

# MANTHAN

APRIL 2025 : WEEK-4

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# 1. Article 142: The Supreme Power or Judicial Overreach

- When the Indian Constitution was drafted, it gave the Supreme Court an extraordinary tool—Article 142—to ensure “complete justice” in any matter before it.
- But in recent times, this clause has moved from a safety valve to a superpower, raising concerns about judicial overreach and constitutional balance.

## What is Article 142?

### At its core, Article 142 allows the Supreme Court to:

- “pass any decree or make any order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.”
- Originally envisioned as an extraordinary remedy, it was meant to fill gaps where laws were silent, or justice would otherwise be denied.
- It’s being used in routine governance disputes, often against elected governments and executive offices.

## The Tamil Nadu Bill Controversy

- In 2024, the Tamil Nadu government passed 11 bills which the Governor withheld or delayed assent to—violating the spirit of Article 200 of the Constitution.
- Rather than let the matter escalate to the President or trigger constitutional mechanisms, the Supreme Court stepped in under Article 142 and “deemed the bills passed.”

## Why does this matter?

- The Governor is the President’s appointee.
- Bypassing the Governor indirectly pressurizes the President, sidestepping the Union’s constitutional role.
- It sets a precedent: the Court can override delays or objections by elected or appointed executive authorities.
- This wasn’t a judicial review—it was judicial enforcement, almost legislative in nature.

## Judiciary vs President: A Shadow Tussle

- Though the case didn’t name the President, the implications are clear.
- If a Governor chooses to withhold a bill and send it to the President for advice, Article 142 can now short-circuit that process.

## The Collegium Conflict: Another 142 Stretch

- In the 2015 NJAC judgment, the Supreme Court struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission, reinstating the collegium system.
- When the Centre delayed appointments, the Court threatened to invoke Article 142 to enforce its judicial selections.

## By 2023, the SC was openly saying:

- “We may be compelled to use Article 142 if appointments are not acted upon.”

- This undermines the President's role as the constitutional appointer of judges under Article 124. What's left is a rubber-stamp presidency, where judiciary proposes and enforces, leaving no room for executive consultation.

### Can the Union Government Push Back?

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- Yes—but the tools are limited and slower:
  - **Article 131:** Used for Centre vs State constitutional disputes.
  - **Articles 256 & 257:** Direct state governments to comply with Union laws.
  - **Attorney General:** Can file for compliance or contempt.
- But these take time, while Article 142 allows the Supreme Court to act immediately, often without accountability.

### Federalism at Risk?

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- India's democracy rests on a balance—Centre, States, Judiciary, and the President all play defined roles.
- But if Article 142 becomes the norm, the judiciary starts to dominate:
  - Interpreting laws
  - Enforcing its own judgments
  - Bypassing executive and legislative will
- This transforms the Supreme Court from an interpreter of the Constitution into a de facto super-government.

### Conclusion: Justice or Supremacy?

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- Article 142 is meant to be a fire alarm—used only in exceptional emergencies.
- But if it's pulled every time there's a disagreement between the judiciary and executive, it ceases to be exceptional.

### Judicial Review

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- Judicial review in India is a process by which the Supreme Court and the High Courts of India examine, determine and invalidate the Executive or Legislative actions inconsistent with the Constitution of India.
- The Constitution of India explicitly provides for judicial review through Articles 13, 32, 131 through 136, 143, 226 and 246.
- Judicial review is one of the checks and balances in the separation of powers, the power of the judiciary to supervise the legislative and executive branches and ensure constitutional supremacy.
- The Supreme Court and the High Courts have the power to invalidate any law, ordinance, order, bye-law, rule, regulation, notification, custom or usage that has the force of law and is incompatible with the terms of the Constitution of India.
- Since *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1970), the courts can invalidate any constitutional amendments if they infringe on the Basic Structure of the Constitution of India.
- Frequently, judicial review is used to protect and enforce the Fundamental Rights guaranteed in the Constitution.
- To a lesser extent, judicial review is used in matters concerning legislative competence concerning the centre-state relations.

## Article 141

- Article 141 stated that the decisions of the Supreme Court were binding on all other courts in India.
- The Constituent Assembly debated and adopted the Draft Article on 27 May 1949.
- During the debate, B. R. Ambedkar clarified that though the Article reads all courts in India, it does not include the Supreme Court.
- The Supreme Court would be free to change its decision and take a different view from the one it had taken before.
- Following the clarification, the Draft Article was adopted without any amendment.

## Article 142

- Article 142 stated that any decree or order passed by the Supreme Court to do complete justice was enforceable throughout the territory of India.
- The Constituent Assembly adopted the Draft Article on 27 May 1949.

## Parliamentary Supremacy

- The Parliament enacted the First Amendment to the Constitution on 18 June 1951, adding the Ninth Schedule to Constitution to protect specific laws from judicial review.
- When the constitutionality of the amendment was challenged, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court held that Article 368 grants the Parliament the power to amend the Constitution, including the Fundamental Rights and Article 368 in *Shankari Prasad Singh Deo v. Union of India* (1951) and *Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan* (1965).
- The Bench held that the term law in Article 13(2) does not include the Constitutional Amendments.

## Judicial Supremacy

- An eleven-judge bench of the Supreme Court overruled the previous ruling on judicial review of the Constitutional Amendments in *Golaknath v. State Of Punjab* (1967).
- Since the amendment of the Constitution is a legislative process, an amendment under Article 368 is law within the meaning of Article 13 of the Constitution.
- Therefore, an amendment that “takes away or abridges” a Fundamental Right is void.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

1. Which of the following powers does the Supreme Court have under Article 142 of the Indian Constitution?
  - A. The Supreme Court can pass any decree or order necessary to ensure complete justice.
  - B. The Supreme Court can pass orders only within the limits of existing laws.
  - C. The Supreme Court can issue decrees only concerning civil cases.
  - D. The Supreme Court can pass orders that are enforceable only in the capital city of India.
2. Under Article 142(2), the Supreme Court has the power to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Make orders to secure the attendance of persons or production of documents across India.
  - B. Make orders to arrest persons involved in criminal cases.
  - C. Only issue orders to secure the attendance of individuals within the jurisdiction of the Court.
  - D. Pass orders only for the production of documents, not for attendance.

## 2. Shrimad Bhagavad Gita & Bharat Muni's Natyashastra are now inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

- As the world celebrates World Heritage Day, the spotlight shines on preserving humanity's cultural and natural legacy under the 2025 theme, "Heritage under Threat from Disasters and Conflicts: Preparedness and Learning from 60 years of ICOMOS Actions."
- This annual event, marked every April 18, underscores the urgency of safeguarding irreplaceable treasures like India's 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, from the majestic Taj Mahal to the ancient Ajanta and Ellora Caves. Initiated in 1982 by the International Council on Monuments and Sites and adopted by UNESCO in 1983, World Heritage Day—also known as the International Day for Monuments and Sites—celebrates the shared consciousness of humanity embedded in historic sites, folk songs, and ancient scripts.
- This year's theme highlights the need to protect heritage from natural disasters and conflicts, drawing on six decades of ICOMOS expertise to guide global efforts.

### The World Heritage Convention: A Global Commitment

- At the heart of these efforts lies the World Heritage Convention, established by UNESCO in 1972 to identify and protect sites of universal value.
- As of October 2024, the World Heritage List boasts 1,223 sites across 196 countries, including 952 cultural, 231 natural, and 40 mixed properties. India, a signatory since 1977, proudly contributes 43 sites, with recent additions like Moidams: The Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty in Assam, inscribed in July 2024.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi aptly noted, "Heritage is not only history. Rather a shared consciousness of humanity." India's journey began in 1983 with the listing of Agra Fort, Taj Mahal, Ajanta Caves, and Ellora Caves.
- With 62 more sites on UNESCO's Tentative List, the nation continues to champion preservation as a bridge between past and future.

### India's Robust Heritage Initiatives

- India's commitment to its cultural and natural legacy is evident in a slew of innovative initiatives led by the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Since 2014, the government has retrieved 642 antiquities from foreign countries, part of a total 655 recovered since 1976.
- The Adopt a Heritage 2.0 program, revamped in 2023, has seen 21 MoUs signed with organizations to enhance facilities at protected monuments using CSR funds.
- In July 2024, India hosted the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee in Delhi, attended by 2,900 delegates from over 140 countries.
- The event, inaugurated by PM Modi, reinforced India's global leadership in heritage conservation.
- Meanwhile, the ASI oversees 3,697 monuments of national importance, ensuring accessibility with amenities like pathways, signages, and facilities for differently-abled visitors.
- Revival projects like the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Mahakaal Lok, and Ma Kamakhya Corridor enhance pilgrim experiences, while the Chardham Road Project improves connectivity to sacred sites.



- The Must See Portal (asimustsee.nic.in) showcases nearly 100 prominent sites, offering history, access details, and panoramic views to global visitors.

## Digitizing and Celebrating Heritage

- The National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), launched in 2007, has digitized over 12.3 lakh antiquities and 11,406 heritage sites, with ₹20 lakh allocated for 2024–25.
- The Indian Heritage in Digital Space (IHDS) initiative leverages immersive technology to preserve and present India's legacy.
- On October 3, 2024, Assamese, Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, and Bengali were granted classical language status, bringing the total to 11 and affirming India's linguistic heritage.
- India's literary heritage also shone globally when Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahrdayāloka-Locana were inscribed on the MOWCAP Regional Register in May 2024, cementing their universal significance.

## Historic moment for Bharat's civilisational heritage

- The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita & Bharat Muni's Natyashastra are now inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.
- The inclusion of the Gita and Natyashastra in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register is a global recognition of our timeless wisdom and rich culture.
- With this, we now 14 inscriptions from our country on this international register.

## A Shared Responsibility

- World Heritage Day 2025 reminds us that preserving heritage is a collective duty. From ancient monuments to timeless literature, India's efforts—through national initiatives and global collaboration—ensure these treasures continue to inspire and educate.
- As threats loom, the nation's proactive measures, from digitization to disaster preparedness, safeguard the stories of who we were for generations yet to come.

## Indian treasures honoured by UNESCO

### The IAS Tamil Medical Manuscript Collection (1997)

- It is the first Indian text to be inducted in the Unesco World Register in 1997.
- These are Tamil Medical Manuscripts preserved at the Institute of Asian Studies has collected 564 copies of these texts, all written in South India, mostly in Tamil, on palm leaves.
- The texts reflect both the Siddha and Ayurvedic medical systems that discuss the methods of obtaining medicines from herbs, herbal roots, leaves, flowers and the specific processes are explained in detail.

### Saiva manuscripts (2005)

- A collection of texts based on the devotional philosophy of Shaivism are the Saiva texts (the Agama-s, commentaries, manuals, etc.), devotional hymns, sthalapurana-s (legends of many Saiva holy places), texts on Siddha medicines in Tamil, etc.
- Its surviving texts, the majority of them unpublished, range from the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE to the colonial period. The collection is presently housed in the French institutions of research in Pondicherry.

### Rigveda (2007)

- Rigveda is the first literary documents in the history of humankind, oldest among the four Vedas.
- It is not a single book but a compilation of books (Samhita).

- Only one school (Shakha) of the Rigveda is available and it is the Shaakala.
- The Rigveda Samhita contains about 10552 Mantras, classified into ten books called Mandalas.
- Each Mandala is divided into sections called Anuvakas. Each Anuvaka consists of a number of hymns called Suktas and each Sukta is made up of a number of verses called riks.

### **Tarikh-e-Khandan-e-Timuriyah (2011)**

- The Tarikh-e-Khandan-e- Timuriyah recounts the history of the Timurids i.e. of Timur and his successors in Iran and India.
- This richly illustrated manuscript was written and created twenty two years into the reign of the great Mughal emperor and a descendant of Timur, Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar, in 1577-78 AD.
- The paintings of the Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriyah highlight their contributions to the development of astrology, astronomy, medicine, fine arts, architecture, paintings and literature.

### **Laghukalachakratantrarajatika Vimalaprabha (2011)**

- Laghukalacakratantrarajatika (Vimalaprabha), an 11<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan Buddhist text is a commentary to the Kalacakra Tantra.
- The Vimalaprabhā commentary forms the basis of the Kalacakra, a practice in Tibetan Buddhism.
- These manuscripts are significant for their historical, intellectual, and aesthetic value.
- While the primary focus is Tantra, the text also offers detailed discussions on astrology and astronomy and core Indian philosophical concepts in depth.
- Its importance is especially notable given the turbulent medieval period in India, during which many Buddhist manuscripts were lost.

### **Shantinatha Charitra (2013)**

- It is a Sanskrit text, written in the Devanagari script, narrates the life and times of Shantinatha, the sixteenth Jain Tirthankara.
- Composed in 1396 CE (1453 Vikram Samvat), the manuscript is a remarkable example of late 14<sup>th</sup>-century Jain literature.
- It features ten illustrated scenes from Shantinatha's life, rendered in the distinctive style of Jain paintings from Gujarat.
- It is an example of the finest expression in the art of miniature paintings in manuscripts. The ink used in the manuscript is gum lampblack and white paint made from mineral silver.

### **Maitreyayvarakarana**

- Maitreyayvarakarana is a very short text, written on palm leaf in the mixed character of Kutila and Ranjana script, a manuscript of the Pala period (at the time of Gopaladeva, 57<sup>th</sup> regna; year, approx. 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) is in the possession of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata.
- It is believed, Maitreya, the future prophet will eventually appear on earth as enlightened Buddha and teach the pure dharma.
- The text was written in a period when Buddhist literature faced a transition from the Sthaviravada to Mahayana school.
- Vyakarana in Buddhist sanskrit signifies a particular type of composition about the prophesy or prediction of the future Buddhas, as found in Navanga division of Buddhavacana.

### **Gilgit manuscript (2017)**

- The birch bark and clay-coated Gilgit manuscripts are the oldest known surviving manuscripts in India.



- They comprise both canonical and non-canonical Buddhist texts that offer valuable insights into the evolution of religious and philosophical literature across Sanskrit, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Mongolian, Manchu, and Tibetan traditions.
- These manuscripts are crucial for the study of the history and development of Buddhist thought and writing. Paleographic analysis dates them to the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century AD.
- They are written in a Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit, using Gupta Brahmi and Post-Gupta Brahmi scripts. The manuscripts were discovered in three separate finds in the Gilgit region of Kashmir.

### Abhinavagupta (2023)

- This collection consists of 248 manuscripts by Abhinavagupta (940–1015 CE), a remarkable Indian philosopher and polymath from 10<sup>th</sup>-century Srinagar, Kashmir.
- Abhinavagupta made lasting contributions to philosophy, aesthetics, literary theory, performing arts, music, tantra, yoga, and devotion.
- The manuscripts span 41 texts (granthas) and reflect a vibrant knowledge culture whose influence once extended across South Asia, Central Asia, and Northeast Asia.

### Ramcharitmanas (2024)

- Ramcharitmanas composed by Goswami Tulsidasa in Awadhi language in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century text, which is considered one of the greatest works of Hindu literature.
- The core of the work is considered to be a poetic retelling of the events of the Sanskrit epic Ramayana.
- The text is not only famous in India, but also in other Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

### Panchatantra

- The Panchatantra, a collection of ancient Indian fables, has been included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.
- This recognition acknowledges the Panchatantra's enduring legacy and its impact on literature and culture worldwide.

### Sahridayaloka-Locana (2024)

- The manuscript contains two foundational works of Indian Poetics: the Sahridayaloka and the Locana.
- The Sahridayaloka, a groundbreaking text by Rajanaka Anandavardhana—who lived in Kashmir during the late 9<sup>th</sup> century CE.
- He introduced the concept of dhvani (suggested or evoked meaning) as the core essence of poetry, marking a turning point in Indian literary theory.
- The Locana, written in the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE by Abhinavagupta, a renowned philosopher, art critic, and theatre theorist, serves as a detailed commentary on Anandavardhana's work.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

- Which of the following is true about India's contributions to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register as mentioned in the passage?
  - India now has 14 inscriptions in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, including the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra.
  - Only the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita has been inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

- C. Bharat Muni's Natyashastra is the only text inscribed from India in the UNESCO Register.
- D. India has no entries in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register related to ancient texts.
4. What is the role of the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)?
- A. To establish new monuments and heritage sites across India.
- B. To digitize antiquities and heritage sites in India.
- C. To enforce laws protecting heritage sites.
- D. To promote the commercialization of heritage sites for tourism.

### 3. What is SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme that India cancelled for Pakistan nationals after Pahalgam attack?

- After a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in the aftermath of the terror strike in Pahalgam that left 26 dead, the Indian government has announced that Pakistan nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES).
- "Any SVES visas issued in the past to Pakistani nationals are deemed cancelled. Any Pakistani national currently in India under SVES visa has 48 hours to leave India,".

**Recognizing the seriousness of this terrorist attack, the CCS decided upon the following measures:**

- The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism.
- The Integrated Check Post Attari will be closed with immediate effect. Those who have crossed over with valid endorsements may return through that route before May 1, 2025.
- Pakistani nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) visas.
- Any SVES visas issued in the past to Pakistani nationals are deemed cancelled. Any Pakistani national currently in India under SVES visa has 48 hours to leave India.
- The Defence/Military, Naval and Air Advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi are declared Persona Non Grata. They have a week to leave India.
- India will be withdrawing its own Defence/Navy/Air Advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.
- These posts in the respective High Commissions are deemed annulled.
- Five support staff of the Service Advisors will also be withdrawn from both High Commissions.
- The overall strength of the High Commissions will be brought down to 30

**What is SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme?**

- The SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme was launched in 1992.

- The Fourth Summit, which took place in Islamabad in December 1988, decided that certain categories of dignitaries from SAARC countries should be entitled to a Special Travel document that would exempt them from visas within the region.
- Currently, the list included 24 categories of entitled persons, which include Dignitaries, Judges of higher courts, Parliamentarians, Senior Officials, Businessmen, Journalists, Sportspersons etc
- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on December 8, 1985.
- At present, SAARC comprises eight Member states: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- The Visa Stickers are issued by the respective Member states to the entitled categories of that particular country. The validity of the Visa Sticker is generally for one year. The implementation is reviewed regularly by the Immigration Authorities of SAAR Member states.
- The SAARC visa stickers was to ensure that their travel is not limited to any specific cities and would save them from the hassles like police reporting and filling of extra forms on entry in any of the eight SAARC countries.
- Besides Visa Exemption Scheme, SAARC countries also have internship programme to engage people in academia on affairs on South Asian countirs and SAARC countries also have other cooperation in poverty alleviation, tourism and agricultural sector.

### **SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) & India**

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- SAARC is a regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union in South Asia. It was established on December 8, 1985, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- The secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

#### **Member Countries:**

- |                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| • Afghanistan (joined in 2007) | • Maldives  |
| • Bangladesh                   | • Nepal     |
| • Bhutan                       | • Pakistan  |
| • India                        | • Sri Lanka |

### **India's Role in SAARC**

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- India is the largest and most populous member of SAARC.
- It has played a foundational role in the formation of SAARC.
- India contributes significantly to SAARC development funds, regional projects, and initiatives.
- However, due to political tensions with Pakistan, especially after the Uri attack (2016), India has been cautious in promoting full-scale SAARC summits.

### **Recent Developments**

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- SAARC summits have not been held regularly in recent years due to India-Pakistan tensions.
- India is increasingly focusing on sub-regional groupings like:
  - BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)
  - BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal)
- These focus more on economic cooperation, connectivity, and regional integration without Pakistan's involvement.

## Atari Border

- The Atari Border refers to the India-Pakistan border crossing located between the Indian town of Attari in Punjab and Wagah in Pakistan's Punjab province.
- It is most famously known for the Wagah-Attari Border Ceremony, a daily military practice carried out by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and the Pakistan Rangers.
  - **Location:** Near Amritsar, Punjab, India.
  - **Adjacent Pakistani Town:** Wagah.
  - **Significance:** It is the only road border crossing between India and Pakistan open for international travelers.
  - **Ceremony:** The Beating Retreat Ceremony, held every evening, is a patriotic display of military pageantry, drawing large crowds from both sides.
  - **Rail Connection:** The Samjhauta Express used to run across this border as part of the India-Pakistan train service.

## QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

5. Which of the following countries are members in both SAARC and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)?
  - A. India and Pakistan
  - B. India and China
  - C. Maldives and Sri Lanka
  - D. Bangladesh and Maldives
6. Consider the following statements regarding the SAARC:
  1. India is the largest and most populous member of SAARC.
  2. India contributes significantly to SAARC development funds, regional projects, and initiatives.
  3. SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985 and its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.
  4. It launched the South Asian Free Trade Area in 2006.

How many of the above pairs are true?

- A. Only two statements
- B. Only two statements
- C. All statements
- D. None of the statement

## 4. Pope Francis

- Pope Francis was the head of the Catholic Church and sovereign of the Vatican City State from 2013 until his death in 2025.

- He was the first pope from the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order), the first Latin American, the first from the Americas, the first from the Southern Hemisphere, and the first born or raised outside of Europe since the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Syrian pope Gregory III.
- Following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on 28 February 2013, a papal conclave elected Bergoglio as his successor on 13 March.
- He chose Francis as his papal name in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi.
- Throughout his public life, Francis was noted for his humility, emphasis on God's mercy, international visibility as pope, concern for the poor, and commitment to interreligious dialogue.
- He was known for having a less formal approach to the papacy than his predecessors by, for instance, choosing to reside in the Domus Sanctae Marthae (House of St. Martha) guesthouse rather than in the papal apartments of the Apostolic Palace used by previous popes.
- In addition, due to both his Jesuit and Ignatian aesthetic, he was known for favoring simpler vestments void of ornamentation, including refusing the traditional papal mozzetta cape upon his election, choosing silver instead of gold for his piscatory ring, and keeping the same pectoral cross he had as cardinal.
- Francis made women full members of dicasteries in the Roman Curia.
- Francis died at the age of 88 in the early morning of 21 April 2025, on Easter Monday, after suffering a cerebral stroke, which led to a coma and cardiac arrest.
- He had made his last public appearance the day before, on Easter Sunday.

## The Pope

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- The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church and the Bishop of Rome. He is considered the spiritual leader of over 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide and holds a unique position of authority and influence in both religious and global contexts.

## Roles and Duties of the Pope

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### Spiritual Leader:

- Guides the faith and moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Acts as a symbol of unity among Catholics worldwide.

### Teacher of Doctrine:

- Issues encyclicals, apostolic letters, and exhortations—key documents on Church teachings.
- Has the authority to define dogma when speaking ex cathedra (infallibly on matters of faith and morals).

### Supreme Governor of the Church:

- Appoints bishops and cardinals.
- Oversees the administration of the Vatican and its diplomatic relations.

### Global Diplomatic Figure:

- Head of Vatican City, an independent city-state.
- Engages in international diplomacy, advocating for peace, human rights, and social justice.

## History of the Papacy

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### Origin:

- The papacy traces its roots to Saint Peter, one of Jesus Christ's apostles, who is considered the first pope.

- According to Catholic tradition, Peter was the first Bishop of Rome.

### Medieval Power:

- Popes gained both religious and political power in the Middle Ages, often clashing or collaborating with kings and emperors.

### Renaissance to Reformation:

- During this time, the papacy wielded great influence, but also faced criticism for corruption, leading to the Protestant Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### Modern Era:

- After the loss of the Papal States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the pope's role became more spiritual and symbolic.
- The Lateran Treaty of 1929 established Vatican City as an independent state.
- The pope is also known as the Pontiff, from the Latin pontifex, meaning “bridge builder.”
- He wears white robes, and his official ring is called the Fisherman's Ring.
- **Fisherman's Ring**, the signet ring that is presented to the pope—the leader of the Roman Catholic Church—at his papal inauguration. Its standard design shows an image of St. Peter the Apostle with the reigning pope's name inscribed above it.
- It was formerly used as a seal for the pope's private letters and papal briefs and was one of two papal seals, the other being the leaden bull (bulla).
- Although the Fisherman's Ring itself is no longer used as a seal, each newly elected pope receives his own ring as a symbol of his episcopal authority.
- After a pope's death, his ring is destroyed by the cardinal camerlengo (the personal representative of the Sacred College of Cardinals in the administration of the church), signifying the end of the deceased pope's authority.
- The Pope lives in the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City.

### The Election of a Pope

- The election of a pope follows a centuries-old process called a papal conclave, guided by traditions and rules set by the Roman Catholic Church.

### How a Pope Is Elected

- Death or Resignation of a Pope
- The process begins when a pope dies or resigns (like Pope Benedict XVI in 2013).

### Sede Vacante (“Vacant Seat”)

- The period between popes is called sede vacante.
- During this time, the governance of the Church passes to the College of Cardinals, but they can't make major decisions.

### Conclave Called

- Within 15–20 days, a conclave is called.
- The conclave is a secret meeting of cardinal electors held in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

### Who Votes?

- Only cardinals under the age of 80 are eligible to vote. There are typically around 120 of them.



## Secrecy and Isolation

- The cardinals are sealed off from the outside world (no phones, no media). Even the Vatican hotel (Casa Santa Marta) where they stay is secured.

## Voting Process

- Voting is done by secret ballot.
- A two-thirds majority is required to elect a new pope.
- There can be up to four votes per day (two in the morning, two in the afternoon).

## After each round, the ballots are burned:

- Black smoke (created by chemicals) means no pope has been elected.
- White smoke signals a new pope has been chosen.

## Acceptance and New Name

- Once elected, the chosen cardinal is asked, “Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?”
- If he accepts, he chooses a papal name (like Pope Francis).

## Announcement to the World

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### The cardinal protodeacon announces:

- “**Habemus Papam**” (We have a pope)
- The new pope then appears on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica to bless the people.

## Lateran Treaty of 1929

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- The Lateran Treaty of 1929 was a landmark agreement between the Kingdom of Italy and the Holy See (the jurisdiction of the Pope), signed on February 11, 1929.
- It was negotiated between Benito Mussolini, representing the Italian government, and Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri, representing Pope Pius XI.

### Creation of Vatican City:

- The treaty established Vatican City as an independent sovereign state, the world’s smallest both in area and population.
- It granted full sovereignty to the Pope over this new state.

### Recognition of the Holy See:

- Italy officially recognized the Holy See as a sovereign entity in international law.

### Compensation to the Church:

- The Italian government paid the Holy See 1.75 billion lire (in bonds and cash) as compensation for the loss of the Papal States during Italian unification in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Religious Privileges:

- Roman Catholicism was recognized as the state religion of Italy.
- The Church was granted privileges in Italian society, including control over marriage laws (concordat), religious education in schools, and tax exemptions.

### Resolution of the “Roman Question”:

- This treaty resolved the so-called “Roman Question”, which had been a source of tension between the Italian state and the Papacy since 1870, when the Papal States were annexed by Italy.

### Historical Importance:

- It marked the end of the decades-long conflict between the Catholic Church and the Italian state.
- It strengthened the position of Benito Mussolini, who gained favor with many Catholics.
- It laid the groundwork for the modern status of the Vatican as a sovereign entity.

### QUESTIONS

#### Solve the multiple choice questions:

7. Which of the following was a significant first achieved by Pope Francis?
- A. He was the first pope to resign in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
  - B. He was the first pope to be born outside of Europe since the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Syrian pope Gregory III.
  - C. He was the first pope to choose the name Francis in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi.
  - D. He was the first pope to choose silver instead of gold for his piscatory ring.
8. Consider the following statements:
1. St. Francis Xavier was one of the founding members of the Jesuit Order.
  2. St. Francis Xavier died in Goa and a church is dedicated to him there.
  3. The Feast of St. Francis Xavier is celebrated in Goa each year.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

## 5. India to have its own space station by 2035

- By 2040, India will be among the developed nations in the field of space and would have its own space station, V. Narayanan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), said.
- ISRO looked to place in orbit an independent 52-tonne space station by 2035.

### The International Space Station

- The International Space Station (ISS) is a large space station that was assembled and is maintained in low Earth orbit by a collaboration of five space agencies and their contractors: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe), JAXA (Japan), and CSA (Canada).
- As the largest space station ever constructed, it primarily serves as a platform for conducting scientific experiments in microgravity and studying the space environment.
- The station is divided into two main sections: the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS), developed by Roscosmos, and the US Orbital Segment (USOS), built by NASA, ESA, JAXA, and CSA.

- A striking feature of the ISS is the Integrated Truss Structure, which connect the station's vast system of solar panels and radiators to its pressurized modules.
- These modules support diverse functions, including scientific research, crew habitation, storage, spacecraft control, and airlock operations.
- The ISS has eight docking and berthing ports for visiting spacecraft.
- The station orbits the Earth at an average altitude of 400 kilometres (250 miles) and circles the Earth in roughly 93 minutes, completing 15.5 orbits per day.
- The ISS programme combines two previously planned crewed Earth-orbiting stations: the United States' Space Station Freedom and the Soviet Union's Mir-2. The first ISS module was launched in 1998, with major components delivered by Proton and Soyuz rockets and the Space Shuttle.
- Long-term occupancy began on 2 November 2000, with the arrival of the Expedition 1 crew. Since then, the ISS has remained continuously inhabited for 24 years and 173 days, the longest continuous human presence in space.
- Future plans for the ISS include the addition of at least one module, Axiom Space's Payload Power Thermal Module.
- The station is expected to remain operational until the end of 2030, after which it will be de-orbited using a dedicated NASA spacecraft.

## ISS Program

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- The Space Station was officially given approval by President Reagan and a budget approved by the US Congress in 1984.
- NASA Administrator James Beggs immediately set out to find international partners who would cooperate on the program. Canadians, Japanese and many nations of the European Space Agency began to participate in the program soon after.
- The Station was designed between 1984 and 1993. Elements of the Station were in construction throughout the US, Canada, Japan, and Europe beginning in the late 1980s.
- In 1993, as the Station was undergoing a redesign, the Russians were invited to participate.
- Agreement was made to proceed in two phases.
- During the first phase, NASA Space Shuttles would carry astronauts and cosmonauts to the Russian Mir Orbital Station.
- The US would help to modify two Russian-built modules to house US and international experiments and to establish working processes between the participating nations.
- During Phase 2, led by the US and Russia, all of the participating nations would contribute elements and crewmembers to a new International Space Station (ISS).
- **Phase 1**, called NASA-Mir, took place between 1995 and 1998. Eleven Space Shuttle launches went to Mir with the last ten docking to Mir and astronauts and cosmonauts transferring between the two vehicles.
- Two new Russian modules, Spektr and Priroda were launched, became part of Mir, and housed dozens of US payloads and seven US astronauts.

- **In Phase 2**, the elements of the new ISS were launched beginning in 1998.
- Five partner agencies, the Canadian Space Agency, the European Space Agency, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the State Space Corporation “Roscosmos”, operate the International Space Station, with each partner responsible for managing and controlling the hardware it provides.
- The station was designed from the outset to be interdependent and relies on contributions from across the partnership to function.
- The International Space Station (ISS) is the unique blend of unified and diversified goals among the world’s space agencies that will lead to improvements in life on Earth for all people of all nations.
- While the various space agency partners may emphasize different aspects of research to achieve their goals in the use of the ISS, they are unified in several important overarching goals.
- All of the agencies recognize the importance of leveraging the ISS as an education platform to encourage and motivate youth to pursue careers in math, science, engineering, and technology (STEM): educating the children to be the leaders and space explorers of tomorrow.
- All the agencies are unified in their goals to apply knowledge gained through ISS research in human physiology, radiation, materials science, engineering, biology, fluid physics, and technology: enabling future space exploration missions.
- Advancing our knowledge in the areas of human physiology, biology, and material and physical sciences and translating that knowledge to health, socioeconomic, and environmental benefits on Earth is another common goal of the agencies: returning the knowledge gained in space research for the benefit of society.
- The ISS program’s greatest accomplishment is as much a human achievement as a technological one.
- The global partnership of space agencies exemplifies meshing of cultural differences and political intricacies to plan, coordinate, provide, and operate the complex elements of the ISS.
- The program also brings together international flight crews and globally distributed launch, operations, training, engineering, communications networks, and scientific research communities.
- Although the primary Mission Control centers are in the US and Russia, several ancillary control centers in Canada, Japan, and Europe also have a role in managing each nation’s elements and crew members.
- The intended life span of ISS has been extended several times.
- Since several elements are now beyond their originally intended lifespans, analyses are conducted periodically to ensure the Station is safe for continued habitation and operation.
- Much of the Station is modular and so as parts and systems wear out, new parts are launched to replace or augment the original. The ISS will continue to be a working laboratory and outpost in orbit until at least 2030.
- Construction for the ISS began in 1998.
- New modules were added as recently as 2021.

## How it All Began

- The idea of living in space was the very first step towards a space station. The first person to write about living and traveling in space was the noted renaissance astronomer Johannes Kepler in the early 1600s.
- He was the first to realize that planets were worlds, that there was space between the planets and he wrote that one day people would travel through space.

- Others, like the Russian theoretician Konstantin Tsiolkovsky were thinking about designs for space stations that could use sunlight for power and that would serve as miniature Earths, with growth of vegetation in the interior.
- The first details of the engineering, design and construction of a space station were described by Herman Noordung, in 1928.
- The US government began to develop space station concepts in the 1950s.
- One of the early concepts was the US Army Project Horizon modular orbital station which would serve to house crews and refuel spacecraft on their way to a moon base.
- In the early 1960s, NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center (now Johnson Space Center in Houston) elaborated on the requirements for a station and they patented the concept.
- Concepts for the first US space station, which would later become known as Skylab, started about this time.
- Almost simultaneously, the Soviet Union planned a super rocket launcher that would orbit a large space station.
- The rocket, designated the N-1, would also be pressed into service for the Soviet manned Moon landing program.
- But test launches beginning in 1969 proved unsuccessful and so the Soviets turned their attention to smaller stations which could be launched by their most powerful functioning rocket, the Proton.

## Assembly

- The ISS components were built in various countries around the world, with each piece performing once connected in space, a testament to the teamwork and cultural coordination.
- Like a Lego set, each piece of the ISS was launched and assembled in space, using complex robotics systems and humans in spacesuits connecting fluid lines and electrical wires.
- The ISS is the largest humanmade object ever to orbit Earth. ISS has a pressurized volume of approximately 900 m<sup>3</sup> (31,000 ft<sup>3</sup>) and a mass over 400,000 kg (900,000 lbs). Actual numbers vary as logistics resupply vehicles come and go on a frequent and regular basis.
- The ISS solar arrays cover an area of 2,247 m<sup>2</sup> (24,187 ft<sup>2</sup>) and can generate 735,000 kW-hours of electrical power per year.
- The ISS structure measures 109 m (358 ft) (across arrays) by 51 m (168 ft) (module length from the forward end of PMA2 to the aft end of the SM).
- ISS orbits at an altitude of between 370–460 km (200–250 nmi). Its falls towards Earth continually due to atmospheric friction and requires periodic rocket firings to boost the orbit. The ISS orbital inclination is 51.6°, permitting ISS to fly over 90% of the inhabited Earth.
- ISS carries a crew of between 3 and 13 depending on then number of people and passenger vehicles during handover periods, It continually hosts a crew of seven.
- Building the ISS required 36 Space Shuttle assembly flights and 6 Russian Proton and Soyuz rocket launches. More launches are continuing as new modules are completed and ready to become part of the orbiting complex.
- Logistics, resupply and crew exchange have been provided by a number of vehicles including the
- Space Shuttle, Russian Progress and Soyuz, Japanese H-II Transfer Vehicle (HTV), European Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) and commercial Dragon, Cygnus and Starliner vehicles.



## QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

9. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the International Space Station (ISS)?
1. It is a collaborative orbiting research laboratory in low Earth orbit, operated by an international partnership of ten space agencies.
  2. The ISS is not owned by any single nation and is a “cooperative program”.
  3. The station has been continuously occupied since November 2000.
  4. As the largest space station ever constructed, it primarily serves as a platform for conducting scientific experiments in microgravity and studying the space environment.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one statement
  - B. Only two statements
  - C. Only three statements
  - D. All statements
10. How does the International Space Station maintain its orbit around Earth?
- A. The ISS uses large ion engines to maintain its speed and altitude.
  - B. The ISS is positioned at a fixed height above Earth and is not subject to gravitational forces.
  - C. The ISS relies on a combination of periodic boosts from spacecraft and its own velocity to stay in orbit.
  - D. The ISS uses a unique gravitational drive system that counteracts Earth’s gravity.

## 6. Trump, Musk, Yunus among Time’s 100 most influential people, no Indian in list

- US President Donald Trump, tech magnate Elon Musk, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Bangladesh’s Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus are among the prominent names featured in the Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People of 2025 list.
- However, no Indian featured in the Time Magazine’s list, a noteworthy absence considering previous appearances.
- Last year, actor Alia Bhatt and Olympian wrestler Sakshi Malik were among the few Indians who featured in the Time Magazine’s list.
- Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, World Bank President Ajay Banga and actor Dev Patel were the few Indian-origin people who made it to the list.
- The 2025 Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People list features global figures ranging from politics, science, business and entertainment who made significant impacts and contributions over the past year.



- Several prominent world leaders find their way onto the list, which include Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, US Vice President JD Vance, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Germany's conservative leader Friedrich Merz and South Korean leader Lee Jae-myung. Notably, Yunus, 84, a Nobel laureate, is the oldest to feature in the list.
- US Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F Kennedy Jr, Argentinian President Javier Milei, and Ahmed al-Sharaa, who led a rebellion to oust autocratic Syrian President Bashar al-Assad last year, also made it to this year's Time Magazine's list.
- Despite no Indian featuring in the list, Indian-origin CEO of Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Reshma Kewalramani, found herself in the top 100 list. Emigrating from India at the age of 11, Kewalramani became the first woman CEO of a major biotechnology company in the US.
- The 2025 Time Magazine was released with five international covers, each spotlighting a standout personality.
- The five individuals were actor Demi Moore, American rapper Snoop Dogg, former tennis champion Serena Williams, English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran and Co-founder and CEO of Google DeepMind Demis Hassabis.
- This year's list has been divided into various categories, including 'Leaders', 'Icons' and 'Titans'.

## Time 100

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- Time 100 is a list of the top 100 most influential people, assembled by the American news magazine Time.
- First published in 1999 as the result of a debate among American academics, politicians, and journalists, the list is now a highly publicized annual event.
- It is generally considered an honor to be included on the list, but Time makes it clear that entrants are recognized for changing the world, regardless of the consequences of their actions.
- The final list of influential individuals is exclusively chosen by Time editors, with nominations coming from the Time 100 alumni and the magazine's international writing staff.
- Only the winner of the Reader's Poll, conducted days before the official list is revealed, is chosen by the general public.
- The corresponding commemorative gala is held annually in Manhattan.
- In 2019, Time began publishing the Time 100 Next list, which "spotlights 100 rising stars who are shaping the future of business, entertainment, sports, politics, science, health and more".

## Time (Magazine)

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- Time is an American news magazine based in New York City.
- It was published weekly for nearly a century. Starting in March 2020, it transitioned to every other week.
- It was first published in New York City on March 3, 1923, and for many years it was run by its influential co-founder, Henry Luce.
- A European edition (Time Europe, formerly known as Time Atlantic) is published in London and also covers the Middle East, Africa, and, since 2003, Latin America. An Asian edition (Time Asia) is based in Hong Kong.
- The South Pacific edition, which covers Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, is based in Sydney.

- Since 2018, Time has been owned by Salesforce founder Marc Benioff, who acquired it from Meredith Corporation.
- Benioff currently publishes the magazine through the company Time USA, LLC.

## Special editions

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### Time Person of the Year

- Since the list began, every serving president of the United States has been a Man or Person of the Year at least once, with the exceptions of Calvin Coolidge (in office at the time of the first issue), Herbert Hoover (the subsequent president), and Gerald Ford (the only president never to have been elected to the office of president or vice president).
- Most were named Man or Person of the Year either the year they were elected or while they were in office; the only one to be given the title before being elected was Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1944, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Invasion Force, eight years before his first election.
- He received the title again in 1959 while in office.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt became the first chosen US president and is the only person to have received the title three times, first as president-elect (1932) and later as the incumbent president (1934 and 1941).

### Indians as Time person of the year

- Mahatma Gandhi is the only Indian to have been named TIME magazine's Person of the Year, receiving the honor in 1930.
- This recognition was due to his leadership in India's struggle for independence, particularly his role in the Salt March and civil disobedience movement against British colonial rule.
- While other Indians, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Narendra Modi, have been featured on TIME's cover, none have been named Person of the Year.
- In 1999, TIME ranked Gandhi second in its list of the most important people of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, behind Albert Einstein.

### X covers

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- During its history, on seven occasions, Time has released a special issue with a cover showing an X scrawled over the face of a man, a year, or a national symbol.
- The first Time magazine with an X cover was released on May 7, 1945, showing a red X over Adolf Hitler's face which was published the week following his death.
- The second X cover was released more than three months later on August 20, 1945, with a black X (to date, the magazine's only such use of a black X) covering the flag of Japan, representing the recent surrender of Japan and which signaled the end of World War II.
- Fifty-eight years later, on April 21, 2003, Time released another issue with a red X over Saddam Hussein's face, two weeks after the start of the Invasion of Iraq.
- A third red X issue was that of June 19, 2006, after Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed, and a fourth red X cover issue was published on May 20, 2011, after the death of Osama bin Laden.
- A fifth red X cover issue, that of Dec. 14, 2020, had a red X scrawled over the pandemic-hit year 2020 and the declaration "the worst year ever".
- As of 2024, the most recent and seventh X cover issue of Time, that of Nov. 11, 2024, features a red X over the face of Yahya Sinwar following his killing by the Israel Defense Forces.

## QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

11. How does the U.S. Presidential election differ from the general election system in India?
- In both systems, the head of state is directly elected by popular vote.
  - The U.S. Presidential election uses the Electoral College, while India has a parliamentary system.
  - India has an Electoral College for the election of the Prime Minister.
  - In both countries, the head of state holds executive power.
12. Which of the following statements about Presidential system is/are correct?
- The Head of Government is also Head of State.
  - The Executive can veto Legislative acts.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

## 7. India to work with Saudi Arabia to enhance stability of global oil markets

- India and Saudi Arabia have reinforced their strategic partnership by agreeing to enhance cooperation across multiple sectors, with a particular emphasis on energy security, climate action, digital technology, and regional peace.
- This development comes as part of a broader effort to deepen bilateral relations and foster mutual growth and stability, following Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third visit to the Kingdom.
- The visit also builds upon the momentum generated by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's participation in the G-20 Summit in India in September 2023 and the co-chairing of the first meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council.

### Energy Cooperation and Market Stability

- At the core of the joint statement was a shared commitment to enhance the stability of global oil markets and balance energy dynamics.
- Both countries acknowledged the critical need to ensure a reliable supply of all energy sources to global markets.
- The leaders agreed to collaborate on crude oil and its derivatives, ensuring long-term energy security for both nations and contributing to broader global supply chain stability.
- The partnership also aims to build stronger supply chains and launch joint energy sector projects.

- There was a focus on enabling company-level cooperation, improving energy efficiency, and promoting responsible energy consumption across sectors such as buildings, industry, and transportation.
- This reflects a holistic approach to managing demand while ensuring sustainable development.

### **Commitment to Green Energy and Hydrogen Collaboration**

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- Recognizing the future of clean energy, the two sides emphasized the importance of green and clean hydrogen.
- They agreed to work jointly on stimulating demand, developing technologies for hydrogen storage and transport, and exchanging best practices to accelerate the global hydrogen economy.
- These efforts underscore their commitment to sustainable energy transitions and innovation in renewable energy solutions.

### **Climate Change and the Circular Carbon Economy**

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- India and Saudi Arabia reaffirmed their adherence to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.
- They stressed the importance of developing climate frameworks that target emissions rather than the sources of energy.
- This approach allows for a more inclusive and flexible pathway to achieving emission reduction goals.
- India appreciated Saudi Arabia's ambitious environmental initiatives, particularly the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative.
- These efforts aim to combat climate change, reduce emissions, and promote sustainable development.
- Both nations also supported joint efforts to explore the circular carbon economy, which recycles and reuses carbon emissions through innovative policy tools and technologies.
- This concept serves as a vital strategy in achieving global climate objectives while supporting economic growth.

### **Technology and Digital Governance**

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- Beyond energy and climate, both countries expressed a strong interest in expanding cooperation in the fields of advanced technology.
- This includes artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, semiconductors, and other emerging digital domains.
- The partnership aims to harness technological innovation to drive economic development and improve governance.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India's Telecom Regulatory Authority and Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space and Technology Commission.
- This agreement will facilitate regulatory cooperation and collaboration in digital governance, highlighting a shared commitment to innovation-driven growth.

### **Cultural and Tourism Exchange**

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- Recognizing the strong people-to-people ties between the two nations, the joint statement highlighted the potential for expanding collaboration in tourism, media, entertainment, and sports.
- There was mutual agreement to enhance tourism through sustainable practices and capacity building, fostering cross-cultural exchange and economic opportunities.

## Regional Security and Humanitarian Cooperation

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- India and Saudi Arabia also addressed pressing regional issues, particularly the crisis in Yemen.
- Both nations voiced full support for international and regional efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive political resolution.
- India appreciated Saudi Arabia's role in promoting dialogue among Yemeni parties and its facilitation of humanitarian aid.
- In turn, Saudi Arabia acknowledged India's humanitarian contributions to Yemen.
- The shared focus on peace and stability underscores the two countries' commitment to responsible regional leadership.
- Furthermore, both sides emphasized the importance of ensuring the safety and freedom of navigation in international waterways.
- They agreed to promote maritime security in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), reaffirming their dedication to a rules-based international order.

## United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

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- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty that establishes a comprehensive legal framework to regulate all aspects of the world's oceans and seas.

### Overview of UNCLOS

- **Adopted:** December 10, 1982
- **Came into Force:** November 16, 1994
- **Signed at:** Montego Bay, Jamaica
- **Total Parties:** 168 (as of now), including the European Union

### UNCLOS governs

- Maritime zones
- Navigation rights
- Exclusive economic zones (EEZs)
- Continental shelf rights
- Deep seabed mining
- Marine environmental protection
- Marine scientific research
- Dispute resolution

### Territorial Sea

- Up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline
- Coastal state exercises full sovereignty

### Contiguous Zone

- 12–24 nautical miles
- State can enforce laws related to customs, immigration, and sanitation

### Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

- Up to 200 nautical miles
- State has rights to explore, exploit, conserve, and manage natural resources

## Continental Shelf

- Seabed and subsoil up to 200 nautical miles or more (based on geology)
- Coastal state has sovereign rights for resource exploitation

## High Seas

- Beyond national jurisdictions
- Open to all states (freedom of navigation, overflight, fishing, etc.)

## Dispute Settlement Mechanisms

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### UNCLOS provides mechanisms such as:

- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)
- International Court of Justice (ICJ)
- Arbitral tribunals
- Special arbitral tribunals

## Significance

- Promotes peaceful use of seas
- Ensures freedom of navigation
- Balances sovereign rights and global commons
- Addresses marine environmental protection
- Governs seabed resources beyond national jurisdiction (via the International Seabed Authority)

## Notable Points

- USA has signed but not ratified UNCLOS, citing concerns over sovereignty and deep seabed provisions.
- UNCLOS is central to disputes in regions like the South China Sea, where claims and counterclaims often invoke the convention.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

13. Saudi Arabia shares its border with which of the following?

1. Bahrain
2. Qatar
3. Oman
4. Gulf of Aqaba
5. Red Sea
6. Persian Gulf

Select the correct answer using codes given below?

- A. 1, 2, 5 and 6 only
- B. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
- C. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6



14. Consider the following statements:

**Statement-I :** Saudi Arabia is currently the largest oil-producing country in the world.

**Statement-II :** Saudi Arabia is the largest oil-producing country among OPEC member states.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I
- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does not explain Statement I
- C. Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect
- D. Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

## 8. RBI Issues Revised LCR Guidelines For Banks, Effective April 2026

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released updated guidelines for the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), introducing key changes that will take effect from April 1, 2026.
- The revisions are aimed at strengthening the liquidity resilience of Indian banks and bringing domestic regulations in line with global standards.
- As per the new guidelines, banks will be required to assign an additional run-off rate of 2.5 per cent to deposits made through internet and mobile banking channels by retail and small business customers.
- In another major change, banks must now apply haircuts to the market value of Government Securities (classified as Level 1 High-Quality Liquid Assets or HQLA), in accordance with margin requirements under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF).
- Under the revised norms, funds from non-financial entities such as educational, charitable and religious trusts, as well as partnerships and LLPs, will now attract a lower run-off rate of 40 per cent, compared to the current 100 per cent.
- “To give banks adequate time to transition their systems to the new standards for LCR computation, the revised instructions shall become applicable from April 1, 2026,”.
- An impact analysis based on data as of December 31, 2024, indicates that these changes are expected to improve the aggregate LCR of banks by approximately 6 percentage points.
- The RBI noted that all banks are projected to continue meeting the minimum regulatory LCR requirements comfortably.
- “These measures are expected to enhance the liquidity resilience of banks in India while aligning the regulatory framework more closely with global practices in a non-disruptive manner,” the RBI said.
- The final guidelines follow a draft circular issued on July 25, 2024, which proposed amendments to the LCR framework, including changes to haircuts on HQLA and run-off rates for specific deposit categories.
- The final version reflects the feedback received from banks and other stakeholders during the consultation period.
- The Liquidity Coverage Ratio is a key regulatory requirement under the Basel III framework.

- It mandates that banks maintain a sufficient stock of High Quality Liquid Assets to cover their total net cash outflows for a 30-day stress period.

## Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)

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- Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) is a monetary policy tool used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to help banks manage their short-term liquidity requirements.
- It plays a crucial role in maintaining liquidity in the banking system and controlling short-term interest rates.

### Key Features of LAF

#### Purpose

- To manage liquidity in the banking system.
- To ensure stability in the financial markets.
- To transmit interest rate signals to the economy.

### Operations under LAF

#### Repo (Repurchase Agreement)

- Banks borrow money from RBI by selling securities with an agreement to repurchase them.
- Injects liquidity into the system.

#### Reverse Repo

- Banks deposit excess funds with the RBI and earn interest.
- Absorbs liquidity from the system.

#### Rates Involved

- **Repo Rate:** Interest rate at which RBI lends to banks.
- **Reverse Repo Rate:** Interest rate at which RBI borrows from banks.
- These are part of the policy corridor—the repo rate is higher than the reverse repo rate.

#### Tenure

- LAF is typically used for overnight borrowing, but RBI may offer other tenures as needed.

## Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)

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- The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) is a monetary policy tool used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to manage liquidity in the banking system and to control short-term interest rates.

### Key Features of MSF

#### Purpose

- It allows scheduled commercial banks to borrow funds overnight from the RBI against approved government securities when they are short on liquidity.

#### Eligibility

- Only scheduled commercial banks (excluding RRBs) can access MSF.

#### Collateral

- Banks borrow under MSF by pledging government securities that are part of their Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) portfolio.

## Interest Rate

- The MSF rate is typically higher than the repo rate (by 25 basis points as per current norms).
- It acts as the ceiling rate for the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) corridor, which means it is the upper bound of the interest rate corridor within which the RBI operates.

## Limit

- Banks can borrow up to 3% of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL) under the MSF as per current RBI norms (subject to change by RBI).

## Introduced in

- The MSF was introduced in May 2011 as part of the RBI's effort to enhance its monetary policy transmission and maintain orderly liquidity conditions.

## Basel Framework

- The Basel Framework refers to a set of international banking regulations developed by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) to ensure financial stability, strengthen bank capital requirements, and improve risk management across the global banking sector.
- It has evolved over time through multiple iterations.

## Basel I (1988)

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- **Focus:** Credit risk
- **Key Feature:** Introduced minimum capital requirements based on risk-weighted assets (RWA)
- **Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR):** Banks must maintain at least 8% of their RWA as capital.
- **Limitation:** Too simplistic — all loans were not equally risky.

## Basel II (2004)

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- **Three Pillars:**
  - Minimum Capital Requirements – Improved risk sensitivity (added operational risk).
  - Supervisory Review Process – Oversight by regulators.
  - Market Discipline – Disclosure to promote transparency.
- **Improvements:** Considered credit, market, and operational risk, and encouraged internal risk models.

## Basel III (2010–2017, extended beyond)

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### Trigger: Global Financial Crisis of 2008

#### Key Enhancements

- Higher quality of capital (focus on Common Equity Tier 1 - CET1)
- Capital conservation buffer and countercyclical buffer
- **Leverage ratio:** non-risk-based backstop

#### Liquidity standards

- LCR (Liquidity Coverage Ratio)
- NSFR (Net Stable Funding Ratio)
- **Goal:** Increase bank resilience to shocks and reduce systemic risk.

## Basel IV (informally, 2023 onward implementation)

- Not officially called Basel IV, but refers to updates under Basel III reforms finalized in 2017, particularly:
- Revisions to credit risk, operational risk, and output floor (limits internal model use).
- **Effective date:** Phased in globally starting January 2023, full implementation by 2028 in many countries.

### QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

15. Consider the following statements regarding the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF):

1. It is a provision made by the RBI that enables scheduled commercial banks to obtain overnight liquidity if inter-bank funds completely dry up.
2. It is an emergency facility that allows banks to borrow at a rate higher than the repo rate.

Which of the statements given above is/are true?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

16. With reference to the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF), consider the following statements:

1. The SDF was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India to absorb liquidity without providing government securities.
2. The SDF replaced the reverse repo as a floor for the liquidity adjustment facility corridor.

Which of the statements given above is/are true?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

17. What is the primary purpose of the revised Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?

- A. To reduce the regulatory burden on banks and improve profitability.
- B. To improve the liquidity resilience of Indian banks and align domestic regulations with global standards.
- C. To introduce a new framework for loan disbursement by banks.
- D. To mandate the implementation of stricter loan classification criteria for banks.

18. Which of the following changes is introduced by the RBI's revised LCR guidelines regarding the treatment of deposits made through internet and mobile banking channels?

- A. A higher run-off rate is applied to these deposits compared to traditional deposits.
- B. These deposits will be treated as Level 1 High-Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA).

C. A new run-off rate of 2.5 per cent is assigned to these deposits for retail and small business customers.

D. Deposits made through internet and mobile banking channels are exempt from LCR calculations.

19. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) acts as a bankers' bank. This would imply which of the following?

1. Other bank retains their deposits with the RBI.

2. The RBI lends funds to the commercial banks in times of need.

3. The RBI advises the commercial banks on monetary matters.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 2 and 3 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

## 9. Rafael Nadal, Armand Duplantis, Simone Biles Emerge As Winners At Laureus World Sports Awards 2025

- Former tennis player Rafael Nadal and Paris 2024 Olympic champions Armand Duplantis, Simone Biles, and Rebeca Andrade were among the top winners at the 2025 Laureus World Sports Awards held in Madrid.
- The event marked the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the prestigious awards ceremony, celebrating the world's most outstanding athletes.
- Eleven-time world surfing champion Kelly Slater received the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award, while Nadal was honoured with the Laureus Sporting Icon Award to a standing ovation from a hall filled with sporting legends.
- The red carpet saw a host of global sports stars, including freestyle skiing sensation Eileen Gu, football World Cup winner Paulo Dybala, gymnastics icon Nadia Comaneci, and cycling legend Chris Hoy.
- Alpine skiing champion Lindsey Vonn hosted the ceremony for the second time in four years.
- Sportsman of the Year, Novak Djokovic presented the award to Swedish pole vaulter Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis.
- Duplantis made history by becoming the first back-to-back Olympic men's pole vault champion in over 50 years, while also breaking the world record for the ninth time.
- Simone Biles and Rebeca Andrade were named World Sportswoman of the Year and World Comeback of the Year, respectively.
- The American and Brazilian gymnasts shared several podiums at the Paris Games and praised each other's resilience and achievements.

- Great Britain's Tom Pidcock won the World Action Sportsperson of the Year Award after a dramatic mountain biking gold at Paris 2024, where he overcame a punctured tyre to defend his Tokyo title.
- Chinese para-swimmer Jiang Yuyan was awarded Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability after winning seven gold medals in seven events at Paris 2024, matching a record last achieved by Mark Spitz at the 1972 Olympics.
- Football was also celebrated, with Real Madrid named World Team of the Year and 17-year-old Lamine Yamal, a standout performer in Spain's Euro 2024 campaign, named Breakthrough of the Year.
- The Sport for Good Award was given to Kick4Life, a foundation in Lesotho that uses football to educate young people about HIV prevention.
- Kelly Slater, widely regarded as the greatest surfer of all time, reflected on his journey: "As a kid, I wasn't sure if someone from my area in Florida could win a world title."
- Now we have 22 world titles from our state.
- Rafael Nadal retired in 2024. He became only the second recipient of the Laureus Sporting Icon Award, following Valentino Rossi in 2022.

### Full list of winners at the 2025 Laureus World Sports Awards

- **World Sportsman of the Year:** Mondo Duplantis
- **World Sportswoman of the Year:** Simone Biles
- **World Team of the Year:** Real Madrid
- **World Breakthrough of the Year:** Lamine Yamal
- **World Comeback of the Year:** Rebeca Andrade
- **Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability:** Jiang Yuyan
- **World Action Sportsperson of the Year:** Tom Pidcock
- **Sport for Good Award:** Kick4Life
- **Sporting Icon Award:** Rafael Nadal
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Kelly Slater

### Laureus World Sports Awards

- The Laureus World Sports Awards are among the most prestigious accolades in the world of sports, often referred to as the "Oscars of Sports." Here's a detailed breakdown of their origin, history, and importance.

#### Origin

- **Established:** 2000
- **Founded by:** Daimler AG (Mercedes-Benz) and Richemont (Cartier)
- **Inaugural Ceremony:** Monte Carlo, Monaco, hosted by actor Nelson Mandela (who gave a powerful keynote speech).

#### History

- Laureus Sport for Good Foundation was launched alongside the awards to support sport-based programs that address social challenges.

#### Nelson Mandela's iconic quote at the first ceremony —

**"Sport has the power to change the world" — became the guiding philosophy of Laureus.**

- The awards have been hosted in major cities like Barcelona, London, Abu Dhabi, Berlin, and more.



## Award Categories

The key awards include:

- Sportsman of the Year
- Sportswoman of the Year
- Team of the Year
- Breakthrough of the Year
- Comeback of the Year
- Action Sportsperson of the Year
- Sportsperson with a Disability
- Lifetime Achievement and Spirit of Sport awards

## Importance

- **Global Recognition:** Recognizes elite sporting excellence across disciplines and nationalities.
- **Promotes Social Change:** Supports over 250 community programs in 50+ countries through the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.
- **Brings Together Legends:** Voted on by the Laureus World Sports Academy, a group of 70+ legendary athletes like Boris Becker, Michael Johnson, and Kapil Dev.
- **Spotlight on Integrity & Inspiration:** Emphasizes stories of courage, comeback, and impact beyond the playing field.

## Indian Highlights

- Sachin Tendulkar won the Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000–2020) in 2020 for India's 2011 World Cup win.
- Vijay Amritraj is a member of the Laureus Academy.
- Indian athletes have frequently been shortlisted, including Neeraj Chopra and M.S. Dhoni.

## Rafal Nadal

- Rafael Nadal Parera, born on June 3, 1986, in Manacor, Mallorca, Spain, is widely regarded as one of the greatest tennis players in history. Known for his relentless work ethic, mental toughness, and dominance on clay courts, Nadal's career is marked by numerous records and accolades.

## Career Highlights

- **Grand Slam Titles:** 22 (2 Australian Open, 14 French Open, 2 Wimbledon, 4 US Open)
- **Olympic Gold Medals:** 2 (Singles in 2008, Doubles in 2016)
- **ATP Singles Titles:** 92
- **Masters 1000 Titles:** 36
- **Davis Cup Titles with Spain:** 5 (2004, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2019)
- **Career Prize Money:** Over \$134 million
- **Highest ATP Ranking:** World No. 1 for 209 weeks
- **Top 10 ATP Ranking Streak:** 912 consecutive weeks (April 2005 – March 2023)

Nadal's prowess on clay earned him the nickname "King of Clay," with a record 14 French Open titles and 63 clay-court titles overall. His 81-match win streak on clay remains unmatched in the Open Era.

**Solve the multiple choice questions:**

20. Who among the following broke the pole vault world record for the ninth time and won the World Sportsman of the Year award?
- A. Simone Biles
  - B. Tom Pidcock
  - C. Armand Duplantis
  - D. Lamine Yamal
21. Who among the following was honored with the Laureus Sporting Icon Award in 2025?
- A. Kelly Slater
  - B. Novak Djokovic
  - C. Rafael Nadal
  - D. Armand Duplantis
22. Who among the following Indian cricketers won the Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000–2020) in 2020?
- A. M.S. Dhoni
  - B. Virat Kohli
  - C. Sachin Tendulkar
  - D. Rahul Dravid

## **10. Nadda Launches National ‘Zero Measles-Rubella’ Elimination Campaign On World Immunization Week**

- Marking the start of World Immunization Week 2025 Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, virtually launched the National Zero Measles-Rubella (MR) Elimination Campaign 2025–26.
- The campaign reinforces India’s commitment to eliminate Measles and Rubella by 2026.
- During the launch, J.P. Nadda unveiled multilingual IEC materials—including posters, radio jingles, and official campaign films—which will be distributed across all States and Union Territories to raise awareness and promote public participation in the campaign.
- Calling the day a “momentous occasion,” Nadda underscored the importance of achieving 100% immunization coverage.
- He said that Measles and Rubella are highly contagious diseases that severely impact children’s health and bring distress to families, and it is vital that no child is left behind.

- He highlighted India's progress in this regard, stating that 332 districts have reported zero measles cases and 487 districts have reported zero rubella cases between January and March 2025.
- India's efforts have also received global recognition with the prestigious Measles and Rubella Champion Award from the Measles and Rubella Partnership, presented in March 2024.
- The Minister called for enhanced surveillance through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and urged States and Union Territories to adopt an 'ACT NOW' approach.
- He encouraged state leaders and Chief Medical Officers to engage with the public and media, and involve elected representatives, local panchayat heads, and civil society to ensure widespread awareness and participation.
- India's strategy to eliminate Measles and Rubella focuses on achieving and maintaining over 95% vaccination coverage with two doses of the MR vaccine in every district, maintaining a sensitive and timely case-based surveillance system, ensuring preparedness and swift outbreak responses, and building strong inter-departmental linkages.
- Public awareness remains a central pillar, with targeted campaigns to dispel myths and reduce vaccine hesitancy.
- According to 2024–25 HMIS data, India currently stands at 93.7% coverage for the first dose of the MR vaccine and 92.2% for the second dose.
- In 2024, the country saw a significant decline in measles and rubella cases, with measles dropping by 73% and rubella by 17% compared to 2023.
- India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), the largest in the world, vaccinates approximately 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.6 crore newborns annually against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, and hepatitis B.
- The U-WIN digital platform, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is streamlining vaccination services across the country by enabling online registration, appointment booking, and digital certification.

## Immunization in India

- Immunization in India is a critical public health strategy aimed at preventing a variety of infectious diseases and reducing mortality, particularly among children. The country has made significant progress in its immunization programs over the years, largely through initiatives like the Universal Immunization Program (UIP), which is the cornerstone of India's immunization efforts.

## Universal Immunization Program (UIP)

- Launched in 1985, the UIP is designed to ensure that every child in India receives vaccinations to prevent six major diseases: Diphtheria, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Tetanus, Polio, Tuberculosis, and Measles.
- In 2014, the Indradhanush Immunization Drive was launched to further accelerate immunization coverage and address gaps.

## Vaccines in the UIP

- BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin) for tuberculosis
- OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine) to prevent polio
- DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus) vaccine
- Hepatitis B
- Measles and Rubella vaccines
- Rotavirus vaccine (for diarrhea caused by rotavirus)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) for pneumonia

## National Immunization Days (NID)

- A nationwide effort aimed at eliminating polio and increasing immunization coverage. NIDs are held periodically, focusing on vaccinating every child under five years of age.
- India was declared polio-free by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2014, a major achievement due to the success of these drives.

## Vaccination Challenges

- **Geographical Disparities:** Immunization coverage can be uneven, especially in rural and remote areas.
- **Healthcare Infrastructure:** While improvements have been made, some regions still face challenges in terms of health workers, cold chain maintenance (necessary for vaccines), and overall healthcare access.
- **Awareness and Misinformation:** Vaccine hesitancy, though less of a problem in India compared to some other countries, still exists due to misinformation or cultural factors.
- **Logistical Issues:** The vast population of India requires immense logistical coordination to ensure vaccines are delivered and stored at proper temperatures.

## COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign

- India initiated a large-scale vaccination campaign for COVID-19 starting in January 2021. The country administered vaccines like Covishield (AstraZeneca), Covaxin (developed by Bharat Biotech), and Sputnik V.
- The campaign successfully vaccinated a large portion of the population, with efforts focusing on high-risk groups and later expanding to the general public.

## Progress and Achievements

- Over the past few decades, India has made significant strides in increasing immunization coverage, with over 90% of children receiving basic vaccinations under the UIP.
- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) regularly tracks immunization rates and has shown an upward trend in vaccine coverage.
- India has also become a major producer of vaccines, supplying to many countries through initiatives like GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) and the UNICEF.

## Future Outlook

- India is focusing on improving vaccination coverage among hard-to-reach populations, addressing vaccine hesitancy, and ensuring that vaccines for newer diseases are included in the national schedule.
- The introduction of newer vaccines, like for human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis E, is also part of the broader strategy to address other preventable diseases.

## Measles (Rubeola)

- **Cause:** Measles virus (a paramyxovirus)

### Transmission

- Spread through respiratory droplets (coughing and sneezing)
- Extremely contagious – can linger in the air for up to 2 hours

### Symptoms

- High fever
- Cough, runny nose, red/watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Koplik spots (tiny white spots inside the mouth)
- Red, blotchy skin rash that starts at the hairline and spreads downward

## Complications

- Ear infections, diarrhea, pneumonia
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Can be fatal, especially in young children

## Prevention

- MMR vaccine (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- First dose at 9–12 months, second dose at 15–18 months (varies by country)

## Rubella (German Measles)

- Cause: Rubella virus (a togavirus)

## Transmission

- Also spread through respiratory droplets
- Not as contagious as measles

## Symptoms

- Mild fever
- Rash (starts on face and spreads)
- Swollen lymph nodes behind ears and neck
- Joint pain (more common in adults, especially women)

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

23. Consider the following statements:

1. The Universal Immunization Program (UIP) was launched in 1985 with the goal of ensuring every child in India receives vaccines to prevent major diseases such as Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Tuberculosis, and Measles.
2. The Indradhanush Immunization Drive, launched in 2014, was aimed at accelerating immunization coverage and addressing gaps in the Universal Immunization Program (UIP).

Which of the statements given above is/are true?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

24. In the context of India's Universal Immunization Program (UIP), which of the following vaccines was introduced to prevent severe infections caused by a bacteria that leads to life-threatening conditions like meningitis and sepsis?

- A. BCG vaccine
- B. Hepatitis B vaccine
- C. Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)
- D. OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine)

- 25.** What is the primary objective of the National Zero Measles-Rubella (MR) Elimination Campaign 2025–26 launched by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare?
- A. To eliminate polio by 2026
  - B. To eliminate measles and rubella by 2026
  - C. To increase immunization rates for all diseases
  - D. To launch a new vaccine for tuberculosis



Career  
Launcher



## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **A** Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or make any order that is necessary to do complete justice in any case. This means the Court has the flexibility to go beyond existing laws if required to deliver full justice in a case. Option **A** correctly reflects this power. **B**: The Supreme Court's power under Article 142 is not restricted to existing laws; it can pass orders beyond the scope of existing laws if necessary for justice. **C**: Article 142 applies to all types of cases, not just civil cases, and can extend to any matter the Court is handling. **D**: The orders passed by the Supreme Court under Article 142 are enforceable throughout India, not just in the capital city.
2. **A** Article 142(2) grants the Supreme Court the authority to issue orders for securing the attendance of individuals, the discovery or production of documents, or the investigation of contempt throughout India. This provision ensures that the Court's orders are applicable nationwide, irrespective of where a person or document may be located. **B**: While the Supreme Court has the power to secure the attendance of people, it does not automatically have the power to arrest them under Article 142. Arrest orders are not covered under this specific provision. **C**: Article 142(2) applies across the entire territory of India, not just within the Court's jurisdiction. **D**: The provision allows both securing attendance and obtaining documents, not just one.
3. **A** India now has 14 inscriptions in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, with the recent addition of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Bharat Muni's Natyashastra, recognizing India's cultural and literary heritage. This makes option **A** the correct choice. **B** and **C**: Both are incorrect because both the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Bharat Muni's Natyashastra are included in the Memory of the World Register, not just one of them. **D**: This is incorrect because India does have multiple inscriptions in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, including the Rigveda and other cultural treasures.
4. **B** National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), launched in 2007, has digitized over 12.3 lakh antiquities and 11,406 heritage sites. This initiative is part of India's efforts to preserve and showcase its cultural and historical heritage.
5. **A** India and Pakistan are members of both SAARC and SCO. Both India and Pakistan are founding members of SAARC. Both India and Pakistan are full members of SCO, having joined in 2017. While India is a member of both SAARC and SCO, China is not a member of SAARC. China is an observer in SAARC but does not hold full membership. However, China is a full member of SCO. Therefore, Option **B** is incorrect. Maldives and Sri Lanka are both members of SAARC but are not members of the SCO. While the Maldives has an observer status in the SCO, Sri Lanka does not have any formal membership in the SCO. Therefore, Option **C** is incorrect. Bangladesh is a member of both SAARC and SCO (it became a member of SCO in 2021 as a dialogue partner). Maldives is a member of SAARC, but it does not have full membership in SCO, though it has observer status. Therefore, Option **D** is incorrect. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
6. **C** India's Role in SAARC: India is the largest and most populous member of SAARC. It has played a foundational role in the formation of SAARC. India contributes significantly to SAARC development funds, regional projects, and initiatives. SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The organization promotes economic development and regional integration. It launched the South Asian Free Trade Area in 2006.

7. **B** Pope Francis was the first pope born or raised outside of Europe since the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Syrian pope Gregory III, making option **B** correct. **A**: While Pope Benedict XVI did resign, the first pope to resign in modern times was Pope Benedict XVI, not Pope Francis. Although Pope Francis did choose the name Francis in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, it's not the most significant "first" in this context compared to being the first pope born outside of Europe. **D**: Pope Francis's choice to use silver instead of gold for his piscatory ring is mentioned in the passage, but it's a personal preference and not the most significant "first."
8. **C** Statement 1 is correct. St. Francis Xavier was indeed one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuit Order. The Jesuit Order was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1534, and St. Francis Xavier was one of the first companions of Ignatius. Together, they established the order, which became known for its missionary work, education, and service to the Church. Statement 2 is incorrect. He died on Shangchuan Island (now Shang-ch'uan Tao, off the Chinese coast) while trying to gain entrance to China, which was then closed to foreigners. Statement 3 is correct. Every year the feast of St. Francis Xavier is celebrated in Goa on 3<sup>rd</sup> of December.
9. **C** The International Space Station (ISS) is a collaborative orbiting research laboratory in low Earth orbit, operated by an international partnership of five space agencies: the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe, and Japan. The ISS is not owned by any single nation and is a "cooperative program". The station has been continuously occupied since November 2000. As the largest space station ever constructed, it primarily serves as a platform for conducting scientific experiments in microgravity and studying the space environment. The station is divided into two main sections: the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS), developed by Roscosmos, and the US Orbital Segment (USOS), built by NASA, ESA, JAXA, and CSA.
10. **C** The ISS orbits the Earth at a speed of approximately 28,000 kilometers per hour (17,500 miles per hour). It stays in orbit due to its orbital velocity, which balances the pull of Earth's gravity. However, the ISS experiences orbital decay due to atmospheric drag and requires periodic boosts from visiting spacecraft, such as Progress or Cygnus, to maintain its orbit. The ISS relies on a combination of periodic boosts from spacecraft and its own velocity to stay in orbit. **A**: The ISS does not rely on ion engines; it is not equipped with such propulsion systems. The boosts it receives come from traditional spacecraft. **B**: The ISS is not at a fixed height; it is in a low Earth orbit, where gravity still plays a role. It needs regular adjustments to prevent falling back to Earth. **D**: The ISS does not use any gravitational drive system. Its velocity and periodic boosts from spacecraft maintain its orbit, not any form of counteracting gravity.
11. **B** In the U.S., the President is elected through the Electoral College system, whereas in India, the President is ceremonial, and the Prime Minister holds executive power in a parliamentary system. In India, the Prime Minister is elected by the members of the Lok Sabha, not through a popular vote or an electoral college, making option **B** the correct answer.
12. **C** In a Presidential system, the Head of Government (the President) is also the Head of State. This means that in countries with a presidential system, the President holds both the executive powers of governance (as the Head of Government) and the symbolic, ceremonial role of representing the country (as the Head of State). This is distinct from systems like parliamentary systems, where the Head of State (*e.g.*, a monarch or ceremonial president) is separate from the Head of Government (*e.g.*, the Prime Minister). For example, in the United States, the President serves as both the Head of Government (making decisions on policy and governance) and the Head of State (symbolizing national unity and representing the nation at home and abroad). In a Presidential system, the Executive

(the President) typically has the power to veto legislative acts passed by the legislature (Congress in the U.S.). This veto power allows the President to block legislation passed by the legislature. However, the legislature can override this veto in many cases, often requiring a supermajority vote. For example, in the United States, the President can veto bills passed by Congress, but Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. This system is a feature of the checks and balances structure in presidential systems, which ensures that no single branch of government (Executive, Legislature, or Judiciary) becomes too powerful.

- 13. D** Saudi Arabia is a country in West Asia. Located in the centre of the Middle East, it covers the bulk of the Arabian Peninsula and has a land area of about 2,150,000 km<sup>2</sup> (830,000 sq mi), making it the fifth-largest country in Asia, the largest in the Middle East, and the 12<sup>th</sup>-largest in the world. It is bordered by the Red Sea to the west; Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait to the north; the Persian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to the east; Oman to the southeast; and Yemen to the south. The Gulf of Aqaba in the northwest separates Saudi Arabia from Egypt and Israel. Saudi Arabia is the only country with a coastline along both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and most of its terrain consists of arid desert, lowland, steppe, and mountains.
- 14. D** Saudi Arabia is a major oil producer and the largest exporter, it is not currently the largest oil-producing country in the world. The United States is the largest oil producer, with Saudi Arabia ranking second. Saudi Arabia is indeed the largest oil-producing country among OPEC member states. It accounts for a significant portion of the total oil supply within the Organization. In 2023, Saudi Arabia's oil production averaged around 9.6 million barrels per day. OPEC was founded on 14 September 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. The organization, which currently comprises 12 member countries. Current OPEC members are Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.
- 15. C** The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF), a provision made by the RBI that enables scheduled commercial banks to obtain overnight liquidity if inter-bank funds completely dry up. It is an emergency facility that allows banks to borrow at a rate higher than the repo rate.
- 16. C** The SDF was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India to absorb liquidity without providing government securities. The Standing Deposit Facility was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India to absorb excess liquidity from commercial banks without the need to provide government securities in return, making it a collateral-free arrangement. The SDF replaced the reverse repo as a floor for the liquidity adjustment facility corridor. **Correct:** The SDF replaced the reverse repo as the floor for the liquidity adjustment facility corridor in 2022, allowing the RBI to manage liquidity more effectively during periods of surplus.
- 17. B** The revised LCR guidelines are designed to strengthen the liquidity resilience of Indian banks, making sure they are better prepared to withstand financial stress. The guidelines are aimed at aligning the domestic regulatory framework with global standards (such as those outlined in the Basel III framework) to ensure banks have adequate liquidity during times of stress. Therefore, option **B** is the correct answer. **A:** While the guidelines may have an indirect effect on banks' profitability by ensuring stability, the primary focus is on improving liquidity resilience, not reducing regulatory burden. **C:** The guidelines are related to liquidity management, not loan disbursement policies. **D:** The LCR guidelines are focused on liquidity management, not loan classification.

- 18. C** The revised guidelines specify that deposits made through internet and mobile banking channels by retail and small business customers will now attract a run-off rate of 2.5 per cent. This adjustment is a new requirement introduced to absorb liquidity in a more effective manner while reflecting changes in customer behavior. Option **C** correctly reflects this update. **A:** The revised guidelines specifically mention a lower run-off rate (2.5 per cent) for these deposits, not a higher one. **B:** These deposits are not classified as Level 1 HQLA; the guidelines focus on their run-off rate, not on their classification as HQLA. **D:** Internet and mobile banking deposits are not exempt from LCR calculations; they now have a specific run-off rate applied to them.
- 19. D** **Statement 1:** “Other banks retain their deposits with the RBI.” As the bankers’ bank, the RBI holds the deposits of commercial banks in the country. This is part of the mechanism that helps the RBI manage monetary policy, as banks can park their excess reserves with the RBI. These deposits are part of the cash reserves of the commercial banks, and the RBI acts as a custodian of these funds.
- Statement 2:** “The RBI lends funds to the commercial banks in times of need.” The RBI also lends money to commercial banks during times of liquidity shortages. This can be done through mechanisms like the repo rate and marginal standing facility (MSF), which allow commercial banks to borrow money from the RBI. The RBI ensures that the banking system has adequate liquidity, and this lending function is part of its role as a bankers’ bank.
- Statement 3:** “The RBI advises the commercial banks on monetary matters. The RBI also provides guidance and advice to commercial banks on monetary policy, interest rates, and other aspects of the financial system. The RBI’s primary role is to maintain financial stability, and part of that includes advising and setting policy directions that influence how commercial banks operate, especially concerning lending, borrowing, and managing reserves. All three statements correctly describe the functions of the RBI as a bankers’ bank:
- 20. C** Armand Duplantis, a Swedish pole vaulter, was named World Sportsman of the Year at the 2025 Laureus World Sports Awards. He made history by becoming the first man in over 50 years to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals in pole vaulting, while also breaking the world record for the ninth time. Option **C** is the correct answer.
- 21. C** Rafael Nadal was awarded the Laureus Sporting Icon Award in 2025, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to tennis. He received the award amidst a standing ovation from the audience, which included many sporting legends. Option **C** is the correct answer.
- 22. C** Sachin Tendulkar won the Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000–2020) in 2020, in recognition of India’s 2011 World Cup win. This victory was a historic moment for Indian cricket and Tendulkar, as he had been a pivotal figure in the sport for decades. Option **C** is the correct answer. **A:** M.S. Dhoni is one of India’s cricketing legends but did not win the Laureus Sporting Moment Award in 2020. **B:** Virat Kohli has been frequently recognized for his cricketing achievements, but he did not win the Laureus Sporting Moment Award. **D:** Rahul Dravid is another prominent Indian cricketer, but he did not win the Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000-2020).
- 23. C** **Universal Immunization Program (UIP):** Launched in 1985, the UIP is designed to ensure that every child in India receives vaccinations to prevent six major diseases: Diphtheria, Pertussis



(Whooping Cough), Tetanus, Polio, Tuberculosis, and Measles. In 2014, the Indradhanush Immunization Drive was launched to further accelerate immunization coverage and address gaps. Vaccines in the UIP: BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin) for tuberculosis, OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine) to prevent polio, DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus) vaccine, Hepatitis B, Measles and Rubella vaccines, Rotavirus vaccine (for diarrhea caused by rotavirus) and Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) for pneumonia. The Indradhanush Immunization Drive, launched in 2014, was aimed at accelerating immunization coverage and addressing gaps in the Universal Immunization Program (UIP). It focused on improving vaccination rates across the country, especially in areas with low coverage.

- 24. C** The Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) is included in the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) to prevent infections caused by pneumococcal bacteria, which can lead to severe and potentially life-threatening conditions like meningitis, sepsis, and pneumonia in children. The PCV vaccine is crucial in preventing these infections, especially in young children under 2 years of age. Option **C** is the correct answer.
- 25. B** The National Zero Measles-Rubella (MR) Elimination Campaign 2025–26 is aimed at eliminating measles and rubella by 2026. This campaign is part of India's efforts to ensure 100% immunization coverage for these two highly contagious diseases, which severely affect children's health. Option **B** is the correct answer. **A:** The campaign specifically focuses on measles and rubella, not polio. **C:** While the campaign aims to boost immunization coverage, its primary goal is to eliminate measles and rubella, not all diseases. **D:** The campaign is not about launching a new vaccine for tuberculosis but addressing measles and rubella.