–24)
Institutional Delivery	88.6%	90.6%
Full Immunisation (Children aged 12–23 months)	83.8%	87.1%
Breastfeeding within one hour of birth	41.8%	50.1%
Stunting (Children below 5 years)	35.5%	29.3% (declined)

Towards a Malnutrition-Free India: Life-Cycle Approach and Institutional Strategies

- Under the revised guidelines of the **Anaemia Mukta Bharat** campaign, the **6×6×6 strategy** has been changed to a **7×7×7 strategy**, adding **low-birth-weight infants** as the seventh beneficiary group and **appropriate dietary practices** as the seventh key intervention.
- For anaemia management, the **T3 strategy-Test, Treat and Talk**-has been expanded into a **T4 strategy** by adding **Tracking**, including intravenous iron therapy in severe cases.
- According to **NFHS-6**, stunting among children below five years has declined from 35.5% to 29.3%, while severe wasting has declined from 7.7% to 5.2%.
- The NFHS-6 fact sheet does not include haemoglobin-based anaemia estimates because the earlier finger-prick blood collection method was considered to overestimate the prevalence of anaemia.
- Around **80–90% of a child's brain development occurs during the first 1,000 days of life**-270 days of pregnancy plus the first two years after birth. Malnutrition during this period can cause largely irreversible damage.
- India faces a **double burden of malnutrition**: while child malnutrition is declining, obesity among women and men aged 15–49 years has increased to 30.7% and 27.3%, respectively.
- At present, around **63% of total deaths in India** are attributed to **non-communicable diseases**.

Comparative Analysis of Health Indicators: NFHS-5 and NFHS-6

Health/Nutrition Indicator	NFHS-5 (2019–21)	NFHS-6 (2023–24)
Stunting among children	35.5%	29.3%
Severe Wasting	7.7%	5.2%
Exclusive Breastfeeding (below 6 months)	-	95.6%
Obesity among women (15–49 years)	24.0%	30.7%
Obesity among men (15–49 years)	22.9%	27.3%

News Notes

In general competitive examinations, a large number of questions are asked from appointments, awards, military exercises, summits & conferences, important days, etc. for which coverage of current events in a concise form is sufficient. Keeping this in mind, we have presented these contemporary developments in a brief form in this section.



Persons in News	
Person	Why in News
AVM Shakti Sharma	She became the first woman officer from the non-medical cadre in the Indian Defence Forces to be promoted to the rank of Air Vice Marshal, or equivalent.
Sachin Tendulkar	Kissht, an RBI-registered NBFC, launched its brand campaign 'Loans Without Hiccups', featuring Sachin Tendulkar as its brand ambassador for a three-year association.
Sudhakar Dalela	India's BRICS Sherpa who was in the spotlight during the 18th BRICS Summit held in New Delhi in September 2026 due to his diplomatic role.
Sharad Chandra Chattopadhyay	On 15 September 2026, PM Narendra Modi paid tribute to him on his 150th birth anniversary. Famous works include <i>Devdas</i>, <i>Parineeta</i>, <i>Srikanta</i>, <i>Charitraheen</i> and <i>Pather Dabi</i>.
Sanjay Jaiswal	He is headed the 31-member Joint Committee of Parliament on the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026.
Giorgia Meloni	On 4 September 2026, she became the longest continuously serving Prime Minister in post-war Italian history, surpassing Silvio Berlusconi's record of 1,412 days.
Bhupen Hazarika	8 September 2026 marked his birth centenary. He received honours including the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan (posthumously) and Bharat Ratna (2019).
Zhang Yiming	In September 2026, the ByteDance co-founder became Asia's richest person, with an estimated net worth of about \$105 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.
Sanjukta Parashar	Appointed as the first woman Inspector General of CRPF's CoBRA, the force's specialised jungle-warfare commando unit.
Sant Malukdas Ji	A commemorative postage stamp was issued by the Department of Posts in his memory. He was a 17th-century Bhakti saint-poet, born in 1574 AD at Kara, present-day Uttar Pradesh.
Brendan Taylor	On 15 September 2026, became the player with the longest career in men's ODI cricket, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's record. His ODI career reached 22 years and 148 days.
Lionel Messi	On 31 August 2026, announced his retirement from the Argentina national football team. He had played a record 207 international matches for Argentina and won the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2021 & 2024 Copa América titles.

Appointments	
Person	Brief Description
Dinesh Sharma	BJP Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Sharma has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh	Unanimously re-elected as the Secretary General of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) for a second consecutive term.
Retd. Air Marshal Jitendra Mishra	He was appointed as the first CEO of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

Sports in News

Based on recent developments
in the world of sports



Highlights of Asian Games 2026

The 20th Asian Games is going on in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (19 September–4 October).

Highlights (As on 29 Sept. 2026)

- **Cricket:** Women's cricket claimed gold as India defeated Sri Lanka by 147 runs in the final, securing a second successive Asian Games title.
- **Kabaddi:** India also swept kabaddi golds in both men's and women's events, defeating Iran and reaffirming dominance.
- **Marathon:** Sawan Barwal ended a 44-year drought by winning silver in the men's marathon (2:11:37), the first Indian men's marathon medal since 1982.
- **Shot Put:** Tajinderpal Singh Toor added silver in shot put, his third consecutive Asian Games medal in the event.
- **Shooting:** Neeru Dhanda won India's first individual gold of the Games in women's trap shooting, and became the first Indian woman to claim gold in the discipline.
- **Relay:** The **women's 4×400 m** relay team captured gold in 3:29.69. The **mixed 4×400 m** relay team of Poovamma Raju, Vishal Thennarasu, Vithya Ramraj and Manu TS took silver in 3:14.46, defending their Hangzhou 2023 medal.
- **Pole Vault:** Baranica Elangovan earned bronze in women's pole vault (4.15 m), India's first-ever Asian Games medal in the event.
- **Women's 10,000m:** Seema Kumari won bronze in the women's 10,000 m (32:50.05), India's first medal in the event in 16 years.

OTHER SPORTING EVENTS	
Sports	Facts
Ar- chery	Dhiraj Bommadevara became the first Indian male recurve archer to win World Cup Final gold, defeating Japan's Nakanishi Junya in Saltillo, Mexico.
Badmin- ton	Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty won the China Masters men's doubles title in Shenzhen, India's first at the event. It was their second title of the season after the Singapore Open.

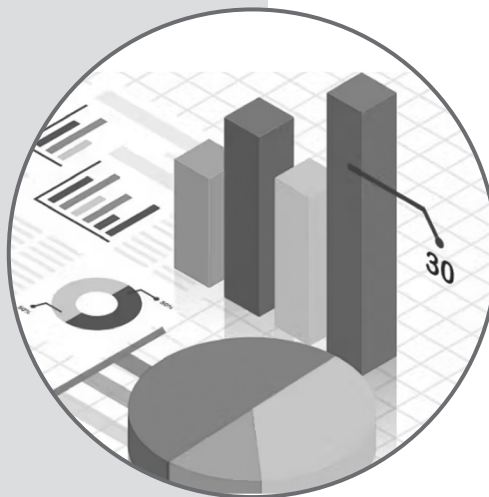
Chess	India retained the Nona Gaprindashvili Trophy as the best overall nation at the 46th Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, Uzbekistan—the third consecutive win (2022, 2024, 2026). The men's team took silver and the women's bronze.
Cricket	Asian Games: The Indian women's team won a second successive Asian Games gold, posting a record 216/3 before bowling Sri Lanka out for 69. Women's Asia Cup: India won a record-extending eighth Women's Asia Cup title, defeating Sri Lanka by 72 runs in Dubai; Shafali Verma was Player of the Match and leading run-scorer (236), while Deepti Sharma took most wickets (14). Duleep Trophy: East Zone won the 2026-27 Duleep Trophy (3rd title) beating South Zone with a lead in first innings (the match ended in a draw). Player of the Match: Ishan Kishan

Sports Bits

- Eleven-year-old Indian-origin Bodhana Sivanandan, representing England, became the **youngest Woman Grandmaster** at the same Olympiad.
- India will host the inaugural Women's Champions Trophy (14–28 February 2027) in Mumbai and Vadodara.
- India qualified for the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2027 for the first time in 20 years after a 3-0 win over Bangladesh.
- Lallianzuala Chhangte was named **Indian Footballer of the Year 2026**; Manisha Kalyan took the women's award.
- At the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 (Belgium/Netherlands), Germany retained the men's title and Argentina won the women's.
- Savita Punia became the **most-capped Indian women's hockey player** (321 caps). Savita surpassed Vandana Katariya's record of 320 senior international caps.
- India swept the Junior Asia Cup titles in China—men's (record sixth) and women's (third consecutive)—qualifying both for the FIH Junior World Cups.
- India finished fourth at the Pickleball World Cup in Da Nang with 41 medals (7 gold).
- Alexander Zverev (Germany) and Elena Rybakina (Kazakhstan) won the 2026 US Open singles titles.
- India will host the Asian Senior Wushu Championships in 2028. ■■

Fact Sheet

In this section, we have presented a compilation of useful information on those topics which are important for general competitive examinations and from which facts and figures related questions are repeatedly asked.



India's Sugar Industry

- **Global Position:** India is the world's second-largest sugarcane producer.
- **Livelihoods:** The sugarcane sector supports nearly **5 crore farmers** and around **5 lakh workers** in sugar factories and allied industries.
- **Top Producing States:** Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- **Sugar Exports Major Destinations:** Sri Lanka, West Asia and East Africa.

Sugar-Ethanol Linkage

- Ethanol blending with petrol helps reduce **fossil-fuel dependence**, strengthen **energy security** and lower greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Sugar diverted to ethanol declined from around **12% in 2022-23** to around **9% in 2025-26**.
- Nearly **three-fourths of India's ethanol production** now comes from **grains, particularly maize**.

Why Ethanol Matters?

- Annual sugar production: **300-340 lakh MT**
- Domestic consumption: **280-290 lakh MT**
- Diversion of surplus sugar to ethanol helps prevent **stock accumulation**, improves mill liquidity and facilitates **timely payment of sugarcane dues**.

India's Higher Education Sector

Institutional & Enrolment Growth

- **Universities:** Increased from **760 (2014-15)** to **1,289 (2023-24)** - a **69.6% rise**.
- **Colleges:** Increased from **38,498** to **48,246** - **25.3% growth**.
- **Standalone institutions:** Rose from **12,276** to **15,221** - about **24% growth**.
- **Total enrolment:** Increased from **3.42 crore** to **4.50 crore** - **31.5% growth**.
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** Improved from **23.7% to 30%**.

- The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** targets **50% GER by 2035**.

Expansion across Levels

- **Integrated Programmes:** **+301.4%**
- **Ph.D.:** **+192.9%**
- **Post-Graduate:** **+50.2%**
- **Diploma:** **+32.2%**
- **Under-Graduate:** **+27.3%**

Women & Social Inclusion

- **Female Enrolment:** Increased by **42.2%**, from **1.57 crore** to **2.24 crore**.
- **Female GER:** Rose from **22.9% to 31.2%**, exceeding male GER (**28.9%**).
- **Gender Parity Index (GPI):** Improved from **0.92** to **1.08**.
- **Scheduled Caste (SC) GER:** **18.9% → 27.8%**; **Scheduled Tribe (ST) GER:** **13.5% → 22.8%**.
- **Other Backward Classes (OBC) Enrolment Share:** Increased to **40.1%**.
- **Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwBD):** Enrolment reached **88,816** in **2022-23**, up **38.1%** since **2014-15**.

Research, Faculty & Globalisation

- **STEM Enrolment:** **91.5 lakh → 1.02 crore**.
- **Foreign Students:** **42,293 → 58,134**.
- **Teachers:** **14.73 lakh → 17.32 lakh**; female teachers increased by **36.7%**.
- **Higher Education Out-turn:** Rose to **over 1.09 crore** in **2023-24**.

Infrastructure

- **Libraries:** **98%** of universities, colleges and standalone institutions.
- **Playgrounds:** **94%** universities, **95%** colleges and **91%** standalone institutions.
- **Laboratories:** **89%** universities, **85%** colleges and **94%** standalone institutions. ■■

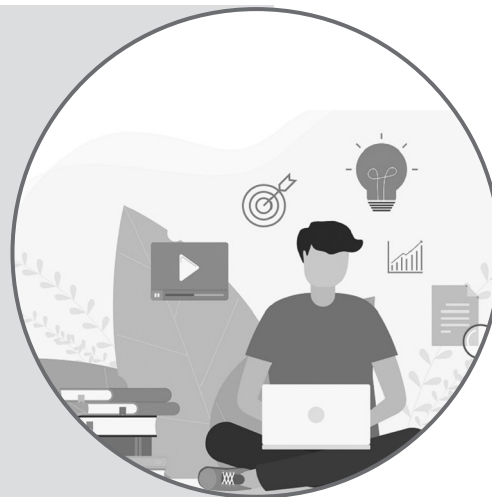
Info Bytes

From Govt. News Services like PIB, AIR, etc.



- Which country announced limited military assistance to Saudi Arabia in September 2026 to counter Houthi attacks? - **Britain (UK)**
- Which edition of the National Formulary of India (NFI) was released in September 2026? - **7th Edition (NFI 2026)**
- On how many tariff lines will New Zealand grant duty-free market access to Indian exports from the first day of the India–New Zealand FTA implementation? - **100% of tariff lines**
- Where was the 17th Kathakali Festival inaugurated on September 18, 2026? - **Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai**
- What is India's current global rank in silk production? - **Second-largest silk producer after China**
- Where is the bilateral naval exercise 'SLINEX-26' between India and Sri Lanka being held? - **Visakhapatnam**
- When is World Patient Safety Day 2026 observed, and what was this year's theme? - **17 September; Theme: 'Safe Care for Non-communicable Diseases'**
- When was the nationwide 'Rashtriya Sankalp Samaroh' launched under the 100-week 'Nasha Mukta Yuva Abhiyaan'? - **18 September 2026**
- Where did the BIMSTEC Energy Centre organise a five-day capacity-building programme on new and emerging technologies in the power sector from September 14-18, 2026? - **Bengaluru**
- Where will the 'Odisha Silicon Valley', which was in the news in the context of Semicon India 2026, be developed? - **Naraj, near Cuttack**
- Where was the 25th Meeting of SCO Ministers responsible for Foreign Economy and Foreign Trade held on September 17, 2026? - **Dushanbe, Tajikistan**
- What was the primary objective of the India–Nepal Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee (IGSC) meeting held in New Delhi on September 16–17, 2026? - **To review trade and trade-related issues and further facilitate bilateral trade and transit**
- What will be India's role in Gulfood 2027, and when will it be held? - **Official Partner Country; UAE, March 15-19, 2027**
- When is the 'Swachhata Hi Seva 2026' campaign being organised, and what is its theme? - **17 September–2 October 2026; Theme: "Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat"**
- Where was the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held, and who led the Indian parliamentary delegation? - **Cape Town, South Africa; Harivansh Narayan Singh, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha**
- When and where was Semicon India 2026 organised, and what was its theme? - **September 17–19, 2026, at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi; Theme: 'Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem'**
- Which actor was selected for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2024? - **Anant Nag**
- Which two major digital platforms were launched by India on the occasion of Ozone Day 2026? - **Net Zero Portal and National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) Dashboard**
- Which television series won the Best Comedy Series award at the Primetime Emmy Awards 2026? - **Widow's Bay**
- Which famous Bengali writer's 150th birth anniversary was celebrated recently? - **Saratchandra Chattopadhyay**
- Which forum was inaugurated by the Union Environment Ministry in Gandhinagar on September 15, 2026? - **World Circular Economy Forum 2026**
- Which regional bloc began negotiations with India to expand their existing Preferential Trade Agreement? - **MERCOSUR**
- Which material was found by Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) researchers to exhibit an unusual wave-like heat transport mechanism? - **Thallium Copper Selenide**
- Which department won the first prize under the Rajbhasha Kirti Awards 2025–26 in the category of ministries and departments with fewer than 300 personnel? - **Department of Financial Services**

Current Affairs Model MCQs



1. With reference to India's Digital Land-Governance Framework, consider the following statements:

1. ULPIN provides a unique geospatial identity to individual land parcels.
2. Bharat Land Stack aims to integrate geospatial land information with records related to ownership, registration, encumbrances and litigation.
3. NAKSHA is primarily concerned with modern geospatial mapping of urban land parcels.
4. Digitisation of land records by itself completely eliminates the possibility of land-related litigation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

2. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), consider the following statements:

1. The shift from providing an account to 'every household' towards 'every unbanked adult' reflects a move from basic access to broader individual-level financial inclusion.
2. Business Correspondents can extend basic banking services beyond the traditional bank branch network.
3. PMJDY accounts can serve as a delivery channel for both social-security schemes and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
4. The JAM architecture links bank accounts, Aadhaar and mobile connectivity to facilitate more targeted delivery of benefits.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

3. The inclusion of 'Samarthak' is most significant from which of the following perspectives?

- (a) Replacing specialised naval platforms with a single vessel dedicated exclusively to combat

operations

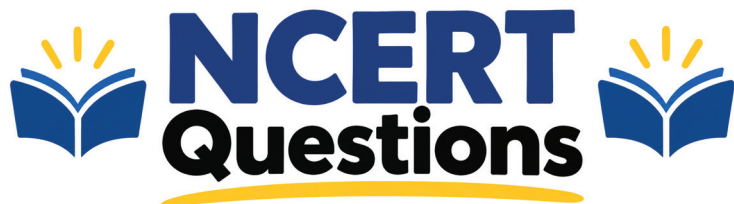
- (b) Building an indigenous, versatile platform capable of supporting multiple maritime activities, including surveillance, patrolling and HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief)
- (c) Developing a nuclear-powered platform for long-duration underwater surveillance
- (d) Expanding India's aircraft carrier fleet through indigenous construction of large aviation ships

4. With reference to the restructured PM SVANidhi Scheme, which of the following best reflects its broader policy direction?

- (a) Moving beyond collateral-free credit towards formal credit, digital financial inclusion, social security and entrepreneurship
- (b) Replacing working-capital loans with direct income support for all urban informal workers
- (c) Restricting the scheme only to street vendors who already possess formal bank accounts and digital payment facilities
- (d) Shifting the scheme from a Central Sector structure to a State-funded urban livelihood programme

5. India's cooperation with Russia on the conservation of the Snow Leopard, recently in the news, is important because it underscores which of the following approaches?

- (a) Ex-situ conservation through captive breeding as the principal strategy for restoring Snow Leopard populations
- (b) Conservation based primarily on restricting human access across all high-altitude Himalayan landscapes
- (c) Use of scientific tools such as population assessment, radio telemetry and genetic analysis for species conservation
- (d) Viewing Snow Leopard conservation primarily as a mechanism to regulate international wildlife trade



Exam-Oriented Conceptual MCQs based on Class 6-12 (Old & New) NCERT

Geography

1. With reference to Indian soils, consider the following statements:

1. Desert soils are red and brown in colour; they have low humus and moisture content due to the high rate of evaporation, and the presence of kankar in the lower layers obstructs water infiltration.
2. Forest soils found in the snow-covered regions of the Himalayas are highly fertile because they contain abundant humus and are alkaline in character.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans. (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Desert soils are red and brown in colour. Due to the dry climate and high temperature, the rate of water evaporation is high, resulting in low humus and moisture content. The increase in the amount of calcium towards the lower layers of the soil leads to the formation of a layer of kankar, which obstructs water infiltration.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Forest soils found in the snow-covered (ice-covered) regions of the Himalayas undergo considerable erosion. These soils are acidic and devoid of humus, rather than being alkaline and rich in humus. (Forest soils are fertile only in the lower areas of river valleys and alluvial fans.)

Reference: NCERT Book Class-10, Chapter-1 (Resources and Development),

- * **Topic-** Classification of Soils,
- * **Subtopic-** Desert Soil and Forest Soil,
- * **Paragraph -** 1st (Page 11).

2. With reference to environmental conservation, traditional movements and Joint Forest Management, consider the following statements and select the incorrect statement:

1. The famous 'Chipko Movement' in the Himalayas not only succeeded in preventing deforestation but also successfully promoted community afforestation campaigns using local plant species.

2. The 'Beej Bachao Andolan' in Tehri and 'Navdanya' demonstrated that economically viable agriculture is possible through diverse crop production even without chemical fertilisers.
3. The Joint Forest Management programme was formally initiated in India in 1988, when the state of Uttarakhand was the first to pass a proposal for it.
4. Under Joint Forest Management, local communities receive rights over non-timber forest products in return for protecting degraded forests and receive a share in timber upon successful conservation.

Ans. (3)

Explanation: The Joint Forest Management programme was formally initiated in India in 1988, but the first proposal was passed by the state of **Odisha**, not Uttarakhand.

Reference: NCERT Book Class-10,

- * **Chapter-2** (Forest and Wildlife Resources),
- * **Topic-** Community and Forest Conservation,
- * **Paragraph -** 2nd, 3rd (Page 23).

3. Two statements are given below, one labelled as Assertion (A) and the other as Reason (R):

Assertion (A): The Narmada River, originating from the Amarkantak Hills, does not form a large delta at its mouth like the rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal; instead, it forms an estuary.

Reason (R): The Narmada flows through a rift valley between hard rocks in Madhya Pradesh with a steep gradient, leaving little flat terrain for sediment deposition.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
(b) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
(c) (A) is correct, but (R) is incorrect.
(d) (A) is incorrect, but (R) is correct.

Ans. (a)