

MANTHAN

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1. The Emergency 50 years on



- On June 12, 1975, Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court delivered a landmark judgment that declared Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's 1971 election void due to electoral malpractices, based on a petition filed by Raj Narain, her opponent in the election. The court also disqualified her from office for six years. This was the first time in independent India's history that a Prime Minister's election had been annulled.
- The judgment was followed by Indira Gandhi's decision to invoke Constitutional provisions to impose a state of Emergency in India, leading to a 21-month period of suspended fundamental rights and suppressed dissent. The court proceedings were marked by Indira Gandhi's cross-examination, a first in itself.

- The case had started in 1971, when Raj Narain challenged the election result, accusing Indira Gandhi of misusing government machinery. The case faced multiple delays due to retirements of judges, but was finally assigned to Justice Sinha in 1975. The trial featured prominent witnesses and lawyers, including P N Haksar for Gandhi and Shanti Bhushan for Narain.
- Prashant Bhushan's book *The Case That Shook India* recounts the pressures faced by Justice Sinha in delivering the verdict, which would trigger a series of events culminating in the Emergency.

What is an "Emergency"?

- An Emergency refers to legal measures in a country's constitution or laws that enable swift government response to crises like war or rebellion threatening national stability, security, or sovereignty.
- Provisions in Constitution: These are outlined in Articles 352 to 360 under Part XVIII of the Indian Constitution, drawing inspiration from Germany's Weimar Constitution.

What was a National Emergency?

- Emergency in India was a period of 21 months from 1975 to 1977 declared by the then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and officially issued by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed under Article 352 of the Constitution of India because of the prevailing "internal disturbances".
- This gave the Prime Minister the authority to Rule by decree leading to the suspension of elections and curbing of civil liberties.
- National Emergency has been proclaimed three times in India:
 - **Indo-China War (1962):** Declared due to "external aggression" during the Sino-Indian War.
 - **Indo-Pak War (1971):** Imposed on the grounds of "external aggression" during the Indo-Pakistani War.
 - **(1975-1977):** The third and most controversial national emergency was declared due to "internal disturbance" amidst internal political unrest, significantly suspending civil liberties.

Reasons for declaration of Emergency in 1975:

- **Internal Disturbances:** Growing political dissent and protests against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government created significant internal instability. Eg: Nationwide protests and movements such as Jayaprakash Narayan's Sampurna Kranti or "Total Revolution".
- **Electoral Malpractice Allegations:** The Allahabad High Court found Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractices and invalidated her 1971 election victory in the Indira Gandhi vs Raj Narain case.
- **Economic Challenges:** The country faced severe economic issues, including high inflation, food shortages, and labor strikes. Eg: Strikes and protests by labor unions, such as the railway workers' strike of 1974. Also, post-liberation war hardship persisted along with a national emergency already in place.
- **National Security Threats:** Indira Gandhi's government argued that there were threats to national security from both internal and external sources. Eg: Threats from the Cold war and post-liberation war tensions.

Emergency Provisions – Now and Then:

- Under Article 352 of the Constitution of India, the President may (on the advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the PM) issue a proclamation of emergency if the security of India or any part of the country is threatened by –
 - War or
 - External aggression or
 - Armed rebellion

- Article 358 frees the state of all limitations imposed by Article 19 (“Right to freedom”) as soon as an emergency is imposed.
- Article 359 empowers the President to suspend the right of people (except under Articles 20 and 21) to move court for the enforcement of their rights during an emergency.
- In 1975, the ground of “internal disturbance” (instead of armed rebellion) was available to the government to proclaim an emergency. This was the only instance of proclamation of emergency due to “internal disturbance”.
- The other two occasions in which an emergency was proclaimed earlier (on October 26, 1962, and December 3, 1971), were both on grounds of war.
- This ground of “internal disturbance” was removed by the Constitution (44th Amendment) Act 1978 by the Janata government that came to power after the Emergency.

It was criticized as the darkest phase of post-independent India:

- **Suspension of Civil Liberties:** Fundamental rights, including freedom of speech and expression, were suspended.
- **Arbitrary Arrests and Detentions:** Thousands of opposition leaders, activists, and dissidents were detained without trial. *E.g.:* Key political figures such as Jayaprakash Narayan and Morarji Desai were imprisoned under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA).
- **Human Rights Violations:** The Emergency witnessed a disregard for human rights. *E.g.:* The mass sterilization program, targeting low-income populations, was coercive and unethical.
- **Centralization of Power:** The 38th and the 42nd Amendment significantly curtailed the powers of the judiciary and centralized authority in the executive. *E.g.:* Limitations on judicial review.
- **Press Censorship and Information Blackout:** The Emergency witnessed a severe crackdown on press freedom. Media outlets faced strict censorship, and critical reporting of the government’s actions was banned.
- **Lessons that were learnt and checks and balances put in place to prevent a recurrence:**
 - **Constitutional Safeguards:** Later, the newly formed Janata government brought about 43rd and 44th amendments in 1977 and 1978 respectively to restore the earlier constitution to some extent. *E.g.:* Written recommendation of the cabinet for national emergency, “armed rebellion” in place of internal disturbance et al.
 - **Judicial Activism:** The Supreme Court evolved the basic structure doctrine to strike down 39th Amendment some parts of the 42nd. This paved the way for restoration of democracy. *Eg:* The landmark *Minerva Mills* case (1980) established the power of judicial review over proclamations of emergency.
 - **Parliamentary Oversight:** Efforts were made to strengthen parliamentary oversight over the executive branch. *Eg:* Passage of subsequent amendments by Parliament, Parliamentary committees were empowered.
 - **Ensuring Fair Elections:** Reforms were introduced to make the electoral process more transparent and fairer. *E.g.:* ECI became multi-member body, reforms like Model Code of Conduct were brought in.
 - **Civil Society and Grassroots Mobilization:** The Emergency galvanized civil society, highlighting its role in protecting democracy. *E.g.:* Significance of JP’s *Sampoorna Kranti*, the post-emergency rise of activist organizations like the People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCI).

Conclusion

- The Emergency of 1975-77 stands as a stark reminder of the importance of strong democratic safeguards to prevent the misuse of power. Moving forward, ongoing vigilance from citizens, a resilient civil society, and robust democratic institutions are crucial to ensure that such a dark chapter does not repeat itself.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following statements accurately reflects the constitutional implications of the 1975 Emergency declaration under Article 352?
 - A. Article 19 was suspended only for laws made after the proclamation of Emergency.
 - B. The Supreme Court retained full jurisdiction to enforce all Fundamental Rights under Articles 14 to 32.
 - C. The proclamation was based on the ground of “internal disturbance,” which was later replaced by “armed rebellion” through a constitutional amendment.
 - D. Article 359 allowed the enforcement of all Fundamental Rights except Article 19 during the Emergency.
2. Which of the following reflects the unique constitutional precedent set by the Allahabad High Court judgment in Indira Gandhi v. Raj Narain?
 - A. It upheld the Prime Minister’s immunity from judicial scrutiny in election matters.
 - B. It was the first time a sitting Prime Minister’s election was declared void due to corrupt practices.
 - C. It led to the resignation of the entire cabinet and re-election within six months.
 - D. It overturned the President’s discretionary power under Article 356.
3. During the 1975 Emergency, which Fundamental Rights were explicitly protected from suspension under Article 359 as per later constitutional reforms?
 - A. Articles 19 and 21
 - B. Articles 20 and 21
 - C. Articles 14 and 21
 - D. Articles 32 and 21
4. Which of the following best explains why the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978 was considered a direct response to the 1975 Emergency?
 - A. It made the judiciary subservient to the Parliament in interpreting Emergency powers.
 - B. It allowed Emergency to be declared for economic instability.
 - C. It mandated that the advice to proclaim Emergency must be in writing and by the Union Cabinet.
 - D. It empowered the President to proclaim Emergency unilaterally in case of war.
5. Which of the following cases is directly linked to the legal legacy of the 1975 Emergency and addresses the scope of judicial review during emergency periods?
 - A. Golaknath v. State of Punjab
 - B. Minerva Mills v. Union of India
 - C. A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras
 - D. I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu

2. India Becomes World's 4th Largest Economy, Surpasses Japan: NITI Aayog



- India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy. NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam said, India is now poised to displace Germany from the third rank in the next 2.5 to 3 years. Yesterday, briefing the media after tenth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog in New Delhi, he said India is now a 'four trillion dollar' economy as per the IMF data. He said, it's only the United States, China, and Germany's economies which are larger than India.
- The IMF in its recent report has said that India will remain the world's fastest-growing major economy. The IMF had stated earlier this month in the World Economic Outlook report that India continues to remain the world's fastest-growing major economy and the only country expected to clock over 6 per cent growth in the next two years.
- According to the IMF, India's GDP currently stands at 4.3 trillion dollar. India's GDP was 2.1 trillion dollar in 2015, since then, the country has more than doubled its economy. According to the report, the high rate of growth will see India's GDP increasing to 5.5 trillion dollar in 2028 overtaking Germany to become the third-largest economy. The IMF has projected a zero growth rate for Germany in 2025,

followed by 0.9 per cent in 2026 as it is expected to be hit the hardest among the European countries due to the ongoing global trade war. The GDP of the US, the world's largest economy, has been pegged at 30.5 trillion dollar for 2025, while that of China, the second biggest, is around 19.2 trillion dollars.

NITI Aayog:



- NITI Aayog was established on 1st January 2015 as the successor to the Planning Commission of India. It was created to serve as the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, focusing on inclusive and sustainable development through cooperative federalism and a bottom-up approach. NITI Aayog, the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, is structured to promote cooperative federalism and facilitate economic development. Chairperson: The Prime Minister of India. Vice Chairperson: Suman Bery appointed by the Prime Minister. Full-Time Members: Currently, these are Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Prof. Ramesh Chand, Dr. V.K. Paul, and Dr. Arvind Virmani. Ex-Officio Members: Up to four members from the Union Council of Ministers, nominated by the Prime Minister. As per the latest available information, these include: Shri Raj Nath Singh, Minister of Defence, Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; and Minister of Rural Development and Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs.
- **Governing Council:** Comprises the Chief Ministers of all States and Union Territories with legislatures, and Lieutenant Governors of other Union Territories. Regional Councils: Formed to address specific regional issues, these councils consist of Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors from the respective regions and are convened by the Prime Minister or his nominee. Special Invitees: Experts, specialists, and practitioners with relevant domain knowledge, nominated by the Prime Minister. Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Appointed by the Prime Minister, the CEO holds the rank of Secretary to the Government of India and oversees the administration of NITI Aayog.

NITI Aayog

(National Institution for Transforming India)

HISTORY- PLANNING COMMISSION

Set up in **1950**
to direct investment
activity

Replaced by **NITI
Aayog** on January
1, 2015

Composition of #NITLaayog

- **Chairperson**
Prime Minister
- **Governing Council**
CMs (States) and Lt Governors (UTs)
- **Regional Councils**
Formed on need-basis, comprising CMs
and Lt Govs of the region
- **Members**
Full-time basis
- **Part-time Members**
Max 2, rotational, from relevant institutions
- **Ex-officio Members**
Max 4 from Council of Ministers,
nominated by PM
- **Special Inviters**
Experts, specialists, practitioners with
domain knowledge
- **Chief Executive Officer**
Appointed by PM for fixed tenure
(Secy rank)
- **Secretariat**
As deemed necessary

OBJECTIVES

- ④ Foster **cooperative federalism**
- ④ Develop mechanisms to **formulate credible plans (village level)**
- ④ Interests of **national security** in economic strategy and policy
- ④ Special **attention to weaker sections**
- ④ Provide advice and encouragement to partnerships between **key stakeholders, national-international Think Tanks, research institutions**
- ④ Create **knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system**
- ④ **Platform for inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues resolution**
- ④ Maintain **state-of-the-art Resource Centre**

NITI Aayog vs Planning Commission

NITI Aayog	Planning Commission
Advisory Think Tank	Extra-constitutional body
Wider expertise	Limited expertise
Secretaries (CEO) appointed by PM	Secretaries appointed by usual process
Bottom-up approach	Top-Down approach
No Mandate to impose policies	Imposed policies on states
No power to allocate funds	Allocated funds to ministries/state govts

Major Initiatives

- ④ SDG India Index
- ④ Atal Innovation Mission
- ④ e-AMRIT Portal (electric vehicles)
- ④ Good Governance Index
- ④ India Innovation Index
- ④ Aspirational District Programme
- ④ 'Methanol Economy' programme

Issues

- ④ **No powers** in granting **discretionary funds** to states
- ④ Only an **advisory body**
- ④ **No role in influencing private or public investment**
- ④ **Politicisation of the organisation**
- ④ **Lacks the requisite power** to bring positive change

QUESTIONS

6. In the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report, India showed improvement in which of the following subindexes, yet still recorded an overall drop in its global ranking?
- A. Health and Survival
 - B. Educational Attainment
 - C. Economic Participation and Opportunity
 - D. Political Empowerment
7. Which of the following best explains why India's overall parity score improved, yet its ranking fell in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report?
- A. Other countries experienced sharper improvements, surpassing India despite its slight progress.
 - B. India's data was incomplete for some indicators, leading to a score adjustment.
 - C. The scoring methodology was revised in 2025 to prioritize health indicators over political ones.
 - D. India's high literacy rates masked deficiencies in economic metrics, skewing the ranking.
8. Which of the following pairs is correctly matched as per the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report?

Country	:	Observation in Report
A. Pakistan	:	Improved its ranking due to gains in health and political empowerment
B. Iceland	:	Dropped from the top position for the first time since 2006
C. Bangladesh	:	Became South Asia's top performer due to gains in political and economic parity
D. India	:	Achieved near-full parity in political empowerment despite economic decline

3. India slips to 131st position in Global Gender Gap Index 2025



- India has ranked 131 out of 148 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, slipping two places from its position last year. With a parity score of just 64.1%, India is among the lowest-ranked countries in South Asia, according to the report released on Thursday (June 12, 2025). India ranked 129 last year.
- The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. The Indian economy's overall performance improved in absolute terms by +0.3 points. "One of the dimensions where India increases parity is in Economic Participation and Opportunity, where its score improves by +.9 percentage points to 40.7%. While most indicator values remain the same, parity in estimated earned income rises from 28.6% to 29.9%, positively impacting the subindex score," the report said.
- Scores in labour force participation rate remained the same (45.9%) as last year — India's highest achieved to date. In educational attainment, the report said, India scored 97.1%, reflecting positive shifts in female shares for literacy and tertiary education enrolment, which result in positive score improvements for the subindex as a whole. "India also records higher parity in health and survival, driven by improved scores in sex ratio at birth and in healthy life expectancy," it said.
- However, similar to other countries, parity in healthy life expectancy is obtained despite an overall reduction in the life expectancy of men and women, the report said.
- "Where India records a slight drop in parity [-0.6 points] since the last edition is in Political Empowerment. Female representation in Parliament falls from 14.7% to 13.8% in 2025, lowering the indicator score for the second year in a row below 2023 levels," it said.
- Similarly, the share of women in ministerial roles falls from 6.5% to 5.6%, moving the indicator score (5.9%) further away this year from its highest level (30% in 2019), it said.
- With notable gains in political empowerment and economic participation, Bangladesh emerged as the best performer in South Asia, jumping 75 ranks to rank 24 globally. Nepal ranked 125, Sri Lanka 130, Bhutan 119, Maldives 138 and Pakistan 148.
- The report said the global gender gap has closed to 68.8%, marking the strongest annual advancement since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Yet full parity remains 123 years away at current rates, according to the report.
- Iceland leads the rankings for the 16th year running, followed by Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.
- The 19th edition of the report, which covers 148 economies, revealed both encouraging momentum and persistent structural barriers facing women worldwide.
- The progress made in this edition was driven primarily by significant strides in political empowerment and economic participation while educational attainment and health and survival maintained near-parity levels above 95%.
- However, despite women representing 41.2% of the global workforce, a stark leadership gap persists with women holding only 28.8% of top leadership positions, the report said.
- "At a time of heightened global economic uncertainty and a low growth outlook combined with technological and demographic change, advancing gender parity represents a key force for economic renewal," said Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director, World Economic Forum.
- "The evidence is clear. Economies that have made decisive progress towards parity are positioning themselves for stronger, more innovative and more resilient economic progress," Ms. Zahidi said.

World Economic Forum

- The World Economic Forum is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation. It provides a global, impartial and not-for-profit platform for meaningful connection between stakeholders to

establish trust, and build initiatives for cooperation and progress. It was founded on 24 January 1971 by German engineer Klaus Schwab. Borge Brende is President and CEO of the World Economic Forum. Peter Brabeck-Letmathe is an Austrian businessman serving since 2025 as chairman ad interim of the World Economic Forum. It is based in Cologny, Canton of Geneva, Switzerland. The WEF is mostly known for its annual meeting at the end of January in Davos, a mountain resort in the canton of Graubünden, in the eastern Alps region of Switzerland.

- In a world marked by complex challenges, the World Economic Forum engages political, business, academic, civil society and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas. Established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation, it is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests, upholding the highest standards of governance and moral and intellectual integrity.
- At the heart of our mission of improving the state of the world lies the belief in the power of human ingenuity, entrepreneurship, innovation and cooperation. We recognise the need for a forum fostering rigorous and respectful dialogue between and among leaders with different beliefs and viewpoints, where diversity of thought is respected and all voices can be heard. Achieving this mission is made possible by all our stakeholders, who come together to find common ground and seize opportunities for positive change.

QUESTIONS

9. Which of the following statements correctly reflects the constitutional provisions introduced by the Women's Reservation Act, 2023?
 - A. Article 330A reserves one-third of the seats for women only in the Lok Sabha, excluding SC/ST-reserved seats.
 - B. Article 332A mandates one-third reservation for women in State Assemblies but excludes seats reserved for SCs and STs.
 - C. Article 334A links implementation of reservation to the completion of delimitation post the next census.
 - D. Article 239AA was newly inserted to include reservation for women in union territories.
10. The Women's Reservation Act, 2023, will come into force only after certain conditions are met. Which of the following sequences represents the correct order of implementation?
 - A. Delimitation → Census → Presidential Notification
 - B. Census → Delimitation → Reservation in Elections
 - C. Presidential Notification → Census → Delimitation
 - D. Delimitation → Reservation in Elections → Census
11. Regarding the scope and duration of the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, which of the following statements is correct?
 - A. It provides for permanent reservation for women in all directly elected bodies across the country.
 - B. It applies immediately to all state elections held after September 2023.
 - C. It provides for reservation in the Lok Sabha, all State Legislative Assemblies, and the NCT of Delhi, for a term of 15 years, extendable by Parliament.
 - D. The 106th Amendment applies retroactively to the 2011 Census data for implementing women's reservations.

4.33% seat reservation: Govt looks at quota for women in next Lok Sabha polls



- The Narendra Modi government intends to roll out reservation of seats for women, which is linked to the delimitation exercise, in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, highly-placed sources said. Official sources said the government is targeting implementation of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam that reserves one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the next election.
- “The Census has been announced and the other steps will follow. The women’s reservation Bill is linked to the delimitation process. We are aiming to roll it out in the next election,” sources in the government said.
- According to the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, passed in September 2023, reservation of one-third of seats for women in Lok Sabha and state Assemblies shall come into effect after an exercise of delimitation is undertaken based on figures from the first Census that is conducted after the enactment of the Act.
- Earlier this month, the government announced that the process of data collection for the Census, along with caste enumeration, would commence next year and offer a snapshot of the country’s population as on March 1, 2027.
- For women’s reservation to become a reality in the next Lok Sabha elections, delimitation will have to be completed well in time for the Election Commission of India to conduct the 2029 polls on the basis of the new delimitation of constituencies.
- Government sources claimed that the Census data will be available faster than the previous time with the advancement of technology – the enumeration will be conducted digitally using mobile applications for data collection and a central portal to collate the details and manage it.
- The Census data is significant for delimitation because the process of readjusting the seats of Lok Sabha and state Assemblies and redrawing their territorial boundaries is expected to be launched once the data is available.
- There have been concerns among southern states regarding delimitation changing the proportion of seats allocated to various states in Lok Sabha to conform to the constitutional principle of “one person, one vote, one value”, which will lead to a jump in seats for the northern states where populations have grown

briskly since 1971 and reduce the relative weight of southern states where the population rate has slowed down in the same period.

- Senior ministers have said that the concerns expressed by the southern states will be addressed, and that no room for complaints will be left.
- In February this year, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said that the southern states would not lose even a single seat on a pro-rata basis, making A Raja of the DMK ask whether pro-rata meant population-based or based on the present number of constituencies.
- Later, at the RSS's Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha meet at Bengaluru, RSS joint general secretary K Mukunda said the share of seats of the southern states would be maintained as it is in case the number of Lok Sabha seats is increased via delimitation.
- However, NDA ally Upendra Kushwaha has already made "justice for Bihar", through allocation of seats as per present population share, as a poll plank for the Bihar Assembly elections, taking the line multiple times in Bihar and Delhi.
- For delimitation to happen after the next Census, Parliament will have to pass a Delimitation Act, which will constitute a Delimitation Commission for the exercise that is likely to lead to an increase in Lok Sabha seats. Article 82 of the Constitution mandates readjustment of seats after every Census.
- However, the present Lok Sabha reflects the population figures of the 1971 Census because the delimitation of seats was frozen in 1976 for 25 years, and in 2001 for another 25 years, through Constitutional amendments, with the Vajpayee government stating in 2002 that this would provide an incentive for family planning.
- If another Constitutional amendment is not passed by Parliament by 2026, the freeze on delimitation will automatically be over.
- Under Article 81(2) (a) of the Constitution, "there shall be allotted to each State a number of seats in the House of the People in such manner that the ratio between that number and the population of the state is, so far as practicable, the same for all States". The only exception to this rule are small states whose population do not exceed six million.

Women's Reservation Act, 2023

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam), was enacted to reserve one-third of the seats for women in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. This historic legislation aims to enhance women's representation in India's political landscape.

Key Provisions of the Act

- **Insertion of Article 330A:** This article mandates that one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha, including those reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), be reserved for women. Additionally, one-third of the total seats filled by direct election in the Lok Sabha must be reserved for women, encompassing those reserved for SCs and STs.
- **Insertion of Article 332A:** This article requires that one-third of the seats in each State Legislative Assembly, including those reserved for SCs and STs, be reserved for women. Furthermore, one-third of the total seats filled by direct election in these Assemblies must be reserved for women, including those reserved for SCs and STs.
- **Amendment to Article 239AA:** This amendment ensures that the provisions for reserving seats for women are applicable to the Legislative Assembly of the NCT of Delhi. It also specifies that one-third of the seats reserved for SCs in the Delhi Legislative Assembly must be reserved for women.

- **Insertion of Article 334A:** This article stipulates that the reservation for women will come into effect after a delimitation exercise is undertaken following the first census conducted after the commencement of the Act. The reservation will remain in force for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Act, after which it may be extended by Parliament.
- **Implementation Timeline:** The reservation for women will be implemented after the publication of the relevant figures from the first census conducted after the commencement of the Act. A delimitation exercise will follow to adjust the constituencies accordingly. The reservation will cease to have effect 15 years from the commencement of the Act, unless extended by Parliament.

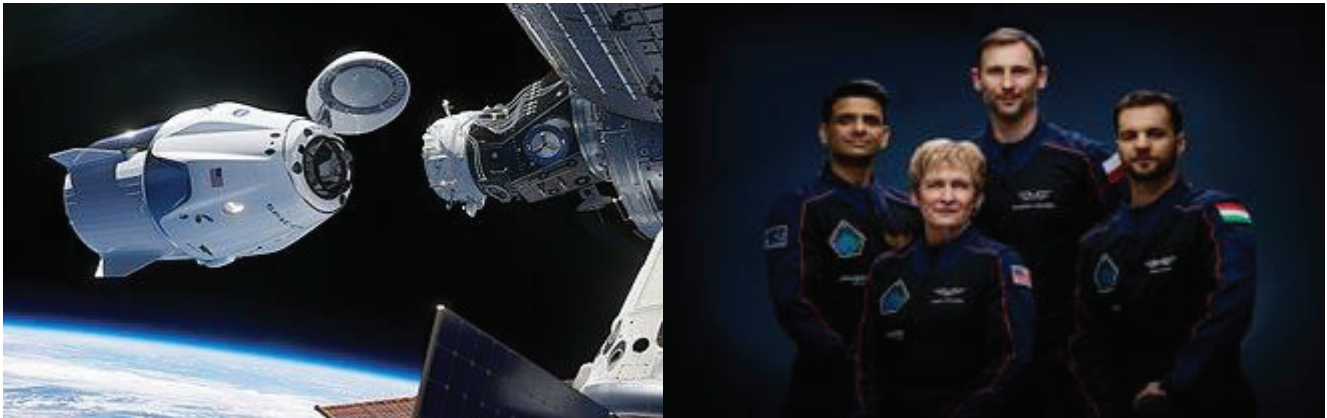
Legislative Process

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Bill, 2023, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on September 19, 2023, during the special session of Parliament. It was passed by the Lok Sabha on September 20, 2023, with 454 votes in favor and 2 against. The Rajya Sabha unanimously passed the bill on September 21, 2023, with 214 votes in favor and none against. President Droupadi Murmu granted assent to the bill on September 28, 2023.

QUESTIONS

12. What unique milestone does the Axiom-4 mission represent in the context of India's space program?
 - A. It marks India's first completely indigenous space mission.
 - B. It is the first time an Indian astronaut flies without government sponsorship.
 - C. It is the first Indian astronaut mission to the ISS, as part of the Gaganyaan-related collaboration.
 - D. It is the first time an Indian female astronaut enters space.
13. What critical safety implication is associated with a liquid oxygen leak in rocket launch systems like Falcon 9?
 - A. It accelerates fuel consumption and increases orbit insertion speed.
 - B. It neutralizes combustion reactions, halting ignition.
 - C. It poses a risk of fire or explosion due to cryogenic volatility.
 - D. It affects the temperature control system of onboard electronics.
14. Which statement about the Crew Dragon spacecraft (C213) used in the Axiom-4 mission is correct?
 - A. C213 had previously flown on a Starlink mission in April 2025.
 - B. C213 is the maiden flight of the fifth and final Crew Dragon built by SpaceX.
 - C. C213 was jointly manufactured by NASA and Axiom Space.
 - D. C213 is a non-reusable module used only for cargo transport.
15. Which of the following is NOT one of the planned scientific experiments that Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla will carry out aboard the ISS during the Ax-4 mission?
 - A. Research on crop resilience in microgravity
 - B. Study on cognitive effects of screen exposure
 - C. Gene-editing trials on human embryos in zero gravity
 - D. Observations on microbial adaptation and muscle atrophy

5. Axiom-4: The leak that led to mission delay



- The Axiom-4 mission, which is to carry India's Shubhanshu Shukla and three others to the International Space Station, **is facing an uncertain delay now, after its scheduled launch on 11th evening** India time had to be aborted due to problems in the rocket.
- The mission was supposed to take off from NASA's Kennedy Space Station in Florida at 5.30 India time on 11 June 2025. But during tests on 10 June 2025, a leak of liquid oxygen (LOx) from the Falcon 9 rocket was detected. SpaceX, the company that produces these rockets, had initially said that it would be able to fix the problem by Tuesday to enable a Wednesday launch. However, on Tuesday night, it was decided to put off the launch to allow for more time to carry out the repairs.
- "Standing down from tomorrow's (Wednesday's) Falcon 9 launch of Ax-4 to the space station to allow additional time for SpaceX teams to repair the LOx leak identified during post static fire booster inspections. Once complete — and pending range availability — we will share a new launch date".

What exactly is the leak?

- Liquid oxygen is a critical component in rocket propulsion as it allows the combustion of the main fuel, highly refined kerosene in this case. Oxygen attains liquid state at very low temperatures, well below -180 degree Celsius. The leak can happen either in the storage chamber of the rocket or in the pipelines that supply the LOx to the rocket's engine. In the best case scenario, a leak reduces the amount of LOx available for enabling combustion of the main fuel. In the worst case, it could trigger a fire or an explosion.
- "As part of launch vehicle preparation to validate the performance of booster stage of Falcon 9 launch vehicle, seven second of hot test was carried out on the launch pad (on Monday). It is understood that LOx leakage was detected in the propulsion bay during the test. Based on the discussion on this topic by ISRO team with the experts of Axiom and SpaceX it has been decided to correct the leak and carry out necessary validation test before clearing for the launch. Hence the launch of Axiom-4 slated for 11th June 2025 for sending first Indian Gaganyatri to ISS is postponed," ISRO chairman V Narayanan, who is in the United States to witness the launch, said in a statement.

A reusable rocket

- Falcon 9 is a partially reusable rocket. Its first stage (booster) returns to the Earth after separating from the mission it has launched, and can be reused after a refurbishment. This is the second trip for the booster being used in the rocket that will launch Ax-4 mission. It had earlier flown on a Starlink mission in April this year.

Axiom Mission 4

- Axiom Mission 4 (Ax 4) is a planned private spaceflight to the International Space Station (ISS) operated by Axiom Space in partnership with SpaceX and NASA. Axiom Mission 4 is a commercial spaceflight mission to the International Space Station (ISS) organized by Axiom Space, a company founded in 2016 by Dr. Kam Ghaffarian and Michael Suffredini. The flight is scheduled to lift off from Launch Complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center no earlier than June 2025. It will use a SpaceX Falcon 9 Block 5 rocket to place Crew Dragon C213 into low Earth orbit. This will be the maiden flight of the C213 spacecraft, the fifth and final Crew Dragon to be built.
- The crew of four consists of commander Peggy Whitson, an Axiom employee; pilot Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Space Research Organisation; and mission specialists Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski, a European Space Agency project astronaut from Poland, and Tibor Kapu representing the Hungarian Space Office. Shubhanshu Shukla will be the first of India's astronaut corps to fly to space. The mission represents the first government-sponsored human spaceflight in over 40 years, and the second overall, for India, Poland, and Hungary, with each country having previously participated in one Soviet-era Interkosmos mission.
- Ax 4 represents a milestone for India's Indian Human Spaceflight Programme, integrating with ISRO's Gaganyaan initiative. While Gaganyaan remains India's independent crewed program, Ax 4 provides the first opportunity for an Indian astronaut—Shubhanshu Shukla—to fly on a commercial mission to the ISS. Shukla will conduct experiments developed by ISRO and Indian institutions, including studies of cognitive effects of screen use, microbial adaptation, muscle atrophy, and crop resilience in microgravity.

Axiom-4 Mission Overview

- **Mission:** Axiom-4 to the ISS (postponed due to technical fault).
- **Launch Site:** Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- **Spacecraft:** SpaceX's **Crew Dragon**.
- **Rocket:** **Falcon 9** by SpaceX.
- **Crew Members:**
 - Peggy Whitson (USA)
 - Shubhanshu Shukla (India) – 2nd Indian in space
 - Sławosz Uznanski-Wisniewski (Poland)
 - Tibor Kapu (Hungary)

Flight Planning

- **Launch Window:** Selected based on alignment with ISS trajectory.
- **Trajectory:** Curved path minimizes fuel use by reducing gravitational resistance.
- **Alignment:** Spacecraft orbits Earth multiple times to sync with ISS orbit.

Rocket and Launch Stages

- **Falcon 9 Structure:**
 - **Two stages:**
 - **First stage:** 9 Merlin engines, reusable, lands vertically.
 - **Second stage:** 1 Merlin engine, carries spacecraft to orbit.
- **Dragon Capsule:** Detaches from second stage after orbital insertion.

Dragon's Journey to the ISS

- **ISS Altitude:** 400 km above Earth, moving at ~28,000 km/h.

- **Dragon's Travel Time:** ~28 hours (vs ~8 hours for Russia's Soyuz).
- **Maneuvers:**
 - Uses **16 Draco thrusters** for orbit alignment and altitude adjustment.
 - Performs **phasing maneuvers** to match ISS orbit.

Docking Process

- **Final Maneuver:** Dragon approaches a 200-meter "keep-out sphere" near ISS.
- **Autonomous Docking:**
 - Uses **GPS, cameras, Lidar** and flight computer algorithms.
 - Manual override possible by astronauts.
- **Post-Docking:**
 - Takes 1–2 hours for checks and stabilization.
 - Then, **transfer gates** open and astronauts board the ISS.

QUESTIONS

- Which of the following findings from the Lakhapar excavation near the Gandhi river provides the strongest evidence of a culturally distinct group within the Harappan Civilization?
 - Remains of double-storey houses and uniform brick size
 - Presence of both Early and Classical Harappan pottery
 - Discovery of a dockyard structure similar to Lothal
 - Rare Pre-Prabhas Ware ceramics found at the site
- The discovery of burnt bricks in Harappan cities primarily helps archaeologists understand which of the following aspects?
 - Religious beliefs and temple construction
 - Techniques of metallurgy and tool-making
 - Urban planning and infrastructure durability
 - Language and script development
- Which of the following sites and features is correctly matched with its unique Harappan characteristic?
 - Kalibangan – Evidence of dockyard
 - Rakhigarhi – Presence of a mud brick granary
 - Lothal – Remains of a ploughed field
 - Mohenjodaro – Discovery of terracotta horse figurines
- The absence of palaces and temples in Harappan sites suggests which of the following about their society?
 - Complete absence of religion or ritual practice
 - Lack of social stratification
 - A relatively egalitarian and decentralized power structure
 - Total reliance on nomadic pastoralism

6. Kerala University's archaeological excavation unearths 5,300-year-old Early Harappan settlement in Gujarat



- Archaeologists from the University of Kerala have unearthed a 5,300-year-old settlement near Lakhpar village in western Kachchh, Gujarat. The excavation has revealed an Early Harappan habitation site, located near the now-quiet Gandi river, once a perennial water source, spanning nearly three hectares on either side of the Gaduli-Lakhpar road. The site was first identified in 2022 by a team led by Abhayan G.S. and Rajesh S.V. from the Department of Archaeology, Kerala University.
- The collaborative project, involving both international and national institutions, builds upon the team's earlier work at the nearby Early Harappan necropolis of Juna Khatiya, just 1.5 km away, where they had documented 197 burials over three field seasons since 2019. The Lakhpar discoveries now provide critical habitation context to those burials, suggesting a dynamic, interconnected cultural landscape in the arid Kachchh desert.

- The excavation uncovered structural remnants, walls made of local sandstone and shale, indicating well-planned construction activities. Particularly striking is the presence of pottery from both Early and Classical Harappan phases, dating back to around 3300 BC. Among these finds is the extremely rare Pre-Prabhas Ware, previously known from only three sites across Gujarat. The presence of this distinct ceramic tradition at Lakhapar points to a culturally unique group within the larger Harappan civilization.

Burial site

- Even more intriguing is the discovery of a human burial in the vicinity of the settlement. The skeleton, though poorly preserved, was interred directly in a pit with no visible architecture or markers and accompanied by Pre-Prabhas Ware pottery. This is the first known burial to include this rare ware, hinting at a previously undocumented ritual practice or subgroup within the Early Harappan population, the researchers point out.
- “Beyond architecture and pottery, the excavation revealed a rich array of artefacts: semiprecious stone beads made of carnelian, agate, amazonite, and steatite; shell ornaments, copper and terracotta objects; and lithic tools. Of particular note are Rohri chert blades, which indicate connections with the Sindh region,” Dr. Abhayan stated.
- Animal remains, including cattle, sheep, goats, fish bones and edible shell fragments, suggest that inhabitants relied on both animal husbandry and aquatic resources. Samples have also been collected for archaeobotanical analysis to understand plant use and ancient diet.
- According to Dr. Rajesh, what sets Lakhapar apart is that while Gujarat has yielded several Early Harappan burial sites, such as Dhaneti, evidence of associated settlements has been elusive until now. Lakhapar bridges that critical gap, offering a rare glimpse into both the living and the dead of the same cultural group.

100 years of Discovery of Harappan Civilisation

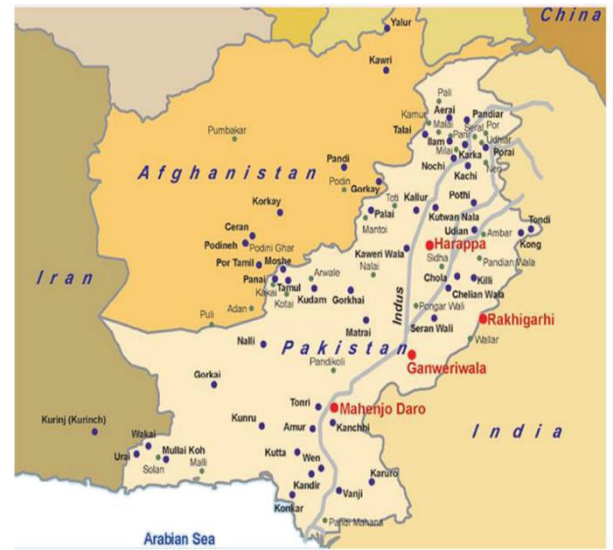
- It has been 100 years since John Marshall, then director general of the Archaeological Society of India, announced the discovery of “Harappa civilization” on September 20, 1924.

About Harappa Civilization

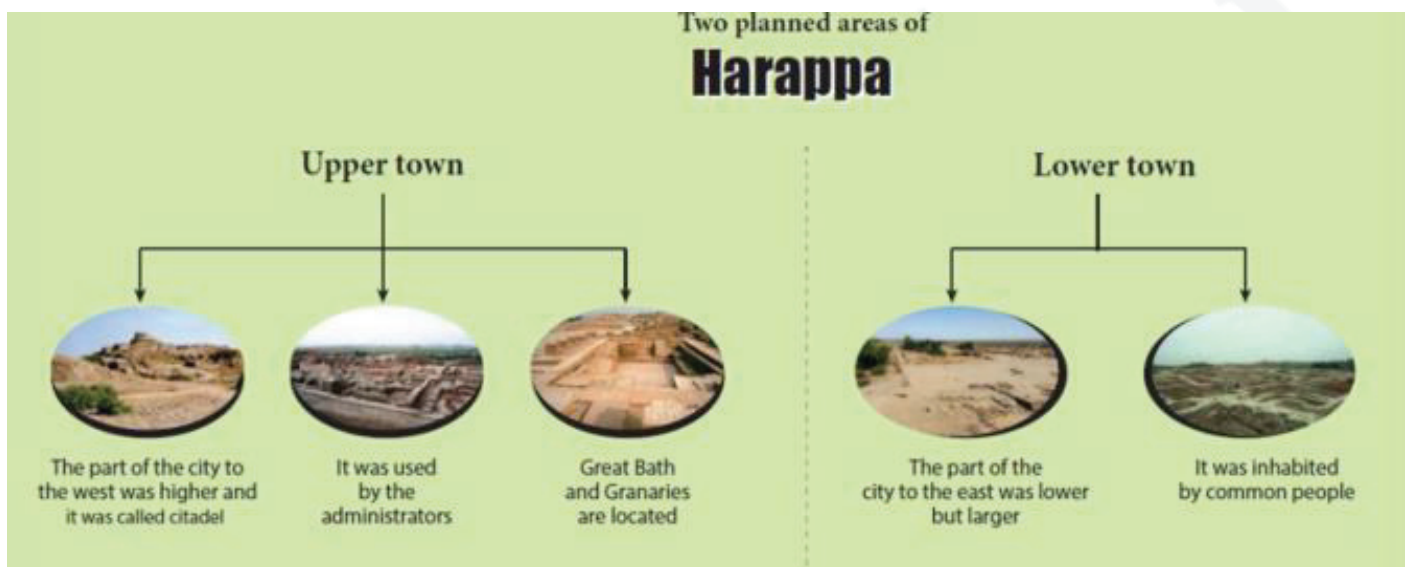
- Harappa civilization also known as ‘Indus Valley Civilisation’. It was discovered first at Harappa in modern day Punjab province of Pakistan in 1921 by Daya Ram Sahni.
- It is identified as a Bronze-age civilization because many objects have been found that are made up of copper-based alloys.
- **Location:** North-western regions of Indian subcontinent. It spans across 2,000 sites in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Most of the sites are found located between Indus and Saraswati River basins.
- **Extent of Civilization:** Daimabad in Maharashtra (Southernmost), Alamgirpur in UP (Easternmost), Sutgahkendor in Pakistan (Westernmost), and Manda in Jammu (Northernmost).
- **Time-Period:** It flourished from 6000 BCE to 1300 BCE. The archaeological findings reveal the gradual development of the Harappan culture.
- Early Harappan (6000 BCE-2600 BCE) is a formative phase of the civilisation.
- Mature Harappan (2600 BCE-1900 BCE), the urban phase of the civilization, represents its most prosperous period.
- This decadent phase (1900 BCE-1300 BCE) is termed as Late Harappan

Sites of Indus valley Civilization

- Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan)
 - Mohenjo-Daro (Sindh, Pakistan)
 - Dholavira (Gujarat, India)
 - Lothal (Gujarat, India)
 - Surkotada (Gujarat, India)
 - Kalibangan (Rajasthan, India)
 - Banawali (Rajasthan, India)
 - Rakhigarhi (Haryana, India)
- Unique Features of Harappan Civilisation Town planning is a unique feature of the Indus Civilisation. The Harappan city had two planned areas

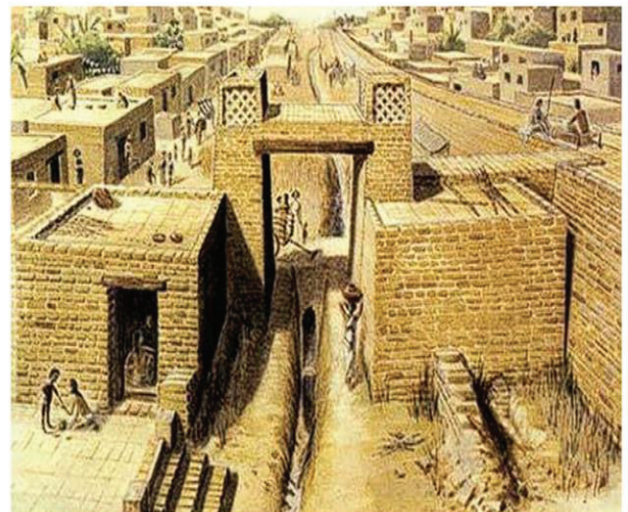


Two planned areas of Harappa



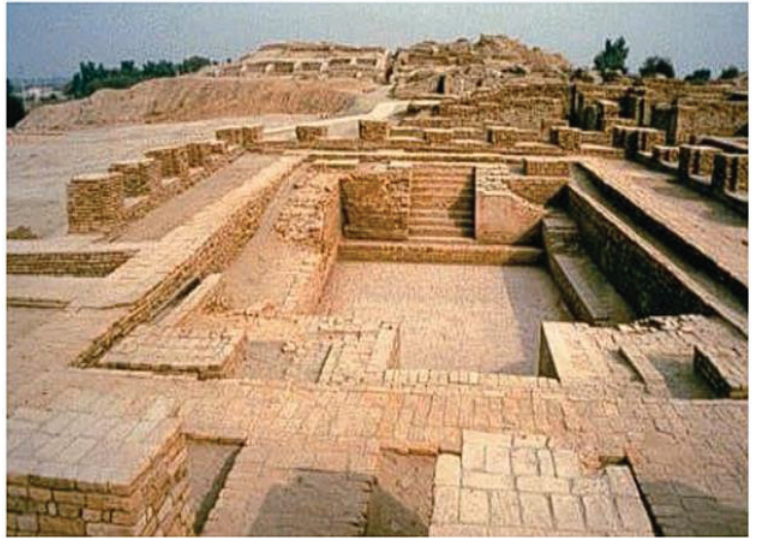
Streets and Houses

- The streets are observed to have a grid pattern. They were straight running from north to south and east to west and intersected each other at right angles.
- The roads were wide with rounded corners.
- Houses were built on both sides of the street. The houses were either one or two storeys.
- Most of the houses had many rooms, a courtyard and a well. Each house had toilets and bathrooms.
- The houses were built using baked bricks and mortar. Sun-dried bricks were also used. Most of the bricks were of uniform size.
- Roofs were flat.
- There is no conclusive evidence of the presence of palaces or places of worship.
- Burnt Bricks are strong, hard, durable, resistant to fire and will not dissolve in water or rain.



The Great Bath

- The great bath was a large, rectangular tank in a courtyard. It may be the earliest example of a water-proof structure.
- The bath was lined with bricks, coated with plaster and made water-tight using layers of natural bitumen.
- There were steps on the north and south leading into the tank.
- There were rooms on three sides.
- Water was drawn from the well located in the courtyard and drained out after use.



Drainage System

- Many of these cities had covered drains. The drains were covered with slabs or bricks.
- Each drain had a gentle slope so that water could flow.
- Holes were provided at regular intervals to clear the drains.

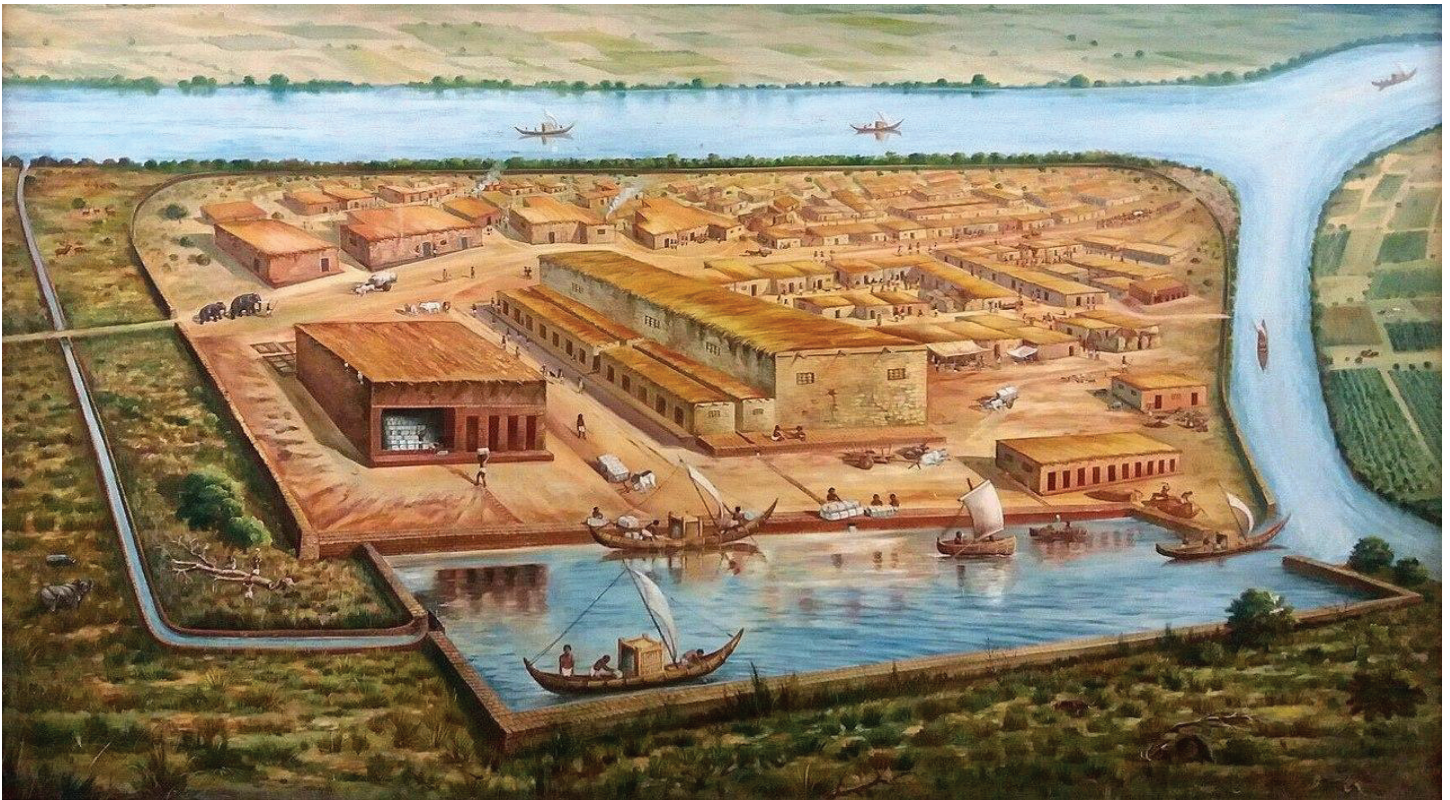


The Great Granary

- The granary was a massive building with a solid brick foundation. Granaries were used to store food grain. The remains of wheat, barley, millets, sesame and pulses have been found there
- A granary with walls made of mud bricks, which are still in a good condition, has been discovered in Rakhigarhi, a village in Haryana, belonging to Mature Harappan Phase.



Dockyard



- Recently, researchers from IIT Gandhinagar uncovered fresh evidence that supports the existence of a dock in Lothal, one of the most important Harappan sites in India. Since Lothal was first discovered in 1954, archaeologists have debated whether the roughly 215-m long and 37-m wide structure, excavated at the township's eastern edge, was a dockyard. ASI has always supported the dockyard thesis, but some scholars have argued that its size and inlet suggest more mundane usage. Here is the story of Lothal, and its "dock".
- National identity is forged at the altar of history, a shared past acting as the glue that makes a "people". This is why the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation in 1924, which pushed back the history of India by more than 1,000 years, was a seminal moment for the nation. The sophistication of sites like Mohenjodaro and Harappa was a matter of pride for Indians, long seen as backward by colonial masters.
- Lothal, among southernmost Harappan sites, lies 80 km southwest of Ahmedabad, at the head of the Gulf of Khambhat. In Gujarati, "Lothal" loosely translates to the "place of the dead" — a name given by villagers who knew of the existence of an ancient settlement (and remains of the long dead) much before the site's official discovery. The Lothal excavations were led by S R Rao, among the finest Indian archaeologists of his generation who discovered over 30 Harappan sites. It is he who identified the excavated Lothal structure as a dockyard.

Discovered Sites

Place	Year	Inventor	River
Harappa	1921	DayaRam Sahni	Ravi
Mohenjodaro	1922	R.D Banerjee	Sindh
Chanhudaro	1931	MG Majumdar	Sindh
Lothal	1945	S R Rao	Pogavo
Kalibangan	1961	Lal	Ghaggar
Dholavira	1991	Joshi	Saraswati

Economic Activities

Introduction :

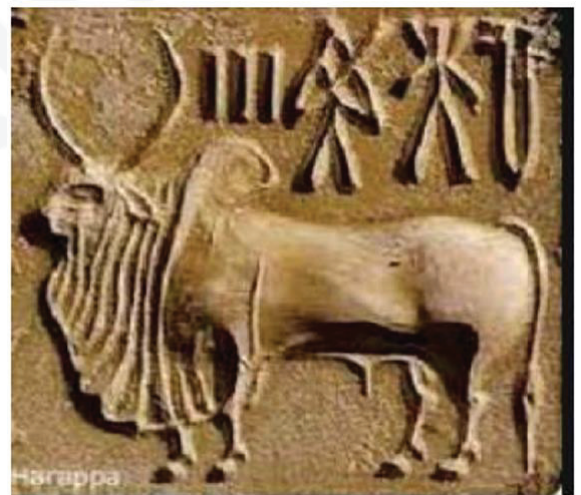
- There was a great progress in all spheres of economic activity such as agriculture, industry and crafts and trade
- Trade was of the barter type.
- The seals and the terracotta models of the Indus valley reveal the use of bullock carts and oxen for land transport and boats and ships for river and sea transport.
- Bronze and copper vessels are the outstanding examples of the Harappan metal craft. Gold and silver ornaments are found in many places.
- Pottery remains plain and in some places red and black painted pottery is found.

Agriculture

- Agriculture was an important source of subsistence for the Harappans.
- The Harappans cultivated diverse crops such as wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea, sesame and various millets.
- Agricultural surplus was an important stimulus for a number of developments.
- They adopted a double cropping system.
- The Harappans used ploughs.
- They perhaps ploughed the land and then sowed the seeds.
- Ploughed fields have been found at Kalibangan.
- They used both canal and well irrigation.

Animal Domestication

- Pastoralism was also practised by the Harappans.
- They domesticated sheep, goat and fowl. They had knowledge of various other animals including buffalo, pig and elephant.
- But horse was not known to them.
- The Harappan cattle are called Zebu.
- It is a large breed, often represented in their seals.
- They also ate fish and birds.
- Evidence of boar, deer and gharial has been found at the Harappan sites.



Craft production

- Craft production was an important part of the Harappan economy.
- Bead and ornament making, shell bangle making and metal working were the major crafts.
- They made beads and ornaments out of carnelian, jasper, crystal, and steatite, metals like copper, bronze and gold and shell, faience and terracotta or burnt clay.
- The beads were made in innumerable designs and decorations.

Material	Site or Source
Shell	Nageshwar and Balakot
Lapis lazuli	Shortughai
Carnelian	Lothal
Steatite	South Rajasthan
Copper	Rajasthan and Oman

- They were exported to Mesopotamia and the evidence for such exported artefacts have been found from the excavations in Mesopotamian sites.
- Some artefacts and their production site was tabled above.

Arts:

- The Harappan sculpture revealed a high degree of workmanship.
- Figures of men and women, animals and birds made of terracotta and the carvings on the seals show the degree of proficiency attained by the sculptor.
- The figure of a dancing girl from Mohenjo-Daro made of bronze is remarkable for its workmanship.
- Its right hand rests on the hip, while the left arm, covered with bangles, hangs loosely in a relaxed posture.
- Two stone statues from Harappa, one representing the back view of a man and the other of a dancer are also specimens of their sculpture.
- The pottery from Harappa is another specimen of the fine arts of the Indus people.
- The pots and jars were painted with various designs and colours.
- Painted pottery is of better quality.
- The pictorial motifs consisted of geometrical patterns like horizontal lines, circles, leaves, plants and trees.
- On some pottery pieces we find figures of fish or peacock.\



Pottery

- The Harappans used diverse varieties of pottery for daily use.
- They use well-fired pottery. Their potteries have a deep red slip and black paintings.
- The pottery are shaped like dish-on-stands, storage jars, perforated jars, goblets, S-shaped jars, plates, dishes, bowls and pots.
- The painted motifs, generally noticed on the pottery, are pipal leaves, fish-scale design, intersecting circles, zigzag lines, horizontal bands and geometrical motifs with floral and faunal patterns.
- The Harappan pottery is well-baked and fine in decorations.



Social and political life

Trade:

- Harappans were great traders.
- They used carts with spokeless solid wheels.

- Standardised weights and measures were used by them. They used sticks with marks to measure length.
- Lothal is situated on the banks of a tributary of Sabarmati river in Gujarat. There is evidence for extensive maritime trade with Mesopotamia.
- Indus Seals have been found as far as Mesopotamia (Sumer) which are modern-day Iraq, Kuwait and parts of Syria.

Social Life

- The dress of both men and women consisted of two pieces of cloth, one upper garment and the other lower garment.
- Beads were worn by men and women
- Jewellery such as bangles, bracelets, fillets, girdles, anklets, ear[1]rings and finger rings were worn by women.
- These ornaments were made of gold, silver, copper, bronze and semi precious stones.
- Various household articles made of pottery, stone, shells, ivory and metal have been found at Mohenjo-Daro.
- Spindles, needles, combs, fishhooks, knives are made of copper.
- Fishing was a regular occupation while hunting and bull fighting were other pastimes.
- There were numerous specimens of weapons of war such as axes, spearheads, daggers, bows, arrows made of copper and bronze.

Seals

- The seals from various media such as steatite, copper, terracotta and ivory are frequently found in the Harappan sites.
- Square type seals are engraved with carved animals and inscriptions.
- Hundreds of rectangular seals were discovered here. It engraved with inscriptions only.
- Pictographic writings were written on them.

Script

- The Harappan script has still to be fully deciphered.
- The number of signs is between 400 and 600 of which 40 or 60 are basic and the rest are their variants.
- The script was mostly written from right to left.
- In a few long seals the boustrophedon method – writing in the reverse direction in alternative lines – was adopted.
- Parpola and his Scandinavian colleagues came to the conclusion that the language of the Harappans was Dravidian.
- The mystery of the Harappan script still exists and there is no doubt that the decipherment of Harappan script will throw much light on this culture.

Religion & Decline

Faith

- The Indus people worshipped nature.
- They worshipped pipal trees.
- Some of the terracotta figures resemble the mother Goddess (which symbolized fertility).

- Fire altars have been identified at Kalibangan.
- The Indus people buried the dead.
- Burials were done elaborately and evidence for cremation has also been found.

Pasupathi Shiva

- The chief male deity was Pasupati, (proto-Siva) represented in seals as sitting in a yogic posture.
- He has three faces and two horns.
- He is surrounded by four animals (elephant, tiger, rhino, and buffalo- each facing a different direction).
- Two deer appear on his feet.
- In latter times, Linga worship was prevalent.

Burial Methods

- The cemeteries discovered around the cities like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal and Rupar throw light on the burial practices of the Harappans.
- Complete burial and post-cremation burial were popular at Mohenjodaro.
- They buried the dead with Head facing north direction.
- At Lothal the burial pit was lined with burnt bricks indicating the use of coffins.
- However, there is no clear evidence for the practice of Sati.

Decline of the Harappan Culture

- There is no unanimous view pertaining to the cause for the decline of the Harappan culture.
- By 1900 BCE, the Harappan culture had started declining. It is assumed that the civilisation met with repeated floods, ecological changes, invasions (Aryans), natural calamity, climatic changes, deforestation and an epidemic
- In course of time, the people shifted to the southern and eastern directions from the Indus region. The destruction of forts is mentioned in the Rig Veda.

QUESTIONS

- Two more wetlands from India have been added to the list of Ramsar sites, taking the number of such sites in the country to 91. The latest to join the list of Ramsar sites in India are Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur, both in Rajasthan. Which of the following pairs of newly designated Ramsar Sites and their respective states is correctly matched?
 - Udhwa Lake – Tamil Nadu
 - Khecheopalri – Sikkim
 - Menar – Jharkhand
 - Sakkarakottai – Rajasthan
- Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the Ramsar Convention and India's participation?
 - India was the first Asian country to sign the Ramsar Convention in 1971
 - The first two Ramsar sites in India were Chilika Lake and Keoladeo National Park
 - India currently has 91 designated Ramsar Sites
 - The Ramsar Convention promotes the wise use of wetlands through international cooperation

7. Two More Wetlands from India Added To Ramsar List



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WETLANDS: DEFINITION & CHARACTERISTICS

Definition

- Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods. They are transitional zones between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Types of Wetlands

- Inland Wetlands:
 - Marshes, lakes, ponds, rivers, floodplains, swamps.
 - Coastal Wetlands:
 - Mangroves, estuaries, lagoons, salt marshes, coral reefs.

Key Features

- **Hydrology:** Water saturation or flooding.
- **Soil:** Hydric soils (poor in oxygen).
- **Vegetation:** Hydrophytic (water-loving) plants.

RAMSAR CONVENTION: BACKGROUND

What is it?

- The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971, aimed at the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Objectives

- Halt worldwide loss of wetlands.
- Conserve and manage wetlands sustainably.
- Promote international cooperation on transboundary wetlands.
- Criteria for Ramsar Site Designation

A site must meet at least one of nine criteria based on:

- Uniqueness
- Biodiversity support
- Rare species
- Fish spawning grounds
- Migratory species habitat

RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA

India & the Ramsar Convention

- World Wetlands Day is observed on 2nd 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. The first Ramsar sites designated in India were Chilika Lake in Odisha and Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan in 1981. These sites were recognized as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. As of June 2025, India has 91 Ramsar Sites.

IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS & RAMSAR SITES

- Ecological Importance
- Biodiversity Hotspots: Habitats for amphibians, birds, fish, and insects.
- Water Purification: Filter pollutants and sediments.
- Flood Control: Act as sponges by absorbing excess rainwater.
- Groundwater Recharge: Help replenish underground aquifers.
- Climate Regulation
- Store large amounts of carbon (especially peatlands).
- Mitigate climate change impacts.
- Livelihoods & Economy
- Support fisheries, agriculture, tourism.
- Source of food, fuel, and fiber for local communities.
- Cultural and Spiritual Significance
- Sacred landscapes for local communities.
- Ecotourism and educational opportunities.

THREATS TO WETLANDS

- Encroachment and land reclamation.
- Industrial pollution and agricultural runoff.
- Invasive species.
- Climate change and altered hydrology.
- Urban development and infrastructure.

GOVERNMENT & CONSERVATION INITIATIVES IN INDIA

- National Wetland Conservation Programme (NWCP)
- Initiated in 1985 for wetland conservation.
- Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017
- Legal framework for protecting notified wetlands.
- Prohibits conversion, dumping, or any encroachment.
- Amrit Dharohar Scheme (2023)
- Announced in Union Budget 2023–24 to develop Ramsar sites as eco-tourism hubs and enhance biodiversity.
- As of June 2025, India boasts 91 Ramsar Sites—wetlands recognized for their international ecological importance under the Ramsar Convention. These sites span diverse ecosystems such as lakes, marshes, mangroves, and estuaries across the country.
- Tamil Nadu leads with 20 Ramsar Sites, including the Vembannur Wetland Complex and Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary.
- Uttar Pradesh has 10 Ramsar Sites, such as Upper Ganga River and Sur Sarovar.
- Sikkim and Jharkhand received their first Ramsar Sites in early 2025: Khecheopalri Wetland and Udhwa Lake, respectively.
- Khichan, also known as Kheechan, is a village in Rajasthan's Phalodi tehsil, Jodhpur district, renowned for its unique ecological significance and cultural heritage. Situated approximately 150 km from Jodhpur, it has become a prominent destination for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts.

Ecological Significance

- Khichan is globally recognized for hosting thousands of migratory Demoiselle Cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*) during their annual winter migration. This tradition began in the 1970s when a local couple started feeding pigeons, inadvertently attracting the cranes. Over time, the community's efforts have led to the establishment of feeding stations known as chugga ghar, where the cranes are fed daily from August to March, with peak numbers observed between November and February.
- The village's commitment to crane conservation has been formalized through the creation of the Kurja Conservation Reserve in 2023, India's first dedicated to the Demoiselle Crane.

Ramsar Site Designation

- On June 5, 2025, Khichan was officially designated as a Ramsar Site, elevating its status among the world's wetlands of international importance. This recognition underscores the village's critical role in supporting biodiversity and its alignment with the objectives of the Ramsar Convention.
- The Menar Wetland Complex, located near the village of Menar in Udaipur district, Rajasthan, is a significant ecological site renowned for its rich biodiversity and community-driven conservation efforts. On June 4, 2025, it was designated as a Ramsar Site, bringing India's total number of such internationally recognized wetlands to 91—the highest in Asia.

QUESTIONS

22. According to the IMF's latest data, which of the following statements is most accurate regarding India's current and projected economic standing?
- A. India is currently the third-largest economy, ahead of Germany.
 - B. India's GDP growth rate is the slowest among major global economies.
 - C. India is projected to overtake Germany to become the third-largest economy by 2028.
 - D. India's GDP is currently around \$3 trillion and will double by 2025.
23. Which of the following features most accurately distinguishes NITI Aayog from the erstwhile Planning Commission?
- A. NITI Aayog controls financial allocations to states.
 - B. NITI Aayog uses a bottom-up approach and promotes cooperative federalism.
 - C. NITI Aayog prepares Five-Year Plans.
 - D. NITI Aayog functions under the Ministry of Finance.
24. Which of the following is NOT a valid reason for skipping 2017–18 as the base year for GDP revision?
- A. Disruptions caused by the rollout of GST in 2017
 - B. COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on data collection
 - C. Outdated international GDP calculation standards
 - D. Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) data showing rising poverty
25. What is the main purpose of revising the base year of GDP at periodic intervals?
- A. To increase the GDP artificially for political advantage
 - B. To eliminate the effect of black money from official GDP
 - C. To ensure GDP reflects structural and sectoral changes in the economy
 - D. To standardize GDP figures globally with the IMF

8. Government to revise GDP base year and methodology



- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is in the process of revising the “base year” for the calculation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The GDP is the central metric to assess the annual economic growth or the overall size of an economy and the so-called “base year” refers to the year that works as a starting point for calculations. At present, the base year is 2011-12. In other words, the GDP in 2011-12 is used as a “base” over which the GDP growth of any following year is calculated. The new base year for GDP calculations will be 2022-23 and the revised series of data will be released on February 27, 2026.
- Some other key macroeconomic metrics will also undergo changes in base years. The base year for Index of Industrial Production (IIP) will also be revised to 2022-23 while the base year for Consumer Price Index, which is used to assess the rate of inflation faced by consumers, will be revised to 2023-24.

Is this the first time such a revision is happening?

- No. The revision slated for 2026 will be the eighth such. The first set of estimates of national income (GDP) for India was compiled by the “National Income Committee”, under the chairmanship of PC Mahalanobis in 1949. The first and final reports of national income by this committee were brought out in 1951 and 1954 respectively.
- Since then, as more and better quality data became available, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) undertook comprehensive reviews of the methodology used for calculating GDP. Apart from shifting base years of national accounts series, the CSO also tried making improvements in the compilation of national accounts series, in terms of coverage of activities, incorporation of latest datasets and latest international guidelines.

What is GDP and Base Year?

- **GDP (Gross Domestic Product):** Measures the *monetary value of final goods and services* produced in a country in a specific period.
- **Base Year:** The reference year for GDP calculations; it is used to measure *real* economic growth by adjusting for inflation.
- **Current Base Year:** 2011–12.
- **New Base Year:** Will be revised to **2022–23**.
- **Release Date of New Series:** **February 27, 2026**.

The base year of national accounts have been revised on seven different occasions:

This will be the **8th revision** of the base year since independence:

Revision	From → To	Year Announced
1 st	1948–49 → 1960–61	August 1967
2 nd	1960–61 → 1970–71	January 1978
3 rd	1970–71 → 1980–81	February 1988
4 th	1980–81 → 1993–94	February 1999
5 th	1993–94 → 1999–2000	January 2006
6 th	1999–2000 → 2004–05	January 2010
7 th	2004–05 → 2011–12	January 30, 2015
8 th	2011–12 → 2022–23	To be released February 2026

Why is the Base Year Revisited?

- **Reflect structural changes** in the economy (e.g., rise of services sector).
- **Include new industries** and remove outdated ones.
- **Improve data accuracy** using better methods and surveys.

- **More accurate inflation-adjusted (“real”) GDP calculations.**

Why 2017–18 Was Skipped as New Base Year

- Data from **Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES)** and **PLFS** were unreliable or politically sensitive.
- **CES (2017–18)** showed rising poverty — was *not accepted*.
- **PLFS (2017–18)** showed 45-year high in unemployment — later accepted after 2019 elections.
- Disruptions due to **demonetisation (2016)** and **GST (2017)** made 2017–18 an *abnormal year*.
- **COVID-19 (2020 onwards)** further delayed normal data conditions.

Upcoming Changes in Other Macroeconomic Indicators

- **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** base year → **2022–23**
- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** base year → **2023–24**

Why This Revision Matters Globally

- India is on track to become the **world’s 3rd-largest economy**.
- Past controversies (especially 2015 revision) raised concerns about **overestimated GDP**.
- Accurate new series is crucial for:
 - **Investor confidence**
 - **Credibility of India’s economic data**
 - **Effective policymaking**

Methodological Notes

- GDP includes only **final goods/services** — avoids double counting intermediate products.
- Earlier base years (pre-1999) coincided with **Census years (ending in 1)** for workforce estimates.
- Post-1999, **NSSO surveys** (every 5 years) used instead.
- **National Statistical Commission** recommends rebasing every **5 years**.

QUESTIONS

26. Which of the following statements about the Governing Council of NITI Aayog is incorrect?
 - A. It includes Chief Ministers of all States and Union Territories with legislatures.
 - B. It is chaired by the Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog.
 - C. It includes Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories without legislatures.
 - D. It discusses national development agendas and state-specific issues.
27. Which of the following is not an Ex-Officio Member of NITI Aayog as per the latest structure?
 - A. Shri Raj Nath Singh
 - B. Shri Amit Shah
 - C. Dr. Ramesh Chand
 - D. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman

28. The upcoming 2026 GDP revision will mark the eighth revision of the base year. Which of the following base year transitions is incorrectly matched with its announcement year?
- A. 1970–71 → 1980–81 | Announced in February 1988
 - B. 1980–81 → 1993–94 | Announced in February 1999
 - C. 1993–94 → 1999–2000 | Announced in January 2006
 - D. 2004–05 → 2011–12 | Announced in February 2012
29. Who was the chairperson of the National Income Committee that compiled India's first official estimates of national income post-Independence?
- A. K.C. Neogy
 - B. V.K.R.V. Rao
 - C. P.C. Mahalanobis
 - D. Amartya Sen
30. What does the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure?
- A. Total government revenue collection and expenditure incurred during a financial year.
 - B. Total money in circulation in the economy at any given point of time.
 - C. It is a measure of income distribution and inequality within a country.
 - D. Broadly understood as the final value of the goods and services produced within the geographic boundaries of a country during a specified period of time.



ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **C** The 1975 Emergency was proclaimed on the ground of “internal disturbance”, which was a vague and controversial ground. This ground was later replaced by “armed rebellion” through the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978. Article 19 (freedom of speech, assembly, etc.) was fully suspended under Article 358, and Article 359 allowed the President to suspend the right to move any court for enforcement of rights except under Articles 20 and 21 (right to life & protection against ex post facto laws). Hence, only Option C is fully accurate.
2. **B** The Allahabad High Court, under Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha, in a historic verdict, declared Indira Gandhi’s 1971 election to the Lok Sabha void due to electoral malpractices under the Representation of the People Act, 1951. It also disqualified her from contesting elections for six years—unprecedented for a sitting Prime Minister. This was a trigger for the 1975 Emergency, but the ruling did not involve Article 356, cabinet resignation, or PM immunity. Hence, Option B is correct.
3. **B** Article 359 allows the President to suspend the right to move court for enforcement of certain rights during an Emergency. However, after misuse during the 1975 Emergency, the 44th Constitutional Amendment ensured that Articles 20 (protection in respect of conviction for offences) and 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) cannot be suspended, even during an Emergency.
4. **C** The 44th Amendment introduced a critical safeguard: the President can only declare an Emergency based on the written advice of the Council of Ministers (not just the PM), to prevent arbitrary decisions like in 1975. It also replaced “internal disturbance” with “armed rebellion”, restored the enforceability of Articles 20 and 21, and shortened the duration for Parliament’s approval.
5. **B** *Minerva Mills v. Union of India* (1980) was a landmark judgment that reasserted the power of judicial review and limited Parliament’s power under Article 368, especially after the Emergency and constitutional excesses. It struck down parts of the 42nd Amendment, reinforcing the “basic structure doctrine” first established in *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973).
6. **C** India's score improved by +0.9 percentage points in the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, especially due to a rise in estimated earned income parity. However, despite this gain, India fell two ranks globally due to declines in other areas, notably Political Empowerment, where both women’s representation in Parliament and ministerial positions dropped.
7. **A** Although India’s absolute parity score improved slightly (to 64.1%), its ranking dropped from 129 to 131 because other countries advanced faster, particularly in political empowerment and economic participation. For example, Bangladesh jumped 75 ranks. Rankings are relative—so even a small improvement is insufficient if others improve more significantly.
8. **C** Bangladesh made notable gains in political empowerment and economic participation, rising dramatically to 24th position globally, becoming South Asia’s best performer. Iceland retained the top spot for the 16th consecutive year. India dropped in political empowerment, especially in Parliament (13.8%) and ministerial roles (5.6%), and thus did not achieve near-full parity in that domain. Pakistan was ranked last (148th) with no notable improvement.

9. **C** Article 334A was newly inserted to specify that women's reservation will come into effect only after a delimitation exercise, which in turn will occur after the first census conducted following the Act's commencement. Article 330A includes SC/ST-reserved seats in the Lok Sabha under the one-third reservation. Article 332A also mandates one-third reservation including SC/ST-reserved seats in State Assemblies. Article 239AA was amended (not inserted) to include Delhi Legislative Assembly within the ambit of this reservation.
10. **B** The Act clearly states that: First, the next census must be conducted. Second, based on the new census data, a delimitation exercise must take place. Third, only after delimitation, the reservation for women will be implemented in elections. So the correct sequence is: Census → Delimitation → Implementation.
11. **C** The Act reserves one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and Delhi Legislative Assembly (NCT). The reservation will last 15 years from the date of implementation, extendable by Parliament via legislation. It will not apply immediately; it will only take effect after delimitation following the next census, which is yet to happen. There is no retroactive application to the 2011 census.
12. **C** Shubhanshu Shukla's participation in Axiom-4 makes him the first Indian astronaut to go to the International Space Station (ISS) and the first Gaganyatri to fly under a commercial international collaboration. Option A is false: This is not an indigenous mission (it uses SpaceX tech). Option B is incorrect: He is government-sponsored under ISRO's Human Spaceflight Programme. Option D is incorrect: Shukla is not female, and the first Indian woman in space was Kalpana Chawla.
13. **C** Liquid oxygen is a highly reactive cryogenic oxidizer. A leak could reduce fuel combustion efficiency and, worse, trigger fires or explosions, especially in the presence of fuel like kerosene. Option A is incorrect: The leak reduces, not accelerates, performance. Option B is too simplistic and doesn't capture the hazard involved. Option D is unrelated to the immediate combustion danger.
14. **B** Crew Dragon C213 is making its maiden flight with Axiom-4 and is noted as the fifth and final Crew Dragon to be built by SpaceX. Option A is false: The booster, not the spacecraft, was reused. Option C is incorrect: SpaceX manufactures Crew Dragon, not jointly with NASA or Axiom. Option D is wrong: Crew Dragon is a reusable crew transport vehicle, not cargo-only.
15. **C** The planned experiments include: Cognitive effects of screen exposure, Microbial adaptation, Muscle atrophy, Crop resilience in microgravity. However, gene-editing on human embryos is not part of the mission and would raise significant ethical and regulatory concerns.
16. **D** The presence of Pre-Prabhas Ware is extremely rare and has only been identified at three other sites in Gujarat. Its discovery at Lakhapar highlights the existence of a culturally distinct group within the larger Harappan framework. Option B, while important, shows cultural continuity, not uniqueness. Option A refers to broader Harappan architecture. Option C is not applicable to Lakhapar.
17. **C** Burnt bricks were used in constructing houses, drains, baths, and granaries. Their uniformity and strength reveal sophisticated urban planning and durability in public infrastructure. A and D are unrelated to building materials. B refers to metal artifacts, not bricks.

- 18. B** Rakhigarhi, a major Harappan site in Haryana, has revealed a granary structure made of mud bricks, still in good condition. A is incorrect because Kalibangan is known for ploughed fields, not a dockyard. C is incorrect, as Lothal is famous for its dockyard, not ploughed fields. D is incorrect because horse remains or figurines are absent from Harappan contexts; horse was unknown to Harappans.
- 19. C** The absence of monumental religious or royal architecture like palaces or temples suggests no dominant central monarchy or priestly class. It implies a society that was likely urban and commercial, possibly governed by merchant elites or councils. A is incorrect; Harappans had religious symbols (e.g., seals, terracotta figurines). B is incorrect; some stratification did exist (e.g., house size differences). D contradicts the urban and agricultural economy.
- 20. B** Two more wetlands from India have been added to the list of Ramsar sites, taking the number of such sites in the country to 91. The latest to join the list of Ramsar sites in India are Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur, both in Rajasthan. Khecheopalri is located in Sikkim and is the first Ramsar site from that state. Udhwa Lake is in Jharkhand, not Tamil Nadu. Menar is in Udaipur, Rajasthan, not Jharkhand. Sakkarakottai is in Tamil Nadu, not Rajasthan.
- 21. A** A is incorrect: The Ramsar Convention was signed in 1971, but India joined later in 1982, not in 1971 and not as the first Asian country. B, C, and D are correct: Chilika and Keoladeo were the first Indian Ramsar sites in 1981. 91 sites as of June 2025. The convention advocates for "wise use" and international collaboration, especially for transboundary wetlands.
- 22. C** India is projected to overtake Germany to become the third-largest economy by 2028. India currently holds the 4th position globally, surpassing Japan, and is projected to overtake Germany by 2028. Germany's stagnant growth rate (0% in 2025) contrasts with India's projected 6%+ growth. Statement A is false—India is not yet 3rd. Statement B is false—India is the fastest-growing major economy. Statement D is outdated—India's current GDP is \$4.3 trillion.
- 23. B** NITI Aayog uses a bottom-up approach and promotes cooperative federalism. NITI Aayog was created to replace the top-down planning model of the Planning Commission. It emphasizes state participation and inclusive development. Statement A is wrong—NITI Aayog has no financial allocation power. Statement C is false—Five-Year Plans were abolished with the Planning Commission. Statement D is incorrect—NITI Aayog is an independent policy think tank, not under MoF.
- 24. C** 2017–18 was skipped because: GST and demonetisation caused major economic disruptions. CES (2017–18) data was considered politically sensitive as it indicated rising poverty. PLFS (2017–18) showed record unemployment. The COVID-19 pandemic further delayed normalization of data. Option C is incorrect because the revision was not due to outdated international standards, but rather abnormal domestic conditions and unreliable datasets.
- 25. C** Base year revisions help reflect current economic realities, including: Rise of service and digital sectors. Inclusion of new industries, Use of updated surveys and data techniques. While international comparability matters, the primary driver is to capture the changing structure of the domestic economy.
- 26. B** The Governing Council is chaired by the Prime Minister, not the Vice Chairperson. It includes: CMs of States & UTs with legislatures, LGs of UTs without legislatures. It serves as a platform for cooperative federalism and strategic planning.

27. **C** Dr. Ramesh Chand is a Full-Time Member, not an Ex-Officio Member. Ex-Officio Members are Union Ministers nominated by the PM, such as: Raj Nath Singh (Defence), Amit Shah (Home Affairs), Shivraj Singh Chauhan (Agriculture) and Nirmala Sitharaman (Finance)
28. **D** The 7th base year revision (from 2004–05 to 2011–12) was announced on January 30, 2015, not February 2012. All other options are correctly matched.
29. **C** The National Income Committee was established in 1949 under the leadership of Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis. It released the first report in 1951 and the final report in 1954. Mahalanobis was a key figure in early Indian statistical planning and also founded the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI).
30. **D** Gross Domestic Product measures the aggregate production of final goods and services taking place within the domestic economy during a year.

