

# MANTHAN

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# 1. Greenland controversy

- President-elect Donald Trump's renewed interest in acquiring Greenland has sparked global intrigue and sharp responses from Denmark.
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## Trump's Case for Greenland

- Donald Trump emphasized Greenland's critical importance to U.S. national security.
- "We need Greenland for national security purposes," he declared, urging Denmark to relinquish control to "protect the free world."
- Trump even hinted at leveraging economic pressure, including tariffs on Denmark, to facilitate the acquisition.

## Why Greenland Matters

- Greenland, a semiautonomous territory under Denmark's control, boasts immense natural resources and geopolitical significance.
- Its vast ice sheets and glaciers, retreating rapidly due to climate change, reveal untapped reserves of oil, copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and other critical minerals.
- These resources are indispensable for industries producing renewable energy infrastructure, batteries, and electric vehicles.
- The Danish government's 2023 report highlighted Greenland's mineral wealth, describing its conditions as ideal for ore formation.
- As the Arctic ice melts, the region's potential for resource extraction continues to grow.
- Additionally, the melting ice opens up new shipping routes, significantly shortening maritime journeys.
- For instance, navigating the Arctic Sea from Western Europe to East Asia is 40% faster than traditional routes through the Suez Canal.
- Arctic shipping traffic has surged by 37% over the past decade, according to the Arctic Council. Geopolitical Stakes in the Arctic Greenland's strategic location places it at the crossroads of North America and the Arctic, making it a critical asset in global geopolitics.
- Trump's former national security adviser, Robert C. O'Brien, noted that Greenland serves as a "highway" from the Arctic to the United States.
- With Arctic shipping routes gaining prominence, control over Greenland could bolster U.S. influence in the region.
- Other nations, including China and Russia, are already eyeing the Arctic's potential. In a November 2023 agreement, Beijing and Moscow pledged to collaborate on developing Arctic shipping routes, intensifying competition for dominance in the area.

## What is so special about Greenland?

- Greenland, the largest island in the world, is predominantly covered by ice, with nearly 80% of its surface blanketed by an expansive ice cap and glaciers.

## Importance of Greenland

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- Greenland is a region of significant geopolitical, environmental, and scientific importance due to several factors:
  - **Strategic Location:** Situated between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, Greenland holds a critical position in global geopolitics. Its location is key for military, navigation, and shipping routes, especially as climate change opens up previously inaccessible Arctic passages.
  - **Climate Change Indicator:** Greenland's ice sheet is one of the largest in the world, and its rapid melting due to climate change is a major concern. The loss of ice contributes to rising sea levels, which affects coastlines globally. Studying Greenland's ice can provide valuable insights into the broader impact of climate change.
  - **Natural Resources:** Greenland is rich in minerals, rare earth elements, and oil reserves. As global demand for these resources increases, Greenland's potential as a source of materials like lithium, uranium, and gold becomes more significant.
  - **Biodiversity and Ecosystems:** The region's ecosystems are home to unique species of flora and fauna, many of which are adapted to cold environments. Greenland's biodiversity is important for scientific research on how life adapts to extreme conditions.
  - **Indigenous Culture:** Greenland is home to the Inuit people, whose culture, traditions, and lifestyle are closely tied to the Arctic environment. Preserving their way of life and supporting their self-determination is important from a cultural and human rights perspective.
  - **International Relations:** Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark but is also a subject of international interest, with countries like the United States, China, and Russia showing interest in its resources, strategic location, and potential for future trade routes.

## Advantages of Acquiring Greenland

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- **Geopolitical and Strategic Importance:**
  - **Arctic Dominance:** Greenland's location is pivotal in the Arctic region, offering strategic military advantages. The U.S. already maintains Thule Air Base in Greenland, which is critical for missile warning systems and space surveillance. Full control could enhance the U.S.'s Arctic defense capabilities.
  - **Control Over Shipping Lanes:** As Arctic ice melts due to climate change, new maritime routes are emerging. Greenland could provide the U.S. with control over these routes, reducing shipping times between major global markets.
- **Natural Resources:**
  - **Mineral Wealth:** Greenland is rich in rare earth minerals, essential for modern technologies like smartphones, electric vehicles, and renewable energy systems. Acquiring Greenland could reduce U.S. dependence on countries like China for these critical resources.
  - **Energy Potential:** The territory has untapped oil and gas reserves. Ownership would allow the U.S. to explore and potentially exploit these resources, enhancing energy security.
- **Scientific and Environmental Research:**
  - Greenland's unique environment offers valuable opportunities for climate research. Direct control could facilitate scientific exploration, providing insights into climate change and environmental dynamics.

- **Economic Opportunities:**

- **Tourism and Development:** Greenland's natural beauty and unique landscapes could be leveraged to boost tourism, creating economic growth opportunities.
- **Infrastructure Projects:** U.S. investment could improve Greenland's infrastructure, potentially benefiting both local populations and broader economic interests.

## Disadvantages of Acquiring Greenland

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- **Diplomatic and Political Challenges:**

- **Strained Relations with Denmark and NATO:** Attempting to purchase Greenland could severely strain U.S. relations with Denmark and other NATO allies, undermining long-standing diplomatic ties.
- **International Backlash:** Such a move might be perceived as neocolonialism, attracting criticism from the global community and affecting the U.S.'s international standing.

- **Economic Costs:**

- **High Acquisition and Development Costs:** Beyond the purchase price, significant investments would be needed to develop Greenland's infrastructure, support its population, and manage its vast territory.
- **Limited Immediate Returns:** While rich in resources, Greenland's harsh climate and remote location make resource extraction expensive and logistically challenging.

- **Environmental Concerns:**

- **Impact of Resource Exploitation:** Extracting natural resources could harm Greenland's fragile ecosystems, contributing to environmental degradation and accelerating climate change impacts.
- **Climate Change Risks:** Greenland is ground zero for climate change. Rising temperatures could create unforeseen environmental and economic challenges.

- **Local Opposition:**

- **Indigenous Rights and Autonomy:** Greenland's predominantly Inuit population values its autonomy. Acquiring the territory without their consent could lead to resistance, social unrest, and ethical concerns regarding self-determination.

## Critical Analysis and Conclusion

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- Acquiring Greenland presents a mix of strategic opportunities and significant challenges. While the potential for enhanced Arctic dominance, resource wealth, and scientific advancements is appealing, the diplomatic fallout, economic burdens, and ethical considerations cannot be ignored.
- Strategically, Greenland would undoubtedly strengthen U.S. influence in the Arctic. However, in an era where diplomacy, environmental stewardship, and indigenous rights are paramount, such an acquisition could damage the U.S.'s global reputation. Economically, the costs associated with acquisition and development may outweigh immediate benefits.
- In conclusion, while the advantages of acquiring Greenland are notable, particularly in terms of strategic positioning and resource access, the potential disadvantages—ranging from diplomatic tensions to environmental risks—highlight the complexity of such a geopolitical move. Any consideration of this nature requires a nuanced approach, balancing national interests with global responsibilities and ethical considerations.

## QUESTIONS

**Solve the multiple choice questions:**

1. The Ottawa Declaration defines these states as Members of the Arctic Council. Which of the following countries are members in Arctic Council?

1. Canada
2. Denmark
3. India
4. China
5. Finland
6. Iceland
7. Norway

Select the correct answer using codes given below.

- A. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only  
C. 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 only

- B. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 only  
D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7

2. Which of the following statements about Greenland is true?

- A. Greenland is an independent country.  
B. Greenland is part of the European Union.  
C. Greenland is the world's largest island.  
D. Greenland's primary language is French.

## 2. Parliament panel on Waqf Amendment Bill submits report to Lok Sabha speaker

- The joint committee of Parliament examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill submitted its report to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Panel chairperson Jagdambika Pal met Birla at his Parliament House office and handed over the report.
- The panel adopted by a majority vote its report that contained changes suggested by members of the ruling BJP, prompting the opposition to dub the exercise an attempt to destroy Waqf boards.
- The Joint Committee of Parliament on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill adopted the report on the draft legislation by a 15-11 majority vote. Opposition members submitted dissent notes to the report.
- BJP members insisted that the Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha in August last year, seeks to bring modernity, transparency and accountability in the management of Waqf properties.
- On the other hand, the opposition termed it an attack on the constitutional rights of the Muslim community and interference in the functioning of Waqf boards.
- The objective of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, to redress the issues and challenges in regulating and managing Waqf properties. The Amendment Bill seeks to



improve the administration and management of waqf properties in India. It aims to overcome the shortcomings of the previous act and enhance the efficiency of Waqf boards by introducing changes such as renaming the Act, updating the definitions of waqf, improving the registration process, and increasing the role of technology in managing waqf records.

- The primary objective of the Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024 is to repeal the Mussalman Wakf Act, 1923, a colonial-era legislation that has become outdated and inadequate for managing waqf properties in modern India. The repeal aims to ensure uniformity, transparency, and accountability in the administration and management of waqf properties under the Waqf Act, 1995, thus eliminating inconsistencies and ambiguities caused by the continued existence of this redundant law. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 has been referred to the Joint Committee of Parliament.

### What are the key features of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024?

- The key features of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 are:
  - **Renaming the Waqf Act, 1995:** The Act has been renamed to the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 1995, to reflect its broader objective of improving the management and efficiency of Waqf boards and properties, emphasising empowerment and development along with effective administration.
  - **Formation of Waqf:** The Act allows waqf to be formed by: (i) declaration, (ii) recognition based on long-term use (waqf by user), or (iii) endowment when the line of succession ends (waqf-alal-aulad).
    - The Bill states that only a person practicing Islam for at least five years may declare a waqf. It clarifies that the person must own the property being declared.
    - It removes waqf by user, where properties could be deemed as waqf based solely on prolonged use for religious purposes.
    - It also adds that waqf-alal-aulad must not result in denial of inheritance rights to the donor's heir including women heirs.
  - **Government property as Waqf:** The Bill states that any government property identified as waqf will cease to be so. The Collector of the area will determine ownership in case of uncertainty, and submit a report to the state government. If deemed a government property, he will update the revenue records.
  - **Power to determine if a property is waqf:** The Act empowers the Waqf Board to inquire and determine if a property is waqf. The Bill removes this provision.
  - **Survey of waqf:** The Act provides for appointment of a Survey Commissioner and additional commissioners to survey waqf. The Bill instead empowers Collectors to do the survey. Pending surveys will be conducted as per the state revenue laws.
  - **Central Waqf Council:** The Act constitutes the Central Waqf Council to advise the central and state governments and Waqf Boards. The Union Minister in-charge of Waqf is the ex-officio chairperson of the Council. The Act requires that all Council members be Muslims, and at least two must be women. The Bill instead provides that two members must be non-Muslims. MPs, former judges, and eminent persons appointed to the Council as per the Act need not be Muslims.
  - **Waqf Boards:** The Act provides for election of up to two members each from electoral colleges of Muslim: (i) MPs, (ii) MLAs and MLCs, and (iii) Bar Council members, from the state to the Board. The Bill instead empowers the state government to nominate one person from each of the above background to the Board. They need not be Muslims. It adds that the Board must have: (i) two non-Muslim members. and (ii) at least one member each from Shias, Sunnis, and Backward classes of Muslims. It must also have one member each from Bohra and Agakhani communities if they have waqf in the state. The Act provides that at least two members must be women. The Bill states that two Muslim members must be women.

- **Composition of Tribunals:** The Act requires states to constitute Tribunals to address disputes over waqf. The Chairman of these Tribunals must be a Judge of the rank equivalent to a Class-1, District, Sessions, or Civil Judge. Other members include: (i) a state officer equal to an Additional District Magistrate, and (ii) a person knowledgeable in Muslim law and jurisprudence. The Bill removes the latter from the Tribunal. It instead provides the following as members: (i) a current or former District Court judge as its chairman, and (ii) a current or former officer of the rank joint secretary to the state government.
- **Appeal on orders of Tribunals:** Under the Act, decisions of the Tribunal are final and appeals against its decisions in Courts are prohibited. The High Court can consider matters on its own accord, on an application by the Board, or an aggrieved party. The Bill omits provisions deeming finality to Tribunal's decisions. Tribunal's orders may be appealed in the High Court within 90 days.
- **Powers of the Central Government:** The Bill empowers the central government to make rules regarding: (i) registration, (ii) publication of accounts of waqf, and (iii) publication of proceedings of waqf Boards. Under the Act, state government may get the accounts of waqfs audited at any point. The Bill empowers the central government to get these audited by the CAG or a designated officer.
- **Waqf Boards for Bohra and Agakhani:** The Act allows establishing separate Waqf Boards for Sunni and Shia sects if Shia waqf constitute more than 15% of all waqf properties or waqf income in the state. The Bill also allows separate waqf boards for Aghakhani and Bohra sects.

### What is the meaning of 'Waqf'?

- Waqf refers to properties dedicated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes under Islamic law, and any other use or sale of the property is prohibited. Waqf means that the ownership of the property is now taken away from the person making Waqf and transferred and detained by Allah. 'Waqif' is a person who creates a waqf for the beneficiary. As Waqf properties are bestowed upon Allah, in the absence of a physically tangible entity, a 'mutawalli' is appointed by the waqif, or by a competent authority, to manage or administer a Waqf. Once designated as waqf, the ownership is transferred from the person making the waqf (waqif) to Allah, making it irrevocable.

### What is origin of the concept of 'Waqf'?

- In India, the history of Waqf can be traced back to the early days of the Delhi Sultanate when Sultan Muizuddin Sam Ghaor dedicated two villages in favour of the Jama Masjid of Multan and handed its administration to Shaikhul Islam. As the Delhi Sultanate and later Islamic dynasties flourished in India, the number of Waqf properties kept increasing in India.
- There was a case made for the abolition of Waqfs in India in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when a dispute over a Waqf property ended up in the Privy Council of London during the days of the British Raj. The four British judges who heard the case described the Waqf as "a perpetuity of the worst and the most pernicious kind" and declared Waqf to be invalid. However, the decision by the four judges was not accepted in India, and the Mussalman Waqf Validating Act of 1913 saved the institution of Waqf in India. Since then, no attempt has been made to curb Waqfs.

### What are the key legislative changes and developments in the administration of Waqf properties in India through Waqf Act?

- The Waqf Act, 1954 - Waqf has only been strengthened post-independence. The Waqf Act of 1954 passed provided a pathway toward the centralisation of Waqfs. Central Waqf Council of India, a statutory body was established in 1964 by the Government of India under this Waqf Act of 1954. This central body oversees the work under various state Waqf boards which were established under provisions of Section 9(1) of the Waqf Act, 1954.
- The Waqf Act, 1995 - The Waqf Act was made even more favourable to Muslims in 1995, which made it an overriding law. The Waqf Act, 1995 was enacted to govern the administration of Waqf Properties



(Religious Endowments) in India. It provides for the power and functions of the Waqf Council, the State Waqf Boards, and the Chief Executive Officer, and also the duties of mutawalli. This Act also describes the power and restrictions of a Waqf Tribunal that acts in lieu of a civil court under its jurisdiction. The Waqf Tribunals are deemed to be a civil court and required to exercise all the powers and functions exercised by a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. The decision of a Tribunal shall be final and binding on the parties. No suit or legal proceedings shall lie under any civil court. Thus, making the Waqf Tribunal decisions above any civil court.

- Amendments in 2013 - Some provisions of the Act were amended in the year 2013 to make waqf management more efficient and transparent. However, during the course of implementation of the Act, it was felt that the Act did not prove effective in improving administration of Waqf.
- The Waqf Repeal Bill, 2022 - For the purpose of achieving a more equitable arrangement and treatment of bodies such as waqf and other recognized religious entities established under similar intent, the aforesaid Waqf Act, 1995 as amended was tabled in Rajya Sabha on December 8, 2023.

### Are the Waqf properties revocable?

- No, since the ownership of the property is transferred to Allah from the waqif in the case of Waqf, and property cannot be taken back from Allah, once a property becomes Waqf, it will always stay Waqf, making it irrevocable. Once a property is declared waqf, it remains so forever. Examples include the Bengaluru Eidgah ground, claimed as waqf property since the 1850s. Similarly, the Surat Municipal Corporation building, claimed due to historical use as sarai during Hajj in the Mughal era.

### Do all the Islamic Countries have Waqf Properties?

- No, not all the Islamic countries have Waqf properties. Islamic Countries such as Turkey, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Tunisia, and Iraq do not have Waqfs. However, in India, not only are Waqf Boards the largest urban landowners, but they also have an Act protecting them legally.

### How many properties does the Waqf Board control?

- Wakf Boards currently control 8.7 lakh properties spanning 9.4 lakh acres across India with an estimated value of 1.2 lakh crores. India has the largest waqf holding in the World. Further, Waqf Board is the largest landowner in India after the Armed Forces and the Indian Railways.

### What are the issues concerned with Waqf Board?

- The Major issues highlighted by the stakeholders are of limited diversity in constitution of Waqf Board and Central Waqf Council, misuse of power by Mutawallis, non-maintenance of proper accounts of properties by Mutawallis, lack of effective coordination with local revenue authorities, issues of removal of encroachments, registration and declaration of title of WAQF properties, sweeping power to Waqf Boards for claiming properties resulting in disputes and litigation, non-applicability of Limitation Act resulting in creating disharmony among the communities, Low and negligible income from Waqf properties etc. The issues concerned with Waqf Board are as follows:
- **Irrevocability of Waqf Properties:** The principle of “once a waqf, always a waqf” has led to various disputes and claims. Some of which, like the claim on two islands in Bet Dwarka, have been deemed perplexing by courts.
- **Litigation and Mismanagement:** The Waqf Act, 1995, and its 2013 amendment have been criticized for inefficacy, leading to issues like encroachment, mismanagement, ownership disputes, and delays in registration and surveys. A number of issues have also been communicated to the Ministry regarding problem of ownership title and possession of Waqf Properties; complaints and grievances of registration, functioning of Tribunal and related large scale litigations etc.

- **No Judicial Oversight:** There is no judicial oversight on tribunal decisions, further complicating waqf management. Without the possibility of appealing to a higher judicial body, decisions made by the tribunal may undermine transparency, and accountability in the management of waqf properties.
- **Unsatisfactory Survey Work:** The work of survey of Waqf Properties by the Survey Commissioner was found unsatisfactory. Even survey of Waqf Properties is still to be started in the State of Gujarat and Uttarakhand. In Uttar Pradesh, the survey was ordered in 2014 and it is yet to be started. The major issue of non-completing survey is non-expertise of Survey Commissioner's in survey work. Further, there are issues of coordinating survey reports with the Revenue Department to carry out work of registration of Waqf Properties smoothly.
- **Mis-use of Provisions:** It was observed that the State Waqf Boards have also mis-used some of the provisions of the Act which created disharmony and discontent among the communities. Section 40 of the Waqf Act was widely misused to acquire and declare a property as waqf property. This has not only generated enormous number of litigations but also disharmony among the Communities.
- **Constitutional Validity:** Waqf Act is a special Act for religious properties of only one religion of the country, when no such law exists for any other religion. In fact, a PIL has been currently filed in the Delhi High Court asking this very question. Delhi HC has issued notice to the central government on this plea regarding the constitutional validity of Waqf.

### What are the recommendations by the Sachar Committee?

- The Sachar Committee observed that if these properties are put up to efficient and marketable use, they can generate at least a minimum revenue of 10% which is about Rs. 12,000 crores per annum. The Sachar Committee submitted its Report in 2006 and recommended various measures to improve the management of Waqf. It emphasized on:
  - Need of regulation and functioning of Mutawallis,
  - Efficient management of records,
  - Inclusion of non-muslim technical expertise in management of Waqf,
  - Organizational reforms to strengthen Waqf Boards administratively to Include two women Member in Central Waqf Board(CWC) and each State Waqf Board(SWBs),
  - Appointment of Joint Secretary level Officer in CWC/SWBs,
  - Bring the Waqf under the Scheme of financial audit.

### 1. Waqf Boards in India

- A Waqf is an endowment made by a Muslim individual or institution for religious, charitable, or educational purposes.
- Once a property is declared as waqf, it cannot be sold or transferred and is meant for perpetual use in public welfare.

### 2. What are Waqf Boards?

- Waqf Boards are statutory bodies responsible for the management, regulation, and administration of waqf properties in India. They function under the Waqf Act, 1995, which was enacted to regulate and protect waqf assets.

### 3. Structure and Functions of Waqf Boards

- **Central Waqf Council (CWC):** A national-level advisory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs that oversees state waqf boards.
- **State Waqf Boards:** Established in each state or union territory, responsible for managing waqf properties, revenue collection, and ensuring proper utilization of waqf funds.

- **Mutawallis:** Trustees or managers appointed to oversee individual waqf properties.

#### 4. Key Responsibilities of Waqf Boards

- Maintaining records of waqf properties.
- Preventing illegal encroachments on waqf lands.
- Ensuring funds are used for legitimate purposes such as education, healthcare, and welfare of the needy.
- Supervising the work of mutawallis (caretakers).

#### 5. Challenges Faced by Waqf Boards

- **Encroachment and Mismanagement:** Many waqf properties have been illegally occupied or misused.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Corruption and poor record-keeping have led to financial mismanagement.
- **Legal Disputes:** Many waqf properties are subject to prolonged legal battles, making their utilization difficult.
- **Reforms and Digitalization:** The government has undertaken initiatives to digitize waqf records under the Waqf Management System of India (WAMSI) to enhance transparency.

#### Joint Committee of Parliament

- The Joint Committee of Parliament (JPC) is a special committee in India, formed with members from both the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) to examine specific issues, policies, or legislation.
- It is an ad hoc (temporary) committee constituted for a specific purpose.

#### Key Features of the JPC

##### Formation

- It is constituted by a motion passed in one House of Parliament and agreed upon by the other.
- The motion specifies the composition, powers, and objectives of the committee.

##### Composition

- Members are drawn from both Houses of Parliament.
- The number of members varies depending on the terms of the motion.
- It is usually chaired by a ruling party MP.

##### Purpose

- To investigate matters of public importance, such as financial irregularities, government policies, or large-scale scams.
- To examine and report on specific bills, policies, or scandals.

##### Powers

- Can call witnesses, summon officials, and seek documents.
- Can recommend actions based on its findings, though its reports are not binding on the government.

##### Reports & Impact

- The JPC submits its report to Parliament.
- The government may choose to act on its recommendations, but it is not legally obligated to do so.

#### Notable JPCs in India

- **Bofors Scandal (1987)** – Investigated allegations of corruption in the Bofors arms deal.

- **Stock Market Scam (2001)** – Investigated the Harshad Mehta and Ketan Parekh scams.
- **2G Spectrum Scam (2011)** – Probed the allocation of 2G spectrum licenses.
- **Financial Sector JPC (2013)** – Examined irregularities in financial institutions.

## QUESTIONS

**Solve the multiple choice questions:**

- Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Waqf Boards in India?
  - These are non-statutory bodies responsible for the management, regulation, and administration of waqf properties in India.
  - Once a property is declared as waqf, it cannot be sold or transferred and is meant for perpetual use in public welfare.
  - Central Waqf Council (CWC) is a national-level advisory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs that oversees state waqf boards.

How many of the above statements is/are true?

  - One statement only
  - Two statements only
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
- Under the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which of the following statements about the determination of Waqf property is INCORRECT?
  - The Waqf Board retains its power to inquire and determine if a property is Waqf.
  - The Bill removes the concept of “waqf by user.”
  - In case of uncertainty over ownership of government property claimed as waqf, the Collector submits a report to the state government.
  - Waqf-alal-aulad cannot deny inheritance rights to the donor’s heirs, including women.
- Which of the following significant changes has the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 introduced regarding the composition of Waqf Boards?
  - It mandates that all members of the Waqf Board must be Muslims.
  - It allows the state government to nominate members from specified backgrounds, including non-Muslims.
  - It requires at least 50% of the Waqf Board members to be women.
  - It eliminates the representation of Shia and Sunni communities on the Board.
- What is the correct sequence of appeal under the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, when a party is dissatisfied with the decision of a Waqf Tribunal?
  - Appeal can be made directly to the Supreme Court without involving the High Court.
  - The decision of the Waqf Tribunal is final, and no appeal can be made.
  - Appeals can now be made to the High Court within 90 days of the Tribunal’s order.
  - Appeals can only be filed with the Waqf Board for reconsideration.
- Which of the following statements regarding the powers of the Central Government under the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is TRUE?
  - The central government has no role in auditing waqf accounts; it remains solely with the state governments.

- B. The Bill empowers the central government to audit waqf accounts through the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).
- C. Only the state government can publish accounts and proceedings of Waqf Boards.
- D. The central government cannot frame rules related to waqf property registration.

### 3. Padma Awards

- Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. The Awards are given in various disciplines / fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- ‘Padma Vibhushan’ is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; ‘Padma Bhushan’ for distinguished service of high order and ‘Padma Shri’ for distinguished service in any field.
- The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.
- 2. These Awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March / April every year. For the year 2025, the President has approved conferment of 139 Padma Awards including 1 duo case (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one) as per list below. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri Awards. 23 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners / NRI / PIO / OCI and 13 Posthumous awardees.

#### Padma Vibhushan (5)

S.No.	Name	Field	State/Region/Country
1	Ms. Vyjayantimala Bali	Art	Tamil Nadu
2	Shri Konidela Chiranjeevi	Art	Andhra Pradesh
3	Shri M Venkaiah Naidu	Public Affairs	Andhra Pradesh
4	Shri Bindeshwar Pathak (Posthumous)	Social Work	Bihar
5	Ms. Padma Subrahmanyam	Art	Tamil Nadu

#### Padma Bhushan (17)

S.No.	Name	Field	State/Region/Country
6	Ms. M Fathima Beevi (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Kerala
7	Shri Hormusji N Cama	Literature & Education - Journalism	Maharashtra
8	Shri Mithun Chakraborty	Art	West Bengal
9	Shri Sitaram Jindal	Trade & Industry	Karnataka
10	Shri Young Liu	Trade & Industry	Taiwan
11	Shri Ashwin Balachand Mehta	Medicine	Maharashtra
12	Shri Satyabrata Mookherjee (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	West Bengal



13	Shri Ram Naik	Public Affairs	Maharashtra
14	Shri Tejas Madhusudan Patel	Medicine	Gujarat
15	Shri Olanchery Rajagopal	Public Affairs	Kerala
16	Shri Dattatray Ambadas Mayaloo alias Rajdutt	Art	Maharashtra
17	Shri Togdan Rinpoche (Posthumous)	Others - Spiritualism	Ladakh
18	Shri Pyarelal Sharma	Art	Maharashtra
19	Shri Chandreshwar Prasad Thakur	Medicine	Bihar
20	Ms. Usha Uthup	Art	West Bengal
21	Shri Vijaykanth (Posthumous)	Art	Tamil Nadu
22	Shri Kundan Vyas	Literature & Education - Journalism	Maharashtra

### Know More about Padma Awards

- Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, is announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day except for brief interruption(s) during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997. Per Article 18 (1) of the Constitution of India: Abolition of titles, “no title, not being a military or academic distinction, shall be conferred by the State”.
- The first recipients of the award were Satyendra Nath Bose, Nand Lal Bose, Zakir Hussain, Balasaheb Gangadhar Kher, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, and V. K. Krishna Menon, who were honoured in 1954. The 1954 statutes did not allow posthumous awards but this was subsequently modified in the January 1955 statute.
- P. N. Haksar was offered the award in 1973 for, among other services, his crucial diplomatic role in brokering the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and the Shimla Agreement, but declined as “Accepting an award for work done somehow causes an inexplicable discomfort to me.”
- Vilayat Khan refused Padma Shri (1964), Padma Bhushan (1968), and Padma Vibhushan (2000) and stated that “the selection committees were incompetent to judge his music”.
- E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) from 1964) and the first Chief Minister of Kerala (1957-59, 1967-69), declined the award in 1992, as it went against his nature to accept a state honour.
- Swami Ranganathananda declined the award in 2000 as it was conferred to him as an individual and not to the Ramakrishna Mission. Lakshmi Chand Jain died on 14 November 2010, at the age of 84. His family refused to accept the posthumous honour as Jain was against accepting state honours.
- Sharad Anantrao Joshi’s family refused to accept the posthumous honour as Joshi’s work for good of farmers is not reflected in the Government policies for them. In 1991, Baba Amte returned the award, along with the Padma Shri conferred in 1971, to protest against the treatment given to the tribals during the construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam.

### What are Padma awards?

- Padma awards are the highest civilian honour of India after the Bharat Ratna. Instituted in 1954 along with Bharat Ratna.
- The awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service).



- The award seeks to recognise achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

### **Limitations and exceptions**

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- The awardees do not get any cash reward but a certificate signed by the President apart from a medallion which they can wear at public and government functions.
- The awards are, however, not a conferment of title and the awardees are expected to not use them as prefix or suffix to their names.
- A Padma awardee can be given a higher award only after five years of the conferment of the earlier award.
- Not more than 120 awards can be given in a year but this does not include posthumous awards or awards given to NRIs and foreigners.

### **Eligibility**

- All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards. However, government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these awards.
- The award is given for “special services” and not just for “long service”. “It should not be merely excellence in a particular field, but the criteria has to be ‘excellence plus’.

### **Who nominates the awardees?**

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- Any citizen of India can nominate a potential recipient.
- One can even nominate one’s own self.
- All nominations are to be done online where a form is to be filled along with details of the person or the organisation being nominated.
- An 800-word essay detailing the work done by the potential awardee is also to be submitted for the nomination to be considered.

### **Who selects the awardees?**

- All nominations received for Padma awards are placed before the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.
- The Padma Awards Committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members.
- The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President of India for approval.

### **Is the recipient’s consent sought?**

- There is no provision for seeking a written or formal consent of the recipient before announcement of the award. However, before the announcement, every recipient receives a call from the Ministry of Home Affairs informing him or her about the selection. In case the recipient expresses a desire to be excluded from the award list, the name is removed.

### **BHARAT RATNA**

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- Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the country. It is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour. It was instituted in 1954. It is treated on a different footing from Padma Award. The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President of India. No formal recommendations for Bharat Ratna are necessary.

- On conferment of the award, the recipient receives a Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion. The Award does not carry any monetary grant. In terms of Article 18 (1) of the Constitution, the award cannot be used as a prefix or suffix to the recipient's name. However, should an award winner consider it necessary, he/she may use the following expression in their biodata/letterhead/visiting card etc. to indicate that he/she is a recipient of the award: 'Awarded Bharat Ratna by the President' or 'Recipient of Bharat Ratna Award'
- The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year. The rule of maximum three awards in a year is a guideline for the Bharat Ratna. The rule was broken for the first time in 1999, when four recipients were conferred the award: Jayaprakash Narayan, Amartya Sen, Gopinath Bordoloi, and Ravi Shankar. The rule was broken again in 2024, when five recipients were conferred the award.
- The award was briefly suspended twice in its history. The first suspension occurred when Morarji Desai, who was sworn in as the fourth Prime Minister in 1977, withdrew all personal civil honours on 13 July 1977. The suspension was rescinded on 25 January 1980, after Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister. The award was suspended again in mid-1992, when two Public-Interest Litigations were filed, one in the Kerala High Court and another in the Madhya Pradesh High Court, challenging the "constitutional validity" of the awards. The awards were reintroduced by the Supreme Court in December 1995, following the conclusion of the litigation.
- There is no formal provision that recipients of the Bharat Ratna should be Indian citizens. It has been awarded to a naturalised Indian citizen, Mother Teresa in 1980, and to two non-Indians, Abdul Ghaffar Khan of Pakistan in 1987 and the former South African president Nelson Mandela in 1990. Sachin Tendulkar, at the age of 40, became the youngest person and first sportsperson to receive the honour. Dhondo Keshav Karve was the oldest living recipient when he was awarded on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 18 April 1958. As of 2024, the award has been conferred upon 50 people with 15 posthumous declarations.
- The prestigious Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour is conferred upon five eminent personalities in 2024 who have made remarkable contributions to politics, governance, and agriculture. They are Karpoori Thakur, Mankombu Sambasivan (MS) Swaminathan, Pamulaparthi Venkata (P. V.) Narasimha Rao, Lal Krishna Advani, and Chaudhary Charan Singh.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

- Which of the following statements regarding the Bharat Ratna Award is INCORRECT?
  - The Bharat Ratna was first conferred in 1954, the same year it was instituted.
  - The Bharat Ratna award carries no monetary grant but provides lifetime privileges such as diplomatic immunity.
  - The maximum number of Bharat Ratna awards that can be conferred in a year is generally restricted to three, though exceptions have occurred.
  - The Bharat Ratna award cannot be used as a prefix or suffix to the recipient's name under Article 18(1) of the Indian Constitution.
- The Bharat Ratna award has been suspended twice in its history. Which of the following statements about these suspensions is INCORRECT?
  - The first suspension of the Bharat Ratna occurred under Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who withdrew all personal civil honours in 1977.
  - The Bharat Ratna remained suspended for exactly 5 years during the second suspension due to constitutional challenges.

- C. The first suspension was lifted after Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980.
- D. The second suspension was due to Public-Interest Litigations (PILs) questioning the constitutional validity of the award, which were eventually settled by the Supreme Court in 1995.

10. Consider the following pairs regarding Bharat Ratna recipients and milestones:

Milestone	Recipient
1. First naturalized Indian citizen recipient	: Mother Teresa
2. First non-Indian recipient	: Nelson Mandela
3. Youngest Bharat Ratna awardee	: Sachin Tendulkar
4. Oldest living recipient at the time of award	: Dhondo Keshav Karve

Which of the above pairs are correct?

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

## 4.2 Indian Cities Are the First to Join Wetland Accredited Cities List

- Indore and Udaipur have become the first two Indian cities to receive the prestigious Wetland City Accreditation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- This recognition places them among the 31 globally accredited wetland cities and marks India's commitment to sustainable urban development and environmental conservation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the two cities, emphasizing the balance between nature and urban growth.
- Earlier in the month, India's Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) had nominated three Indian cities—Indore, Bhopal, and Udaipur—for the Wetland City Accreditation (WCA).
- This was India's first submission to the Ramsar Convention for such recognition. Among the nominated cities, Indore and Udaipur successfully secured a place on the global list.
- Wetlands in and around these cities play a crucial role in providing ecological and socio-economic benefits.
- They help regulate floods, support biodiversity, offer livelihood opportunities, and contribute to cultural and recreational values. Indore's Sirpur Lake, designated as a Ramsar Site, has gained recognition for attracting a large congregation of water birds and is being developed as a bird sanctuary.
- Udaipur, often referred to as the "City of Lakes," is surrounded by five major wetlands: Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai.
- These wetlands are an integral part of the city's identity and culture, helping maintain its microclimate and acting as a buffer against extreme weather events.
- This accreditation highlights India's growing focus on wetland conservation and urban sustainability.
- By securing this recognition, Indore and Udaipur have set a benchmark for other Indian cities to integrate environmental sustainability into urban planning and development.

- The accreditation is expected to enhance eco-tourism and local conservation efforts while reinforcing the importance of wetlands in urban ecosystems.

## Wetland City Accreditation

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- Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) is a recognition program under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, aimed at promoting sustainable urban development while protecting and managing wetlands in and around cities.
- The program acknowledges cities that have made exceptional efforts to conserve wetlands and integrate them into urban planning and development.

## Key Features of Wetland City Accreditation

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- Established by the Ramsar Convention – Introduced in 2015, the WCA program is managed by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
- **Recognition for Sustainable Urban Development** – Cities that successfully incorporate wetland conservation into their urban planning and management receive accreditation.
- **Encourages Wetland Protection** – Accredited cities must demonstrate efforts in wetland restoration, water management, biodiversity conservation, and eco-tourism.
- **Global Recognition** – The accreditation helps cities enhance their global reputation, attract eco-tourism, and receive technical and financial support for further wetland conservation.
- **Renewable Accreditation** – Accreditation is granted for a period of six years, after which cities must reapply and demonstrate continued efforts.

## Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

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- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands around the world.
- It was adopted on February 2, 1971, in Ramsar, Iran, and entered into force on December 21, 1975.
- The convention is formally known as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

## Key Objectives

- **Conservation of Wetlands:** To promote the conservation of wetlands and their biodiversity through international cooperation.
- **Sustainable Use:** To ensure the sustainable use of wetland resources, balancing ecological health with human needs.
- **International Cooperation:** To encourage countries to collaborate in the management and protection of shared wetland ecosystems.

## Key Features

- The Ramsar Convention has designated wetlands of international importance known as Ramsar sites, which are recognized for their ecological, cultural, or scientific value.
- The convention encourages countries to establish national policies for wetland conservation and management.
- The convention promotes the wise use of wetlands, ensuring their ecological character is maintained, while also supporting human livelihoods.

## Wetlands and their Importance

- Wetlands, which include marshes, swamps, and bogs, play a vital role in the environment by providing habitats for biodiversity, purifying water, controlling floods, and serving as carbon sinks.

## India's Involvement

- India is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention, and as of recent years, it has designated numerous Ramsar sites across the country. These sites play a crucial role in conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance.
- World Wetlands Day is observed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February every year worldwide to commemorate the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1971. India is a party to the Convention since 1982. India has recently increased its tally of Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) to 89 by designating four more wetlands as Ramsar sites. Udhwa Lake in Jharkhand, Theerthangal and Sakkarakottai in Tamil Nadu and Khecheopalri in Sikkim. These are the first Ramsar Sites of Sikkim and Jharkhand. With the addition of these wetlands to List of Wetlands of International Importance, the total area covered under Ramsar sites is now 1.358 million ha. Tamil Nadu continues to have maximum number of Ramsar Sites (20 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).

## QUESTIONS

**Solve the multiple choice questions:**

- 11.** Consider the following statements regarding the Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) under the Ramsar Convention:
1. Indore and Udaipur are the first Indian cities to receive Wetland City Accreditation, placing them among 31 globally accredited wetland cities.
  2. India's Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) nominated Indore, Bhopal, and Udaipur for the WCA, with all three securing the accreditation.
  3. The accreditation promotes urban sustainability by recognizing cities that maintain the ecological character of their wetlands and integrate them into urban planning.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

12. Tamil Nadu holds the record for having the maximum number of Ramsar Sites in India. Which of the following statements regarding Ramsar Sites in India is INCORRECT?
- Udhwa Lake in Jharkhand and Khecheopalri Lake in Sikkim were recently designated as the first Ramsar Sites in their respective states.
  - With the latest additions, India now has 89 Ramsar Sites covering a total area of 1.358 million hectares.
  - Uttar Pradesh ranks second after Tamil Nadu in the number of Ramsar Sites, having 15 Ramsar Sites.
  - The recently designated Ramsar Sites in Tamil Nadu include Theerthangal and Sakkarakottai, contributing to the state's tally of 20 Ramsar Sites.
13. Which of the following statements correctly explains the ecological significance of wetlands associated with the recently accredited Wetland Cities in India?
- Sirpur Lake in Indore, designated as a Ramsar Site, plays a critical role in flood regulation and serves as an important bird sanctuary attracting large congregations of water birds.



2. Udaipur's network of lakes, including Pichola, Fateh Sagar, and Doodh Talai, acts as a natural barrier against desertification and supports the region's microclimate stability.
3. Wetlands in both Indore and Udaipur significantly contribute to climate resilience by acting as buffers against extreme weather events and maintaining groundwater recharge.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

## 5. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurates the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games in Dehradun

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, emphasizing the energy of youth and the blessings of Baba Kedarnath, Badrinath, and Maa Ganga.
- As Uttarakhand celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the event showcases 'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat,' highlighting national unity. The theme, 'Green Games,' incorporates eco-friendly practices, with trophies and medals made from e-waste and a tree planted for every medal winner.
- PM Modi praised India's evolving sports ecosystem, citing initiatives like Khelo India Youth Games, University Games, and Para Games, which provide platforms for young athletes.
- He highlighted the role of Members of Parliament in organizing sports competitions and noted that in Varanasi alone, 2.5 lakh youth participate annually.
- He underscored the broader economic impact of sports, emphasizing India's emergence as a major sports equipment manufacturer, particularly in Meerut, which houses over 35,000 factories employing 3 lakh people.
- PM Modi recalled his meeting with India's Olympic team, where an athlete referred to him as 'Param Mitra' (best friend).
- He reaffirmed the government's commitment to sports, highlighting a tripling of the sports budget over the past decade and substantial investments through the TOPS scheme.
- He noted that modern sports infrastructure was being developed nationwide, and India's first sports university was established in Manipur.
- The Prime Minister acknowledged Indian athletes' international achievements, from the Olympics and Paralympics to the kho-kho World Cup and chess championships.
- He stated that sports are no longer seen as extracurricular activities but viable career choices.
- He also reiterated India's aspirations to host the 2036 Olympics, emphasizing its potential economic and infrastructural benefits, such as improved connectivity, construction growth, and tourism boosts. Hosting the National Games in Uttarakhand is expected to enhance the local economy and attract more visitors.



- He also linked the event to Uttarakhand's implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), describing it as a step toward equality and democracy.
- He emphasized that, like sportsmanship, the UCC promotes fairness and unity, ensuring dignity for women.
- Hosting the National Games for the first time, Uttarakhand has seized the opportunity to create employment and boost its economy beyond religious tourism. PM Modi encouraged developing winter spiritual tourism and adventure activities. He urged athletes and visitors to extend their stay, explore Uttarakhand, and contribute to its economy.
- PM Modi encouraged athletes to break records and embrace India's diversity. He urged them to engage with different languages, cuisines, and cultures while promoting a plastic-free Uttarakhand.
- Stressing the importance of fitness, he highlighted the rising obesity problem and promoted the Fit India Movement.
- He advised reducing unhealthy fats and oils in diets and encouraged exercise as a daily habit, urging collective efforts to build a healthier nation.
- He concluded by officially opening the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, extending best wishes to the participants. The event was attended by Uttarakhand Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Gurmit Singh, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, and other dignitaries.
- The 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, hosted across 11 cities in 8 districts from January 28 to February 14, features 36 states and one union territory. Over 10,000 athletes will compete in 35 sports disciplines, including Yoga and Mallakhamb, introduced for the first time.

### 38<sup>th</sup> National Games

- The 38<sup>th</sup> National Games of India are currently underway in Uttarakhand, having commenced on January 28 and scheduled to conclude on February 14, 2025.
- This marks the first time Uttarakhand is hosting the National Games, with events spread across seven cities: Dehradun, Haridwar, Shivpuri, New Tehri, Nainital, Haldwani, and Rudrapur.
- The Games feature 32 core sports, including athletics, swimming, and kabaddi, along with four demonstration events: mallakhamb, kalaripayattu, rafting, and yogasana.
- Notably, shooter Anish Bhanwala clinched the gold medal in the men's 25m rapid fire pistol event.
- For those interested in swimming events, competitions are being held at the Indira Gandhi International Stadium Swimming Pool in Haldwani from January 29 to February 4.
- The National Games serve as a platform for athletes from across India to showcase their talents and foster a spirit of unity and sportsmanship.

### History of the National Games in India

- The National Games of India is a multi-sport event held at the national level, similar to the Olympics, where athletes from various Indian states and Union Territories compete.
- The event has evolved over time, playing a crucial role in shaping India's sporting culture.

### Origins and Early Years (1924–1940s)

- The idea of the National Games was inspired by the Olympic movement, with the goal of promoting sports in India.
- The first edition of the games, then called the Indian Olympic Games, was held in Lahore in 1924 under the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).
- The Games were held every two years in different cities.
- Initially, only a few sports were included, such as athletics and wrestling.

## Post-Independence Era (1947-1980s)

- After India's independence in 1947, the event was renamed the National Games of India.
- The first National Games after independence were held in Lucknow (1948).
- Over the years, the number of participating states and sports disciplines increased.

## Modernization and Revamp (1990s-Present)

- In the 1990s, the format of the National Games was revised to improve competitiveness and infrastructure.
- The National Games 1997 (Bangalore) marked a significant shift, introducing better organization and state-of-the-art facilities.
- The 2015 National Games (Kerala) were considered among the most professionally managed editions.
- The 2022 National Games (Gujarat) had record participation, with 36 teams (all states and Union Territories) competing.
- The latest edition, 2023 National Games (Goa), included new-age sports such as Yachting and Sepaktakraw.

## Significance of the National Games

- Platform for Emerging Athletes – Many top Indian athletes, including Milkha Singh, PT Usha, and Neeraj Chopra, have gained national recognition through the Games.
- State Development in Sports – The host state often benefits from improved sports infrastructure.
- Boost to India's Olympic Aspirations – The National Games serve as a preparation ground for international events like the Asian Games and the Olympics.

## Future of the National Games

- India is focusing on digitalization, AI-driven analytics, and better training facilities for athletes.
- The upcoming editions are expected to include esports and adventure sports to attract younger audiences.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

14. Which of the following statements correctly differentiates the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games from its earlier editions?
  - A. The 38<sup>th</sup> National Games is the first edition to introduce indigenous sports like kabaddi and wrestling.
  - B. Unlike previous editions, the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games feature demonstration events such as mallakhamb, kalaripayattu, rafting, and yogasana.
  - C. This is the first edition where the entire event is hosted in a single city, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
  - D. The 38<sup>th</sup> National Games is the first time athletes from Indian Union Territories are excluded from participation.
15. Considering the history of the National Games in India, which of the following statements is accurate regarding its origins and evolution?
  - A. The first National Games of India, held in 1924, were exclusively organized for military personnel in Mumbai.
  - B. The National Games were originally called the Indian Olympic Games and were first held in Lahore under the Indian Olympic Association.

- C. The National Games were consistently held annually without interruption from 1924 until India's independence in 1947.
- D. In the early years, the National Games included popular team sports like football and hockey as the primary events.

## 6. First Nations to fight for billions in treaty payments in Canadian court

- A group of First Nations in Canada is seeking billions in compensation through the courts, accusing the government of failing to negotiate in good faith over money owed under the 1850 Robinson treaties.
- The agreements, signed between the British crown and Anishinaabe nations covering 35,700 square miles around Lakes Huron and Superior, included an “augmentation clause” promising to increase annual payments as land wealth grew.
- However, payments were capped at \$4 per person in 1874 and never raised, despite the land generating immense profits for private companies and the Ontario government.
- In July 2023, Canada's Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the federal and Ontario governments had acted dishonourably by neglecting their treaty obligations. It criticized the \$4 payments as a “mockery” of the treaty promise and ordered negotiations to conclude within six months.
- However, First Nations leaders rejected a C\$3.6 bn offer from the government, arguing it ignored the economic benefits extracted from their lands. Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz previously testified that the amount owed could be as high as C\$126 bn.
- While 21 First Nations from the Robinson Huron treaty settled for C\$10 bn, 12 signatories from the Robinson Superior treaty are pursuing further legal action.
- They will ask Ontario's Superior Court to determine a fair compensation amount. Chief Wilfred King of Gull Bay First Nation accused the government of perpetuating “175 years of broken promises, lies, and neglect,” while Chief Patricia Tangie of Michipicoten First Nation emphasized the fight was about securing a just future for their descendants.
- The lawsuit highlights long-standing Indigenous grievances, including poverty, poor health, and economic disparity resulting from government failures to uphold treaty commitments.

### Robinson Treaties of 1850

- The Robinson Treaties of 1850 were a pair of treaties signed between the British Crown and the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) First Nations in what is now Ontario, Canada.
- These treaties, known as the Robinson Superior Treaty and the Robinson Huron Treaty, were among the first land agreements in Canada that set a precedent for later treaties.

### Key Aspects of the Robinson Treaties

- **Purpose:** The treaties aimed to acquire land for British settlement and resource extraction (particularly mining) while providing Indigenous groups with compensation and certain rights.
- **Land Ceded:** Over 50,000 square miles of land in the areas around Lake Superior and Lake Huron were surrendered to the Crown.

- **Annuities:** The treaties promised an annual payment (annuities) to the First Nations, with provisions for increases if government revenues from the land increased.
- **Reserves:** Specific tracts of land (reserves) were set aside for Indigenous communities to live on.
- **Hunting and Fishing Rights:** The treaties allowed the signatories to continue their traditional hunting and fishing practices on the ceded lands.

## Significance

- **Model for Future Treaties:** These treaties served as a framework for later agreements, including the Numbered Treaties (1871-1921).
- **Ongoing Legal Disputes:** Indigenous groups have long argued that the Crown failed to uphold its obligations, particularly regarding annuity increases. A 2023 Canadian court ruling reaffirmed that the government must fairly adjust these payments.

## First Nations

- “First Nations” refers to the Indigenous peoples of Canada who are neither Métis nor Inuit.
- They are the original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada and have diverse cultures, languages, and histories.
- There are more than 600 recognized First Nations communities across the country, each with its own unique traditions, governance systems, and treaty relationships with the Canadian government.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

- Which of the following statements best explains the significance of the “augmentation clause” in the Robinson Treaties of 1850?
  - It limited annual annuity payments to First Nations to a fixed amount of \$4 per person.
  - It guaranteed First Nations a fixed percentage of all profits generated from the ceded lands.
  - It promised to adjust annuity payments based on the economic growth derived from the lands.
  - It ensured that hunting and fishing rights would remain unaffected by any future legal disputes.
- What distinguishes the current legal actions of the Robinson Superior Treaty signatories from those of the Robinson Huron Treaty signatories?
  - The Robinson Superior Treaty signatories have accepted a C\$10 billion settlement, while the Robinson Huron signatories rejected it.
  - The Robinson Superior Treaty signatories are pursuing additional legal action despite the Robinson Huron signatories settling for C\$10 billion.
  - Both groups are jointly pursuing legal action for a combined compensation of C\$126 billion.
  - The Robinson Superior Treaty signatories are only seeking compensation for hunting and fishing rights, not annuities.

## 7. DeepSeek

- DeepSeek is a Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) startup that has recently gained significant attention for developing advanced AI models comparable to those of leading U.S. tech companies, but at a fraction of the cost and computational resources.

- Founded in May 2023 and based in Hangzhou, DeepSeek has introduced several models that have disrupted the AI industry.

## Key Developments

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- **DeepSeek-R1 Model:** Released in January 2025, the DeepSeek-R1 model has been recognized for its performance on par with OpenAI's models, excelling in tasks such as mathematics, coding, and reasoning.
- Notably, it was developed at a cost of approximately \$6 million, significantly less than the over \$100 million required for similar models like GPT-4.
- **DeepSeek-V3 Model:** In December 2024, DeepSeek unveiled the DeepSeek-V3 model, achieving a breakthrough in inference speed and ranking among the top open-source models globally.
- This model demonstrated that high-performing AI systems could be developed with fewer resources, challenging the prevailing notion that only large tech firms with vast financial resources can dominate the AI field.

## Impact on the AI Industry

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- DeepSeek's advancements have had a profound impact on the AI industry, leading to significant market value losses for major tech companies.
- For instance, Nvidia's market value dropped by \$593 billion, the largest in U.S. stock market history, following the release of DeepSeek's models.
- This has prompted discussions about the future of AI development, emphasizing efficiency and cost-effectiveness over traditional reliance on extensive computational resources.

## Technological Innovations

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- DeepSeek employs innovative techniques such as the "mixture of experts" approach, which activates only the necessary computing resources for a task, enhancing efficiency and reducing costs.
- This method has been instrumental in achieving high performance with less advanced hardware.

## Global Implications

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- The success of DeepSeek underscores China's rapid advancements in AI technology, challenging the dominance of U.S. tech giants and prompting a reevaluation of AI development strategies worldwide.
- The company's open-source approach and cost-effective models have the potential to democratize AI access, enabling a broader range of entities to develop and deploy advanced AI systems.

## How is it cheaper than its US peers?

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- It is commonly known that training AI models requires massive investments. But DeepSeek has found a way to circumvent the massive infrastructure and hardware cost.
- DeepSeek was able to dramatically reduce the cost of building its AI models by using NVIDIA H800, which is considered to be an older generation of GPUs in the US.
- While American AI giants used advanced AI GPU NVIDIA H100, DeepSeek relied on the watered-down version of the GPU—NVIDIA H800, which reportedly has lower chip-to-chip bandwidth.
- In 2022, US regulators put in place rules that prevented NVIDIA from selling two advanced chips, the A100 and H100, citing national security concerns.
- These chips are essential for developing technologies like ChatGPT. Following the rules, NVIDIA designed a chip called the A800 that reduced some capabilities of the A100 to make the A800 legal for export to China.



- DeepSeek engineers reportedly relied on low-level code optimisations to enhance memory usage.
- And this reportedly ensured that the performance was not affected by chip limitations. In simple words, they worked with their existing resources.

## AI technology

- AI technology is evolving rapidly, and it spans across various domains like machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, robotics, and more.
- It's being applied in industries like healthcare, finance, transportation, entertainment, and education.

## Some key advancements in AI include

- **Generative AI:** This is a class of models, like GPT (which powers me), that can create text, images, or even music based on a given prompt. It's making waves in creative industries.
- **Reinforcement Learning:** This technique enables machines to learn from their environment and make decisions that maximize a reward. It's used in areas like gaming and robotics.
- **AI in Healthcare:** From diagnostics to drug discovery, AI is revolutionizing how healthcare providers treat patients. AI tools can analyze medical images, predict disease risk, and even assist in personalized treatment plans.
- **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** NLP allows machines to understand and respond to human language. This includes voice assistants, translation services, and customer support chatbots.
- **AI and Automation:** AI is driving advancements in autonomous vehicles, drones, and robotic process automation, improving efficiency and safety.
- **Ethics and AI:** As AI becomes more integrated into daily life, ethical concerns such as bias, transparency, and accountability are at the forefront of discussions.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

- Which of the following factors most directly contributed to DeepSeek's ability to achieve high-performance AI models at a fraction of the cost compared to its U.S. counterparts?
  - Exclusive access to the latest generation of NVIDIA H100 GPUs unavailable to U.S. companies.
  - Utilization of older GPU models combined with low-level code optimizations to mitigate hardware limitations.
  - Heavy reliance on cloud-based infrastructure, eliminating the need for physical computing resources.
  - Government subsidies that fully covered DeepSeek's hardware and software development costs.
- What is the broader implication of DeepSeek's success on global AI development strategies?
  - It reinforces the belief that only companies with extensive financial and computational resources can dominate the AI industry.
  - It demonstrates that reliance on outdated hardware inevitably limits AI model performance.
  - It highlights that cost-effective and efficient AI development can challenge the dominance of traditional tech giants.
  - It proves that government-imposed export restrictions have eliminated China's ability to compete in AI.



## 8. ISRO's 100<sup>th</sup> launch

- With the first launch of 2025, the Indian Space Research Organisation achieved the significant milestone of having carried out 100 launches. The GSLV-F15 put in orbit the navigation satellite NVS-02.
- After the launch, the new Isro chairperson Dr V Narayanan, recalled the greats like Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan, and APJ Abdul Kalam.

### Why is this significant?

- The space agency has its roots in the Indian National Committee for Space Research set up under the Department of Atomic Energy in 1962.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation that we know today was set up in 1969 — the same year that the United States sent men to the moon. A separate department of space was created only in 1972.
- The space agency has since developed several rockets, becoming a reliable launch partner even for satellites from other countries.
- It has also carried out scientific missions such as the three Chandrayaan missions, which provide useful data not only to researchers from within the country but across the world.

### Rockets

- Isro has so far developed at least six generations of launch vehicles, of which four remain in operation.
- The first two generations of launchers are no longer in use.
- There were three developmental flights and one operational flight of the four-stage, solid fuel vehicle SLV-3 that could carry 40 kg to low earth orbit.
- And, there were only four development flights of its augmented version that could carry 150 kg to low earth orbit.
- It was the third generation PSLV that continues to be Isro's workhorse launcher. The four-stage rocket with solid and liquid fuel-based engines is capable of carrying just under 2,000 kg to low earth orbit.
- There have been 62 flights of PSLV, including three development flights. Only two of the launches using PSLV have been unsuccessful.
- Then came the GSLV, whose initial flights used cryogenic engines supplied by Russia. When the technology could not be transferred from Russia because of geopolitical reasons, India developed its own cryogenic engine. GSLV-F15 utilised for the 100<sup>th</sup> launch is a variation of this vehicle — and the eleventh flight using an indigenously developed cryogenic engine.
- The GSLV MkIII, now called LVM3, capable of carrying nearly 8,500 kg to low earth orbit, is the heaviest vehicle India has.
- The vehicle has been used for seven launches so far, none of which have been unsuccessful.
- The vehicle was used for Chandrayaan-2 and 3 missions. And, a modified, human-rated version will be used for the Gaganyaan mission.
- Isro has also developed the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle to transfer to private industry for commercial launch of small satellites. There have been three developmental flights of the launcher.

### Launches

- In the 100 launches so far, the space agency has placed in orbit 548 satellites weighing 120 tonnes in total.

- This includes 433 satellites weighing 23 tonnes that came from foreign nations. Isro has launched communication satellites, earth observation satellites, navigation satellites, and experimental satellites.
- The space agency has also launched several scientific missions such as space-based observatory AstroSat, Mars Orbiter Mission, Chandrayaan 1, 2 and 3, another space observatory XpoSat, and solar mission Aditya L1.

### What are the upcoming developments?

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- With the space agency targeting big-ticket missions such as the sample return mission from the moon, the mission to Venus, setting up an Indian space station, and sending a man to the moon, Isro is working towards developing a heavier rocket called Next Generation Launch Vehicle.
- NGLV will be capable of carrying up to 30,000 kg to low earth orbit. It will be 91 metres tall as compared to the 43 metres of LVM3. It will also have a re-usable first stage, which would be utilised 15 to 20 times, to make the launches more affordable.
- The cabinet has also green-lit the setting up of the third launch pad needed for NGLV launches. Built at an estimated cost of R 3984.86 crores over four years, the third launch pad would also be capable of launching human missions along with the modified second launch pad. It will also help in increasing the number of LVM3 launches, thereby increasing the space agency's capability of carrying out heavy commercial missions.

### What is NVS-02?

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- NVS-02 is one of the five replacement satellites for the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System, also referred to as NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).
- The new generation satellites are heavier with longer mission life.
- They carry the indigenously developed atomic clock onboard. And, importantly, they have been enabled with a third frequency L1, which is mostly utilised by the US Global Positioning System (GPS).
- This will help in the utilisation of the NavIC signals more, with almost all devices including smaller ones such as personal trackers also carrying receivers for L1 band signals.

### What is NavIC?

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- NavIC is a seven-satellite regional positioning system that can provide location data on the Indian mainland and up to 1,500 kilometres around.
- The NavIC satellites can provide position accuracy of up to 20 m under standard positioning service that is available to all and a restricted service for better accuracy available to customers.
- A fully functional NavIC system with all seven satellites and ground stations outside of India is likely to be more accurate than the GPS in the region currently.
- The satellites for NavIC are placed directly over India, which ensures better availability of signals even in difficult geographical locations than GPS whose signals are received in India at an angle making it difficult to access in certain areas like valleys and forests.

### Are there other countries that have similar systems?

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- India is the only country with a regional navigation system. Japan's four-satellite Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) augments the GPS signals in the region. Other than there are four global navigation systems in the world — the American GPS, the Russian GLONASS (GLObalnaya NAVigatsionnaya Sputnikovaya Sistema), the European Galileo, and the Chinese Beidou. There have been discussions in the past about increasing the coverage area of India's IRNSS as well.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

20. Which of the following features distinguishes NavIC from global navigation systems like GPS, GLONASS, Galileo, and Beidou?
- A. NavIC satellites are positioned in geostationary orbits, covering the entire globe for universal positioning services.
  - B. Unlike global systems, NavIC offers both standard positioning and restricted services with improved accuracy specifically for the Indian region.
  - C. NavIC relies solely on foreign-supplied atomic clocks for enhanced precision.
  - D. NavIC signals are weaker in difficult terrains like valleys and forests due to their angle of incidence.
21. Which of the following statements best explains why NavIC could potentially offer better accuracy in the Indian region compared to GPS?
- A. NavIC uses polar orbits, providing global coverage with consistent signal strength.
  - B. NavIC satellites are positioned directly over India, ensuring stronger signals even in geographically challenging areas.
  - C. NavIC operates solely on L5 signals, avoiding interference from other satellite systems.
  - D. NavIC relies on external ground stations globally, reducing dependency on Indian infrastructure.
22. Considering ISRO's 100<sup>th</sup> launch, which of the following statements accurately reflects the evolution of its launch vehicles?
- A. The GSLV-F15 was the first ISRO rocket to use an indigenously developed cryogenic engine.
  - B. PSLV has been the least reliable ISRO rocket, with over ten failed launches.
  - C. The LVM3 (formerly GSLV MkIII) has never experienced a launch failure and will be human-rated for future missions.
  - D. The Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) has been exclusively used for launching scientific missions like Aditya L1.
23. What is the key technological advancement in the NVS-02 satellite compared to earlier NavIC satellites?
- A. Introduction of an imported atomic clock to improve time synchronization.
  - B. Replacement of L1 frequency with exclusive dependence on L5 frequency for better global compatibility.
  - C. Inclusion of an indigenously developed atomic clock and support for the L1 frequency, enhancing compatibility with a wider range of devices.
  - D. Deployment of solar-powered propulsion systems for maintaining geostationary positions.
24. Considering the historical development of ISRO, what was the significance of the organization's establishment in 1969, particularly in the context of global space achievements at the time?
- A. It coincided with the Soviet Union's first successful Mars mission, symbolizing global collaboration in space.
  - B. It was the same year the U.S. achieved its first successful manned moon landing, highlighting India's entry into space exploration amidst significant global milestones.
  - C. It marked the creation of India's first geostationary satellite, INSAT-1A.
  - D. It was the year India launched its first successful satellite, Aryabhata.

## 9. 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic Day

- As India celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic Day on January 26 to commemorate the framing of the country's own constitution, here is a look at the history of the special day, amendments to the constitution over the years and the chief guests from various countries to attend the event.

### Republic Day, 2025

- Though India became a free nation on August 15, 1947, it declared itself a Sovereign, Democratic and Republic state with the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950.
- A salute of 21 guns and the unfurling of the Indian National Flag by Dr. Rajendra Prasad heralded the historic birth of the Indian Republic on that day. Thereafter 26<sup>th</sup> of January was decreed a national holiday and was recognised as the Republic Day of India.
- The Constitution gave the citizens of India the power to choose their own government and paved the way for democracy. Dr. Rajendra Prasad took oath as the first President of India at the Durbar Hall in Government House and this was followed by the Presidential drive along a five-mile route to the Irwin Stadium, where he unfurled the National Flag.

### History of Republic Day of India

- Dr BR Ambedkar was appointed the head of the drafting committee on August 28, 1947, with one objective - draft a permanent and organised constitution for India. The committee went back to its roots and referred to the Government of India Act, 1935. 141 days into working on it, a first draft of the constitution was submitted to the Assembly on November 4, 1947.
- The basic five lines of principles the committee confined itself to were - the country being a Republican State, a Parliamentary form of government, a Federal structure, Fundamental Rights, an independent judicial branch.
- Assembly sessions took place 166 days, for a period of two years, that were also open to the public. After a plethora of discussions, amendments and hard work, on January 24, 1950, 616 signatures were made by 308 members of the Assembly on the two hand-written copies (Hindi and English) of the final draft of Constitution of India.
- After two days, on January 26, 1950, the longest written Constitution of the world that incorporated 448 Articles in 22 Parts, 12 Schedules, and 97 Amendments, was validated and found effect across every corner of the country.
- The then President of Indonesia, Sukarno was the first Guest of Honour in India for the Republic Day celebration in 1950. On this day, the original handwritten copies of the Constitution are kept in helium-filled cases in the Library of Parliament House. Since then India celebration, January 26 has been celebrated as Republic Day.

### Significance of Republic Day

- Jawaharlal Nehru's Indian National Congress announced the Purna Swaraj movement on January 26, 1930. Even though this occurred a long time before India gained its independence, it set the stage for the country's struggle for liberty. In order to commemorate that momentous declaration and link India's fight for independence with its future as a republic, January 26 was selected as the date for the Constitution's drafting.

## Republic Day 2025 Theme

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- The theme of Republic Day 2025 is 'Swarnim Bharat – Virasat aur Vikas' (Golden India – Heritage and Development), reflecting India's rich cultural heritage and its ongoing journey of progress and its rich cultural legacy.

## Republic Day 2025 chief guest

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- Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto will be the chief guest for Republic Day 2025, marking a significant milestone in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## Importance of Republic Day

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- Republic Day is one of the most important National events in India. Republic Day is not just a commemoration of India's constitutional journey but is also a testament to its resilience, diversity, and commitment to democratic ideals.
- Republic Day marks the day when the constitution of India came into effect, officially transforming the nation into a democratic republic on Jan 26, 1950 and replaced the colonial-era Government of India Act.
- The day celebrates India's transition from a dominion under British rule to a sovereign nation governed by its own law and principles.
- The day reaffirms India's commitment to equality, justice, liberty and secularism, as enshrined in the constitution. It emphasizes the importance of democratic values like public participation and rule of law.
- Republic Day of India celebrates the adoption of the Indian Constitution to remind people of the efforts that went into the formation of the Constitution. The constitution of India says that the republic of India is a sovereign, socialist, secular and a democratic republic. The constitution of India assures the citizens their economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression, faith, belief and worship.

## Facts of the Indian constitution

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- **Where is the Constitution kept:** The Original Copies Are Stored in Special Cases.
- The original copies of the Indian Constitution, written in Hindi and English, are kept in special helium-filled cases in the Library of the Parliament of India.
- **Constitution Written:** The original copies of the Indian Constitution were written in Hindi and English. Each member of the Constituent Assembly that drafted the Constitution, signed two copies of the constitution, one in Hindi and the other in English.
- **The English Version:** There are a total of 117,369 words in the English version of the Constitution of India which contains 444 articles in 22 parts, 12 schedules and 115 amendments.
- **It Is the Longest Constitution in the World:** With so much of writing, the Indian Constitution is the longest of any sovereign country in the world. In its current form, it has a Preamble, 22 parts with 448 articles, 12 schedules, 5 appendices and 115 amendments.
- **The Constitution Wasn't Typed or Printed:** Both the versions of the Constitution, Hindi and English, were handwritten. It is the longest handwritten constitution of any country on earth.
- **It Was Handwritten by Prem Behari Narain Raizada:** The original Constitution of India was handwritten by Prem Behari Narain Raizada in a flowing italic style with beautiful calligraphy. The Constitution was published in Dehradun and photolithographed by the Survey of India.
- **Each Page Was Decorated by Artists from Shantiniketan:** The original Constitution is hand-written, with each page uniquely decorated by artists from Shantiniketan including Beohar Rammanohar Sinha and Nandalal Bose.



## Story of our National Flag

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- Every free nation of the world has its own flag. It is a symbol of a free country. The National Flag of India was adopted in its present form during the meeting of Constituent Assembly held on the 22 July 1947, a few days before India's independence from the British on 15 August, 1947. It served as the national flag of the Dominion of India between 15 August 1947 and 26 January 1950 and that of the Republic of India thereafter. In India, the term "tricolour" refers to the Indian national flag.
- The National flag of India is a horizontal tricolor of deep saffron (kesari) at the top, white in the middle and dark green at the bottom in equal proportion. The ratio of width of the flag to its length is two to three. In the centre of the white band is a navy blue wheel which represents the chakra. Its design is that of the wheel which appears on the abacus of the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka. Its diameter approximates to the width of the white band and it has 24 spokes.

## Award Distribution

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- Every year on the Republic Day, the Indian President bestows Padma Awards on Indian civilians. After the Bharat Ratna, these are India's second highest civilian honours. In decreasing order of importance, these honours are granted in three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.
  - **Padma Vibhushan:** for "distinguished and excellent service" The Padma Vibhushan is India's second highest civilian honour.
  - **Padma Bhushan:** for "distinguished high-level service". The Padma Bhushan is India's third highest civilian honour.
  - **Padma Shri:** in recognition of "distinguished service". Padma Shri is India's fourth highest civilian honour.
- Republic day of India is a great when all the deserving candidates are honoured with bravery awards such as Param Veer Chakra, Maha Veer Chakra, Veer Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Ashoka Chakra.
- President Sukarno of Indonesia was the first chief guest at the first Republic Day Celebration of India on 26<sup>th</sup> of January, 1950.
- Malik Gulam Mohammed (first governor general of Pakistan) was the first chief guest of the Rajpath parade in 1955 (Republic Day Parade was started first time).

## 26<sup>th</sup> January: The date has a history behind it

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- The date is mentioned in the history related to the mass movement demanding "Purna Swaraj" (Complete Independence) during 1929-30.
- On one side Mahatma Gandhi was demanding gradual freedom starting from the domination status and on the other side Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose were demanding immediate and complete freedom.
- Finally, Nehru was elected as President and along with Sardar Patel, Rajaji and Gandhi, the Indian Declaration of Independence was drafted and on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1929, Nehru hoisted the tricolor flag with Gandhi charkha in centre.
- On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1930, Purna Swaraj was publicly issued and 26<sup>th</sup> January was celebrated as "Indian Independence Day" for the next 17 years.
- The Government of India Act 1935 was originally passed in August 1935 and is said to be the longest Act of (British) Parliament ever enacted by that time. The 1935 Act was the second installment of constitutional reforms passed by British Parliament for implementing the ideal of responsible government in India.
- In 1947, we requested the British to grant freedom on the same date but Lord Mountbatten choose 15<sup>th</sup> August.



- This was the reason when the constitution was formed, the date to declare it, was chosen as 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950.
- Vande Mataram was adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1950 as the National Song of India. The song is taken from the poem of the patriotic novel 'Anandmath' written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Only the two verses of the poem have been adopted as the national song of India.
- The National Emblem was adopted on 26 January 1950 – the day India was declared a republic with its Constitution coming into effect. A representation of Lion Capital of Ashoka was initially adopted as the emblem of the Dominion of India in December 1947. The current version of the emblem was officially adopted on 26 January 1950, the day India became a republic.

### Important Amendments in Constitution

- India's constitution is neither rigid nor flexible. Parliament is empowered to amend the Indian Constitution under Article 368, subjected to 'Basic structure of Constitution'. It is done in three ways:
  - By simple majority
  - By special majority
  - By special majority with ratification by half of the states.

### QUESTIONS

**Solve the multiple choice questions:**

25. Why was 26 January chosen as the date for Republic Day in India?
  - A. It marks the adoption of the Indian Constitution
  - B. It commemorates the Declaration of Indian Independence (Purna Swaraj)
  - C. It was the day when India became a dominion
  - D. It was the day when India gained independence
26. What was the governing document of India before the Constitution of India came into effect?
  - A. The Government of India Act (1935)
  - B. The Indian Independence Act 1947
  - C. The Constitution of the British Empire
  - D. The Indian National Congress Manifesto

## 10. What is Guillain-Barré Syndrome?

- Following a reported outbreak of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare neurological disorder, in Pune, with 73 cases so far, the Union Health Ministry has now sent a team to the city to assess the situation.
- The Maharashtra government has also set up a Rapid Response Team to investigate the sudden rise in infections.

### What is Guillain-Barré Syndrome?

- Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is an autoimmune neurological disorder in which a person's immune system attacks their peripheral nerves, leading to muscle weakness that can progress to paralysis.

- It can develop over a few days or several weeks. People of any age can be affected, but it is more common in adults and males.
- The condition is rare, with an estimated incidence of 1/2 per 100,000 population.
- While the causes of GBS are still not fully understood, in most cases, it occurs after a viral or bacterial infection.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), infection with the bacteria *Campylobacter jejuni*, which causes gastroenteritis (including symptoms of nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea), is one of the most common risk factors for GBS.
- People can also develop GBS after having the flu or other viral infections including cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, and the Zika virus. In rare instances, vaccinations may increase the risk of people getting GBS, but the chance of this occurring is extremely low.

### How does it affect the body?

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- In autoimmune conditions, the body's immune system begins to attack its own cells.
- In GBS, the immune system destroys the myelin sheath – a fatty layer wrapped around nerve cells.
- This impacts the nerves' ability to send signals to the brain, which causes weakness in the muscles.
- GBS affects the peripheral nervous system – the part of the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord – that controls the movement of muscles, temperature, touch and pain sensations.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

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- The first signs of GBS are usually tingling and weakness that start in the feet and legs before spreading to the upper body, arms and face. Symptoms include a pins and needles feeling in the toes, fingers, ankles or wrists, back pain, pain in the legs, not being able to walk or climb stairs, trouble with facial movements and double vision. For some people this can lead to paralysis of the legs, arms or face.
- The severity of the symptoms can range from mild to severe. In approximately one-third of people, the chest muscles are affected, making it hard to breathe, the WHO says. The ability to speak and swallow can become affected in severe cases. GBS can lead to life-threatening complications when it affects the autonomic nervous system which controls your blood pressure and heart rate.

### How is it treated?

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- There is no known cure for GBS.
- However, there are some treatments that aid in recovery. Most people can make a nearly full recovery.
- A few may be left with remaining muscle weakness.
- The treatments primarily include plasma exchange and intravenous immunoglobulin therapy.
- In plasma exchange or plasmapheresis, the plasma (liquid part of the blood) is removed, treated and then returned to the body.
- This removes the antibodies from the plasma that are attacking the nerves. Intravenous immunoglobulin therapy involves injecting the body with immunoglobins, which are proteins that the body makes to identify and neutralise pathogens.
- This helps decrease the immune system's attack on the nerves. Supportive treatment is also given and rehabilitation including physical and occupational therapy may be required. Recovery can take a long time.

## QUESTIONS

### Solve the multiple choice questions:

27. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS)?

1. It is an autoimmune neurological disorder in which a person's immune system attacks their peripheral nerves, leading to muscle weakness that can progress to paralysis.
2. People can also develop GBS after having the flu or other viral infections including cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, and the Zika virus.

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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



Career  
Launcher

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. C The Arctic Council was established on 19 September 1996 when the governments of Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States signed the Ottawa Declaration. The establishment of the Arctic Council was preceded by the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (June 1991), a declaration on the protection of the Arctic environment. The Ottawa Declaration defines these states as Members of the Arctic Council. The eight States have territories within the Arctic and thus carry the role of stewards of the region. Their national jurisdictions and international law govern the lands surrounding the Arctic Ocean and its waters.
2. C Greenland as an island: Greenland is the largest island in the world that is not a continent, with an area of about 2.16 million square kilometers.
3. B A Waqf is an endowment made by a Muslim individual or institution for religious, charitable, or educational purposes. Once a property is declared as waqf, it cannot be sold or transferred and is meant for perpetual use in public welfare. Waqf Boards are statutory bodies responsible for the management, regulation, and administration of waqf properties in India. They function under the Waqf Act, 1995, which was enacted to regulate and protect waqf assets.

**Central Waqf Council (CWC):** A national-level advisory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs that oversees state waqf boards.

**State Waqf Boards:** Established in each state or union territory, responsible for managing waqf properties, revenue collection, and ensuring proper utilization of waqf funds.

4. A The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, specifically removes the Waqf Board's power to unilaterally determine if a property qualifies as waqf. This is a major change aimed at reducing disputes and potential misuse of this authority. Option A is incorrect, making it the right answer because the Bill revokes this power. Option B is correct as the Bill eliminates "waqf by user", which previously allowed properties to be designated waqf based on long-term religious usage. Option C is correct since the Collector is now responsible for assessing such disputes. Option D is correct because the Bill mandates that waqf-alal-aulad cannot be used to bypass inheritance rights, especially of women heirs.
5. B The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, marks a departure from the earlier provisions where members were elected from specific electoral colleges of Muslims (like MPs, MLAs, Bar Council members). Now, the state government has the power to nominate members from these backgrounds. Notably, the Bill allows for the inclusion of non-Muslim members on the Board, which was not permissible under the earlier Act. Option A is incorrect because the new provision includes non-Muslim members. Option C is incorrect as the Bill only mandates two Muslim women members, not 50% representation. Option D is incorrect because the Bill ensures representation from Shia, Sunni, Bohra, and Aghakhani communities, not eliminates them.
6. C Previously, the Waqf Tribunal's decisions were final with no provision for appeal in regular courts. However, under the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, an appeal mechanism has been introduced, allowing parties to appeal to the High Court within 90 days from the date of the Tribunal's order. Option A is incorrect as appeals are directed to the High Court, not the Supreme Court directly. Option B is incorrect because the Bill has removed the finality clause for Tribunal decisions. Option D is incorrect since appeals are not handled by the Waqf Board but by the High Court.
7. B The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, enhances the powers of the central government, including the authority to audit waqf accounts through the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) or an officer designated by the central government. Option A is incorrect because the central government now has auditing powers, reducing the exclusive control of state governments. Option C is incorrect as the central government can also publish accounts and proceedings of waqf boards. Option D is incorrect because the Bill explicitly empowers the central government to frame rules related to waqf property registration.

8. C Option A is correct: The Bharat Ratna was indeed instituted and first awarded in 1954. Option B is incorrect: While it is true that the Bharat Ratna does not carry any monetary grant, it also does not provide any special privileges like diplomatic immunity. Recipients receive only a Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion. Option C is correct: The rule restricting awards to three per year is a guideline, not a constitutional limit. This rule was breached in 1999 (4 recipients) and again in 2024 (5 recipients). Option D is correct: Under Article 18(1) of the Constitution, Bharat Ratna recipients cannot use the award as a prefix or suffix to their names. However, they can mention it in their biodata or official documents in phrases like “Recipient of Bharat Ratna Award.”
9. B Option A is correct: The first suspension occurred on 13 July 1977 when Prime Minister Morarji Desai withdrew all personal civil honours. Option B is incorrect: The second suspension began in mid-1992 and was lifted in December 1995, which is approximately 3.5 years, not exactly 5 years. Option C is correct: The first suspension was indeed lifted on 25 January 1980, after Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister again. Option D is correct: The second suspension was due to PILs filed in the Kerala High Court and Madhya Pradesh High Court, questioning the constitutional validity of the award. The Supreme Court reinstated the awards in 1995.
10. B Pair 1 is correct: Mother Teresa was the first naturalized Indian citizen to receive the Bharat Ratna in 1980. Pair 2 is incorrect: The first non-Indian recipient was Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Pakistan) in 1987, not Nelson Mandela, who received it later in 1990. Pair 3 is correct: Sachin Tendulkar is the youngest Bharat Ratna recipient at the age of 40. Pair 4 is correct: Dhondo Keshav Karve was the oldest living recipient, awarded the Bharat Ratna on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1958. Hence, the correct answer is B) 1, 3, and 4 only.
11. B Statement 1 is correct: Indore and Udaipur are indeed the first two Indian cities to receive the prestigious Wetland City Accreditation under the Ramsar Convention, joining 31 globally accredited wetland cities. Statement 2 is incorrect: While Indore, Bhopal, and Udaipur were nominated, only Indore and Udaipur successfully secured the accreditation. Bhopal did not receive it. Statement 3 is correct: The WCA aims to promote urban sustainability by recognizing cities that maintain the ecological character of their wetlands and integrate wetlands into urban planning and development. Hence, the correct answer is B) 1 and 3 only.
12. C Option A is correct: Udhwa Lake in Jharkhand and Khecheopalri Lake in Sikkim have indeed been designated as the first Ramsar Sites for their respective states. Option B is correct: India now has a total of 89 Ramsar Sites covering an area of 1.358 million hectares after the recent additions. Option C is incorrect: While Uttar Pradesh ranks second after Tamil Nadu, it has 10 Ramsar Sites, NOT 15. Option D is correct: Theerthangal and Sakkarakottai were recently designated in Tamil Nadu, taking the state’s total to 20 Ramsar Sites, the highest in India. Hence, the correct answer is C) Uttar Pradesh ranks second after Tamil Nadu in the number of Ramsar Sites, having 15 Ramsar Sites.
13. D Statement 1 is correct: Sirpur Lake in Indore is a designated Ramsar Site, known for its biodiversity significance, particularly as a bird sanctuary attracting large congregations of water birds. It also helps in flood regulation. Statement 2 is correct: Udaipur, known as the “City of Lakes,” has wetlands like Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai, which help in maintaining the region’s microclimate and act as a buffer against environmental degradation, including risks like desertification due to its proximity to arid zones. Statement 3 is correct: Wetlands in both cities play a significant role in climate resilience by acting as buffers against extreme weather events (like floods and droughts) and aiding in groundwater recharge, which is essential for urban sustainability. Hence, the correct answer is D) 1, 2, and 3.
14. B Option B is correct because the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games indeed introduced demonstration events like mallakhamb, kalaripayattu, rafting, and yogasana for the first time. Option A is incorrect because kabaddi and wrestling have been part of previous editions as core sports. Option C is incorrect because the games are spread across multiple cities in Uttarakhand, including Dehradun, Haridwar, Nainital, and more. Option D is incorrect because Union Territories are participating alongside 36 Indian states.



15. B Option B is correct because the first edition was indeed named the Indian Olympic Games, held in Lahore in 1924, organized under the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Option A is incorrect because the games were not exclusive to military personnel and were held in Lahore, not Mumbai. Option C is incorrect since the Games were not held consistently every year due to various reasons, including political and logistical challenges. Option D is incorrect because in the early years, the focus was more on individual sports like athletics and wrestling, not team sports like football or hockey.
16. C The augmentation clause was designed to ensure that annuity payments to First Nations would increase as the land generated more wealth. However, despite immense profits from resource extraction, payments were capped at \$4 per person in 1874 and never raised, violating the clause's intent. This failure formed the basis of the legal dispute.
17. B While 21 First Nations under the Robinson Huron Treaty settled for C\$10 billion, the 12 signatories from the Robinson Superior Treaty are continuing legal proceedings, seeking higher compensation. They argue that the government's offer does not fully account for the economic benefits derived from their lands.
18. B DeepSeek relied on NVIDIA's H800 GPUs, which have lower chip-to-chip bandwidth compared to the H100 used by U.S. companies. However, engineers optimized low-level code and memory usage, compensating for hardware limitations. This strategic combination significantly reduced costs while maintaining high performance, challenging the assumption that only the latest hardware ensures competitive AI capabilities.
19. C DeepSeek's success disrupted the traditional belief that vast financial resources and cutting-edge hardware are prerequisites for leading AI development. By achieving high-performance models with lower costs and fewer resources, DeepSeek has challenged the dominance of U.S. tech giants, encouraging a global shift towards efficiency and cost-effectiveness in AI strategies.
20. B NavIC is a regional navigation system designed to provide high-accuracy positioning in India and up to 1,500 km around it. It offers two types of services: Standard Positioning Service (SPS) available to all users. Restricted Service (RS) for authorized users, offering better accuracy. Unlike GPS, whose signals enter India at an angle (causing issues in valleys/forests), NavIC's satellites are positioned directly over India, ensuring stronger signal availability even in challenging terrains.
21. B NavIC's satellites are strategically placed directly over the Indian region in geostationary and geosynchronous orbits. This ensures that the signals are received from directly overhead, resulting in stronger, more reliable coverage, especially in difficult terrains like valleys and forests. In contrast, GPS satellites, positioned globally, transmit signals to India at an angle, which can reduce signal strength in certain areas.
22. C The LVM3 (GSLV MkIII) is ISRO's heaviest rocket, capable of carrying nearly 8,500 kg to low Earth orbit. It has had seven successful launches so far, with no failures. Importantly, it will be modified and human-rated for the upcoming Gaganyaan mission. A is incorrect because the first indigenous cryogenic engine was used in an earlier GSLV flight, not GSLV-F15. B is incorrect because PSLV has an excellent success rate, with only two failures out of 62 launches. D is incorrect as the SSLV is designed for commercial small satellite launches, not exclusively scientific missions.
23. C The NVS-02 satellite is part of the new generation of NavIC satellites and features two key advancements: Indigenously developed atomic clock to improve timekeeping accuracy. Support for the L1 frequency, commonly used by the U.S. GPS system, making NavIC signals compatible with more commercial devices, including smartphones and personal trackers. This significantly enhances NavIC's utility for civilian applications.
24. B ISRO was established in 1969, the same year as the U.S. Apollo 11 mission, which successfully landed humans on the moon. This historical coincidence emphasized India's ambitions to enter the global space race during a time of rapid advancements in space technology worldwide. A is incorrect because the Soviet Mars mission occurred earlier. C and D are incorrect because INSAT-1A and Aryabhata were launched after ISRO's formation.

25. B 26 January was chosen as Republic Day because on this day in 1929, the Indian National Congress proclaimed the Declaration of Indian Independence (Purna Swaraj), rejecting the Dominion status offered by the British Regime. **It commemorates the Declaration of Indian Independence (Purna Swaraj).** The Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950, replacing the Government of India Act (1935) and establishing India as a republic.
26. A Before the Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950, the Government of India Act (1935) was the governing document of India.
27. C Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) is an autoimmune neurological disorder in which a person's immune system attacks their peripheral nerves, leading to muscle weakness that can progress to paralysis. It can develop over a few days or several weeks. People of any age can be affected, but it is more common in adults and males. The condition is rare, with an estimated incidence of 1/2 per 100,000 population. While the causes of GBS are still not fully understood, in most cases, it occurs after a viral or bacterial infection. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), infection with the bacteria *Campylobacter jejuni*, which causes gastroenteritis (including symptoms of nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea), is one of the most common risk factors for GBS. People can also develop GBS after having the flu or other viral infections including cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, and the Zika virus. In rare instances, vaccinations may increase the risk of people getting GBS, but the chance of this occurring is extremely low.