Career Launcher

UPSC CSAT

MANTHAN

MAY 2025 : WEEK-1

Contents

1. Union Cabinet approves caste Census

- The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) has approved caste enumeration in the forthcoming population census.
- "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Cabinet Committee of Political Affairs has decided … that caste enumeration should be included in the forthcoming Census.

What kind of caste data is published in the Census?

- Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.
- Before that, every Census until 1931 had data on caste.
- However, in 1941, caste-based data was collected but not published.
- In the absence of such a Census, there is no proper estimate for the population of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), various groups within the OBCs, and others.
- The Mandal Commission estimated the OBC population at 52%, some other estimates have been based on National Sample Survey data, and political parties make their own estimates in states and Lok Sabha and Assembly seats during elections.
- The demand for a caste Census comes up before almost every Census, as records of debates and questions raised in Parliament show.
- It usually comes from among those belonging to OBCs and other deprived sections, while sections from the upper castes oppose the idea.

What happened to the SECC data?

- With an approved cost of Rs. 4,893.60 crore, the SECC was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas.
- The SECC data excluding caste data was finalised and published by the two ministries in 2016.
- The raw caste data was handed over to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which formed an Expert Group under former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson Arvind Pangaria for classification and categorisation of data. It is not clear whether it submitted its report; no such report has been made public.
- The report of a Parliamentary Committee on Rural Development presented to the Lok Sabha Speaker on August 31, 2016, noted about SECC: "The data has been examined and 98.87 per cent data on individuals' caste and religion is error free.
- ORGI has noted incidence of errors in respect of 1,34,77,030 individuals out of total SECC population of 118,64,03,770. States have been advised to take corrective measures."

Census in India

- The Census of India is the largest administrative exercise conducted by the Indian government to collect comprehensive demographic, social, and economic data.
- It plays a crucial role in policy-making, governance, and development planning.
- Held every ten years, the census provides a detailed snapshot of India's vast and diverse population.
- From its colonial beginnings to modern digitized efforts, the census has evolved significantly while maintaining its importance as the backbone of planning and governance.

Historical Background

Pre-Independence Era

- The origins of census-taking in India can be traced back to ancient times. References to population counts are found in Kautilya's Arthashastra (4th century BCE), where he advocated for data collection for administration and taxation.

- However, the first modern census in India was conducted in 1872 under British colonial rule.

- This attempt was not synchronous but marked a step toward systematic demographic data collection.

- The first synchronous census of the entire country was conducted in 1881 under the supervision of W.C. Plowden, the then Census Commissioner.

- From then on, censuses were held every ten years without fail, even during challenging times like wars or political upheaval. The decennial census became a fixture of India's administrative calendar.

Post-Independence Era

- After India gained independence in 1947, the census continued as a constitutional responsibility of the government.

- The first post-independence census was conducted in 1951, which was crucial for understanding the demographic impact of Partition.

- Since then, India has conducted censuses in 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

- The 2021 Census, originally scheduled for that year, was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and remains pending as of 2025.

Census Administration and Process

- The Census of India is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (ORGI) under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- It involves two main phases:

House Listing and Housing Census:

- This phase involves listing all buildings, households, and their characteristics such as type of construction, amenities available, and ownership details.

Population Enumeration:

- This is the more detailed phase where information about individuals is collected, including name, age, sex, marital status, language, religion, caste, literacy, education, occupation, migration status, and disability.

- Data is collected by a massive workforce of enumerators, mostly government school teachers, trained for the exercise.

- The entire operation is governed by the Census Act of 1948, which ensures confidentiality and legal backing for the exercise.

Data Collected in the Census

- The Census provides an extraordinary range of data, including but not limited to:
  - Population size and growth
  - Age and sex distribution

- o Literacy and education level
- o Languages spoken
- o Religious affiliation
- o Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) populations
- o Rural and urban composition
- o Household amenities and assets
- o Employment and occupation
- o Migration patterns
- o Disability status
- The Census 2011, for instance, recorded a population of over 1.21 billion, with detailed insights into literacy (74%), urbanization (31%), and gender ratios (940 females per 1000 males).

Uses and Importance of the Census

1. Policy Formulation and Planning

- The census is the foundation for government policy-making and planning. From education and healthcare to housing and employment, accurate population data helps in formulating effective schemes and allocating resources. For example, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or National Health Mission (NHM) relies heavily on census data for planning and implementation.

2. Resource Allocation

- Census data guides the allocation of funds to states and districts under various schemes. It also helps determine the share of central taxes to states based on population size, as recommended by the Finance Commission.

3. Electoral Delimitation

- The Delimitation Commission of India uses census data to redraw the boundaries of parliamentary and legislative assembly constituencies, ensuring fair representation based on population changes.

4. Infrastructure Development

- Planners use demographic data to assess the need for roads, schools, hospitals, water supply, and sanitation. For instance, identifying under-served rural areas becomes easier with accurate data on household amenities.

5. Academic and Research Purposes

- Census data is widely used by scholars, demographers, economists, sociologists, and NGOs for research and advocacy. It serves as a key input for socio-economic studies and public policy analysis.

6. Private Sector and Business Planning

- Businesses use census data for market analysis, site selection, and customer profiling. For example, a company may use urban population data to decide the best city to launch a new product.

7. Social Justice and Inclusion

- Census data on SCs, STs, and OBCs, though not comprehensively covered for OBCs, is critical for affirmative action policies, reservation implementation, and targeted welfare programs.

8. Disaster Management and Relief

- In times of natural disasters, pandemics, or emergencies, census data helps in identifying vulnerable populations and planning relief operations.

Challenges in Conducting Census

- **Sheer scale:** With over 1.4 billion people, managing the logistics of enumeration is a monumental task.
- **Migration and Mobility:** Internal migration complicates accurate counting, especially for seasonal and undocumented migrants.
- **Language and Cultural Diversity:** Enumerators face difficulties in regions with multiple languages and dialects.
- **Urban Slums and Remote Areas:** Reaching marginalized communities in urban slums or inaccessible tribal areas is challenging.
- **Privacy and Trust Issues:** Ensuring confidentiality and building trust among citizens remains a key concern, especially with increasing data sensitivity.
- **Technological Transition:** The shift from paper-based to digital enumeration raises issues of infrastructure, training, and cyber-security.

Recent Developments and the Future of the Census

- The upcoming 2021 Census, delayed by the pandemic, is expected to be India's first digital census, with mobile apps for data collection and self-enumeration features.
- It aims to improve accuracy, reduce duplication, and ensure faster data processing. Plans also include real-time dashboards and the use of GIS-based mapping.
- There is also a growing demand for a Caste-based Census, especially to update the data on Other Backward Classes (OBCs), last collected in detail during the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

1. How many times India has conducted the census since independence?

   A. 4 times 　　B. 5 times 　　C. 6 times 　　D. 7 times

2. Consider the following statements regarding the Census?

   1. The first non-synchronous, nationwide census took place in 1872 under Lord Ripon.
   2. The first synchronous census occurred in 1881, led by Census Commissioner W.C. Plowden, establishing the decennial cycle.
   3. The Constitution mandates that enumeration is carried out but the Census of India Act of 1948 does not specify its timing or periodicity.
   4. The population census is a Union subject under Article 245 and is listed as item 69 in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

   How many of the above statements are correct?

   A. Only one statement
   B. Only two statements
   C. Only three statements
   D. All statements

3. Which of the following statements is NOT true regarding caste-based enumeration in India?

   A. The last caste-based enumeration was carried out in 1931 under British rule.

   B. The caste details gathered in 1941 were published and used in official records.

   C. After independence, only Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) have been counted in the decennial Census.

   D. In 1961, the Union Government authorized states to conduct their own surveys to identify OBCs (Other Backward Classes).

2. Induction of 26 new Rafale M aircraft matters for the Indian Navy

- India and France signed a $7.4 billion (approximately Rs. 63,000 crore) government-to-government contract for 26 Rafale Marine (Rafale M) fighter aircraft for the Indian Navy.
- Thirty-six Rafale aircraft were earlier inducted into the Indian Air Force from 2021 onward.

First, what is meant by naval aviation?

- Naval aviation is the use of military air power by navies, involving aircraft that operate from warships — such as aircraft carriers and other aircraft — or helicopter-carrying surface combatants, or land bases to support naval operations.
- It includes specialised naval aircraft designed to meet the unique demands of carrier operations and small decks, such as short takeoffs and arrested landings, and roles such as air-to-air combat, surface and submarine attack, maritime reconnaissance, search and rescue, and logistical support.
- Naval aviation is crucial for maintaining control of the seas, supporting naval and ground forces, and projecting military power along distant shores.
- It includes fixed-wing carrier borne squadrons, land-based Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Helicopters and Remotely Piloted Aircraft operated from warships and ashore.

And what exactly is an aircraft carrier?

- An aircraft carrier is a warship that serves as a seagoing airbase, equipped with a full-length flight deck and hangar facilities for supporting, arming, deploying, and recovering shipborne aircraft.
- It allows a naval force to project seaborne air power far from its homeland without having to rely on airfields ashore.
- Aircraft carriers are also adaptable and survivable airfields that are ready to control the seas, conduct strikes, and manoeuvre across the electromagnetic spectrum and cyberspace.
- About 50 carriers, operated by the navies of several countries, are currently active around the world.
- The United States Navy leads with 11 large nuclear powered carriers followed by Brazil, China, France, India, Italy, Russia, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

What is the history of carrier aviation in India?

- While Indian naval aviation will celebrate its 72nd anniversary on May 11, 2025, India's carrier aviation began with the commissioning of the INS Vikrant in 1961.

- Since the 1960s, India has operated four carriers — the INS Vikrant (1961-1997), INS Viraat (1987-2017), INS Vikramaditya (since 2013), and the indigenously built INS Vikrant, which was commissioned in 2022.
- Through this unbroken period of 64 years, India has operated all major types of aircraft launch and recovery systems and continues to expand its carrier fleet, with future plans for additional indigenous construction.

How will the Rafale Ms Help the Navy?

- Over the years, India has operated a wide variety of carrier-based fighters — from Sea Hawks, Alizes, Sea Harriers and, at present, the very capable fourth generation MiG29Ks.
- The country is now developing the fifth generation Twin Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF) that is likely to be operationalised in the middle of the next decade.
- The 26 Rafale M jets, a four-and-a-half-generation battle-proven combat aircraft, will augment the existing MiG29K fleet.
- A great advantage that accrues with the induction of the 26 Rafale Ms for the Indian Navy is the commonality with the IAF Rafales.
- This provides the desirable scope for interoperability and joint training, as well as for maintenance and safe practices of these assets and their aircrew between the two services.
- The induction of this very capable aircraft in the coming years is a shot in the arm for the Indian armed forces, and shall ensure continued and enhanced combat capabilities across the full spectrum of India's military might.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

4. The Governments of India and France have signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for the procurement of 26 Rafale Aircraft (22 Single-Seater and four Twin-Seater) for the Indian Navy. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the Rafale-Marine fighter jets?

   1. Unlike regular fighter jets that take off from land, this aircraft can launch from and land on moving ships, even in tough sea conditions.
   2. It is built by Dassault Aviation of France and is already getting used by the French Navy.
   3. Rafale is a 5 generation, twin-engine, delta-wing, multirole fighter aircraft.

   Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
   A. 2 only
   B. 1 and 2 only
   C. 1 and 3 only
   D. 1, 2 and 3

5. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the hypersonic missiles?

   1. The term hypersonic describes any speed faster than five times that of sound, which is roughly 760 miles (1,220 km) per hour at sea level.
   2. On the other hand, a supersonic missile travels at the speed between Mach 1 and Mach 5.
   3. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight-trial of India's first long-range hypersonic missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 2 only   C. 1 and 3 only

B. 1 and 2 only   D. 1, 2 and 3

6. Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) successfully conducted a 120-seconds ground test of an active-cooled Scramjet combustor for the first time in India. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the Scramjet Engine?

   1. It is an improvement over the ramjet engine as it efficiently operates at hypersonic speeds and allows supersonic combustion.

   2. It is a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the vehicle's forward motion to compress incoming air for combustion without a rotating compressor.

   Select the correct answer using the code given below:

   A. 1 only

   B. 2 only

   C. Both 1 and 2

   D. Neither 1 nor 2

7. Consider the following statements:

   1. Ballistic missiles are jet-propelled at subsonic speeds throughout their fights, while cruise missiles are rocket-powered only in the initial phase of fight.

   2. Agni-V is a medium-range supersonic cruise missile, while BrahMos is a solid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

   A. 1 only

   B. 2 only

   C. Both 1 and 2

   D. Neither 1 nor 2

8. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the BrahMos missile?

   1. It is currently the fastest cruise missile in India's arsenal as of the year 2025.

   2. It operates on 'Fire and Forget Principle'.

   3. It was developed as a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyenia.

   4. The supersonic missile can cruise at Mach 3 (more in the case of supersonic speeds) and has a range of up to 290 kilometres (up to 500 or 800 kilometres in its advanced variants).

   How many of the above statements are true?

   A. Only one statement

   B. Only two statements

   C. Only three statements

   D. All statements

3. Justice B R Gavai Appointed As Next Chief Justice Of India

- Supreme Court Judge, Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai, will be the next Chief Justice of India.
- President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Justice Gavai as the next Chief Justice of India, and his appointment will be effective from 14th of May.
- Justice Gavai will be the 52nd Chief Justice.
- He will succeed Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, whose tenure will end on the 13th of next month.

Complete Process of Selection of the Chief Justice of India

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) holds the highest judicial position in the country and serves as the head of the judiciary and the Supreme Court of India.
- The selection of the CJI is a process that blends constitutional mandates, longstanding conventions, and evolving judicial practices.
- Though the Indian Constitution does not explicitly lay down the procedure for the appointment of the CJI, the process has become well-established through conventions and precedents over time.
- This essay explores the historical background, constitutional basis, conventions followed, and the reforms and criticisms associated with the appointment process of the CJI.

Constitutional Provisions

- The Constitution of India provides for the appointment of judges but does not prescribe a specific procedure for selecting the Chief Justice of India.
- **Article 124(1):** Establishes the Supreme Court and mentions that it shall consist of a Chief Justice of India and other judges.
- **Article 124(2):** States that every judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President of India after consultation with such judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts as deemed necessary.
- However, the Constitution is silent on the specific criteria or process for selecting the Chief Justice of India.
- This silence has been filled by conventions and judicial pronouncements over the years.

Convention of Seniority

- Since the 1950s, the convention of appointing the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court as the Chief Justice of India has been generally followed. Seniority is typically determined based on the date of appointment to the Supreme Court (not age or total judicial service).

The convention was violated only twice in Indian history:

- In 1973, Justice A.N. Ray was appointed CJI superseding three senior judges (Justices Shelat, Hegde, and Grover) after the Kesavananda Bharati case judgment.
- In 1977, Justice M.H. Beg was appointed CJI superseding Justice H.R. Khanna, who had given a dissenting judgment during the Emergency in the ADM Jabalpur case.
- These supersessions were widely criticized and seen as politically motivated, leading to a reaffirmation of the seniority convention in subsequent years.

Role of the President of India

- The President formally appoints the CJI under Article 124(2). However, the President acts on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers, and in practice, the outgoing Chief Justice recommends the name of their successor based on seniority.
- Thus, while the President's role is constitutional and formal, the actual decision is a result of internal consultations within the judiciary.

Procedure Followed in Practice

- **Retirement of Incumbent CJI:** The tenure of a CJI ends at the age of 65, as per Article 124(2). The retirement date is publicly known in advance.
- **Recommendation by Outgoing CJI:** About a month before the retirement, the incumbent CJI recommends the name of the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court for appointment as the next CJI. This is forwarded in writing to the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **Law Ministry's Role:** The Ministry processes the recommendation and seeks approval from the Prime Minister, who in turn advises the President of India.
- **Presidential Appointment:** The President of India issues the warrant of appointment, formally appointing the next Chief Justice.
- **Oath of Office:** The appointed CJI is sworn in by the President of India in a formal ceremony.

Tenure of the Chief Justice

- The tenure of the CJI depends on the age of the judge. Since Supreme Court judges retire at 65, the length of tenure varies.
- Some CJIs serve for just a few months, while others may serve for over a year. This raises issues of continuity and administrative efficiency.

The Collegium System and the CJI

- The Chief Justice of India also serves as the head of the Collegium, a five-member body of senior Supreme Court judges responsible for recommending appointments and transfers of judges in the higher judiciary.
- The CJI's role in the Collegium makes their selection especially critical.

Criticism and Calls for Reform

1. Lack of Transparency

- There is no formal or transparent criterion for determining "seniority" or evaluating the judge's administrative capabilities, jurisprudential vision, or integrity.

2. Short Tenures

- Many CJIs serve for very short durations due to the age-based retirement system, leading to frequent leadership changes and lack of long-term reforms.

3. No Public Participation

- The process is entirely internal, with no role for Parliament, civil society, or even the wider judiciary outside the Supreme Court.

4. Executive Influence

- Although rare in recent years, past instances of supersession (as in the 1970s) show that political interference is possible, particularly when conventions are not respected.

Proposals for Reform

- **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC):** Aimed to replace the Collegium system with a body involving the judiciary, executive, and civil society. It was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 for violating judicial independence.
- **Fixed Tenure for CJI:** Proposals have been made to give CJIs a minimum fixed tenure (e.g., two years) to ensure continuity.
- **Merit-Based Selection:** Some jurists argue for a system that factors in leadership, vision, and experience—rather than seniority alone.
- However, no formal mechanism for such reforms has been adopted as yet.

Difference between NJAC and Collegium System

- The Collegium System and the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) are two different mechanisms proposed or used in India for the appointment and transfer of judges to the higher judiciary (Supreme Court and High Courts).

Collegium System

- The Collegium System is a judicial mechanism developed by the Supreme Court for the appointment and transfer of judges in the higher judiciary.

Composition:

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) + 4 senior-most Supreme Court judges for appointments to the Supreme Court.
- For High Court appointments, the CJI + 2 senior-most judges + concerned High Court's Chief Justice.

Origin:

- It evolved through Supreme Court judgments — especially the Three Judges Cases:
  - First Judges Case (1981) – Gave primacy to the Executive.
  - Second Judges Case (1993) – Gave primacy to the Judiciary and created the Collegium.
  - Third Judges Case (1998) – Expanded the Collegium.

National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)

- The NJAC was a constitutional body proposed through the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act (2014) to replace the Collegium System.

Composition:

- Chief Justice of India (Chairperson)
- Two senior-most SC judges
- Union Law Minister
- Two eminent persons (nominated by a committee of PM, CJI, and Leader of Opposition)

Purpose:

- To make the appointments more transparent and accountable by involving non-judicial members in the process.

Status:

- The NJAC Act and the 99th Amendment were struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 (in a 4:1 verdict) as unconstitutional.

- The Court held it violated the basic structure of the Constitution — particularly the independence of the judiciary.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

9. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the Supreme Court of India?

    1. The judges of Supreme Court of India including Chief Justice of India are appointed by the President of India.

    2. In order to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court, a person must be a citizen of India and must have been, for at least three years, a Judge of a High Court or an Advocate of a High Court for at least 7 years.

    3. In order to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court, he must be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist.

    4. The Constitution also contains provisions for a Judge of the High Court who may be appointed as an ad-hoc Judge of the Supreme Court and for retired Judges of the Supreme Court or High Courts to sit and act as Judges of that Court.

    How many of the above statements are true?
    A. Only one statement
    B. Only two statements
    C. Only three statements
    D. All statements

10. Which of the following statements about the removal of a Supreme Court Judge is NOT true?
    A. A Supreme Court Judge can only be removed by an order of the President of India.
    B. A Supreme Court Judge can be removed only after the passing of a resolution supported by a two-thirds majority in both Houses of Parliament.
    C. A Supreme Court Judge can be removed by a simple majority vote in Parliament.
    D. The removal of a Supreme Court Judge can only be done for proved misbehavior or incapacity.

11. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the Supreme Court of India?

    1. The original Constitution of 1950 envisaged a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and 7 puisne Judges – leaving it to Parliament to increase this number.

    2. In the early years, all the Judges of the Supreme Court sat together to hear the cases presented before them.

    3. Considering the increase in workload, Parliament increased the number of Judges from 8 in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009 and 34 in 2019 (current strength).

    4. The proceedings of the Supreme Court are conducted in English.

    5. The Supreme Court Officers and Servants (Conditions of Service and Conduct) Rules, 1961 contains the rules with respect to the conditions of service and conduct of the staff attached to the Supreme Court of India.

How many of the above statements are true?

A. Only one statement

B. Only two statements

C. Only three statements

D. All statements

12. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the Collegium of the Supreme Court?

1. It consists of 5 senior most Judges including the Chief Justice of India.

2. In case of difference of opinion in the Collegium, the majority view will prevail.

3. It has no place in the Indian Constitution.

4. Since Constitution mandates consultation with the Chief Justice of India is necessary for appointments to judiciary, the collegium model evolved.

How many of the above statements are true?

A. Only one statement

B. Only two statements

C. Only three statements

D. All statements

4. Simililpal designated Odisha's second national park, after Bhitarkanika

- The Odisha government notified the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), the world's only home to wild melanistic tigers, as a national park spanning an area of 845.70 sq/km.
- It is the 107th national park and the second in the eastern state, after the Bhitarkanika.
- Proposed in 1980, the intention to declare Similipal as a National Park remained pending for over four decades.

About Similipal

- Similipal, located in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, is home to 40 royal Bengal tigers, shelter to 25% of Odisha's elephant population and 104 orchid species, many endemic to the region.
- The tigers of Similipal possess higher-than-normal levels of melanin, giving them coats that are more black with yellow stripes.
- Due to their unique lineage, they may be accurately described as pseudo-melanistic.

The impact of the move

- The remaining part of the 2,750 sq/km area will be considered as a wildlife sanctuary.
- "The final notification acknowledges Similipal's multi-layered significance as a wildlife sanctuary, project tiger, UNESCO biosphere reserve, and elephant reserve, now united under the highest national ecological recognition,".

- With the declaration of national park status, the notified area (845.70 sq/km) will now be 'rights free' and no human activities will be allowed, in a significant step towards conservation.
- The national park notified area will include flora, fauna, and all other objects of historical and geographic significance.
- A national park cannot be downgraded to a sanctuary.

Conservation measures by the state

- The state's forest department is implementing the Greater Similipal Landscape Programme to secure the newly designated national park and its surrounding ecological corridors.
- This includes camera towers and trail guard camera systems powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), V-SAT communication networks for surveillance in remote zones, and a dedicated security force including one company of trained police personnel and ex-servicemen.
- In a step towards the recovery of the tiger population and to diversify the gene pool, two female tigers from Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra have been introduced.
- "Their successful acclimatisation has set the stage for Similipal's population to reach 100 tigers by 2036, reinforcing its role in India's conservation roadmap,".

Difference Between National Park and Tiger Reserve: A Detailed Comparison

- India is known for its rich biodiversity and has taken several measures to protect its wildlife and natural habitats.
- Among the most important conservation mechanisms are National Parks and Tiger Reserves.
- While both serve to protect flora and fauna, they differ in terms of objectives, legal status, management, and permissible activities.
- Understanding the distinctions between the two is crucial for appreciating India's conservation framework.

1. Definition and Purpose

National Park

- A National Park is a protected area designated primarily for the conservation of wildlife and the preservation of natural ecosystems.
- These areas are established under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and are aimed at safeguarding biodiversity, including wild animals, birds, plants, and their habitats.
- National Parks often serve as centers for education, research, eco-tourism, and recreation without compromising ecological balance.

Tiger Reserve

- A Tiger Reserve, on the other hand, is a special type of protected area specifically established for the conservation of the Bengal tiger (Panthera tigris tigris).
- Tiger Reserves are designated under Project Tiger, launched in 1973 by the Government of India, and legally recognized under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (Amendment in 2006).
- They aim to ensure a viable population of tigers in their natural habitat, protect prey base, and maintain the integrity of ecosystems.

2. Legal Status and Governing Bodies

National Park

- Established under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Section 35.

- Managed by the State Forest Department.
- The boundaries of a National Park are fixed and cannot be altered without the approval of the state legislature.
- No human activity such as hunting, grazing, forestry operations, or habitat destruction is permitted.

Tiger Reserve

- Established under the Project Tiger initiative and governed under the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), an apex body set up in 2005.
- Designated under Section 38V of the Wildlife Protection Act (Amendment 2006).
- **Comprises two components:** Core Zone (critical tiger habitat) and Buffer Zone (peripheral area for sustainable use and co-existence).
- Core areas are strictly protected, while limited human activity is allowed in buffer zones.

3. Area and Zoning

National Park

- A National Park has a single zone where conservation is prioritized, and no human habitation is allowed.
- Tourism and other activities are regulated and usually restricted to certain eco-sensitive zones.

Tiger Reserve

Divided into:

Core Zone:

- Strictly protected; no human activity is allowed except monitoring and patrolling.

Buffer Zone:

- Allows limited human activities like grazing, firewood collection, and eco-tourism under regulation.
- Some Tiger Reserves include existing National Parks or Wildlife Sanctuaries as part of their core area.

4. National Park

- Human settlements are not allowed within National Parks.
- If people are already living inside the area during its declaration, resettlement may be carried out, but is not always enforced.

Tiger Reserve

- Human settlements inside the core area are often relocated under a voluntary resettlement policy to minimize human-tiger conflict.
- The NTCA provides financial assistance for resettlement to ensure proper rehabilitation of affected communities.

5. Biodiversity and Focus Species

National Park

- No single species is prioritized, and protection is extended to all forms of flora and fauna.
- **Examples:** Kaziranga National Park (Assam) protects the one-horned rhinoceros; Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) is important for migratory birds.

Tiger Reserve

- Focuses specifically on the conservation of tigers, though it also indirectly benefits other wildlife species in the ecosystem.

- Because the tiger is an umbrella species, its protection leads to the conservation of the entire ecosystem.

6. Tourist Access and Activities

National Park

- Tourism is allowed in designated zones with strict regulation.
- Activities include safari tours, nature walks, and bird watching.
- No human interference in core zones.

Tiger Reserve

- Tourism is allowed only in the buffer zone or specifically designated tourist routes in core areas.
- Controlled ecotourism is encouraged to generate awareness and revenue without disturbing tiger habitats.

7. Funding and Support

National Park

- Funded primarily by the State Government with occasional assistance from the central government and international conservation bodies.
- Less structured in terms of national-level monitoring.

Tiger Reserve

- Receives special funding from the Central Government under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Closely monitored and supported by the NTCA.

8. Number and Examples

National Parks in India

- As of 2025, there are 107 National Parks in India.

Notable examples include:

- Jim Corbett National Park (Uttarakhand) – the oldest in India.
- Sundarbans National Park (West Bengal) – a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Ranthambhore National Park (Rajasthan).

Tiger Reserves in India

- India has designated 58 tiger reserves as of 2025, covering over 2.3% of the country's land area.

Notable examples include:

- Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka).
- Kanha Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh).
- Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (West Bengal) – part of the same area as the National Park.
- While National Parks and Tiger Reserves share the goal of conservation, their scope, structure, and management differ significantly.
- National Parks focus on protecting all biodiversity within a given area, whereas Tiger Reserves are specifically designed to ensure the survival of the Bengal tiger and maintain its ecosystem.
- The creation of Tiger Reserves within or alongside National Parks demonstrates India's commitment to integrated and species-specific conservation strategies.

Solve the multiple choice questions:

13. Consider the following statements regarding the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR):

    1. It is located in Odisha's Krishna district.

    2. It is the only home to wild melanistic tigers in the world.

    3. It is home to 25% of Odisha's elephant population.

    4. It is part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009.

    How many of the above statements are true?

    A. Only one statement

    B. Only two statements

    C. Only three statements

    D. All statements

14. Consider the following statements regarding the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR):

    1. National parks can be declared both by the Central Government and State governments.

    2. No alteration of the boundaries of a national park shall be made except on a resolution passed by the State Legislature.

    3. Hemis National Park in Ladakh is largest National park in India.

    4. The smallest national park in India is South Button Island National Park, located Tamil Nadu.

    How many of the above statements are true?

    A. Only one statement

    B. Only two statements

    C. Only three statements

    D. All statements

5. India Lifts Over 17.1 Crore People Out Of Extreme Poverty In A Decade: World Bank Report

- India has successfully lifted over 17.1 crore people out of extreme poverty in the last ten years.

- According to the World Bank's Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity report, five states- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh- accounted for two-thirds of the overall decline in extreme poverty.

- In rural areas, extreme poverty fell from 18.4% in 2011-12 to 2.8% in 2022-23.

- While, in urban areas, poverty reduced from 10.7% to 1.1% over the same period.
- It added that India has witnessed positive trends in employment growth, particularly since 2021-22.
- The report also showed the rise of self-employment, particularly among rural workers and women, contributing to economic participation.

World Bank's spring 2025 Poverty and Equity report

- The World Bank has released its Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Briefs (PEBs), offering concise, data-driven snapshots of poverty, inequality, and shared prosperity trends across more than 100 developing countries.
- These briefs are published biannually to coincide with the Spring and Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund.

Key Features of the Spring 2025 PEBs

- **Comprehensive Country Coverage:** Each brief provides a two-page summary for individual countries, presenting recent developments in poverty reduction and key development indicators.
- **Poverty Metrics:** Data includes poverty rates and the total number of poor individuals, measured by national poverty lines and international thresholds:
  o Extreme poverty line at $2.15 per day (2017 PPP)
  o Lower-middle-income line at $3.65 per day
  o Upper-middle-income line at $6.85 per day
- **Inequality Indicators:** The Gini Index is used to assess income inequality within countries.
- **Multidimensional Poverty**: Beyond income, the briefs consider non-monetary deprivations in areas such as education and access to basic services.
- **Comparative Analysis**: The briefs facilitate comparisons over time and across countries, aiding in the assessment of progress and challenges in poverty reduction.

World Bank Reports

- The World Bank publishes a wide range of reports covering global development, economic trends, policy research, and country-specific analyses.

Major Global Reports

- **World Development Report 2024:** Focuses on strategies for developing economies to avoid the "middle-income trap" by adopting modern technologies and business practices.
- **Global Economic Prospects (January 2025):** Projects global growth at 2.7% for 2025–26, highlighting challenges like policy uncertainty, inflation, and climate-related risks.
- **Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024:** Emphasizes the need to reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity without incurring high environmental costs, especially amid the current "polycrisis" of economic and climate challenges.
- **Women, Business and the Law 2024**: Analyzes legal frameworks affecting women's economic opportunities across 190 economies, introducing new indicators on safety and childcare.

Policy Research Reports

- These reports delve into specific development policies:

Rethinking Resilience:

- Explores strategies to enhance resilience to climate shocks in low- and middle-income countries, focusing on behavioral changes, financial instruments, and social protection.

Improving Effective Coverage in Health (2022):

- Examines the role of financial incentives in enhancing health coverage and outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.

India-Specific Reports

World Bank Group

- **India Country Economic Memorandum:** Provides an in-depth analysis of India's economic landscape, highlighting opportunities and challenges.
- **Meghalaya Multisectoral Project for Adolescent Wellbeing:** Aims to equip 500,000 adolescents in Meghalaya with skills and resources to transition from school to work.

Data & Indicators

- World Development Indicators (WDI): Offers over 1,600 indicators for 217 economies, covering various aspects of development.

Data Topics

- **DataBank:** An analysis and visualization tool containing collections of time series data on a variety of topics.

Accessing Reports

- **World Bank Research Hub:** Central portal for accessing research publications and reports.
- **Annual Reports:** Summarizes the World Bank's operations and financials annually.
- **Documents & Reports Repository:** Comprehensive archive of official World Bank documents and reports from 1946 to present.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

15. The National Multidimensional Poverty measures simultaneous deprivations across three equally weighted dimensions of Health, Education, and Standard of Living that are represented by 12 Sustainable Development Goals-aligned indicators. Which of the following is Not included in the National Multidimensional Poverty?

    1. Maternal Health

    2. Years of schooling

    3. School Attendance

    4. Assets

    5. Bank Accounts

    6. Sanitation

    Select the correct answer using codes given below?

    A. 1, 2, 5 and 6 only

    B. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only

    C. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

    D. None of the above

16. Which methodology does the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) use to assess poverty?
    A. Alkire and Foster (AF) method
    B. Gini Coefficient
    C. Human Development Index (HDI)
    D. Tendulkar Committee method

6. President Droupadi Murmu Presents Padma Awards To 71 Eminent Personalities Of Various Disciplines & Fields

- President Droupadi Murmu today conferred upon Padma Awards to 71 eminent personalities for the year 2025 at the first Civil Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- Of them four were conferred with Padma Vibhushan, 10 with Padma Bhushan and 57 personalities were confered with Padma Shri.
- D Nageshwar Reddy, Dr Lakshminarayana Subramaniam were conferred with Padma Vibhushan for their contribution in medicine and art field, respectively, while M. T. Vasudevan Nair and Osamu Suzuki and honoured with Padma Vibhushan posthumously.
- Among those honoured with Padma Bhushan are Nandamuri Balakrishna, Shekhar Kapur, former Indian Hockey team captain Sreejesh P R, while former deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Sushil Kumar Modi was conferred posthumously.
- Those honoured with Padma Shri include Cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin, Former SBI Chairman Arundhati Bhattacharya, Stephen Knapp, Ronu Majumdar, and classic vocalist Dr. K Omankutty Amma.
- The awards are given in various disciplines and fields of activities including art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, and civil service.
- Carnatic Vocalist Dr. K Omankutty Amma got the Padma Shri award for her contribution in the field of art.
- American Author, Stephen Knapp were also among the 71 people who received Padma awards this year.

Padma Awards

- The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honors in India, instituted in 1954 by the Government of India.
- They are announced annually on the eve of Republic Day (January 25) and recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.
- There are three categories of Padma Awards:
  o Padma Vibhushan – for exceptional and distinguished service.
  o Padma Bhushan – for distinguished service of a high order.

o Padma Shri – for distinguished service.

Presented by:

- The President of India at ceremonial functions held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Eligible Fields:

- Art, literature, education, sports, medicine, social work, science and engineering, public affairs, civil service, trade and industry, etc.

- Not Posthumous by Default: However, they can be awarded posthumously.

- Self-nomination not allowed; recommendations can be made by state/UT governments, ministries, previous awardees, or through the online nomination process.

Notable Facts:

- The Bharat Ratna is not a Padma Award but is the highest civilian award in India.

- Foreign nationals, NRIs, and Persons of Indian Origin can also be honored with Padma awards.

- In recent years, the government has emphasized recognizing "unsung heroes" and grassroots-level contributors.

Padma Awards 2025

- The Padma Awards for 2025 were announced on the eve of Republic Day, honoring 139 individuals for their exceptional contributions across various fields.

- The awards are categorized into three levels: Padma Vibhushan (7 awardees), Padma Bhushan (19 awardees), and Padma Shri (113 awardees).

- Among the recipients, 23 are women, 10 are from the Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI category, and 13 were honored posthumously.

Padma Vibhushan (7 Awardees)

- Dr. Duvvur Nageshwar Reddy – Medicine (Telangana)

- Justice (Retd.) Jagdish Singh Khehar – Public Affairs (Chandigarh)

- Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia – Art (Gujarat)

- Lakshminarayana Subramaniam – Art (Karnataka)

- M. T. Vasudevan Nair (Posthumous) – Literature and Education (Kerala)

- Osamu Suzuki (Posthumous) – Trade and Industry (Japan)

- Sharda Sinha (Posthumous) – Art (Bihar).

Padma Bhushan (19 Awardees)

- A Surya Prakash – Literature and Education (Journalism) (Karnataka)

- Anant Nag – Art (Karnataka)

- Bibek Debroy (Posthumous) – Literature and Education (NCT Delhi)

- Jatin Goswami – Art (Assam)

- Jose Chacko Periappuram – Medicine (Kerala)

- Kailash Nath Dikshit – Archaeology (NCT Delhi)

- Manohar Joshi (Posthumous) – Public Affairs (Maharashtra)

- Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti – Trade and Industry (Tamil Nadu)

- Nandamuri Balakrishna – Art (Andhra Pradesh)

- P. R. Sreejesh – Sports (Kerala)
- Pankaj Patel – Trade and Industry (Gujarat)
- Pankaj Udhas (Posthumous) – Art (Maharashtra)
- Rambahadur Rai – Literature and Education (Journalism) (Uttar Pradesh)
- Sadhvi Ritambhara – Social Work (Uttar Pradesh)
- S. Ajith Kumar – Art (Tamil Nadu)
- Shekhar Kapur – Art (Maharashtra)
- Shobana Chandrakumar – Art (Tamil Nadu)
- Sushil Kumar Modi (Posthumous) – Public Affairs (Bihar)
- Vinod Dham – Science and Engineering (USA)

Padma Shri (113 Awardees)

Notable recipients include:

- Arijit Singh – Art (West Bengal)
- Ricky Kej – Art (Karnataka)
- Barry John – Art (Delhi)
- Jaspinder Narula – Art (Punjab)
- Harvinder Singh – Sports (Paralympic Archer)
- Ajay V. Bhatt – Science and Engineering (USA)
- Dr. Neerja Bhatla – Medicine (Delhi)
- Sally Holkar – Social Work (Madhya Pradesh)
- Bhima Singh Bhavesh – Social Work (Bihar)
- L. Hangthing – Agriculture (Nagaland)
- P. Datchanamurthy – Art (Puducherry)
- Sheikha A J Al Sabah – Yoga (Kuwait)
- Hugh and Colleen Gantzer – Literature and Education (Uttarakhand)

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

17. The individuals Smt. Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia, Shri Lakshminarayana Subramaniam, and Smt. Sharda Sinha were awarded the Padma Vibhushan in the field of_____.

    A. Medicine

    B. Public Affairs

    C. Trade and Industry

    D. Art

18. Shri Osamu Suzuki was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in the field of_____.

    A. Medicine

    B. Public Affairs

    C. Trade and Industry

    D. Art

7. Ongoing civil war in Myanmar

- The ongoing civil war in Myanmar is a complex conflict involving the military junta, ethnic armed groups, and pro-democracy forces.
- It intensified after the February 2021 military coup, which overthrew the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Causes and Reasons

1. Military Coup (2021)

- The Tatmadaw (Myanmar's military) seized power alleging election fraud in the 2020 general elections.
- This ousted the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

2. Historical Ethnic Tensions

- Myanmar has over 135 ethnic groups, many with long-standing grievances against the central government.
- Armed conflicts with groups like the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Union (KNU), and Arakan Army (AA) predate the coup.

3. Suppression of Democracy

- The military's repression of political opposition, media, and civil liberties has provoked widespread resistance.

4. Formation of Resistance Movements

- Civilian opposition coalesced into groups like the People's Defense Forces (PDF), under the National Unity Government (NUG), a shadow government formed by ousted lawmakers.
- These groups now coordinate guerrilla warfare against the junta.

Ongoing Conflict and Key Players

- Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) vs. PDF, NUG, and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs).
- Widespread fighting in Sagaing, Chin, Karen, Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine states.
- Arakan Army re-entered the conflict in 2023 after a ceasefire, worsening the situation.

Effects and Consequences

1. Humanitarian Crisis

- Over 2.6 million people displaced (as of 2025).
- Thousands killed and many more injured.
- Civilian infrastructure—schools, hospitals, and homes—destroyed.

2. Economic Collapse

- Severe economic contraction due to instability, sanctions, and loss of foreign investment.
- Widespread poverty and food insecurity.

3. Regional Instability

- Refugee flows to India, Thailand, and Bangladesh.

- Risk of regional conflict spillover.

4. Global Condemnation and Isolation

- Western nations have imposed sanctions on the junta.
- Myanmar's relations with ASEAN are strained, though some countries like China and Russia maintain ties with the military.

5. Internet and Information Blackouts

- The military restricts internet access and cracks down on independent media to control narratives.
- A US Treasury Department press release states that the two countries have mutually agreed to form a Reconstruction Investment Fund, which would receive 50 per cent of profits and royalties accruing to the Ukrainian state from new natural resources permits.
- The draft states that the US does get preferential access to Ukraine's natural resources, but Washington doesn't get Kyiv's mineral wealth or any gas infrastructure.
- The initial agreement, due to be signed in February, fell apart after a heated exchange between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and US President Donald Trump during their meeting at the Oval Office in the White House.
- The Myanmar Civil War refers to the ongoing armed conflict in Myanmar (also known as Burma), which significantly escalated after the military coup on February 1, 2021.
- The Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) overthrew the elected civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), sparking widespread protests and resistance.

Key Points:

1. Background:

- Myanmar has experienced civil conflict since gaining independence from Britain in 1948, mainly involving ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) fighting for autonomy.
- Tensions have persisted for decades between the central military-led government and various ethnic minorities, especially in border regions.

2. 2021 Coup and Aftermath:

- The military claimed election fraud in the 2020 elections and detained civilian leaders.
- The civil disobedience movement (CDM) arose, with mass protests and strikes.
- As repression intensified, many protesters and dissidents took up arms, forming People's Defense Forces (PDFs) under the opposition National Unity Government (NUG).

3. Civil War Dynamics:

The civil war now involves:

- The Tatmadaw (Myanmar military)
- Ethnic armed groups (e.g., Kachin Independence Army, Karen National Union, Arakan Army)
- Newly formed PDFs aligned with the NUG
- Some ethnic armies, once neutral or allied with the military, are now fighting against it.

4. Humanitarian Crisis:

- Over 2 million people have been displaced internally.
- Thousands of civilians have been killed or arrested.

- Access to food, healthcare, and education has deteriorated drastically.
- Internet blackouts and airstrikes on civilian areas have been common.

5. International Response:

- Condemnation from the UN and Western countries, along with some targeted sanctions.
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) has attempted mediation with limited success.
- China and Russia maintain ties with the military junta.

6. Recent Developments (as of 2025):

- The military has lost ground in some regions.
- Anti-junta forces have captured military outposts and towns in Shan, Chin, Kayah, and Sagaing regions.
- The conflict is becoming increasingly asymmetric, with the military relying on air power and artillery while resistance uses guerrilla tactics.

Myanmar

- Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) is a Southeast Asian nation with a rich history, diverse culture, and complex political landscape.
- **Official Name:** Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- **Capital:** Naypyidaw (since 2005; formerly Yangon/Rangoon)
- **Largest City:** Yangon
- **Population:** Approximately 55 million (2023 estimate)
- **Official Language:** Burmese
- **Currency:** Myanmar Kyat (MMK)

Geography

- **Location:** Southeast Asia, bordered by India, Bangladesh, China, Laos, and Thailand.
- **Terrain:** Diverse—coastal regions, central plains, and mountain ranges.
- **Major Rivers:** Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwady), Chindwin, Sittaung.

History

- **Ancient Kingdoms:** Includes the Pyu, Mon, Bagan (Pagan), and Konbaung dynasties.
- **Colonial Period:** Became a British colony in the 19th century.
- **Independence:** Gained independence from Britain on 4 January 1948.
- **2021 Coup:** Military seized power in February 2021, overthrowing the elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

Government and Politics

- **Current Government:** Military junta (State Administration Council) since 2021.
- **Previous Leader (before coup):** Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD).
- **International Status:** Widely criticized for human rights violations and suppression of democracy.

Economy

- **Key Sectors:** Agriculture, natural gas, mining (jade, gems), textiles.
- **Challenges:** Sanctions, military control, corruption, economic instability.

- **Development Rank:** Among the least developed countries in Southeast Asia.

Religion and Culture

- **Major Religion:** Theravāda Buddhism (practiced by ~90% of the population).

- **Minorities:** Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and indigenous beliefs.

- **Ethnic Groups:** Over 135 officially recognized groups; major ones include Bamar (majority), Shan, Karen, Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, and Rohingya.

- **Cultural Heritage:** Traditional festivals, dance, music, and temples like Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

19. Myanmar shares border with which of the following states of India?
    1. Arunachal Pradesh
    2. Nagaland
    3. Manipur
    4. Mizoram
    5. Tripura
    6. Assam

    Select the correct answer using codes given below?
    A. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
    B. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
    C. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
    D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

20. Consider the following statements:
    1. The Free Movement Regime (FMR) on the India-Myanmar Border is a mutually agreed arrangement between the two countries that allows tribes living along the border on either side to travel up to 100 km inside the other country without a visa.
    2. India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project aims to establish a road link between the three nations, with the highway beginning in Moreh in India's Manipur state, passing through Myanmar, and ending at Mae Sot in Thailand.
    3. India-Myanmar Bilateral Army Exercise (IMBAX) is aimed at building and promoting closer relations with armies.
    4. Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project aims to connect the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe port in Myanmar by sea.

    How many of the above statements are true?
    A. Only one statement
    B. Only two statements
    C. Only three statements
    D. All statements

8. Kilmar Armando Ábrego García

- Kilmar Armando Ábrego García is a Salvadoran national whose controversial deportation from the United States in March 2025 has ignited significant legal and political debates.

Background

- Born on July 26, 1995, Ábrego García entered the U.S. illegally in 2011 as a minor.
- He later settled in Maryland, married a U.S. citizen in 2019.
- Professionally, he worked as an apprentice sheet metal worker with experience in HVAC systems.

Deportation Controversy

- Despite a 2019 immigration court order protecting him from deportation to El Salvador due to potential persecution risks, Ábrego García was deported in March 2025.
- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the deportation was illegal and mandated the government to facilitate his return.
- However, the administration has argued that it lacks jurisdiction to compel El Salvador to release him, leading to ongoing legal and diplomatic tensions.

Allegations and Legal Challenges

- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) alleges that Ábrego García is affiliated with the MS-13 gang, pointing to tattoos and past associations. However, these claims are contested; experts note that his tattoos are not definitively linked to MS-13, and no criminal charges have been filed against him in the U.S.
- Additionally, his ex-wife filed protective orders in 2020 and 2021, alleging domestic abuse.
- These filings have been used by DHS to support their claims, though Ábrego García's legal team disputes the allegations and emphasizes the lack of criminal convictions.

Political and Public Response

The case has drawn widespread attention:

- **Legal Advocacy:** Organizations like CASA have been actively campaigning for his return, highlighting concerns over due process and human rights.
- **Political Actions:** Illinois Governor JB Pritzker initiated measures to boycott El Salvador over Ábrego García's detention, and Maryland officials have condemned the deportation.
- **Public Opinion:** Polls indicate that a majority of Americans disapprove of the administration's handling of the case, with many expressing concern over the potential erosion of constitutional rights.
- As of now, Kilmar Ábrego García remains detained in El Salvador, with his future uncertain amid ongoing legal battles and diplomatic negotiations.

MS-13, or Mara Salvatrucha

- MS-13, or Mara Salvatrucha, is one of the most notorious and violent criminal gangs in the world.

Origin:

- Founded: In the 1980s in Los Angeles, California.

- By: Salvadoran immigrants, many of whom fled the civil war in El Salvador.

Expansion:

- Spread to Central America (especially El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala) after many gang members were deported from the U.S.

- Has a transnational presence, particularly in the U.S. and Northern Triangle countries.

Characteristics:

- Known for extreme violence, including brutal murders, drug trafficking, human trafficking, extortion, and arms smuggling.

- Uses tattoos, symbols, and hand signs for identification and intimidation.

- Highly hierarchical with cliques ("clicas") that operate semi-independently.

Law Enforcement Response:

- Designated a transnational criminal organization by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2012.

- Subject to mass arrests and anti-gang operations in both the U.S. and Central America.

- In El Salvador, recent crackdowns under President Nayib Bukele have led to the imprisonment of tens of thousands of suspected gang members.

International Laws related with wrongful Deportation of a Person:

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948

- **Article 9:** "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

- Though not legally binding, the UDHR is widely considered customary international law and sets the foundation for human rights norms.

2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966

- **Article 13:** Protects aliens lawfully in a country from arbitrary expulsion and ensures due process.

- "An alien lawfully in the territory of a State Party... may be expelled only in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with law..."

- Requires a right to a hearing, legal counsel, and review of the decision.

3. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) & 1967 Protocol

- **Article 33 (Non-Refoulement):**
  o "No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner... to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened..."

- This is a core principle protecting refugees and asylum seekers from wrongful deportation to dangerous situations.

4. Convention Against Torture (CAT), 1984

- **Article 3:** Prohibits deportation or extradition of any person to a country where there are substantial grounds for believing that they would be in danger of torture.

5. European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), 1950 (for Council of Europe States)

- **Article 3:** Absolute prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.

- The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that deportation violating Article 3 (e.g., sending someone back to a war zone or torture) is unlawful.

6. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), 1981

- **Article 12(4–5):** Prevents arbitrary expulsion of non-nationals and emphasizes legal safeguards.

7. Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights

- Protect against collective expulsion and ensure the right to seek asylum, due process, and judicial protection.

8. UN Human Rights Committee (Interpretation & Jurisprudence)

- Has emphasized that deportation without due process, especially if it risks serious human rights violations in the destination country, breaches international law under ICCPR.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

21. Consider the following statements regarding the Citizenship in USA:

    1. Amendment XIV, Section 1, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution directs that all persons born in the United States are U.S. citizens.

    2. This is the case regardless of the tax or immigration status of a person's parents.

    3. Furthermore, a person born outside the United States may also be a U.S. citizen at birth if at least one parent is a U.S. citizen and has lived in the United States for a specified period.

    How many of the above statements are true?

    A. 2 only

    B. 1 and 2 only

    C. 1 and 3 only

    D. 1, 2 and 3

22. Consider the following statements regarding the Citizenship in India:

    1. Indian citizenship can be acquired by birth, descent, registration and naturalization.

    2. The Citizenship Act, 1955 has been amended four times — in 1986, 2003, 2005, and 2015.

    3. Every person born in India on or after 26.1.1950 but before the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, where both the parents are citizens of India or one of whose parents is a citizen of India and the other is not an illegal migrant at the time of birth, shall be a citizen of India by birth.

    4. Every person born outside India shall be a citizen of India by descent if both the parents or either of them is an Indian citizen, not being an illegal migrant, provided his/her birth is registered at an Indian Mission/Post abroad within one year of the birth.

    How many of the above statements are true?

    A. Only one statement

    B. Only two statements

    C. Only three statements

    D. All statements

23. A special provision exists for the submission of applications for Indian Citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019. It is specifically for individuals who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014, and belonging to which of the following communities?

1. Hindu

2. Muslim

3. Sikh

4. Buddhist

5. Jain

6. Parsi

7. Christian

Select the correct answer using codes given below?

A. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 only

B. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only

C. 1, 2, 3 and 7 only

D. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

24. Consider the following statements regarding the Citizenship in India:

1. Constitution of India does not allow holding Indian citizenship and Citizenship of a foreign country simultaneously.

2. Article 9 of the Indian Constitution specifies that anyone who voluntarily acquires the citizenship of a foreign state will cease to be a citizen of India.

3. Article 11 empowers Parliament to make provisions regarding the acquisition and termination of citizenship, as well as any other matters related to it.

4. Unlike other provisions of the Constitution, which came into being on January 26, 1950, the articles from 5 to 11 were enforced on November 26, 1949 itself, when the Constitution was adopted.

How many of the above statements are true?

A. Only one statement

B. Only two statements

C. Only three statements

D. All statements

25. The Person of Indian Origin Card Scheme has been withdrawn by the Government of India and has been merged with the Overseas Citizen of India Card Scheme effective from 9 January 2015. Which of the following is/ benefits given under Overseas Citizen of India Card Scheme?

1. OCI holders are also exempt from foreign registration requirements for any length of stay and parity with NRIs in aspects of economic, financial, and educational.

2. An OCI cardholder is entitled to political rights such as the right to vote, hold employment in the government, hold Indian constitutional posts, or be a member of the legislative assembly, legislative council, or the Parliament of India.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

9. The US has signed a deal with Ukraine on the joint exploitation of its energy and mineral resources

- The United States and Ukraine have reached a landmark agreement to establish a US-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund aimed at accelerating Ukraine's economic recovery from the devastating war with Russia.

- The fund will support major reconstruction projects, stimulate global investment, and secure critical natural resources, which are essential to both Ukraine's economy and broader strategic interests, including those of the United States.

Strategic Purpose and Economic Significance

- US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent emphasized that the agreement showcases the commitment of both nations to securing lasting peace and prosperity for Ukraine.

- The fund is seen as an essential step for Kyiv, not only in terms of economic revival but also as a precondition for receiving further US military aid, particularly under the current Trump administration.

- Ukraine is known to possess vast untapped reserves of critical minerals, including graphite, titanium, and lithium, which are highly valuable for industries such as renewable energy, defense, and infrastructure.

- These resources are especially crucial amid the ongoing US trade tensions with China, which currently supplies around 90% of the world's rare-earth elements.

- Access to Ukraine's resources is viewed as a strategic advantage in reducing US dependence on Chinese supplies.

Structure and Provisions of the Deal

- The agreement, signed by Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko in Washington, outlines a 50:50 partnership between the two countries.

- It includes provisions for investments in Ukraine's mineral, oil, and gas sectors, though these resources will remain under Ukrainian ownership.

- The fund is expected to attract substantial global investment, with a strong emphasis on projects that will enhance Ukraine's infrastructure and economic capabilities.

- In addition to economic initiatives, the deal allows for additional US assistance, such as air defense systems.

- This military component is seen as a crucial element of the agreement, especially given the Trump administration's insistence that Ukraine make significant concessions in exchange for continued security support.

- While Trump initially pushed for full reimbursement of all US military aid since Russia's invasion in February 2022, the current agreement represents a compromise—offering the US access to natural resources in exchange for future aid, but stopping short of retroactive repayment.

Political Context and Challenges

- The announcement of the fund also carries political undertones.

- The language of the US Treasury's statement was notably stronger in support of Ukraine than usual for the Trump administration.

- It explicitly condemns "Russia's full-scale invasion" and includes a clear warning that anyone supporting Russia's war machine will be excluded from the reconstruction efforts.

- The road to the final agreement was not without hurdles.

- The initial signing was scheduled for February but was delayed due to diplomatic tensions—including a confrontation at the White House, where Trump accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of "gambling with World War Three."

- Negotiations nearly derailed again when Kyiv attempted to reopen previously settled terms.

- US officials were particularly concerned with governance and transparency, emphasizing the need for fully traceable fund flows.

- Despite the turbulence, technical documents were finalized, and a breakthrough occurred following an unexpected face-to-face meeting between Trump and Zelensky at Pope Francis's funeral in Vatican City.

- Trump revealed that during the meeting, he pressed Zelensky to finalize the deal, citing the strength of Russia's military and the strategic importance of Ukraine's mineral wealth.

Broader Implications

- The establishment of the Reconstruction Investment Fund represents a pivotal moment in US-Ukraine relations.

- For Washington, it secures a foothold in Ukraine's natural resources—particularly rare earth elements that are vital to global supply chains and national security.

- For Kyiv, the deal provides much-needed investment and military support, reinforcing its sovereignty and post-war recovery trajectory.

- While the agreement still requires ratification by Ukrainian lawmakers, it is expected to form the backbone of a long-term economic and security partnership between the two nations.

- It may also influence broader geopolitical dynamics, particularly ongoing US-Russia and US-China interactions.

What minerals does Ukraine have and what are they used for?

- Ukraine is emerging as a globally significant player in the critical raw materials market, with estimates suggesting it holds approximately 5% of the world's reserves.

- These include essential minerals that are vital to various high-tech and strategic industries, particularly electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing, renewable energy, defense, and nuclear technology.

- Among the most valuable resources in Ukraine is graphite, with around 19 million tonnes of proven reserves.

- This places Ukraine among the top five countries in the world for graphite supply, a mineral that plays a key role in the production of batteries, especially for EVs.

- As the world transitions to green technologies and sustainable energy, graphite is increasingly in demand, enhancing Ukraine's strategic importance.

- Titanium is another key mineral found in Ukraine, with the country holding around 7% of Europe's known supplies.

- Titanium is prized for its lightweight yet strong properties and is widely used in the aerospace sector, as well as in power station construction and other industrial applications.

- One of the most critical untapped resources in Ukraine is lithium, a key component in modern rechargeable batteries.

- Ukraine possesses about one-third of all European lithium deposits, although these remain largely unexplored and undeveloped due to underinvestment and ongoing conflict.

- With lithium being a linchpin of the energy transition and EV revolution, these reserves represent a significant strategic and economic opportunity.

- Ukraine also has notable deposits of other strategic elements including beryllium and uranium, both of which are essential for nuclear energy and, potentially, nuclear weapons.

- In addition, Ukraine is home to significant quantities of copper, lead, zinc, silver, nickel, cobalt, and manganese, minerals that support a broad range of industrial and technological applications.

- Crucially, Ukraine holds considerable reserves of rare earth elements — a group of 17 metals vital for the production of high-tech goods such as wind turbines, smartphones, advanced weaponry, and other electronics.

- Rare earths are especially geopolitically sensitive, as China currently dominates the global supply chain, controlling about 75% of global production.

- Ukraine's potential to serve as an alternative source is of strategic interest to countries like the United States, which seeks to reduce dependency on Chinese-controlled resources.

- However, many of these valuable resources have come under threat due to Russia's military invasion and occupation.

- According to estimates by Ukrainian officials and supported by a 2022 study conducted by Canadian consultancy SecDev, Russia currently occupies territories containing mineral resources worth $350 billion.

- These include 63% of Ukraine's coal mines, along with significant shares of its manganese, caesium, tantalum, and rare earth mineral deposits.

- This has severely impacted Ukraine's ability to exploit and export its natural wealth.

- As of the 2022 full-scale invasion by Russia, only 15% of Ukraine's 20,000 mineral deposit sites were being actively exploited, highlighting the untapped potential that remains underdeveloped due to political instability, conflict, and insufficient foreign investment.

- For example, despite confirmed reserves, no rare earth mines in Ukraine are currently operational.

- Geopolitical tensions have intensified over these resources.

- In response to rising tensions with the U.S., China has imposed export controls on rare earth minerals, further fueling the urgency for Western nations to find alternative sources.

- Ukraine, with its wealth of untapped critical raw materials, is viewed by the U.S. and its allies as a potentially important partner in reshaping the global minerals supply chain away from Chinese dominance.

Solve the multiple choice questions:

26. Ukraine shares it's border with of the following countries?

    1. Georgia
    2. Poland
    3. Slovakia
    4. Hungary
    5. Romania
    6. Moldova

    Select the correct answer using codes given below?

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

27. The Government of India launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) in 2025 to establish a robust framework for self-reliance in the critical mineral sector. Under this mission, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been tasked with conducting 1,200 exploration projects from 2024-25 to 2030-31. Which of the following statements is/are true?

    1. Critical minerals such as silicon, tellurium, indium, and gallium are vital for the production of photovoltaic (PV) cells used in solar panels.
    2. Rare earth elements like dysprosium and neodymium are used in permanent magnets for wind turbines.
    3. Lithium, nickel, and cobalt are key materials used in lithium-ion batteries.

    How many of the above statements are true?

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

28. Which of the following statements regarding the objectives of National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)?

    1. To secure India's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources.
    2. Strengthening the value chains by enhancing technological, regulatory, and financial ecosystems to foster innovation, skill development, and global competitiveness in mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recycling.

    Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

10. Celebrations in Ho Chi Minh City mark 50 years since end of Vietnam War

- Celebrations culminated in a grand parade in Ho Chi Minh City with thousands of marching troops and an airshow featuring Russian-made fighter jets and helicopters, as Vietnamese waved red flags and sang patriotic songs.
- The Vietnam War, one of the most significant conflicts of the 20th century, lasted from 1955 to 1975 and involved the communist forces of North Vietnam and the non-communist forces of South Vietnam.
- The war became a focal point of the Cold War, with the United States and its allies supporting South Vietnam, and the Soviet Union and China backing North Vietnam.

I. Historical Background

- Vietnam, part of French Indochina since the mid-19th century, came under Japanese occupation during World War II. After Japan's defeat in 1945, nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence, inspired by communist ideals and anti-colonial sentiment.
- However, the French sought to reassert control, leading to the First Indochina War (1946–1954) between French colonial forces and the Viet Minh, the communist-led resistance.
- The war ended with the Geneva Accords in 1954, which temporarily divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel into North Vietnam (communist, led by Ho Chi Minh) and South Vietnam (non-communist, backed by the U.S.).
- Elections to unify the country were scheduled for 1956 but were never held, setting the stage for further conflict.

II. Causes of the Vietnam War

Ideological Conflict (Communism vs. Capitalism)

- At the heart of the war was the Cold War ideological struggle between communism and capitalism. The United States, under the policy of containment, sought to prevent the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, fearing the Domino Theory—that if one nation fell to communism, others would follow.

Failure of the Geneva Accords

- The refusal to hold national elections in 1956, largely due to South Vietnam and U.S. opposition, undermined peace efforts. The South feared a likely victory for Ho Chi Minh. This created a legitimacy crisis for South Vietnam and fueled internal resistance.

Rise of the Viet Cong

- In the South, communist insurgents known as the Viet Cong began guerrilla warfare against the South Vietnamese government. They were supported by North Vietnam, who saw reunification as a nationalist cause.

U.S. Involvement and Escalation

- The U.S. gradually increased its military and financial support to South Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin Incident in 1964, in which U.S. naval vessels were allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese patrol boats, led to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson broad powers to escalate U.S. involvement.

III. Major Phases and Events of the War

Early U.S. Involvement (1955–1963)

- U.S. advisors helped train the South Vietnamese army. President Ngo Dinh Diem, a staunch anti-communist, ruled South Vietnam with U.S. support but was unpopular due to corruption and repression. His assassination in 1963 led to political instability.

Escalation (1964–1969)

- U.S. troop levels increased dramatically, peaking at over 500,000 troops by 1969.

Major military campaigns included:

- **Operation Rolling Thunder:** A sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam.

- **Search and destroy missions:** U.S. troops aimed to eliminate Viet Cong fighters in the South.

- **Tet Offensive (1968):** A massive coordinated attack by the Viet Cong on South Vietnamese cities during the Lunar New Year. Though a military failure for the North, it shocked the U.S. public and turned opinion against the war.

Vietnamization and U.S. Withdrawal (1969–1973)

- President Richard Nixon introduced Vietnamization, aimed at transferring combat roles to South Vietnamese forces while gradually withdrawing U.S. troops. Simultaneously, he expanded the war into Cambodia and Laos to cut off Viet Cong supply lines (Ho Chi Minh Trail), sparking protests at home, notably the Kent State shootings in 1970.

Paris Peace Accords and U.S. Exit (1973)

- The Paris Peace Accords were signed in 1973, calling for a ceasefire, U.S. withdrawal, and the return of POWs. Despite the agreement, fighting between North and South continued.

Fall of Saigon (1975)

- In April 1975, North Vietnamese forces captured Saigon, the South Vietnamese capital. The war officially ended, and Vietnam was unified under communist rule.

IV. Effects of the Vietnam War

On Vietnam

Human Cost

- The war caused immense suffering: over 3 million Vietnamese (soldiers and civilians) died, and millions more were injured or displaced. The conflict left deep scars on the Vietnamese population, economy, and infrastructure.

Environmental Damage

- The U.S. used defoliants like Agent Orange to destroy jungle cover, leading to widespread ecological damage and long-term health problems including cancers and birth defects.

Post-war Reunification and Hardship

- After reunification, Vietnam faced economic isolation, U.S. sanctions, and internal challenges. The new regime launched re-education programs and land reforms. Many South Vietnamese fled the country as "boat people" to escape persecution.

Economic Reforms

- In the 1980s, Vietnam adopted market-oriented reforms (Đổi Mới) to revive the economy, leading to gradual growth and reintegration into the global community.

On the United States

Casualties and Veterans

- Over 58,000 American soldiers died, and more than 150,000 were wounded. Veterans faced physical and psychological trauma, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Public Opinion and Anti-War Movement

- The war sparked widespread protests, especially among students and intellectuals. Events like the My Lai Massacre (1968) and the publication of the Pentagon Papers (1971) revealed government deception, further eroding trust.

Political and Social Impact

- The war led to a more cautious U.S. foreign policy, known as the "Vietnam Syndrome", where the public and leaders became wary of military intervention abroad. It also prompted the War Powers Act of 1973, requiring Congressional approval for future deployments.

Media and War Coverage

- Vietnam was the first war extensively televised. Graphic images and footage played a major role in shaping public perception and influencing policy.

On Global Politics

Cold War Implications

- The war was a Cold War battleground, but its outcome did not lead to the widespread spread of communism as feared.
- In fact, Vietnam later clashed with China (1979), showing communist disunity.

Lessons for Future Conflicts

- The Vietnam War influenced U.S. military strategy and foreign policy for decades.
- Its lessons shaped approaches to later conflicts, such as the Gulf War and Iraq War, emphasizing clear objectives and public support.

V. Legacy of the Vietnam War

Cultural Impact

- The war inspired countless books, films, and songs that examined its morality and impact—such as Apocalypse Now, Platoon, and Born on the Fourth of July.

Veterans and Memorials

- The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., honors American soldiers who died.
- In Vietnam, memorials and museums remember the war's devastation from a local perspective.

Reconciliation

- U.S.-Vietnam relations normalized in 1995, with increasing economic and diplomatic ties in the 21st century, especially in the context of countering China's influence in Asia.
- The Vietnam War was a complex, costly, and controversial conflict with deep and lasting effects.
- Rooted in Cold War rivalries and Vietnamese nationalism, it became a symbol of the dangers of foreign intervention and ideological warfare.

Vietnam

- Vietnam, officially the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is a Southeast Asian country known for its rich history, diverse culture, and scenic landscapes.

- It shares borders with China to the north, Laos and Cambodia to the west, and has a long eastern coastline along the South China Sea.
- The capital is Hanoi, while Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) is its largest and most populous city.
- Vietnam has a population of over 98 million people, making it the 15th most populous country in the world.
- The official language is Vietnamese, and the majority religion is Buddhism, although the country is known for its religious diversity.
- Vietnam has a single-party system led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which has governed the country since reunification in 1975 after the Vietnam War.
- The economy of Vietnam has transitioned from a centrally planned system to a socialist-oriented market economy since the introduction of the "Đổi Mới" (Renovation) reforms in 1986.
- Vietnam is one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, driven by manufacturing, exports, and a growing technology sector.
- Major exports include textiles, electronics, rice, coffee, and seafood.
- Vietnam is also known for its natural beauty—ranging from the limestone karsts of Ha Long Bay to the terraced rice fields of Sapa and the beaches of Da Nang.

QUESTIONS

Solve the multiple choice questions:

29. Consider the following statements:

    1. Vietnam has been one of the fastest-growing economies in the world in recent years.

    2. Vietnam is led by a multi-party political system.

    3. Vietnam's economic growth is linked to its integration with global supply chains and focus on exports.

    4. For a long time, Vietnam's low labor costs and stable exchange rates have attracted global manufacturers.

    5. Vietnam has the most productive e-service sector in the Indo-Pacific region.

    Which of the statements given above are correct?

    A. 2 and 4

    B. 3 and 5

    C. 1, 3 and 4

    D. 1 and 2

30. Agent Orange was primarily used by the U.S. military during which conflict?

    A. World War II

    B. Korean War

    C. Vietnam War

    D. Gulf War

1. D India has conducted the census 7 times since independence. The first census of independent India was in 1951, and it has been conducted every ten years since then. The 2011 census was the 7th census in independent India, and the 15th overall since the first census in 1872. The next census was scheduled for 2021 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. B The first non-synchronous, nationwide census took place in 1872 under Lord Mayo. The first synchronous census occurred in 1881, led by Census Commissioner W.C. Plowden, establishing the decennial cycle. Independent India's first census was held in 1951 and since then it has happened in the first year of every decade. The Constitution mandates that enumeration is carried out but the Census of India Act of 1948 does not specify its timing or periodicity. The Census is governed by the Census Act of 1948, introduced by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The population census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is a Union subject under Article 246 and is listed as item 69 in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

3. B Statement A: This is correct. The last caste-based enumeration in India took place in 1931 under British rule, and it recorded 4,147 distinct castes. Statement B: This is incorrect. Although caste details were gathered in 1941, they were never published due to the outbreak of World War II. The outbreak caused delays, and the information was not released into the public domain or used in official records. Statement C: This is correct. After independence, the Indian government has only counted Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the decennial Census. Caste-based data collection beyond these categories was not part of the regular census process. Statement D: This is correct. In 1961, the Union Government authorized states to conduct their own surveys to identify Other Backward Classes (OBCs). These surveys were aimed at collecting data for welfare and affirmative action policies targeting OBCs.

4. B On 28th April 2025, India signed a significant defense agreement with France to procure 26 Rafale-Marine fighter jets, valued at approximately Rs. 63,000 crore. This includes 22 single-seat jets and 4 twin-seat jets. This deal marks India's first acquisition of the naval variant of the Rafale, making it the first international operator of this model. The Rafale-Marine (Rafale-M) is a powerful, advanced fighter jet designed to operate from aircraft carriers at sea. Unlike regular fighter jets that take off from land, this aircraft can launch from and land on moving ships, even in tough sea conditions. It is built by Dassault Aviation of France and is already getting used by the French Navy. The Indian Navy currently operates two aircraft carriers, INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya. The recent agreement for the procurement of 26 Rafale-M aircraft from France will enhance the Navy's fleet, with these jets capable of operating from both carriers. Dassault Rafale is a 4.5 generation, twin-engine, delta-wing, multirole fighter aircraft manufactured by Dassault Aviation. Maximum speed of Mach 1.8 (approximately 1,912 km/h) and a service ceiling of 50,000 feet.

5. D Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight-trial of India's first long-range hypersonic missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha late on November 16, 2024. This hypersonic missile is designed to carry various payloads for ranges greater than 1,500 kms for the Armed Forces. Only US, Russia and China had this technology earlier. The term hypersonic describes any speed faster than five times that of sound, which is roughly 760 miles (1,220 km) per hour at sea level. On the other hand, a supersonic missile travels at the speed between Mach 1 and Mach 5.

6. **C** Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) successfully conducted a 120-seconds ground test of an active-cooled Scramjet combustor for the first time in India. A scramjet engine means a Supersonic Combusting Ramjet engine. It is an improvement over the ramjet engine as it efficiently operates at hypersonic speeds and allows supersonic combustion. A ramjet is a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the vehicle's forward motion to compress incoming air for combustion without a rotating compressor. Dual Mode Ramjet (DMRJ) is also a variant of an air-breathing engine.

7. **D** Statement 1 is incorrect: Cruise missiles are jet-propelled at subsonic speeds throughout their flights, while ballistic missiles are rocket-powered only in the initial (boost) phase of flight, after which they follow an arcing trajectory to the target. Statement 2 is incorrect: Agni-V is a ballistic missile while The BrahMos (also designated as PJ-10) is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, ships, airplanes or land. The BrahMos is notably the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.

8. **D** The BrahMos missile system is currently the fastest cruise missile in India's arsenal as of the year 2025. BrahMos is a long-range supersonic cruise missile known for its high accuracy. It operates on 'Fire and Forget Principle', adopting a variety of flights on its way to the target. Its destructive power is enhanced due to large kinetic energy on impact. The two-stage missile features a solid propellant booster in the first stage that propels it to supersonic speed before detaching. The second stage, a liquid ramjet engine, carries the missile to speeds nearing Mach 3 during the cruise phase. The missile, equipped with stealth technology and an advanced guidance system with embedded software, is designed for precision and survivability. The supersonic missile can cruise at Mach 3 (more in the case of supersonic speeds) and has a range of up to 290 kilometres (up to 500 or 800 kilometres in its advanced variants). It is also equipped to deliver a 200- to 300-kilogram high-explosive warhead. This missile system was developed as a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyenia, which was established through an Intergovernmental Agreement signed in February 1998. As of April 2025, there are only two variants of the BrahMos missile in service with the armed forces, i.e. the BrahMos Block I and the BrahMos Air-Launched.

9. **C** The Supreme Court of India comprises the Chief Justice of India and not more than 33 other Judges appointed by the President of India. Supreme Court Judges retire at the age of 65. In order to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court, a person must be a citizen of India and must have been, for at least five years, a Judge of a High Court or an Advocate of a High Court for at least 10 years or he must be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist. The Constitution also contains provisions for a Judge of the High Court who may be appointed as an ad-hoc Judge of the Supreme Court and for retired Judges of the Supreme Court or High Courts to sit and act as Judges of that Court.

10. **C** The independence of judiciary is part of the basic structure of the Indian Constitution. A Supreme Court Judge cannot be removed from office except by an order of the President passed after an address in each House of Parliament supported by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting, and presented to the President in the same Session for such removal on the ground of proved misbehavior or incapacity. A person who has been a Judge of the Supreme Court is debarred from practicing in any court of law or before any other authority in India.

11. **C** The original Constitution of 1950 envisaged a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and 7 puisne Judges – leaving it to Parliament to increase this number. In the early years, all the Judges of the Supreme Court sat together (en banc) to hear the cases presented before them. Considering the increase in

workload, Parliament increased the number of Judges from 8 in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009 and 34 in 2019 (current strength). Today, the Judges sit in Benches of two and three and come together in larger Benches of 5 and more (Constitution Bench) to decide any conflicting decisions between benches of the Supreme Court or any substantial questions concerning the interpretation of the Constitution. The proceedings of the Supreme Court are conducted in English. The practice and procedure of working of the Registry on the judicial side is regulated by the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 and Handbook on Practice and Procedure and Office Procedure. The Supreme Court Officers and Servants (Conditions of Service and Conduct) Rules, 1961 contains the rules with respect to the conditions of service and conduct of the staff attached to the Supreme Court of India.

12. D The Collegium of the Supreme Court consists of 5 senior most Judges including the Chief Justice of India. They will consider the elevation of Chief Justices/Judges of High Court to Supreme Court, elevation of Judges of High Courts as Chief Justices and elevation of Judges. In case of difference of opinion, the majority view will prevail. Since Constitution mandates consultation with the Chief Justice of India is necessary for appointments to judiciary, the collegium model evovled. It is a system under which appointments and transfers of judges are decided by a forum of the Chief Justice of India and the four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court. It has no place in the Indian Constitution.

13. C The Odisha government notified the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), the world's only home to wild melanistic tigers, as a national park spanning an area of 845.70 sq/km. It is the 107th national park and the second in the eastern state, after the Bhitarkanika. Similipal, located in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, is home to 40 royal Bengal tigers, shelter to 25% of Odisha's elephant population and 104 orchid species, many endemic to the region. The tigers of Similipal possess higher-than-normal levels of melanin, giving them coats that are more black with yellow stripes. Due to their unique lineage, they may be accurately described as pseudo-melanistic. This protected area is part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009.

14. C National parks can be declared both by the Central Government and State governments. No alteration of the boundaries of a national park shall be made except on a resolution passed by the State Legislature. Hemis National Park is a high-elevation national park in Hemis in Leh district of Ladakh, India. It is the only national park in India that is north of the Himalayas, the largest notified protected area in India (largest National park) and is the second largest contiguous protected area, after the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve and surrounding protected areas. The smallest national park in India is South Button Island National Park, located in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

15. D The National Multidimensional Poverty measures simultaneous deprivations across three equally weighted dimensions of Health, Education, and Standard of Living that are represented by 12 Sustainable Development Goals-aligned indicators. These include Nutrition, Child and Adolescent mortality, Maternal Health, Years of schooling, School Attendance, Cooking fuel, Sanitation, Drinking water, Electricity, Housing, Assets, and Bank Accounts.

16. A The National MPI uses the Alkire and Foster (AF) method, a robust methodology that identifies people as poor based on multidimensional measures. This method allows for the analysis of poverty based on various indicators such as health, education, and living standards. This approach provides a complementary perspective to traditional monetary measures of poverty.

17. D The individuals Smt. Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia, Shri Lakshminarayana Subramaniam, and Smt. Sharda Sinha were awarded the Padma Vibhushan in the field of Art. These distinguished artists were recognized for their exceptional and distinguished service in the realm of performing arts.

18. **C** Shri Osamu Suzuki was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in the field of Trade and Industry, and he was from Japan. He was recognized posthumously for his significant contributions to the automotive industry, particularly for his role in founding Suzuki Motor Corporation.

19. **A** The Indian states that share a border with Myanmar are Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram. Myanmar also referred to as Burma (the official English name until 1989), is a country in northwest Southeast Asia. It is the largest country by area in Mainland Southeast Asia and has a population of about 55 million. It is bordered by India and Bangladesh to its northwest, China to its northeast, Laos and Thailand to its east and southeast, and the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to its south and southwest.

20. **C** The Free Movement Regime (FMR) on the India-Myanmar Border is a mutually agreed arrangement between the two countries that allows tribes living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country without a visa. It was implemented in 2018 as part of the Indian government's Act East policy. India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project: The project aims to establish a road link between the three nations, with the highway beginning in Moreh in India's Manipur state, passing through Myanmar, and ending at Mae Sot in Thailand. India-Myanmar Bilateral Army Exercise (IMBAX) is aimed at building and promoting closer relations with armies. Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project aims to connect the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe port in Myanmar by sea.

21. **D** Amendment XIV, Section 1, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution directs that all persons born in the United States are U.S. citizens. This is the case regardless of the tax or immigration status of a person's parents. Furthermore, a person born outside the United States may also be a U.S. citizen at birth if at least one parent is a U.S. citizen and has lived in the United States for a specified period. "Illegal citizenship" or "undocumented status" refers to foreign-born individuals who lack the legal documents or visas required to reside in the U.S. Illegal immigration, or unauthorized immigration, occurs when foreign nationals, known as aliens, violate US immigration laws by entering the United States unlawfully, or by lawfully entering but then remaining after the expiration of their visas, parole or temporary protected status.

22. **D** Indian citizenship can be acquired by birth, descent, registration and naturalization. Indian Parliament enacted the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955) and the Citizenship Rules were framed in 1956. The Citizenship Act, 1955 was amended extensively in 2003. The act has been amended four times — in 1986, 2003, 2005, and 2015. Citizenship is a matter dealt with by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the Government of India. **Citizenship by birth**: Every person born in India on or after 26.1.1950 but before the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, where both the parents are citizens of India or one of whose parents is a citizen of India and the other is not an illegal migrant at the time of birth, shall be a citizen of India by birth. **Citizenship by descent:** Every person born outside India shall be a citizen of India by descent if both the parents or either of them is an Indian citizen, not being an illegal migrant, provided his/her birth is registered at an Indian Mission/Post abroad within one year of the birth. After one year period birth, permission of MHA is required. As per the provisions of Section 4(1) of the Citizenship Act, 1955 – Birth of every child born abroad should be registered with the Consulate, within one year from the date of birth of the child. Only after registration of birth as Indian citizen, the child becomes citizen of India and eligible for Passport or any other services rendered to Indian citizens.

23. **D** A special provision exists for the submission of applications for Indian Citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019. It is specifically for individuals who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014, and belonging to Hindu or Sikh or Buddhist or Jain or Parsi or Christian community from Pakistan or Afghanistan or Bangladesh.

24. **D** Citizenship is listed in the Union List under the Constitution and thus is under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament. The Constitution does not define the term 'citizen' but details of various categories of persons who are entitled to citizenship are given in Part 2 (Articles 5 to 11). Unlike other provisions of the Constitution, which came into being on January 26, 1950, these articles were enforced on November 26, 1949 itself, when the Constitution was adopted. Article 5: It provided for citizenship on commencement of the Constitution. All those domiciled and born in India were given citizenship. Even those who were domiciled but not born in India, but either of whose parents was born in India, were considered citizens. Anyone who had been an ordinary resident for more than five years, too, was entitled to apply for citizenship. Article 9: Provided that if any person voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign State will no longer be a citizen of India. Article 11: It empowers Parliament to make any provision with respect to the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all matters relating to it. Constitution of India does not allow holding Indian citizenship and Citizenship of a foreign country simultaneously. The Government of India has decided to register Persons of Indian Origin of certain category as has been specified in the Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 as Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Cardholder.

25. **A** The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955, in August 2005. The Person of Indian Origin Card Scheme has been withdrawn by the Government of India and has been merged with the Overseas Citizen of India Card Scheme effective from 9 January 2015. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2015 was passed, substituting the words, "Overseas Citizen of India" with the words "Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder" and enabling provisions for registration of OCI cardholders, conferment of certain rights of such citizens, renunciation of overseas citizenship and cancellation of registration as OCI cardholder. An Overseas Citizen of India is entitled to some benefits, such as Section 7B of the Citizenship Act grants a multi-purpose, multiple-entries and a lifelong visa to visit India. OCI holders are also exempt from foreign registration requirements for any length of stay and parity with NRIs in aspects of economic, financial, and educational. However, an OCI cardholder is not entitled to political rights such as the right to vote, hold employment in the government, hold Indian constitutional posts, or be a member of the legislative assembly, legislative council, or the Parliament of India.

26. **A** Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe. It is the second-largest country in Europe after Russia, which borders it to the east and northeast. Ukraine also borders Belarus to the north; Poland and Slovakia to the west; Hungary, Romania and Moldova to the southwest; and the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to the south and southeast.

27. **D** Solar energy: Critical minerals such as silicon, tellurium, indium, and gallium are vital for the production of photovoltaic (PV) cells used in solar panels. India's current solar capacity of 64 GW is heavily dependent on these minerals. Wind energy: Rare earth elements like dysprosium and neodymium are used in permanent magnets for wind turbines. India aims to increase its wind energy capacity from 42 GW to 140 GW by 2030, necessitating a stable supply of these minerals. Electric vehicles (EVs): Lithium, nickel, and cobalt are key materials used in lithium-ion batteries. Under the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP), India plans to deploy 6–7 million EVs by 2024, leading to increased demand for these critical minerals.

28. **C** The Government of India launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) in 2025 to establish a robust framework for self-reliance in the critical mineral sector. Under this mission, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been tasked with conducting 1,200 exploration projects from 2024-25 to 2030-31. Objectives of NCMM are: 1. To secure India's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources. 2. Strengthening the value chains by enhancing technological, regulatory, and financial ecosystems to foster innovation, skill development, and global competitiveness in mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recycling.

29. **C** Statement 1 is correct: Vietnam has been a development success story. Economic reforms since the launch of Doi Moi (economic reforms initiated in Vietnam) in 1986, coupled with beneficial global trends, have helped propel Vietnam from being one of the world's poorest nations to a middle-income economy in one generation. Between 2002 and 2021, GDP per capita increased 3.6 times, reaching almost US$3,700. Statement 2 is incorrect: Vietnam is a one-party socialist republic. Thus, this statement is incorrect. Statement 3 is correct: Vietnam's export-led growth strategy and global integration are among the key factors behind the country's remarkable achievements in growth and poverty reduction over the last two and a half decades. Statement 4 is correct: By ending restrictions over trade and foreign investment, Vietnam attracted companies like South Korea's Samsung, which saw the country, with its well-educated workers and low wages, as an attractive platform for manufacturing and exports. Statement 5 is incorrect: Vietnam does have one of the most productive e-service sectors in the Indo-Pacific region but cannot be called the most productive e-service sector in the entire Indo-Pacific region.

30. **C** Agent Orange is a chemical herbicide and defoliant, one of the tactical uses of Rainbow Herbicides. It was used by the U.S. military as part of its herbicidal warfare program, Operation Ranch Hand, during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971. The U.S. was strongly influenced by the British who used Agent Orange during the Malayan Emergency. It is a mixture of equal parts of two herbicides, 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. It was intended to defoliate forests and crops to reduce enemy cover.