Career Launcher | UPSC CSAT

MANTHAN

NOVEMBER 2024 : WEEK-2

Contents

1. Supreme Court verdict on private property

- In a landmark ruling recently, the Supreme Court observed that all private properties are not automatically considered "material resources of the community" and can't be taken over by the state authorities to subserve the "common good".
- The ruling, which was held by 8-1 majority at the top court, was delivered in the Property Owners Association & Ors v State of Maharashtra case.

What was the case?

- The ruling, which was held by 8-1 majority at the top court, was delivered in the Property Owners Association & Ors v State of Maharashtra case.
- The case began with the Property Owners Association (POA) of Mumbai challenging Chapter VIIIA of the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Act (MHADA) of 1976, which allows the state to acquire privately-owned buildings, or "cessed properties", for restoration. Initially filed in 1992, the case saw multiple referrals to larger benches over the years.
- The case this month finally reached a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court. The bench was tasked with determining the constitutional scope of Article 39(b) in relation to private property.
- The bench, led by CJI Chandrachud, overturned verdicts post 1978 that adopted socialist theme and ruled that states can take over all private properties for the common good.
- The judgement balances the Directive Principles with the need to respect private property rights. The verdict also answered two key questions: what is the status of Article 31C and does Article 39(b) allow the state to acquire private property as "material resources of the community".

What does Article 39(b) state?

- Part IV of the Constitution outlines the "Directive Principles of State Policy" (DPSP). It includes Article 39(b) which mandates the state to adopt policies ensuring that "the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good." The court was tasked with interpreting the scope of "material resources" under Article 39(b).
- The court also examined whether laws enacted to further the objectives of Article 39(b) could be shielded from constitutional challenges based on fundamental rights, such as the right to equality and freedom of expression. Fundamental rights, enshrined in Part III of the Constitution, and DPSPs have long been in conflict.

Why was Article 31C introduced?

- Article 31C was introduced through the 25th Constitutional Amendment in 1971.
- It sought to protect laws made under Article 39(b) and (c) from constitutional challenges based on the fundamental rights to equality and freedoms.

- It also barred courts from assessing whether a law genuinely advanced the objectives outlined in Articles 39(b) and (c).

What is the status for Article 31C?

- In 1992, when the petitioners in the Property Owners Association case approached the top court to appeal Bombay HC's decision from a year before, they argued that Minerva Mills verdict effectively struck down Article 31C in its entirety.

- In the Minerva Mills case in 1980, the top court ruled two amendments to the Constitution introduced by the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 was null and unconstitutional.

- Now, the 42nd Amendment had substituted the words "the principles specified in clause (b) or clause (c) of article 39" in Article 31C with the words "all or any of the principles laid down in Part IV".

- However, the court in Property Owners Association case clarified when striking down the amendment in Minerva Mills, the words "all or any of the principles laid down in Part IV" would not simply be deleted as this would lead to "absurd outcomes or render the text wholly unworkable".

Impact of verdict

- The court has acknowledged the state's role in promoting social welfare while respecting individual property rights.

- By acknowledging this, the Supreme Court has charted a middle path that resonates with India's economic growth ambitions.

- During the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi advocated for a comprehensive census followed by wealth redistribution among various socio-economic groups.

- In response, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sounded alarm bells over what he characterised as the Congress's dubious attempt to confiscate private wealth and redistribute it among Muslims.

Right to Property

- The Right to Property was originally a fundamental right under Article 31 of the Indian Constitution.

- However, following various land reform policies and the need to address social and economic inequalities, the government amended the Constitution in 1978 to remove it as a fundamental right through the 44th Amendment Act.

- **Original Position (Fundamental Right):** Article 31 provided protection to property rights, ensuring that no person could be deprived of their property except by law and with fair compensation.

- **44th Amendment Act, 1978:** This amendment removed the Right to Property from the list of Fundamental Rights. It was then moved to Article 300A in Part XII of the Constitution, making it a legal right instead.

- **Current Position (Legal Right):** As a legal right under Article 300A, the Right to Property now states that "No person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law."

- This means that while the government can still acquire private property for public purposes, it must follow due process and fair compensation standards.

- However, this right does not carry the same level of protection as a Fundamental Right, which limits individuals' recourse to the Supreme Court for enforcement.

- **Implications:** As a result of the change, citizens cannot directly approach the Supreme Court under Article 32 for violations of the Right to Property. Instead, they may seek redress in lower courts or through legal remedies as a legal, rather than fundamental, claim.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The Supreme Court's recent ruling observed that not all private properties are considered "_____ resources of the community" and cannot automatically be taken over by state authorities to serve the "common good."

2. The ruling in the Property Owners Association & Ors v State of Maharashtra case was delivered by an _____ majority.

3. The Property Owners Association of Mumbai challenged Chapter VIIIA of the _____ Housing and Area Development Act (MHADA) of 1976, which allows the state to acquire privately-owned buildings for restoration.

4. The Supreme Court bench, led by _____, overturned post-1978 verdicts that adopted a socialist approach, allowing states to take over private property for the common good.

5. Article 39(b) is part of the _____ Principles of State Policy and mandates the state to ensure that "the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good."

6. Article 31C was introduced through the _____ Constitutional Amendment in 1971 to protect laws made under Article 39(b) and (c) from constitutional challenges.

7. In the _____ Mills case of 1980, the Supreme Court ruled that two amendments introduced by the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 were unconstitutional.

8. The Right to Property was originally a fundamental right under Article _____ of the Indian Constitution but was removed from this status by the 44th Amendment Act of 1978.

9. As a result of the 44th Amendment, the Right to Property is now a _____ right under Article 300A, rather than a fundamental right.

10. Citizens can no longer directly approach the _____ Court under Article 32 for violations of the Right to Property, as it is now a legal rather than a fundamental right.

2. Lingosat: The Wooden Satellite

- LingoSat, collaboration between Kyoto University and Sumitomo Forestry, is the world's first wooden satellite launched by Japan.

- Created to test the durability of timber in space, this innovative satellite aims to explore wood as a sustainable material for future space missions.

- In early November 2024, LingoSat was transported to the International Space Station (ISS) via a SpaceX mission and deployed at around 400 kilometers above Earth.

- The primary goals are to see how well wood can withstand harsh space conditions and to address space debris issues.

- Unlike metal satellites, which release pollutants when they re-enter Earth's atmosphere, wooden satellites like LingoSat would burn up cleanly, reducing environmental impact.
- If successful, this approach could lead to wooden structures in space, such as habitats on the Moon or Mars, as part of a long-term vision for sustainable space exploration.

Key Details:

1. Development and Inspiration:

- **Primary Developers:** The satellite is a collaboration involving both public and private sector organizations in Europe, particularly a Finnish company that specializes in wood technology, UPM Plywood, and the Finnish research community.
- **Inspiration:** The idea stems from the growing interest in using sustainable materials for space technology to reduce the environmental impact of satellites, especially as the issue of space debris becomes more pressing.

2. Design and Materials:

- **Wood-Based Structure:** Lingosat's frame and main body are built from wood, particularly plywood, which is durable, lightweight, and can withstand the stresses of space.
- **Material Properties:** Wood's ability to withstand radiation and extreme temperatures was tested rigorously, as space conditions are far harsher than on Earth.
- **Other Components:** Although the main structure is wooden, certain parts, such as solar panels and communication systems, require traditional space-grade materials for functional purposes.

3. Environmental Impact and Purpose:

- **Sustainability Focus:** Wood as a primary material reduces the use of traditional metals and plastics that contribute to environmental degradation and space debris.
- **End-of-Life Decay:** Unlike traditional satellites, a wooden satellite could potentially burn up cleaner upon re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, leaving minimal trace and reducing long-term orbital debris.
- **Demonstration of Feasibility:** Lingosat aims to prove that alternative materials can work effectively in space, paving the way for future eco-friendly satellite designs.

4. Testing and Challenges:

- **Rigorous Testing:** Lingosat underwent extensive testing for resilience against vacuum conditions, cosmic radiation, and temperature extremes, which are among the greatest challenges for non-metallic structures in space.
- **Wood Treatment:** Special treatments were applied to the wood to enhance its resistance to the vacuum of space and to prevent outgassing, which could interfere with satellite components and the mission.

5. Mission and Objectives:

- **Scientific Research:** Lingosat serves as a research satellite designed to collect data on the viability of wooden materials in space environments.
- **Earth Observation and Communication:** Equipped with basic Earth observation tools and communication modules, it also serves practical purposes, helping scientists gather data on climate and environmental changes.

6. Launch and Future Prospects:

- **Launch Plans:** The satellite was initially scheduled for launch as part of a secondary payload on a commercial rocket, marking it as a significant step toward eco-friendly space solutions.
- **Future Applications:** If successful, Lingosat could inspire more sustainable satellite designs using biodegradable or recyclable materials, thus making space exploration less harmful to the environment.

7. Significance:

- Lingosat represents a critical advancement in eco-conscious space technology.
- If its materials and structure prove reliable, it could lead to a new category of biodegradable satellites, thereby addressing space debris challenges and contributing to cleaner orbital environments.
- In 2024, numerous unique and innovative satellites have been launched with a variety of scientific, climate, and exploratory missions. Some notable examples include:

Major Satellites Launched in 2024

NASA's PACE Satellite (Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, and ocean Ecosystem) –

- Launched to monitor the health of the ocean and atmosphere, PACE is a climate mission aimed at understanding how microscopic organisms (phytoplankton) in oceans impact global ecosystems and climate.
- This satellite provides highly detailed data on aerosol and cloud interactions, critical for climate prediction models and ocean health assessments.

ESA's Proba-3 Mission –

- Proba-3 is a formation-flying mission designed to study the Sun's corona by having two satellites operate in precise synchronization, with one satellite blocking the Sun to allow the other to observe its outer atmosphere.
- This mission marks a breakthrough in solar science by enabling closer observations of the solar corona, which is vital for understanding solar storms and space weather effects on Earth.

India's NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) –

- A joint project by NASA and ISRO, NISAR is set to provide highly accurate radar data to track subtle changes in Earth's surface.
- This mission is critical for monitoring environmental changes such as deforestation, agricultural yield, glacier movement, and coastal erosion.
- Its innovative radar technology allows for global high-resolution images that will enhance our understanding of natural hazards and climate impacts.

ESA's EarthCARE (Earth Cloud, Aerosol, and Radiation Explorer) –

- Developed with JAXA, EarthCARE will provide insights into the interactions between clouds, aerosols, and radiation, essential for climate science.
- The satellite will use advanced lidar and radar systems to measure cloud and aerosol properties and radiation levels, improving climate models and weather forecasts.

Hera Mission to Binary Asteroids –

- Set for late 2024, ESA's Hera mission will study the aftermath of NASA's DART mission, which successfully impacted the asteroid Dimorphos in 2022.
- Hera will analyze the composition and structure of Dimorphos and its larger companion Didymos, providing critical data on planetary defense strategies and the physics of asteroid impacts.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. LingoSat, the world's first wooden satellite, was developed through collaboration between Kyoto University and _____ Forestry.
2. LingoSat was transported to the International Space Station (ISS) via a mission launched by _____ in early November 2024.
3. Unlike metal satellites, which release pollutants when they re-enter Earth's atmosphere, wooden satellites like LingoSat are designed to burn up _____.
4. The primary material used in LingoSat's structure is _____, which has been rigorously tested to withstand the harsh conditions of space.
5. One of the key motivations behind LingoSat's development is to address the issue of _____, a growing concern in space.
6. The satellite's wood-based structure aims to minimize the use of traditional _____ and _____ materials, reducing environmental impact.
7. A Finnish company specializing in wood technology, _____ Plywood, contributed expertise for the development of LingoSat.
8. LingoSat is equipped with basic _____ and communication tools to support Earth observation and scientific research.
9. ESA's Proba-3 mission focuses on studying the Sun's _____ by using two synchronized satellites, one to block the Sun while the other observes.
10. ESA's Hera mission, planned for late 2024, will study the binary asteroid system of Dimorphos and _____, analyzing the aftermath of NASA's DART impact mission.

3. What Supreme Court ruled in AMU minority status case

- A seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court `laid down in a 4-3 majority verdict a "holistic and realistic" test to determine the "minority character" of an educational institution, but left the factual determination on AMU to a smaller Bench.

Background of case

- In 1967, the Supreme Court in S. Azeez Basha v Union of India held that AMU was neither established nor administered by the Muslim minority — it came into existence through an Act of the central legislature — and did not, therefore, qualify as a minority institution under Article 30 of the Constitution.

- In 1981, the government amended the AMU Act, 1920, to say that the institution was established by the Muslim community to promote the cultural and educational advancement of Muslims in India.

- In 2005, AMU provided 50% reservation for Muslims in postgraduate medical programs. In 2006, the Allahabad HC struck down both the university order and the 1981 amendment on the ground that AMU was not a minority institution as per Azeez Basha.

- This judgment was challenged at the SC, and in 2019 the matter was referred to a seven-judge Bench.

Protections for MEIs

- Under Article 30(1), all minorities have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Under Article 15(5), MEIs are exempt from providing reservations for SCs and STs.

- Minority status also allows educational institutions to exercise greater control over their day-to-day administration — from student admissions (they can reserve up to 50% seats for minority students) to the hiring of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Minority character

- The majority decision, authored by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud for himself and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, J B Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra, listed "core essentials" of minority character under Article 30(1).

- While the purpose of establishing a minority institution should be the conservation of language and culture, it need not be the only purpose;

- A minority institution will not lose its minority character by admitting students belonging to non-minorities;

- Secular education can be imparted at a minority institution without affecting its minority character;

- If a minority institution has received aid from the government, no student can be forced to participate in religious instruction; if the institution is fully maintained out of state funds, it cannot provide religious instruction. However these institutions must still be considered minority institutions.

Test laid down by SC

- To determine if an institution actually has a minority character, the court held that it would have to "pierce the veil" and look into how it was established. To do this, it laid down certain criteria or "indicia" that must be considered as a part of a two-fold test.

ESTABLISHMENT:

- The first aspect of the test deals with the genesis or origin of the minority institution, the purpose of its establishment, and how the "idea" for the institution was finally implemented.

- Courts must "trace the origin of the idea for the establishment of the institution" to determine who was the "brain behind the establishment". For proof, a variety of sources could be considered — letters, correspondence with other community members or government officials, etc. The link must "point towards one member of the minority or a group from the community", the court said.

- The purpose of establishing the institution must "predominantly" be for the benefit of the minority community, even if it is not the sole purpose.

- Here too, the court suggested looking at correspondence or even speeches from the time about the "necessity" of establishing the institution, and recognition of the "educational difficulties" faced by the communities in question.

- The AMU Old Boys' Alumni Association, in written submissions, said that AMU was established after Sir Syed Ahmad Khan "found the Muslim community to be neglected and backward".

- In the 1870s, the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College Foundation Committee started collecting funds, and the MAO College was established. After the Muslim University Association was established in 1911, "long negotiations" with the government culminated in the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920, the Alumni Association submitted.

- The Centre, however, argued that a "principal" aim behind the creation of MAO was the "promotion of Western Arts and Sciences and not just religious study". On the implementation, it argued that "persons from all walks of life" contributed to establishing MAO. And even when the idea of a university in Aligarh was floated in 1911, the imperial government was clear that they would retain control, the Centre argued.

ADMINISTRATION:

- The court held that the administration of an educational institution does not need to be handled by the minority community; it was a matter of "choice" for such an institution, and it is not "compelled" to appoint persons from the minority community for day-to-day administration.

- That said, the majority held that courts can look at the administrative set-up to see if it "affirms" the minority character of an institution. If the administration does not seem to "protect and promote the interests of the minority", it could be "reasonably inferred that the purpose was not to establish an educational institution for the benefit of the minority community".

- For institutions that were established before the Constitution came into force (like AMU), the majority held that courts must look at how the administration worked "on the date of the commencement of the Constitution" (January 26, 1950) — and whether any "regulatory measures" were used to "wrest" control from the founders.

- The petitioners argued that the ultimate power over the administration was with the Muslim community until 1950, with the 'Court' (AMU's supreme governing body) entirely composed of Muslims.

- However, the Centre argued that Sections 13 and 14 of the AMU Act gave "overriding authority" to the authorities, such that "the extent of government control over the AMU was far greater than over the MAO College".

History of Establishment of Aligarh Muslim University

- Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), one of India's premier educational institutions, was established in 1920 and has its roots in the Aligarh Movement, an educational and social reform movement initiated by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.

Founding of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (1875):

- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a visionary educationist and social reformer, founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College in 1875 in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. His goal was to promote Western-style scientific and modern education among Muslims, combining it with traditional Islamic values.

- The MAO College was modeled after the British educational system, particularly the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, which Sir Syed believed could help Muslims in India bridge the cultural and educational gap with the British.

Growth of MAO College (1875–1920):

- The college attracted students from across India and neighboring countries, becoming a significant intellectual hub.
- Over time, it expanded its academic offerings and developed into a prominent center for higher learning, with a focus on science, literature, and social sciences, as well as Islamic studies.

Transition to Aligarh Muslim University (1920):

- The demand for converting MAO College into a full-fledged university grew, driven by both students and community leaders.
- In 1920, the Indian government passed the Aligarh Muslim University Act, officially upgrading MAO College to Aligarh Muslim University.
- This new status allowed AMU to offer a broader range of programs and confer degrees, thus enhancing its impact and reputation across India.

Post-Independence Era and AMU's Role:

- After India's independence in 1947, AMU continued to be a prominent institution, attracting students from all backgrounds.
- Although founded to cater to the educational needs of Muslims, AMU became a multicultural university with a national and international reputation. Its contributions to education, research, and social change have continued to shape Indian society.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The Supreme Court recently laid down a new test to determine the "_____ character" of an educational institution in a 4-3 majority verdict.

2. In the 1967 case of S. Azeez Basha v Union of India, the Supreme Court held that _____ was not established or administered by the Muslim minority.

3. In _____, the government amended the AMU Act to state that the university was established by the Muslim community for their educational advancement.

4. Article 30(1) of the Constitution grants minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their _____.

5. According to the Supreme Court, a minority institution does not lose its minority character by admitting students from _____ communities.

6. The Supreme Court laid down a two-fold test to determine if an institution has minority character, consisting of "" and "."

7. The first aspect of the test, "Establishment," requires tracing the origin of the institution to determine who was the _____ behind its founding.

8. The administration of a minority institution is not required to be managed exclusively by the _____ community, according to the Supreme Court.

9. Aligarh Muslim University was originally established as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College by _____ in 1875.

10. In _____, the Indian government passed the Aligarh Muslim University Act, upgrading MAO College to AMU.

4. World Immunization Day 2024

- World Immunization Day, observed annually on November 10, aims to raise awareness about the vital role vaccines play in preventing infectious diseases and protecting public health.

- Immunization is one of the most effective and cost-efficient intervention for controlling and eradicating diseases, saving millions of lives globally each year. Vaccines help protect individuals from diseases like measles, polio, tuberculosis, and COVID-19.

- By reducing the incidence of infectious diseases, immunization not only safeguards individuals but also strengthens community health by building herd immunity.

- This day encourages governments, healthcare providers, and communities worldwide to emphasize the importance of vaccines and extend immunization coverage, especially to underserved populations.

- In India, World Immunization Day is particularly significant due to the unique challenges the country faces in reaching remote areas.

- Further, children, in particular, remain at significant risk because they are either unimmunized or partially immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases. Partially immunized and unimmunized children are most susceptible to childhood diseases and are at a much higher risk of dying as compared to fully immunized children.

- Immunization has been a central focus in India's public health strategy for decades, leading to remarkable progress in reducing disease prevalence and child mortality rates.

- World Immunization Day thus serves as an opportunity to reaffirm India's commitment to achieving universal immunization and to reflect on the progress made through landmark initiatives, including the Universal Immunization Programme and Mission Indradhanush.

- This day also highlights the need for continued efforts to ensure every individual has access to life-saving vaccines.

Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)

- The Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) is one of India's most comprehensive public health initiatives, aiming to provide life-saving vaccines to millions of newborns and pregnant women each year.

- Initially launched in 1978 as the Expanded Programme on Immunization, it was rebranded as the UIP in 1985 when its coverage was extended beyond urban centres to rural areas, addressing disparities in healthcare access.

- In 1992, the UIP was incorporated into the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme and later, in 1997, into the National Reproductive and Child Health Programme.

- Since 2005, under the National Rural Health Mission, the UIP has become a central component of India's public health efforts, focusing on ensuring that vaccines reach every child, even in the most remote parts of the country.

- With a targeted annual reach of around 2.67 crore newborns and 2.9 crore pregnant women, the UIP has become one of the most cost-effective health interventions in the country, significantly reducing the under-5 mortality rate from 45 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 32 per 1000 live births (SRS 2020).

- With consistent efforts to reach and vaccinate all eligible children against vaccine-preventable diseases, the country's Full Immunization Coverage for FY 2023-24 stands at 93.23% nationally.

- Currently, the program provides free immunization against 12 diseases, including nine nationwide, such as Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, and Hepatitis B. Additionally, it offers vaccines against Rotavirus diarrhoea, Pneumococcal Pneumonia, and Japanese Encephalitis in specific regions.

- Under this initiative, a child is considered fully immunized after receiving all vaccinations as per the national schedule within the first year of life.

- Notable milestones include India's elimination of polio in 2014 and maternal and neonatal tetanus in 2015, achievements that underscore the impact of the UIP in protecting public health.

Mission Indradhanush

- Mission Indradhanush (MI), launched in December 2014, is a strategic initiative by the Indian government aimed at increasing the full immunization coverage for children across the country, with a goal to reach 90% coverage.

- Mission Indradhanush specifically focuses on areas with low immunization rates, including hard-to-reach regions and communities where children are either unvaccinated or partially vaccinated.

- This mission adopts a targeted approach, prioritizing districts and pockets where immunization levels remain low, thereby striving to bridge critical gaps in vaccine coverage and ensuring that no child is left unprotected. Since its inception, twelve phases of Mission Indradhanush have been completed, covering 554 districts nationwide.

- Mission Indradhanush has been integrated into other significant national programs, such as the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and the Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, further enhancing its outreach.

- Under these programs, immunization efforts extended to 16,850 villages across 541 districts and 48,929 villages across 117 aspirational districts, respectively.

- The first two phases of Mission Indradhanush alone led to a 6.7% increase in full immunization coverage in just one year, reflecting its early success.

U-Win

- The U-WIN Portal represents a major leap forward in India's immunization efforts, providing a fully digitized record of vaccination for pregnant women and children from birth to 17 years under the Universal Immunization Programme.

- This digital platform aims to streamline vaccine delivery and record-keeping, ensuring that every individual can easily access and manage their immunization records.

- Designed with user-friendly, citizen-centric services, U-WIN allows for 'Anytime Access' and 'Anywhere' vaccination, offering flexible scheduling options for recipients.

- Citizens can self-register through the U-WIN web portal or the mobile app, which makes it easier for families to keep track of vaccination schedules and receive automated SMS alerts for upcoming doses.

- The platform also generates a universal QR-based eVaccination Certificate and provides the option to create an Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) ID for themselves and a Child ABHA ID for their children, enabling comprehensive digital health management.

- With accessibility in mind, the U-WIN portal is available in 11 regional languages, including Hindi, to ensure widespread usability across diverse linguistic communities.

- As of September 16, 2024, the platform has registered 6.46 crore beneficiaries, conducted over 1.04 crore vaccination sessions, and recorded 23.06 crore administered vaccine doses. This scale of registration and record-keeping highlights U-WIN's impact in making immunization data readily accessible and securely stored for millions of families across the country.

- The platform's broad capabilities demonstrate India's commitment to leveraging technology to enhance healthcare accessibility, streamline immunization tracking, and further strengthen public health infrastructure at the grassroots level.

- India's journey in public health showcases remarkable achievements in the elimination of several deadly diseases.

- From being officially certified polio-free to eradicating maternal and neonatal tetanus, the country has made significant strides in improving the health and well-being of its citizens.

- The country's proactive efforts in disease control and vaccination, backed by strong infrastructure and international collaboration, have set global benchmarks.

- India's successes in immunization programs highlight its growing capacity to tackle vaccine-preventable diseases and contribute to global health security.

India's Public Health Milestones

- India's public health journey is marked by significant achievements, including the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive.

- From becoming polio-free to eradicating maternal and neonatal tetanus, the country has made great strides in improving health outcomes.

- Strong infrastructure, proactive disease control efforts, and international collaboration have helped India set global benchmarks in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases.

India's Covid Vaccination Drive

- India's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, launched on January 16, 2021, stands as a global success story in public health.

- By January 6, 2023, the program had administered over 220 crore doses, covering 97% of eligible citizens with at least one dose and 90% with both doses. Initially focused on the adult population, the program expanded to include younger age groups, with vaccinations for those aged 12-14 beginning on March 16, 2022, and precautionary doses for individuals aged 18-59 starting on April 10, 2022.

- Overcoming significant challenges, the program required rapid vaccine research, the training of 2.6 lakh vaccinators and 4.8 lakh support members, and the establishment of an IT platform for tracking and delivery.

- This proactive approach enabled India to not only meet domestic needs but also support global vaccination efforts through initiatives like Vaccine Maitri, which supplied vaccines to other nations.

Polio-Free India

- On March 27, 2014, India, along with ten other countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region, was officially certified as polio-free—a significant public health achievement. India's last reported case of polio was on January 13, 2011, in Howrah, West Bengal.

- However, despite this certification, the country remains vigilant due to the persistent risk of poliovirus importation from the two countries where polio remains endemic: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- India's successful fight against polio has strengthened its broader immunization infrastructure, which is now being leveraged to protect against a range of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPDs).
- Under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), the country continues to introduce additional vaccines, aiming to ensure that no child is left unprotected.
- The systems developed during the National Polio Program have greatly enhanced routine immunization efforts, setting a goal of over 90% full immunization coverage.
- This progress is a collaborative effort supported by state governments, WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International, and other partners, who have been instrumental in not only eradicating polio but also in advancing India's immunization initiatives for broader public health security.

Elimination of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNTE)

- India's success in eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNTE) stands as a major public health accomplishment. Achieved in April 2015, well ahead of the global target of December 2015, MNTE validation was completed across all of India's 36 states and union territories.
- This milestone signifies that the incidence of maternal and neonatal tetanus has fallen to less than 1 case per 1,000 live births, effectively eliminating it as a public health problem.
- This achievement reflects India's commitment to safe maternal and newborn health practices through health system strengthening, high routine immunization coverage, clean delivery protocols, and strong surveillance.
- It is a testament to the dedication of health workers, policymakers, and all stakeholders involved.

India declared Yaws-Free

- In another historic milestone, India became the first country to be officially recognized as yaws-free by the World Health Organization (WHO), achieving this well before the global target year of 2020.
- This recognition highlights India's proactive and sustained efforts to eradicate the disease, which primarily affects rural and marginalized communities.
- The elimination of yaws reflects comprehensive public health efforts focused on early treatment, health education, and targeted interventions for vulnerable populations.
- WHO and UNICEF lauded India's achievements, noting the wider impact on community health, socio-economic improvement, and India's continued leadership in global public health.
- India's commitment to immunization reflects a holistic approach to safeguarding public health, with a focus on reaching every individual, especially those in underserved and remote areas.
- Through initiatives like the Universal Immunization Programme, Mission Indradhanush, and the U-WIN portal, the country has made remarkable strides in increasing immunization coverage, combating vaccine-preventable diseases, and reducing child mortality.
- India's successful elimination of polio, its resilient response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its dedication to leveraging technology for healthcare access underscore the nation's capacity to meet complex health challenges.
- As World Immunization Day reminds us of the vital role vaccines play in public health, India stands as an example of what can be achieved with comprehensive planning, community engagement, and a commitment to universal access.
- Continued efforts will be essential to maintaining and expanding these achievements, ensuring that no child is left unprotected and every individual has access to life-saving vaccines for a healthier future.

Fill in the Blank:

1. World Immunization Day is observed annually on _____ to raise awareness about the importance of vaccines in preventing infectious diseases.

2. India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) was originally launched in 1978 as the _____ Programme on Immunization.

3. Under the Universal Immunization Programme, a child is considered fully immunized after receiving all vaccinations according to the _____ schedule within the first year of life.

4. Mission Indradhanush, launched in December 2014, aims to achieve _____ percent immunization coverage across the country.

5. The U-WIN portal provides a digital platform for immunization records and is available in _____ regional languages, including Hindi.

6. In 2014, India was officially certified as _____ - free by the WHO, along with ten other countries in the South-East Asia region.

7. India's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme began on January 16, 2021, and by January 6, 2023, had administered over _____ crore doses.

8. The elimination of maternal and neonatal _____ in India was achieved in April 2015, signifying significant progress in safe maternal and newborn health practices.

9. India became the first country to be officially recognized as _____ - free by the WHO, achieving this milestone before the global target year of 2020.

10. The _____ portal generates a universal QR-based eVaccination Certificate and allows citizens to create an Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) ID for digital health management.

5. Greta Thunberg protests against Azerbaijan hosting global climate summit

- Climate activist Greta Thunberg attended a rally in Georgia to protest against Azerbaijan hosting the annual United Nations climate talks.

- Ms. Thunberg and scores of other activists who rallied in Tbilisi, the capital of the South Caucasus nation, argued that Azerbaijan doesn't deserve to host the climate talks because of its repressive policies.

- U.N. climate talks, called COP29, opened in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, a major oil producer where the world's first oil well was drilled.

- Thunberg described Azerbaijan as "a repressive, occupying state, which has committed ethnic cleansing, and which is continuing cracking down on Azerbaijani civil society."

- She charged that the Caspian Sea nation has used the summit as "a chance to greenwash their crimes and human rights abuses."

- "We can't give them any legitimacy in this situation, which is why we are standing here and saying no to greenwashing and no to the Azerbaijani regime," she said.

- Azerbaijan has committed to clean energy projects, but critics have argued that's just to export more oil and gas.

- Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has been in power since 2003 when he succeeded his father who died after ruling the oil-rich nation for the previous decade. He has been accused by critics of intolerance to dissent and freedom of speech.

- Earlier this year, Mr. Aliyev won another seven-year presidential term in an election that monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said took place in a "restrictive environment" with no real political competition.

- Mr. Aliyev called the early vote while enjoying a surge in popularity after Azerbaijani forces in September 2023 swiftly reclaimed the Karabakh region from ethnic Armenian separatists, who had controlled it for three decades.

- After Azerbaijan regained full control of Karabakh, most of its 120,000 Armenian residents fled. The Azerbaijani authorities, however, said they were welcome to stay and promised their human rights would be ensured.

- Ms. Thunberg, 21, has inspired a global youth movement demanding stronger efforts to fight climate change after staging weekly protests outside the Swedish parliament starting in 2018.

- The European climate service Copernicus announced earlier this month that the world is on pace for 1.5 degrees of warming this year, which is heading to become the hottest year in human civilization.

- Speaking at the rally in Tbilisi Thunberg emphasized that the hottest year ever recorded comes after global greenhouse gas emissions reached an all-time high last year.

COP29 begins in Azerbaijan

- The 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) kicked off in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

- Delegates from about 200 countries, business leaders, climate scientists, Indigenous Peoples, journalists, and various other experts and stakeholders are expected to attend the summit, which will last until November 22.

- The primary goal of COP29 is to bring together countries to develop a shared plan for curbing further global warming.

- It will also focus on scaling up climate finance to help developing nations tackle the adverse effects of climate change.

What is COP?

- Conference of Parties, or COP, is the supreme governing body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) — an international treaty, signed in 1992, that has provided a basis for climate negotiations.

- The UNFCCC commits parties (countries which have joined the treaty) to act together to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system".

- Currently, there are 198 parties (197 countries plus European Union) to the UNFCCC, constituting near universal membership.

- One of the significant tasks for the COP is to "review the national communications and emission inventories" submitted by member states.
- "Based on this information, the COP assesses the effects of the measures taken by Parties and the progress made in achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention,".
- Every year since 1995 — except in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic — the parties come together to discuss and agree on international climate policy.
- The summit is known as the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

What are some of the milestones of COP?

- The first major breakthrough came at COP3 in Kyoto in 1997 when the parties adopted the Kyoto Protocol.
- The international treaty placed obligations on the set of rich and industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by assigned amounts.
- "Targets varied by country but averaged at a 4.2% reduction by 2012 below 1990 levels," according to a report in the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).
- With the Kyoto Protocol set to expire in 2012, at COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, parties tried to establish a successor to the treaty.
- However, the attempt failed. Instead, the summit ended with the Copenhagen Accord, which included the 2 degree Celsius warming limit and reference to the 1.5 degree Celsius goal.
- It also comprised the idea of developed countries providing funding for mitigation and adaptation.
- Three years later, at COP21 in Paris, 196 parties adopted the landmark Paris Agreement — a legally binding international treaty to limit global temperatures to below 2 degree Celsius, and preferably below 1.5 degree Celsius.
- The parties also agreed to submit their climate action plans, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), by 2020.
- The next milestone came during COP26 in Glasgow 2021 in the form of the Glasgow Pact.
- The parties made a commitment to "phase down" the use of coal (this language was weakened from "phase out" late in the negotiations) and to phase out "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies".
- This was the first time that a UN climate agreement explicitly mentioned coal.
- At last year's COP28 in Dubai, a Loss and Damage fund was officially launched. The fund is meant to provide financial help to countries struck by climate disasters.

What are some of the criticisms of COP?

- Over the years, the biggest criticism has been the COP's failure to provide climate finance to developing nations.
- For instance, in 2009, the wealthiest countries — which are disproportionately responsible for the climate crisis — promised to raise every year from 2020 for developing nations to help them reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis. They failed to deliver on their promise.
- To make matters worse, a 2021 report by UN Climate Change, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), showed that developing countries would

require a total of about $6 trillion annually between then and 2030 just to implement their climate action plans.

- This amount is far more than what developed nations had promised in 2009.

- Experts have also pointed out that parties have not been doing enough to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius.

- During COP28, an analysis by the International Energy Agency (IEA) said the world is on track to breach the threshold, despite pollution-slashing pledges made by dozens of countries at the summit.

What should be expected from COP29?

- Climate finance is at the top of the agenda of COP29.

- The parties are negotiating the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), a new amount that must be mobilised by developed countries every year from 2025 onward to finance climate action in developing countries.

- It has to be more than the $100 billion that developed countries, collectively, had promised to raise every year from 2020.

- However, talks over the NCQG in recent months have been deeply divided. Parties disagree on almost every element of the fund, including "the amount of money that needs to be raised, who should contribute, what types of finance should feed into it, what it should fund and what period of time it should cover", according to a report by Carbon Brief.

- COP29 adopted standards for the creation of carbon credits under Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, breaking a years-long deadlock and allowing countries to emit greenhouse gases if they offset emissions elsewhere.

UNFCCC

- The UNFCCC stands for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is an international environmental treaty established in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

- The primary objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

- The treaty laid the groundwork for subsequent climate agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015).

Key features of the UNFCCC include:

- **Global cooperation:** It provides a platform for global negotiations and actions on climate change, involving almost every country in the world.

- **Mitigation and adaptation:** The convention aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and enhance resilience to climate impacts (adaptation).

- **Annual Conferences of the Parties (COP):** The most notable meetings of the UNFCCC are the COP meetings, where countries review progress and negotiate new measures to combat climate change.

- For example, the Paris Agreement was adopted at COP21 in 2015.

- The UNFCCC plays a central role in shaping global climate policy, encouraging countries to commit to reducing emissions and making efforts to meet international climate goals.

Greta Thunberg

- Greta Thunberg is a Swedish environmental activist internationally known for her efforts to combat climate change.

- She first gained attention in 2018 at the age of 15, when she began skipping school on Fridays to protest outside the Swedish parliament, calling for stronger climate action.

- This movement became known as Fridays for Future and inspired millions of students worldwide to join the cause, advocating for urgent governmental action on climate issues.

- Thunberg has spoken at numerous high-profile events, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) in 2018 and the United Nations Climate Action Summit in 2019, where she delivered a famous speech urging world leaders to "panic" and take immediate action to address the climate crisis.

- Her activism has earned her both praise and criticism, and she has been recognized with various awards, including being named TIME magazine's Person of the Year in 2019 as one of the youngest recipients of the honor.

- Greta is also known for her blunt, direct style of communication, often calling out political leaders and corporations for their inaction on climate change.

Azerbaijan

- Azerbaijan is a country located at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, bordered by the Caspian Sea to the east, Russia to the north, Georgia to the northwest, Armenia to the west, and Iran to the south.

- Its capital is Baku, which is a major cultural, political, and economic center in the region.

- **Key Facts:**

- **Capital: Baku**

- **Official Language: Azerbaijani**

- **Population: Approximately 10 million people (as of 2024)**

- **Currency: Azerbaijani Manat (AZN)**

- **Government: Republic, with a presidential system**

President: Ilham Aliyev (as of October 2024)

- **Geography:** Azerbaijan is known for its diverse geography, including the Caspian Sea coastline, the Caucasus Mountains to the north, and vast lowlands and deserts.

- **History:** Azerbaijan has a rich history influenced by various empires, including the Persian, Ottoman, and Russian empires. It declared its independence in 1918 but was later incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1920.

- Azerbaijan regained its independence on August 30, 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Politics:

- Azerbaijan has a complex political landscape, with a focus on energy production, particularly oil and natural gas, which are central to its economy. The country is a member of organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

- A significant issue in Azerbaijan's modern history is the conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a landlocked area internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but with a large ethnic Armenian population. The conflict escalated into war in the 1990s and again in 2020, leading to a ceasefire brokered by Russia.

Economy:

- Azerbaijan's economy is largely driven by oil and natural gas exports, with its energy sector being the most significant contributor to GDP. The country has made efforts to diversify its economy, investing in infrastructure, agriculture, and tourism.
- Baku is known for its modern skyline, luxury hotels, and the Flame Towers, iconic buildings representing the country's rapid development.

Culture:

- Azerbaijan has a rich cultural heritage, blending Turkish, Persian, and Russian influences. It is known for its music, particularly Mugham (traditional music), as well as its carpets, which are a UNESCO-listed cultural heritage.
- The country celebrates various traditional festivals, including Novruz, the Persian New Year, which is widely observed across Azerbaijan.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Greta Thunberg began her climate activism by skipping school on Fridays to protest outside the Swedish parliament, a movement called _____.

2. The 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as _____, is being held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to November 22, 2024.

3. Azerbaijan's capital, which is also the country's largest city and a major political and cultural hub, is _____.

4. Thunberg criticized Azerbaijan's hosting of the climate talks, accusing the country of using the summit as a chance to _____ their crimes and human rights abuses.

5. The country of Azerbaijan is bordered by the Caspian Sea to the _____ and Armenia to the _____.

6. Azerbaijan has made efforts to diversify its economy by investing in sectors like agriculture, tourism, and _____.

7. In September 2023, Azerbaijani forces regained control of the _____ region from ethnic Armenian separatists.

8. Greta Thunberg emphasized at the rally in Tbilisi that the world is on track for _____ degrees of warming this year, making it the hottest year in human civilization.

9. The Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev, has been in power since 2003, after succeeding his father, who ruled the country for the previous _____ years.

10. The Caspian Sea is significant for Azerbaijan as it is where the world's first _____ was drilled.

6. Burkina Faso wants to reinstate death penalty

- Burkina Faso's military regime is considering reintroducing the death penalty, which the West African country abolished in 2018, according to a government source.

- The last known executions took place in September 1988, when four leaders accused of plotting a coup to oust then-President Blaise Compaoré were executed, including Defence Minister Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lingani and Minister of Economic Promotion Henri Zongo.

- Justice Minister Rodrigue Bayala indicated that discussions on the death penalty are underway, with plans to incorporate it into the draft criminal code.

- This initiative aligns with the direction set by the country's current leader, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, who seized power in a coup in 2022.

- Recently, the military government extended its rule by five more years, despite Traoré's initial promise to restore civilian governance by July 2024. Instead, in May, the junta approved a bill banning homosexuality.

- Amnesty International notes that, despite Burkina Faso's plans, sub-Saharan Africa is witnessing a trend toward abolishing the death penalty.

- As of October, 24 countries in the region have eliminated capital punishment for all crimes, and two others for ordinary crimes only.

- Additionally, Kenya and Zimbabwe are considering bills to abolish it completely, while Gambia is pursuing a constitutional amendment to end the death penalty.

- Conversely, Amnesty reports a rise in executions across Africa, with recorded executions more than tripling and death sentences increasing by 66%.

- This indicates a complex landscape where some nations move toward abolition, while others, like Burkina Faso, consider reintroducing capital punishment amidst broader discussions on legal reform under military rule.

Burkina Faso

- Burkina Faso is a landlocked country located in West Africa. It is bordered by six countries: Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south, and Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) to the southwest. Here are some key details about Burkina Faso:

1. Geography

Capital: Ouagadougou

- **Area:** Approximately 272,967 square kilometers (105,869 square miles).

- **Climate:** Burkina Faso has a predominantly tropical climate, characterized by a dry season (November to May) and a rainy season (June to October). The climate can be classified as semi-arid to tropical in different regions of the country.

- **Landforms:** The country is generally flat, with savannahs and plateaus, and no major rivers; however, it has several small rivers such as the Black Volta, White Volta, and Nakambe rivers.

2. Population

- **Population:** As of 2024, the population is approximately 24 million people.
- **Ethnic Groups:** Burkina Faso is home to more than 60 ethnic groups, including the Mossi (the largest ethnic group), Fula, Gourmanché, and Bobo.
- **Languages:** The official language is French, which was inherited from the colonial period. Several local languages are widely spoken, such as Mossi, Dioula, Fulfulde, and Gourmanchéma.

3. History

- **Pre-Colonial Period:** Burkina Faso was historically inhabited by various kingdoms, with the Mossi kingdoms being among the most powerful in the region.
- **Colonial Era:** The region was colonized by France in the late 19th century. It was known as the French Upper Volta until it gained independence on August 5, 1960.
- **Post-Independence:** After independence, the country was plagued by political instability, military coups, and periodic changes in leadership. Notable figures in its modern history include Thomas Sankara, who led the country from 1983 to 1987 and implemented progressive reforms, before being assassinated in a coup that brought Blaise Compaoré to power. Compaoré ruled for 27 years before being ousted in 2014 during a popular uprising.
- **Recent Conflicts:** The country has faced increasing instability in recent years due to growing militant Islamist insurgencies, particularly in the northern and eastern regions, leading to internal displacement and a deteriorating security situation.

4. Government and Politics

- **Political System:** Burkina Faso is a presidential republic with a multi-party system. The President serves as both the head of state and the government.
- **Current Leadership:** As of 2024, Captain Ibrahim Traoré is the de facto leader of the country after taking power in a military coup in September 2022.
- **Military Influence:** The country has experienced multiple military coups, with the most recent one occurring in 2022 following protests against the government's handling of the security situation.

5. Economy

- **Agriculture:** The economy is largely agrarian, with the majority of the population engaged in subsistence farming. Main crops include sorghum, millet, maize, rice, and cotton. Livestock farming is also an important sector.
- **Mining:** Burkina Faso has substantial gold reserves and is one of Africa's top gold producers. Gold mining is a major contributor to the country's economy.
- **Challenges:** The economy faces challenges such as limited infrastructure, frequent droughts, political instability, and a reliance on foreign aid.
- **Currency:** The currency of Burkina Faso is the West African CFA franc (XOF), which is shared by several countries in the West African region.

6. Culture

- **Religions:** The population practices a mix of traditional African religions, Islam, and Christianity. Islam is the predominant religion, followed by Christianity and indigenous beliefs.

- **Festivals:** Burkina Faso celebrates various cultural festivals, including the Fespaco (Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou), one of Africa's largest film festivals.
- **Music and Arts:** Music plays a significant role in Burkinabe culture, with popular genres including traditional drumming, jazz, and reggae. The country has produced internationally recognized musicians and artists.
- **Cuisine:** The traditional diet includes staples like millet, sorghum, rice, maize, and tubers. Dishes like tô (a porridge-like dish made from millet or sorghum) and riz gras (a rice dish with meat and vegetables) are common.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in _____ Africa, bordered by six countries.
2. The capital city of Burkina Faso is _____.
3. Burkina Faso abolished the death penalty in the year _____.
4. The most recent military coup in Burkina Faso occurred in _____.
5. The last known executions in Burkina Faso took place in _____, when four leaders were executed.
6. The current leader of Burkina Faso, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, seized power in _____.
7. Burkina Faso is home to more than _____ ethnic groups, including the Mossi, Fula, and Gourmanché.
8. The official language of Burkina Faso is _____, which was inherited from its colonial past.
9. The country's economy is largely dependent on _____ farming, with major crops such as sorghum, millet, and maize.
10. Burkina Faso is one of Africa's top _____ producers, with substantial gold reserves.

7. Haiti appoints new prime minister as security crisis mounts

- Haiti's transitional presidential council has appointed Alix Didier Fils-Aimé, an entrepreneur and former senate candidate, as the new prime minister, according to the country's official gazette.
- Didier Fils-Aimé replaces Garry Conille, who had served as prime minister since May.
- This leadership change comes amid ongoing political instability and escalating gang violence, which has plagued the country for years.
- Haiti has not held democratic elections in several years, and armed gangs have taken control of most of the capital, Port-au-Prince, with their influence extending to surrounding areas.
- The surge in violence has led to widespread hunger and displacement, with hundreds of thousands forced to flee their homes.
- Despite promises of international support, the assistance has been slow to materialize, and neighboring countries have deported Haitian migrants back to the country, exacerbating the crisis.

- Alix Didier Fils-Aimé is the son of Alix Fils-Aimé, a prominent Haitian activist who was imprisoned under the regime of the notorious dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. Fils-Aimé's appointment signals a new phase in Haiti's efforts to stabilize the government amid the ongoing turmoil.
- Garry Conille, a longtime civil servant with experience in the United Nations, was appointed as prime minister by Haiti's transitional council earlier this year, with the goal of restoring order and overseeing the country's recovery.
- The transitional council was established in April to help facilitate the restoration of stability by selecting a new prime minister and cabinet.
- However, the process has been marred by political infighting, and the council has been at odds with Conille for some time.
- Last week, the Organization of American States attempted to mediate the disputes within the council but was unsuccessful in easing the tensions.
- Further complicating matters, the transitional council has faced accusations of corruption.
- In October, three of its members were accused of demanding bribes totaling $750,000 from a government bank director to secure his position.
- These same council members were involved in signing the decree that appointed Fils-Aimé as prime minister, adding another layer of controversy to an already unstable political situation.
- Despite these challenges, the hope remains that Haiti's new leadership can guide the country through its ongoing crisis.

Haiti

- Haiti is a country located on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean Sea. It shares the island with the Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island, while Haiti occupies the western third.
- Haiti is known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and ongoing challenges in terms of political instability, economic development, and social issues.

Geography

Location:

- Caribbean, on the island of Hispaniola, which is part of the Greater Antilles archipelago. It is situated to the east of Cuba and Jamaica, and south of the Bahamas.
- **Area:** 27,750 square kilometers (10,714 square miles).
- **Capital:** Port-au-Prince, located on the western side of the country along the Gulf of Gonâve.
- **Landscape:** Haiti has a mountainous terrain, with the highest peak being Pic la Selle (2,680 meters or 8,793 feet above sea level). There are also coastal plains, tropical forests, and numerous rivers.

Population

- **Population:** Approximately 12.5 million (as of 2024). Haiti is the most populous country in the Caribbean.
- **Ethnic Composition:** Primarily of Afro-Haitian descent, with small minorities of European and Arab ancestry.
- **Languages:** Haitian Creole and French are the official languages. Haitian Creole is spoken by almost the entire population, while French is used in government and formal settings.

- **Religion:** Predominantly Roman Catholic (about 80%), with a significant Protestant population (about 16%). There is also a practice of Vodou (Voodoo) among many Haitians, often intertwined with Catholic practices.

History

- **Pre-Colonial Era:** The island of Hispaniola was originally inhabited by the Taíno people, an Arawak-speaking indigenous group.
- **Colonial Period:** In the 16th century, the island was colonized by the Spanish, but the western part of Hispaniola (now Haiti) was later ceded to France. France established a profitable sugar plantation economy in the region using enslaved Africans.
- **Revolution:** In 1791, Haiti became the site of the first successful slave revolt in the Americas, led by figures like Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines. In 1804, after a bloody revolution, Haiti became the first independent black republic and the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere (after the United States).
- **Post-Independence:** Haiti's early years were marked by political instability, internal conflict, and foreign intervention. Despite its historical significance, Haiti has struggled with economic and political challenges throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, often marked by dictatorships, foreign occupation, and extreme poverty.

Political Structure

- **Government Type:** Haiti is a semi-presidential republic.
- **President:** The president is both the head of state and government. As of 2024, the president is Ariel Henry, who assumed office in 2021 after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.
- **Legislature:** Haiti has a bicameral legislature consisting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The political system has been marked by instability and frequent changes in leadership.
- **Political Instability:** Haiti has experienced frequent political turmoil, including coups, civil unrest, and weak governance. Political instability has exacerbated challenges in addressing the country's poverty and infrastructure issues.

Economy

- **GDP:** The economy is one of the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita significantly lower than that of its neighbors.

Major Sectors:

- **Agriculture:** Haiti's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, with coffee, mangoes, and sugarcane being some of the main exports.
- **Textiles:** The textile industry is an important source of export revenue, especially through trade agreements with the United States under the HOPE/HELP Acts.
- **Tourism:** Despite its natural beauty and rich history, tourism is underdeveloped due to infrastructure limitations and security concerns.
- **Challenges:** Haiti faces significant challenges, including high unemployment, inflation, lack of infrastructure, and dependence on foreign aid. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes, have exacerbated economic struggles.

Natural Disasters

- Haiti is highly vulnerable to natural disasters due to its location and geography:

- **Earthquakes:** The most devastating earthquake in recent history occurred in January 2010, with a magnitude of 7.0, killing over 200,000 people and causing widespread damage to infrastructure.
- **Hurricanes:** Haiti frequently experiences hurricanes and tropical storms, which cause significant flooding and damage, further disrupting the country's fragile economy.

Culture

- **Music and Dance:** Haiti has a rich musical tradition, including genres such as Kompa, Rara, and Mizik Rasin. Music and dance are integral to Haitian social life and religious practices.
- **Art:** Haitian art is widely celebrated for its vivid, colorful paintings and sculptures, often reflecting themes of daily life, history, and religious beliefs.
- **Cuisine:** Haitian cuisine is a fusion of African, French, and indigenous influences. Common dishes include rice and beans, griot (fried pork), and joumou (squash soup), which holds historical significance as a symbol of freedom and independence.

Social Issues

- **Poverty:** A large portion of the population lives below the poverty line, and unemployment rates are high. Access to education, healthcare, and clean water remains limited.
- **Health:** Haiti has struggled with public health crises, such as the cholera outbreak following the 2010 earthquake, and the healthcare system is severely under-resourced.
- **Human Rights:** Haiti faces significant challenges with human rights, including issues related to political repression, gender violence, and child labor. The justice system is often slow and inefficient.

International Relations

- **Foreign Aid:** Haiti is one of the largest recipients of foreign aid in the world, primarily from countries like the United States, Canada, and France, as well as from international organizations.
- **Migration:** Due to economic hardship, many Haitians have migrated to the United States, the Dominican Republic, and other countries, often fleeing political instability and the effects of natural disasters.
- **Diplomacy:** Haiti is a member of the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and CARICOM (Caribbean Community). It has longstanding diplomatic relations with the U.S., France, and other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Recent Developments

- **Political Crisis:** The assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021 plunged Haiti into political chaos, with widespread protests and a lack of a stable government.
- **Gang Violence:** Since 2021, gangs have become a significant force in Haiti, with escalating violence impacting the safety and security of the population, particularly in urban areas like Port-au-Prince.
- **International Assistance:** Haiti continues to rely on international support to address its economic, security, and humanitarian needs.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola with the _____, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island.

2. The new prime minister of Haiti, appointed in 2024, is _____, an entrepreneur and former senate candidate.

3. Haiti has been facing ongoing _____, with armed gangs controlling most of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

4. The country's transitional council was established in _____ to help restore stability by selecting a new prime minister and cabinet.

5. The highest peak in Haiti is _____, which stands at 2,680 meters (8,793 feet) above sea level.

6. Haiti became the first independent black republic in 1804 after a successful slave revolt led by figures like _____ and _____.

7. Despite promises of international support, _____ has been slow to materialize, and some neighboring countries have deported Haitian migrants back to Haiti.

8. The devastating earthquake in January _____ killed over 200,000 people and caused widespread damage in Haiti.

9. Haiti's most populous city and capital is _____, located on the western side of the country.

10. _____ is the name of Haiti's official language spoken by almost the entire population, while _____ is used in government and formal settings.

8. Booker Prize 2024: British writer Samantha Harvey wins for space-station novel 'Orbital'

- On November 12, 2024, British author Samantha Harvey won the prestigious Booker Prize for Fiction with her novel Orbital, a short and captivating story set aboard the International Space Station.

- The novel, which Harvey began writing during the COVID-19 pandemic, explores the lives of six astronauts orbiting Earth.

- Over the course of 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets, the astronauts grapple with their confined existence while marveling at the fragile beauty of the planet below.

- Harvey describes Orbital as a "space pastoral," blending themes of isolation, wonder, and human connection in a setting that contrasts the vastness of space with the intimacy of the human experience.

- Harvey was awarded the £50,000 prize for this "miraculous novel," which writer and artist Edmund de Waal, who chaired the five-member judging panel, described as one that "makes our world strange and new."

- Gaby Wood, the CEO of the Booker Prize Foundation, emphasized the novel's relevance, noting its hopeful and timeless message in a year marked by geopolitical tensions and the looming threat of climate change.

- The novel is lauded for its crystalline writing and emotional depth, with de Waal highlighting the "capaciousness" of Harvey's succinct narrative. At just 136 pages, Orbital is one of the shortest novels ever to win the Booker Prize.

- This year's Booker Prize was notable for the presence of five women on the shortlist, the largest number in the award's 55-year history.

- Harvey's win marks the first time a British author has claimed the prize since 2020, and she is the first female winner since 2019. The five other finalists included American writer Percival Everett, whose novel James reimagines Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn from the perspective of its Black character, Jim, and works by Rachel Kushner, Anne Michaels, Charlotte Wood, and Yael van der Wouden.

- The judges' decision was unanimous, with de Waal stressing that the selection was based purely on the quality of the novels, rather than any external factors like gender or nationality.

- Founded in 1969, the Booker Prize is awarded to novels written in English and published in the U.K. or Ireland.

- The award is known for significantly boosting an author's career, and previous winners include literary giants like Ian McEwan, Margaret Atwood, and Salman Rushdie.

- Last year's winner was Irish author Paul Lynch for Prophet Song, a post-democratic dystopian novel.

The Booker Prize is one of the most prestigious literary awards, recognizing excellence in fiction writing.

1. History & Origin

- The Booker Prize was first awarded in 1969, initially called the Man Booker Prize for Fiction after sponsorship by the Man Group, a global investment management firm.

- From 2002 to 2019, the award was known as the Man Booker Prize.

- In 2019, the sponsorship was changed, and it became known simply as the Booker Prize, with no corporate sponsor name attached.

2. Award Criteria

- The Booker Prize is awarded annually for the best original novel written in English.

- The novel must be published in the United Kingdom or Ireland in the year preceding the award, although international works translated into English are eligible.

3. Eligibility

- The book must be written in English (regardless of the author's nationality).

- Authors of any nationality are eligible to win the award as long as the novel is published in the UK or Ireland.

- The author must have originally published the book in English, though it can be a translation if the original language was non-English.

4. The Judging Process

- A panel of judges, usually consisting of five literary figures, selects the winner.

- Judges are replaced each year, often including authors, critics, journalists, and academics.

- The judges first create a longlist of novels, followed by a shortlist, and then announce the final winner.

5. Prize Money

- The winner of the Booker Prize receives a cash award of £50,000 (approximately).

- Shortlisted authors also receive a £2,500 honorarium.

6. Previous Winners

Some notable past winners include:

- Salman Rushdie for Midnight's Children (1981)
- Margaret Atwood for The Blind Assassin (2000) and The Testaments (2019)
- Hilary Mantel for Wolf Hall (2009) and Bring Up the Bodies (2012)
- Khaled Hosseini for The Kite Runner (2003) (shortlisted but not awarded, though it gained widespread popularity)
- Douglas Stuart for Shuggie Bain (2020)

7. Changes & Special Editions

- In 2018, the Booker International Prize was separated from the Booker Prize. The Booker International Prize focuses on translated fiction and includes a prize for both the author and translator.
- In recent years, the Booker Prize has gained international significance, with winners often drawing attention globally and sometimes sparking international debates about literature and culture.

8. Notable Milestones

- **Double Winners:** Some authors have won the Booker Prize more than once, like Hilary Mantel, who won for Wolf Hall (2009) and Bring Up the Bodies (2012).
- **Youngest and Oldest Winners:** The youngest-ever winner is Ben Okri, who was 32 when he won for The Famished Road (1991). The oldest winner is Penelope Fitzgerald, who was 77 when she won for Offshore (1979).
- The Booker Prize has had several controversies over the years, especially concerning the inclusion of certain works, gender balance, and diversity of themes.

9. Global Impact

- The Booker Prize continues to have a significant impact on the literary world, especially in terms of sales and global recognition. Winning the Booker often leads to increased visibility for an author and their works.

10. Recent Developments

- The Booker Prize remains a symbol of literary excellence and continues to evolve with changes in sponsorship, judging criteria, and the nature of modern literature.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The Booker Prize was first awarded in _____ and was initially called the Man Booker Prize for Fiction.
2. In 2019, the Booker Prize sponsorship changed, and it became known simply as the _____ Prize, with no corporate sponsor name attached.
3. The novel Orbital, which won the 2024 Booker Prize, was written by British author _____.
4. The winner of the Booker Prize receives a cash award of approximately _____ pounds.
5. The novel Orbital explores the lives of six astronauts aboard the _____.

6. In 2024, the Booker Prize was awarded to Samantha Harvey, making her the first female winner since _____.

7. The Booker Prize is awarded annually for the best original novel written in _____.

8. The Booker Prize is awarded to novels published in the _____, though international works translated into English are eligible.

9. The novel Orbital was described by Edmund de Waal as a "space _____," blending themes of isolation, wonder, and human connection.

10. The judging panel for the Booker Prize is typically composed of _____ literary figures who create a longlist, shortlist, and select the final winner.

9. Scientists discover new planet with rocky core, 60 times heavier than Earth

- An international team led by the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad has discovered a new exoplanet, TOI-6651b, located 690 light years from Earth.

- This exoplanet, which is five times the size and 60 times the mass of Earth, falls within the sub-Saturn class, which includes planets with sizes between that of Neptune and Saturn.

- TOI-6651b's discovery was made possible by the advanced spectroscope PARAS-2 (PRL Advanced Radial Velocity Abu Sky Search), installed on PRL's 2.5-meter telescope at Mount Abu in Rajasthan.

- As Asia's highest-resolution spectrograph in its band range of 380-690 nanometers, PARAS-2 enabled the precise measurements needed to confirm TOI-6651b's existence.

- This technology advancement has allowed the PRL team to locate TOI-6651b at the boundary of the "Neptune desert," a region where planets orbiting close to their stars are scarce.

- TOI-6651b, considered the third most dense sub-Saturn exoplanet discovered to date, has a rapid orbital period, taking only five days to complete a full orbit around its Sun-like host star, in contrast to Earth's 365-day orbital period.

- Because of its proximity to its star, TOI-6651b receives intense stellar radiation, a factor that has stripped much of its gaseous atmosphere over time.

- This process has left the planet with a rocky core that comprises approximately 87% of its total mass and is rich in heavy metals like iron.

- The remaining mass is surrounded by a low-density hydrogen-helium envelope, indicating that the planet, originally a gas giant, has transformed over time due to tidal forces and atmospheric evaporation.

- TOI-6651b's high surface temperature of around 1,500 Kelvin (1,200 degrees Celsius) renders it inhospitable for life.

- Its position on the edge of the Neptune desert is considered significant for scientists aiming to understand the factors that define the boundaries of this region.

- Studying TOI-6651b's composition and evolution can provide crucial insights into the characteristics and changes occurring within the Neptune desert.
- The dense rocky core and transition from a gas giant offer clues about the evolutionary processes that occur under intense stellar irradiation.
- This discovery emphasizes the potential of PARAS-2 in exoplanet research. Unlike its predecessor, this upgraded spectrograph offers the resolution needed to detect smaller, Earth-like planets. PRL scientists are working on further refining PARAS-2 to enable the discovery of even smaller celestial bodies in the future.
- TOI-6651b is the latest in a series of exoplanet discoveries by the PRL team, adding to previous findings of gas giants that were significantly larger than Earth.
- This research marks a substantial contribution to the field of astronomy, particularly in the study of exoplanets that exist close to their stars and in regions like the Neptune desert, which remain relatively unexplored.

Exoplanets

- Exoplanets are planets that orbit stars outside our Solar System.
- With thousands of exoplanets identified to date, they are a major focus of modern astronomy, shedding light on planet formation, the diversity of planetary systems, and the potential for life beyond Earth.

Discovery:

- The first confirmed exoplanet was found in 1992 around a pulsar, PSR B1257+12, and the first confirmed exoplanet around a Sun-like star was discovered in 1995, orbiting 51 Pegasi.
- Since then, thousands of exoplanets have been identified, mainly by telescopes like the Kepler Space Telescope, TESS (Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite), and Hubble.

Detection Methods:

- **Transit Method:** Detects dips in a star's brightness when a planet passes in front of it. This method has found the most exoplanets.
- **Radial Velocity:** Measures the star's slight wobble caused by a planet's gravitational pull.
- **Direct Imaging:** Captures images of exoplanets by blocking out the host star's light.
- **Gravitational Microlensing:** Uses the gravitational field of a star and planet to focus light from a more distant star.

Types of Exoplanets:

- **Hot Jupiters:** Massive gas giants with close orbits, leading to very high temperatures.
- **Super-Earths:** Larger than Earth but smaller than Neptune; may be rocky, icy, or have thick atmospheres.
- **Mini-Neptunes:** Planets slightly smaller than Neptune, with thick atmospheres but possibly no solid surface.
- **Earth-like:** Exoplanets similar in size and temperature to Earth, often in the habitable zone where liquid water could exist.

Habitable Zone:

- The habitable zone, or "Goldilocks zone," is the range around a star where conditions may allow liquid water to exist on a planet's surface.
- However, being in the habitable zone doesn't guarantee a planet's habitability, as factors like atmospheric composition and magnetic field also play a role.

Notable Exoplanets:

- **Proxima Centauri b:** Orbits Proxima Centauri, the closest star to the Sun. It's in the habitable zone but subject to intense stellar flares.
- **TRAPPIST-1 System:** Contains seven Earth-sized planets, three of which are in the habitable zone.
- **Kepler-186f:** The first Earth-sized exoplanet found in the habitable zone of its star.
- **55 Cancri e:** A hot super-Earth that orbits so close to its star that its surface temperature can exceed 2,000°C.

Atmospheric Studies and Biosignatures:

- Scientists study exoplanet atmospheres to understand composition, temperature, and potential signs of life.
- James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) and other next-gen telescopes are improving our ability to detect biosignatures like water vapor, oxygen, methane, and other life-associated molecules.

Future Missions:

- Planned missions like the James Webb Space Telescope, Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, and potential future instruments like LUVOIR aim to refine our understanding of exoplanets and look for potential life signatures.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The exoplanet TOI-6651b, discovered by an international team led by PRL, is located _____ light years from Earth.

2. TOI-6651b falls within the _____ class, which includes planets with sizes between that of Neptune and Saturn.

3. The discovery of TOI-6651b was made possible by the advanced spectroscope _____, installed on PRL's 2.5-meter telescope at Mount Abu in Rajasthan.

4. TOI-6651b is positioned on the edge of the _____ desert, a region where planets orbiting close to their stars are rare.

5. With a rapid orbital period, TOI-6651b completes a full orbit around its star in only _____ days, compared to Earth's 365-day orbit.

6. Due to its close proximity to its star, TOI-6651b has lost much of its _____ atmosphere, leaving it with a rocky core.

7. The core of TOI-6651b is composed of approximately _____% of its total mass and is rich in heavy metals like iron.

8. The temperature on TOI-6651b reaches approximately _____ Kelvin, making it inhospitable for life.

9. Exoplanets are planets that orbit stars _____ our Solar System and are a major focus of modern astronomy.

10. The first confirmed exoplanet around a Sun-like star was discovered in 1995 and orbits the star _____.

10. Musk, Indian-origin Ramaswamy to head body (DOGE) to trim US Government

- US President-elect Donald Trump has announced that X owner Elon Musk and Indian-origin entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy will head a new body called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).
- The acronym DOGE seems a nod to dogecoin, the cryptocurrency Musk has long promoted.

What will DOGE do?

- The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a new initiative under former President Donald Trump, is designed to reduce federal bureaucracy and streamline government spending.
- Headed by tech entrepreneur Elon Musk and businessman Vivek Ramaswamy, DOGE aims to dismantle excessive government structures, minimize wasteful expenditures, and reform federal agencies to align with Trump's "Save America" movement, which promotes "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance."
- The Republican Party's long-standing preference for a leaner government with fewer regulations and lower taxes aligns with this initiative, but entrusting the task to two high-profile billionaires marks an unprecedented step.
- According to Trump, Musk and Ramaswamy will spearhead efforts to overhaul how federal departments operate and are financed.
- He anticipates their work will disrupt government norms and hold accountable those contributing to inefficient government spending.
- In a statement, Trump expressed confidence that their combined efforts would "send shockwaves through the system" and address the vast amount of waste he perceives in federal operations.
- Musk, highlighted DOGE's commitment to transparency, stating that all departmental actions would be made public.
- He introduced a novel approach to public accountability by encouraging citizens to offer feedback on potential spending cuts and planned a "leaderboard" showcasing the most absurd government expenditures.
- Ramaswamy also announced that DOGE would crowdsource examples of government waste, fraud, and abuse, enabling Americans to contribute directly to the reform process.
- While these posts provide insight into DOGE's principles, details on the department's structure, operational strategies, and key appointments remain unclear.

- DOGE is set to embark on its mission to fulfill what Trump and his team sees as a critical transformation of U.S. government efficiency.

How will Department of Government Efficiency work?

- Former President Donald Trump announced the creation of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a body aimed at advising the government on reforms and promoting a more entrepreneurial approach to federal operations.
- Trump emphasized that DOGE would operate externally, working alongside the White House and Office of Management and Budget (OMB), rather than as a traditional government department.
- This arrangement allows prominent figures like Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, who are involved in this initiative, to retain their roles in their business ventures, avoiding the restrictions that federal employment would impose.
- DOGE is tasked with achieving its goals by July 4, 2026, in time for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.
- Trump has likened the initiative to the "Manhattan Project" due to its potential impact.
- However, critics express concerns over potential conflicts of interest, noting that Musk and Ramaswamy's private sector ties could compromise objective governance.
- Additionally, both men lack government experience, sparking skepticism over their suitability to oversee functions beyond corporate efficiency, such as social welfare responsibilities.
- Critics argue that the initiative risks prioritizing corporate goals over the broader duties of governance, raising doubts about the balance between efficiency and public service obligations.

Elon Musk

- Elon Musk is a well-known entrepreneur, inventor, and CEO of several prominent companies, including Tesla and SpaceX.
- He is recognized for his ambitious vision to push technological boundaries and his leadership in industries such as electric vehicles, space exploration, and renewable energy.
- Musk co-founded Zip2 and X.com (which later became PayPal) early in his career. After selling PayPal, he founded SpaceX in 2002, with the goal of making space travel more affordable and sustainable.
- SpaceX has since achieved significant milestones, including the development of reusable rockets, missions to the International Space Station, and plans for Mars colonization.
- Musk joined Tesla in 2004, helping transform it into a leading electric vehicle manufacturer.
- Tesla not only popularized electric cars but also pioneered autonomous driving features and the use of AI in automobiles.
- Beyond Tesla and SpaceX, Musk's ventures include Neuralink (which works on brain-computer interface technology) and The Boring Company (which focuses on tunnel construction and reducing urban traffic congestion).
- A prominent figure on social media, Musk frequently shares updates on his projects, interacts with fans, and expresses his views on various topics, from artificial intelligence to space colonization.
- His unconventional approach and bold decisions have made him one of the most influential, yet often controversial, figures in modern tech.

"Save America" movement

- The "Save America" movement is primarily associated with former President Donald Trump and is spearheaded by the Save America PAC, a political action committee he established shortly after the 2020 U.S. presidential election.
- This PAC promotes Trump's "America First" agenda and supports like-minded conservative candidates, especially those aligned with his policies and those challenging Republicans who opposed his claims regarding the 2020 election.
- The PAC has garnered substantial financial support, raising over $129 million through grassroots donations and partnering with other Trump-affiliated organizations.
- However, while the PAC has substantial reserves, it has contributed relatively modest sums directly to political campaigns, focusing instead on legal costs, consulting, and other expenses related to maintaining the Trump brand and supporting his influence within the Republican Party.
- Additionally, the PAC's activities, particularly its fundraising, are under investigation by federal grand juries to ensure transparency and compliance with campaign finance laws.
- The Save America PAC remains a significant force in shaping conservative politics, advocating for Trump's platform, and maintaining his influence on the party's future direction.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The Department of Government Efficiency, or _____, is a new initiative under former President Donald Trump aimed at reducing federal bureaucracy and streamlining government spending.

2. The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is led by _____ and Indian-origin entrepreneur _____.

3. The acronym "DOGE" may be a playful reference to the cryptocurrency _____, which Elon Musk has long promoted.

4. DOGE's primary goals include dismantling excessive government structures, minimizing wasteful expenditures, and reforming _____ to align with Trump's "Save America" movement.

5. DOGE will operate externally, working alongside the White House and _____, instead of functioning as a traditional government department.

6. DOGE is tasked with achieving its reform goals by _____, to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

7. Musk introduced a novel approach to public accountability by planning a _____ that showcases the most absurd government expenditures.

8. _____ is a high-profile tech entrepreneur recognized for his ventures like Tesla, SpaceX, and his leadership in industries such as electric vehicles and space exploration.

9. The "Save America" movement, led by former President Donald Trump, is primarily associated with the _____, a political action committee that promotes Trump's "America First" agenda.

10. Critics of DOGE express concerns over potential conflicts of interest, noting that Musk and Ramaswamy's _____ could compromise objective governance.