

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER 2025 : WEEK-4

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1. President Murmu Presents 71st National Film Awards, Confers Dadasaheb Phalke Award on Mohanlal



- Malayalam superstar Mohanlal has been honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award at the 71st National Film Awards, recognising his extraordinary four-decade career spanning nearly 400 films across five languages.
- Mohanlal joined legends like Mithun Chakraborty, Asha Parekh, Waheeda Rehman, Rajinikanth, Amitabh Bachchan, Vinod Khanna, K Viswanath, Manoj Kumar, Shashi Kapoor, Gulzar, Pran, Soumitra Chatterjee, Shyam Benegal, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, Yash Chopra, Asha Bhosle, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, BR Chopra, Dilip Kumar, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Lata Mangeshkar, Bhupen Hazarika, Raj Kapoor and Satyajit Ray, among others in the coveted Dadasaheb Phalke Award club.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is the highest award in Indian cinema, presented annually by the Government of India for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema.
 - **Established:** 1969
 - **Named After:** Dadasaheb Phalke, regarded as the Father of Indian Cinema (He directed Raja Harishchandra in 1913, the first Indian feature film.)
 - **Presented by:** Directorate of Film Festivals, under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- **Prize:**
 - A Swarn Kamal (Golden Lotus) medal
 - A shawl
 - A cash prize (currently ₹10 lakh)
- **Notable Recipients (selected):**

Year	Recipient	Note
1969	Devika Rani	First recipient
1989	Lata Mangeshkar	Legendary playback singer
1992	Satyajit Ray	Renowned filmmaker; also won an Honorary Oscar
2001	Yash Chopra	Legendary director/producer
2018	Amitabh Bachchan	Iconic actor
2020	Rajinikanth	Superstar of Indian cinema
2021	Asha Parekh	Veteran actress
2023	Waheeda Rehman	Celebrated actress

71st National Film Awards

Major Winners & Highlights

Category	Winner(s)	Film / Details
Dadasaheb Phalke Award	Mohanlal	Lifetime contribution to Indian cinema
Best Feature Film	12 th Fail	Produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra
Best Actor (Male)	Shah Rukh Khan & Vikrant Massey (tie)	Shah Rukh for Jawan, Vikrant for 12 th Fail
Best Actress (Female)	Rani Mukerji	For Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway

Category	Winner(s)	Film / Details
Best Director	Sudipto Sen	For The Kerala Story
Best Supporting Actress	Urvashi & Janki Bodiwala	Urvashi for Ullozhukku, Janki Bodiwala for Vash
Best Supporting Actor	Vijayaraghavan & M. S. Bhaskar	Vijayaraghavan for Pookalam, Bhaskar for Parking
Best Hindi Film	Kathal	Kathal: A Jackfruit Mystery
Other language / regional awards	- Tamil: Parking - Telugu: Bhagavanth Kesari - Gujarati: Vash - Marathi: Shyamchi Aai - Malayalam: Ullozhukku - Kannada: Kandeelu: The Ray of Hope - Bengali: Deep Fridge - Assamese: Rangatapu 1982 - Odia: Pushkara - Punjabi: Godday Godday Chaa	
Most wins	Animal, Parking, Sam Bahadur	Each won 3 awards

QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements regarding the Dadasaheb Phalke Award:

1. It is the highest award in Indian cinema for lifetime contribution.
2. It was instituted in 1969.
3. The award is presented by the Ministry of Culture.
4. The award includes a Swarn Kamal medal, a shawl, and a cash prize.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

2. Which of the following statements about Dadasaheb Phalke, after whom the award is named, are correct?

1. He is regarded as the Father of Indian Cinema.
2. He directed the first Indian feature film, Raja Harishchandra, in 1913.
3. He received the Bharat Ratna during his lifetime.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

3. Consider the following statements about Mohanlal, the 2025 Dadasaheb Phalke Award recipient:

1. He is the youngest recipient of the award from Kerala.
2. He has acted in over 400 films across five Indian languages.
3. The first recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award from Kerala was Adoor Gopalakrishnan.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

4. Consider the following pairs with regard to sports awards:

1. Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award : For the most spectacular and outstanding performance by a sportsperson over period of last four years
2. Arjuna Award : For the lifetime achievement by a sportsperson
3. Dronacharya Award: To honour eminent coaches who have successfully trained sportspersons or teams
4. Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar : To recognize the contribution made by sportspersons even after their retirement

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| A. Only one | C. Only three |
| B. Only two | D. All four |

5. Consider the following statements in respect of Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards:

1. Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are titles under the Article 18(1) of the Constitution of India.
2. Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, were suspended only once.
3. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.

Which of the above statements are not correct?

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

2. India and FAO Join Hands to Build World-Class Blue Ports for Sustainable Fisheries

- India and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, FAO, of the United Nations, have joined hands to build world-class Blue Ports.
- Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has signed a Technical Cooperation Programme agreement with FAO to strengthen Blue Port infrastructure in India.



India & FAO Partner to Develop Next-Gen Blue Ports for Global Fisheries Sustainability

- Addressing the participants of the webinar, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Dr Abhilaksh Likhi, reiterated the government's vision of developing ecologically healthy, economically viable, and socially inclusive fisheries systems to strengthen national food and nutritional security.
- He highlighted the role of advanced technologies such as 5G, artificial intelligence, automation, and digital platforms in enhancing efficiency and service delivery at fishing ports.
- Under the Blue Ports framework, the Department of Fisheries is leading the development of Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbours that combine technological innovation with environmental stewardship.
- Three pilot harbours, namely Vanakbara in Diu, Karaikal in Puducherry and Jakhau in Gujarat, have been approved with a total investment of 369.8 crore rupees.

Blue Ports in Maritime

- In maritime terminology, Blue Ports refer to ports that prioritize sustainable, environmentally-friendly operations and practices.
- These ports focus on reducing their environmental impact, ensuring compliance with international environmental standards, and promoting sustainable development in the maritime industry.
- The term is often associated with the concept of green ports or eco-friendly ports, but specifically, "blue" emphasizes the connection to the ocean and marine ecosystems.

Key features of Blue Ports include:

- **Environmental Management:** Blue ports implement practices that minimize pollution, such as reducing emissions from ships and port operations, treating wastewater, managing ballast water, and handling waste responsibly.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** These ports may use renewable energy sources (like solar or wind power), implement energy-efficient systems, and build eco-friendly infrastructures like green terminals or sustainable warehouses.

- **Marine Biodiversity Protection:** Blue ports are also involved in initiatives to protect marine ecosystems, including coral reefs, fish populations, and other marine life. This can involve measures like using eco-friendly hull coatings to reduce marine growth or enforcing no-go zones for ships.
- **Innovation in Green Technologies:** Blue ports often adopt cutting-edge technologies to minimize their environmental footprint. This might include electric-powered cranes, shore-to-ship power connections (to reduce emissions from ships when docked), or the use of automated, more energy-efficient systems.
- **Compliance with International Standards:** Many Blue Ports adhere to international conventions and standards, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulations, the Marpol Convention (to prevent marine pollution), and ISO 14001 for environmental management.
- **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** A Blue Port works with various stakeholders, including shipping companies, local governments, environmental organizations, and the public, to ensure sustainable development in the maritime sector.

Examples of Blue Ports:

- **Port of Rotterdam (Netherlands):** This port is one of the leading examples of sustainability in Europe, incorporating renewable energy, advanced waste management, and environmental monitoring systems.
- **Port of Hamburg (Germany):** Known for its commitment to reducing emissions and enhancing environmental performance.
- **Port of Singapore:** Incorporates green technology like LNG-powered vessels and shore power systems for ships.

Blue Ports vs. Green Ports:

- While the terms “blue” and “green” ports are sometimes used interchangeably, the “blue” label emphasizes the broader commitment to marine ecosystem protection, ocean sustainability, and marine biodiversity, while “green” often focuses more on reducing emissions, energy use, and pollution at the port itself.
- The maritime industry is increasingly adopting these sustainable practices, not just for environmental reasons, but also due to pressure from regulatory bodies, environmental NGOs, and consumers who are more conscious of sustainability.

QUESTIONS

6. Consider the following statements regarding Blue Ports in India:

1. Blue Ports focus on sustainable and environmentally-friendly operations.
2. Blue Ports exclusively use renewable energy for all operations.
3. Blue Ports aim to protect marine biodiversity along with promoting economic activity.
4. Blue Ports follow international standards like IMO regulations and ISO 14001.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

7. Consider the following statements regarding the development of Blue Ports under the FAO partnership:

1. India has approved three pilot Blue Ports under this initiative.
2. The pilot ports include Vanakbara, Karaikal, and Jakhau.

3. Blue Ports development does not include collaboration with industry, research, and academic institutions.
4. Blue Ports incorporate technologies like AI, automation, and 5G to improve efficiency.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. How do Blue Ports differ from Green Ports?

- A. Blue Ports focus on marine ecosystem protection, while Green Ports primarily focus on reducing emissions and energy use.
- B. Blue Ports are only for military operations, whereas Green Ports are commercial ports.
- C. Blue Ports are limited to India, whereas Green Ports exist only in Europe.
- D. There is no difference; the terms are interchangeable.

9. What is blue carbon?

- A. Carbon captured by oceans and coastal ecosystems
- B. Carbon sequestered in forest biomass and agricultural soils
- C. Carbon contained in petroleum and natural gas
- D. Carbon present in atmosphere

10. Consider the following pairs:

Port	Well known as
1. Kamarajar Port	: First major port in India registered as a company
2. Mundra Port	: Largest privately owned port in India
3. Visakhapatnam	: Largest container port in India

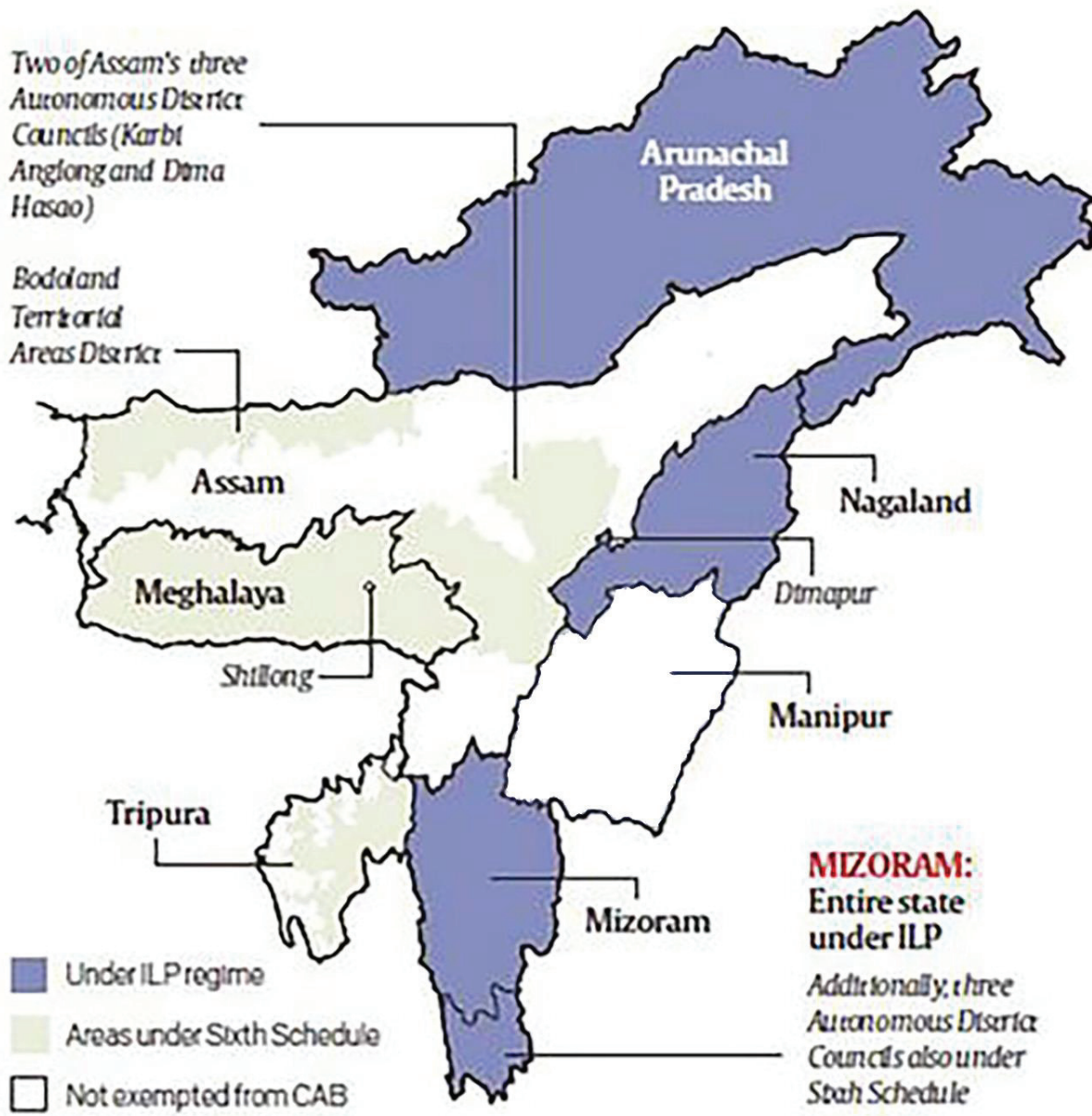
How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only one pair
- B. Only two pairs
- C. All three pairs
- D. None of the pairs

3. Ladakh protests demanding statehood

Ladakh's Political Transition Post-2019

- The roots of the current unrest in Ladakh trace back to August 2019, when the Indian government revoked Article 370 and passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.
- This led to the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories (UTs)—Jammu & Kashmir (with a legislature) and Ladakh (without a legislature).



ARUNACHAL PRADESH: Entire state under ILP regime

NAGALAND: Entire state under ILP regime

TRIPURA: Sixth Schedule covers 70% of geographical area

MEGHALAYA: Almost entire state covered under Sixth Schedule, except a part of Shillong

ASSAM: 3 Autonomous District Councils under Sixth Schedule

MANIPUR: Entire state under ILP regime

- While initially welcomed by many in Leh, who had long demanded separation from J&K, the new arrangement stripped Ladakh of legislative representation and autonomy, placing it directly under central administration.
- Over time, local resentment grew, particularly due to concerns over governance, job security, and unchecked industrialisation.

Protests Turn Violent in Leh

- The long-standing agitation escalated when protesters demanding statehood and Sixth Schedule protections set a BJP office on fire in Leh. In response, the police fired teargas shells to control the crowd.
- The clashes turned deadly, resulting in the death of four people and injuries to over 30 others.
- The Leh Apex Body (LAB), a key coalition of local organisations, called for a massive shutdown across Leh town to protest the violence and to further their demands.

The Sixth Schedule Demand: What and Why?

- One of the central demands of Ladakh's people is the inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- The Sixth Schedule, under Article 244, provides for the creation of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in tribal-majority areas, currently applicable in parts of the Northeast (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura).
- Given that over 90% of Ladakh's population belongs to Scheduled Tribes, the demand is rooted in the desire for local governance, protection of land and resources, cultural preservation, and a voice in administrative matters. ADCs have powers to legislate on land, forests, water, agriculture, health, sanitation, and local policing—areas the Ladakhi people feel vulnerable about under direct central control.

Who is Sonam Wangchuk?

- A central figure in the protests is Sonam Wangchuk, an engineer, innovator, and education reformer, who inspired the character of “Phunsukh Wangdu” in the Hindi film 3 Idiots.
- In 2018, he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for his work in transforming education systems and advocating for sustainable development in Ladakh.
- Wangchuk has been a prominent voice for autonomy and environmental protection in the region.
- Since 2019, he has been actively raising the issue of Ladakh's exclusion from the Sixth Schedule and the adverse impact of industrialisation on fragile ecosystems.

Wangchuk's Role in the Movement

- Wangchuk has repeatedly stressed that the BJP had promised Sixth Schedule protections during the 2019 elections, a promise he claims has not been fulfilled.
- In 2019, he wrote to then-Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda, who responded positively, but no further action followed.
- Following failed talks in March 2024 between Ladakhi leaders and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Wangchuk began a 21-day hunger strike in sub-zero temperatures in Leh, demanding constitutional safeguards for the region.
- Again, in September 2025, following the violent clashes, he ended another 15-day hunger fast, urging youth to remain peaceful and avoid derailing the non-violent, five-year-old movement.

Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance

- In response to the central government's inaction, regional political forces began to consolidate.
- The Leh Apex Body (LAB), formed under the leadership of former MP Thupstan Chhewang, and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), emerged as key platforms representing Leh and Kargil districts, respectively.

- Together, these groups have mobilised wide-scale protests and coordinated with each other to demand:
 - Full statehood for Ladakh
 - Inclusion in the Sixth Schedule
 - Creation of a Public Service Commission
 - Early recruitment drives
 - Separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil

The Economic and Environmental Angle

- A major grievance voiced by protesters is the fear of resource exploitation by industrial powers.
- Wangchuk and others believe that lower levels of Ladakhi bureaucracy have been compromised, paving the way for mining and corporate interests to operate unchecked.
- This has endangered traditional pastoral practices, especially those involving Pashmina goat herders in border areas.
- In 2024, a planned “Pashmina March” to the China border was called off after authorities threatened to impose Section 144, prohibiting public gatherings.
- The march was intended to spotlight land loss, Chinese activity near the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and threats to traditional livelihoods.

QUESTIONS

11. Consider the following statements regarding the strategic importance of Ladakh:

1. Ladakh shares borders with China and Pakistan and serves as a buffer region.
2. Ladakh’s location makes it a central hub for international trade via the Indian Ocean.
3. Pangong and Tso Moriri lakes in Ladakh are of ecological and tourism importance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 3 only | D. All of the above |

12. Consider the following statements about the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution:

1. It allows creation of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
2. ADCs can legislate on matters such as land management, forest administration, and social customs.
3. Sixth Schedule provisions automatically apply to all tribal areas in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. All of the above |

13. Consider the following statements regarding Autonomous District Councils (ADCs):

1. ADCs can establish primary schools, dispensaries, roads, and markets within their jurisdiction.

2. ADCs can assess and collect land revenue, taxes on professions, and license fees for mineral extraction.
3. ADCs have authority to decide criminal cases punishable by death.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. All of the above |

14. Consider the following statements regarding Ladakh and its governance:

1. Ladakh became a Union Territory of India in 2019 following the abrogation of Article 370.
2. Ladakh currently has its own Public Service Commission for local recruitment.
3. The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) continues to have the same powers as it did before 2019.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. 1 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 2 only | D. All of the above |

15. Which of the following correctly describes the composition of an Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule?

1. Maximum 30 members in the district council.
2. Four members nominated by the Governor and the rest elected via adult franchise.
3. All members are appointed by the State Government.
4. The President of India has the power to declare an area as a Scheduled Area in India, as stipulated by Article 244(1) and the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| A. 1, 2, and 4 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. All of the above |

4. WIPO Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025

- The World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025 ranks Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States as the top three innovation economies, with China entering the top 10 for the first time.
- India holds the 38th position in the 2025 report, continuing to be a strong performer among middle-income economies.
- The report notes that innovation is facing headwinds with slowing R&D growth and subdued venture capital, but highlights breakthroughs in areas like AI and green technology.



Top-Ranked Economies

- **Switzerland:** Maintains its lead for the 15th consecutive year, excelling in Creative outputs and having strong institutions.
- **Sweden:** Holds the second position, leading in Business sophistication and Creative outputs, and excelling in indicators like R&D expenditure and researchers.
- **United States of America:** Ranks third, with strengths in Market and Business sophistication, and a significant role for its private sector in R&D.

Other Key Findings

- **China:** Enters the top 10 for the first time, a significant achievement.
- **India:** Ranks 38th and is recognized as one of the longest-running innovation overperformers, demonstrating continuous improvement in its GII position.
- **Middle-Income Economies:** Countries like India, Türkiye, and Viet Nam are identified as fast-climbing innovation economies.
- **Innovation Clusters:** The GII 2025 also identifies key innovation clusters, with Bengaluru and Delhi in India making it into the global top 30 for the first time.

Challenges and Outlook

- **Economic Headwinds:** The report acknowledges slowing R&D growth and subdued venture capital markets.
- **Harnessing Potential:** The GII serves as a reminder that innovation ecosystems require thoughtful policies, investments, and cross-sector collaboration to realize their full potential.
- **Emerging Technologies:** Breakthroughs in areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), green energy, and digital biology are highlighted for their transformative potential.

QUESTIONS

16. Consider the following statements about India's performance in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025:

1. India ranked 38th among 139 economies, up from 48th in 2020.
2. India is ranked first among lower-middle-income economies and in Central & Southern Asia.
3. India's strengths include Knowledge & Technology Outputs and Market Sophistication.
4. India's weaknesses include Human Capital & Research and Business Sophistication.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

17. Consider the following statements about India's innovation landscape:

1. India's gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) is about 0.65% of GDP.
2. The private sector contributes more than 60% of India's total R&D funding.
3. India ranks 6th globally in terms of patent applications.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

18. With reference to India's innovation support mechanisms, consider the following statements:

1. Startup India Seed Fund Scheme provided Rs 945 crore for seed funding in 2023.
2. The National Semiconductor Mission is backed by Rs 76,000 crore.
3. Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) are helping decentralize innovation with over 45% of startups emerging from tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

19. Consider the following statements about the Global Innovation Index (GII):

1. The GII was introduced in 2007 to provide a comprehensive metric for assessing innovations across economies.
2. The GII is published annually by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
3. The GII is recognized by the UN General Assembly as an authoritative reference for shaping Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 3 only | D. All of the above |

20. Consider the following reports/indices and their respective organizations:

1. Ease of Doing Business Index
2. Global Competitiveness Report
3. Rule of Law Index
4. Global Gender Gap Index
5. Global Financial Stability Report
6. Global Hunger Index
7. Global Economic Prospects
8. World Economic Outlook

Which of the following correctly matches the reports/indices with their publishing organizations?

- A. 1–World Bank, 2–World Economic Forum, 3–World Justice Project, 4–World Economic Forum, 5–International Monetary Fund, 6–IFPRI, 7–World Bank, 8–International Monetary Fund
- B. 1–IMF, 2–UNDP, 3–World Bank, 4–UN Women, 5–World Bank, 6–FAO, 7–ADB, 8–World Economic Forum
- C. 1–World Economic Forum, 2–World Bank, 3–UNHRC, 4–UN Women, 5–IMF, 6–FAO, 7–IMF, 8–World Bank
- D. 1–World Bank, 2–IMF, 3–UNHRC, 4–World Health Organization, 5–OECD, 6–FAO, 7–World Economic Forum, 8–IMF

5. Trump's H-1B visa fee hike



- President Donald Trump’s administration has dramatically raised the cost of H-1B visa applications, sending shockwaves through the U.S. tech industry and opening new opportunities for competing nations to attract skilled foreign talent.
- Under a new decree, U.S. companies must now pay a \$100,000 fee per H-1B visa application, a steep increase from the previous range of \$2,000 to \$5,000.
- The administration claims the move is aimed at encouraging employers to hire American workers over foreign professionals, but industry leaders and economists warn it may instead lead to an economic setback and an exodus of high-skilled workers from the U.S.
- The H-1B visa, introduced in 1990 during the George H.W. Bush administration, allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers with specialized skills, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.
- Each year, 65,000 visas are made available under the standard cap, along with an additional 20,000 for applicants holding advanced degrees.
- The visa can be extended up to six years, and the fee must be paid again during the extension process.
- The change applies only to new applicants from September 21 onwards and not to existing visa holders.
- Tech companies are among the hardest hit by the fee increase, as they are the largest users of the H-1B program.
- Approximately two-thirds of all H-1B roles are in technology, with Amazon, Google, Meta, Microsoft, and Apple being some of the top employers of H-1B talent.
- The increase in visa costs is expected to raise the barriers for hiring much-needed foreign professionals, thereby threatening innovation and competitiveness in the U.S. technology sector.
- Indian nationals, who received 71% of H-1B visas last year, are particularly affected, followed by Chinese applicants at 11.7%.
- The Indian government has expressed concern over the humanitarian and family disruptions the changes could cause, and is currently assessing the full implications of the move.
- Critics argue that the H-1B program has long been exploited by companies to bring in workers at lower wages than would be required for U.S. employees, undercutting local labor markets.
- The Trump administration claims the fee hike will reduce this abuse. However, the Department of Homeland Security’s additional step—to prioritize high-paid and high-skilled workers in the visa lottery—suggests a shift toward favoring elite talent, possibly leaving mid-level professionals behind.
- The backlash has not been limited to tech executives and economists. Industry leaders who were once H-1B holders themselves—such as Sundar Pichai (Alphabet), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), and Elon Musk (Tesla/SpaceX)—have emphasized the vital role the visa played in shaping not only their careers but also America’s global tech dominance.
- Musk publicly noted in 2024 that many of the innovators behind SpaceX and Tesla originally came to the U.S. via H-1B visas.
- In the wake of the U.S. decision, several countries are moving swiftly to capitalize on the opportunity to attract disillusioned tech workers and scientists.
- The United Kingdom, under Prime Minister Keir Starmer, is reportedly considering abolishing visa fees for highly skilled professionals to draw top talent.
- A newly formed “global talent task force” is exploring incentives to boost economic growth by bringing in foreign STEM experts, digital professionals, and academics.

- China is also stepping in with the introduction of a new K Visa starting October 1, which will allow skilled workers in STEM to study and work in China without needing a prior job offer.
- While the Chinese government has refrained from commenting directly on U.S. visa changes, it has reiterated its openness to top-tier global talent.
- South Korea is responding by reviewing strategies to attract foreign engineers and scientists.
- President Yoon's chief of staff, Kang Hoon-sik, has asked ministries to design plans that leverage the U.S. policy shift. Budgetary focus is expected to target artificial intelligence and other tech-driven sectors in 2026.
- Canada, another key beneficiary of the changing landscape, has already taken action.
- It recently lowered the cut-off scores in its immigration system to invite more skilled workers and may revive its popular 2023 visa program that allowed current H-1B holders in the U.S. to migrate to Canada under favorable conditions.
- That program, which had a cap of 10,000 applicants, filled up quickly and demonstrated the high demand among foreign professionals for stable alternatives to the U.S.
- In summary, Trump's H-1B visa fee hike represents a major shift in U.S. immigration policy, aimed at boosting domestic employment but likely to come at the cost of economic innovation and competitiveness.
- As skilled workers reassess their global options, countries like the UK, China, South Korea, and Canada are seizing the moment to welcome the world's top talent—potentially triggering a global reshuffle of technological leadership in the years ahead.

H-1B visa

What is the H-1B Visa?

- **Purpose:** Allows U.S. employers to temporarily hire foreign workers in specialized fields.
- **Specialty Occupations:** Usually require a bachelor's degree or higher in fields like IT, engineering, medicine, architecture, finance, etc.
- **Duration:** Initially up to 3 years, with the possibility to extend to a maximum of 6 years.
- **Employer-Sponsored:** The employer must file the petition on behalf of the worker.
- **Cap/Lottery:** There is an annual cap (typically 65,000 visas + 20,000 for U.S. advanced degree holders). Because of high demand, there is often a lottery system.

Key Requirements

- The job must require a specialized degree.
- The worker must have the necessary qualifications.
- The employer must pay the prevailing wage.
- Labor Condition Application (LCA) must be filed with the Department of Labor.

Benefits

- Allows foreign workers to gain U.S. work experience.
- Can lead to permanent residency (green card).
- Can bring dependents (H-4 visa holders), who may get work authorization in some cases.

QUESTIONS

21. Consider the following statements about the H-1B visa program:

1. It allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations requiring at least a bachelor's degree.
2. The visa is employer-sponsored and can be extended up to a maximum of six years.
3. The H-1B visa program has no cap or annual limit on the number of applicants.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

22. Which of the following countries are reported to be leveraging the U.S. H-1B visa fee hike to attract global skilled talent?

1. United Kingdom
2. China
3. South Korea
4. Canada

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

23. Which of the following statements correctly reflect the impact of the H-1B visa fee hike on Indian nationals?

1. Indian citizens received the highest proportion of H-1B visas in the previous year.
2. About 71% of H-1B visas were granted to Indian nationals, making them the most affected by the fee increase.
3. The fee hike applies retroactively to existing H-1B visa holders.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

24. Consider the following statements regarding the EB-5 visa program:

1. It was established by the U.S. Congress in 1990 to encourage foreign investment and job creation.
2. It requires a minimum investment of \$5 million for all applicants, regardless of location.
3. A certain number of visas are reserved for investments in high-unemployment or distressed areas.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

25. Which of the following distinguishes the Gold Card Visa program from the EB-5 program?

1. The Gold Card allows direct purchase of a U.S. Green Card for \$5 million.
2. The Gold Card program requires creation of at least 10 jobs for American citizens.
3. The EB-5 program requires investment in American businesses and job creation.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

6. Malawi's ex-president Mutharika wins election by a landslide



- Peter Mutharika has been re-elected as President of Malawi, securing 56.8% of the votes in the September 16 election, according to the country's election commission.
- The 85-year-old former president defeated incumbent President Lazarus Chakwera, who garnered 33% of the vote.
- The election took place amid a worsening economic crisis in the southern African nation, characterized by soaring inflation, rising food and fuel costs, and widespread public frustration.
- The election was seen as one of the most competitive in Malawi's recent history, pitting the two major political parties against each other.
- While initial predictions suggested a close race, the struggling economy appeared to play a decisive role in voter sentiment.

- Since taking office in 2020, Chakwera's administration faced mounting criticism over economic mismanagement, stagnation, and lack of decisive leadership. Inflation surged to 33%, severely affecting the cost of living in the agriculture-dependent nation.
- Prices of essential goods like maize and fertilizer rose sharply, exacerbating the hardships faced by millions of Malawian.

Basic Facts

Official name: Republic of Malawi

- **Location:** Southeastern Africa. Landlocked. Bordered by Tanzania (north), Mozambique (east, south), Zambia (west).
- **Area:** ~118,480 km² (~45,700 sq mi) total, of which water makes up around 24,400 km².
- **Capital:** Lilongwe is the capital. The judiciary meets in Blantyre.

Geography & Environment

- **Terrain:** Malawi includes the Great Rift Valley running north-south. On the eastern boundary is Lake Malawi (also called Lake Nyasa). There are plateaus, highlands, isolated mountains. Mulanje Massif is the highest point (Sapitwa Peak ~3,002 m)
- **Lake Malawi:** Large, biologically rich freshwater lake. Many endemic fish species. The lake and its drainage system are important for the country.
- **Climate:** Sub-tropical. Two main seasons — rainy (November to May), dry (May to November).
- **Natural resources:** Includes arable land, hydropower potential, some minerals (coal, limestone, uranium, bauxite in less exploited areas)
- **Early period:** The area has been inhabited since at least 8000 BCE. Bantu migrations brought various groups. There was the Maravi Confederacy (from about 15th century) that gave Malawi its name.
- **Colonial era:** British influence increased in the late 19th century. Became British Central Africa Protectorate (1891), then Nyasaland. Part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1950s), which dissolved.
- **Independence:** Gained independence from Britain in 1964. Hastings Kamuzu Banda became leader; in 1966 Malawi declared a republic, Banda was effectively leader for life for decades. Multiparty democracy began officially in 1994.

Population & Society

- **Population size:** ~20-21 million (recent estimates: ~21.1 million in 2023)
- **Growth/Demographics:** High growth rate (~2-2.6% per year). Young population: large proportion are children. Fertility rates are relatively high.
- **Ethnic groups:** Majority Bantu-speaking groups. Major ethnicities include Chewa (~34%), Lomwe, Yao, Ngoni, Tumbuka, Sena, Tonga, etc.
- **Languages:** English is the official language used in government/education. Chichewa (Chewa) is a major national language; many other local languages are spoken.
- **Religion:** Christianity is the dominant religion (various Protestant denominations, Catholic), Islam also present; traditional beliefs as well.
- **Literacy / Life expectancy:** Literacy around 65-75% depending on gender. Life expectancy: about mid-60s for women, slightly lower for men.

Government & Politics

- **Political system:** Multiparty republic. President is head of state & government. Unicameral parliament (National Assembly).
- **Capital & major cities:** Lilongwe is the capital. Blantyre is a major city and economic centre. Zomba was earlier capital during colonial times.

Economy

- **General economy:** One of the poorer countries globally. The economy is heavily agrarian. Over 80% of population works in agriculture. Vulnerable to climate shocks (drought, floods).
- **GDP and income:** GDP (PPP) around US\$35 billion in 2023; per capita income has been low (~US\$1,700 PPP).
- **Exports / main products:** Main exports are tobacco, tea, sugar, groundnuts, dried legumes, etc. Tobacco has been especially important.
- **Imports:** Include fuel, machinery, chemical goods, medicines, etc. Malawi depends heavily on foreign aid and development finance.

Social & Development Indicators

- **Poverty:** A large share of the population lives under the poverty line; many are in extreme poverty. Food insecurity is a concern, especially in drought years.
- **Health:** Issues like malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, malaria are important. Life expectancy moderately low. Infant mortality also significant.
- **Education:** Literacy is improving but there's gender gap. Many children attend primary school but secondary/higher education still limited in reach.

Environment & Conservation

- **Biodiversity:** Malawi has diverse ecosystems: forests, lakes, wetland areas. Lake Malawi is especially noted for its endemic fish species.
- **Protected areas:** Several national parks, reserves. The Lake Malawi National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- **Environmental challenges:** Deforestation, soil erosion, resource extraction issues, effects of climate change (droughts, floods)

QUESTIONS

26. Consider the following statements regarding the Republic of Malawi:

1. Malawi is a landlocked country in southeastern Africa.
2. Lilongwe is the legislative capital, while Blantyre hosts the judiciary.
3. Lake Malawi, also known as Lake Nyasa, is shared with Mozambique and Tanzania.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

27. Consider the following statements about Malawi's geography:

1. The Great Rift Valley runs north-south through Malawi.
2. Mulanje Massif, the highest point of Malawi, is over 3,000 meters.
3. Malawi has a tropical climate with two distinct seasons: wet (November–May) and dry (May–November).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

28. Consider the following pairs:

Country	Reason for being in the news
1. Argentina :	Worst economic crisis
2. Sudan :	War between the country's regular army and paramilitary forces
3. Turkey :	Rescinded its membership of NATO

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- A. Only one pair
B. Only two pairs
C. All three pairs
D. None of the pairs

29. Consider the following pairs:

Area of conflict mentioned in news	Country where it is located
1. Donbas	: Syria
2. Kachin	: Ethiopia
3. Tigray	: North Yemen

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

30. Consider the following pairs:

Region often mentioned in news	Reason for being in news
1. North Kivu and Ituri	: War between Armenia and Azerbaijan
2. Nagorno-Karabakh	: Insurgency in Mozambique
3. Kherson and Zaporizhzhia	: Dispute between Israel and Lebanon

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

7. GST 2.0 kicks in

- The Government of India has rolled out a comprehensive reform of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, termed “GST Bachat Utsav”, effective from September 22, 2025.
- This marks a significant transition towards a simpler, more consumption-friendly indirect tax regime.
- The new structure aims to increase disposable income, boost household consumption, correct tax anomalies, and ease compliance for businesses.

Rationalised GST Slabs: From Multiplicity to Simplicity

Old vs New Slab Structure

- The previous GST structure with four major slabs (5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%) has now been streamlined into:
 - **Merit rate:** 5%
 - **Standard rate:** 18%
 - **Demerit rate:** 40% (for sin goods)
- Some items such as bricks continue under the 12% slab due to sector-specific considerations. The special composition scheme for bricks retains 6% GST without input tax credit (ITC) and 12% with ITC, with a lower threshold limit of ₹20 lakh.

Items under New Slabs

- **0.25%:** Rough diamonds and semi-precious stones
- **1.5%:** Cut and polished diamonds
- **3%:** Precious metals like gold, silver, and pearls
- **5% (516 items):** Essential goods and services, including food, health items, agricultural machinery, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles
- **18% (640 items):** Industrial goods like chemicals, auto parts, and consumer durables like TVs and refrigerators
- **40% (13 items):** Sin and luxury goods such as pan masala, carbonated drinks, yachts, aircraft for personal use, and large vehicles

Key Rate Reductions and Exemptions

Essential and Household Items

- Roti, paratha, khakhra: Exempted from GST
- UHT milk, dry fruits, biscuits, ghee, butter: Covered under reduced or exempted rates
- Toiletries: Items like toothpaste, shampoo, and soap to be monitored for price changes

The poster features the title "GST Reductions for Leather and Footwear Industry" at the top. Below it, a large graphic shows "5% from 12%". To the right are two images: one of a person working on a leather shoe and another of hands working on leather pieces. A list of eligible items is provided with checkmarks: Chamois Leather, Composition Leather, Leather prepared after Tanning, and Supply of job work in relation to Hides, Skins, & Leather. At the bottom, a blue box states "Footwear priced up to ₹2500 per pair: 5% GST". The source is cited as "Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry".

GST Reductions
for Leather and Footwear Industry

5% from 12%

- ✓ Chamois Leather
- ✓ Composition Leather
- ✓ Leather prepared after Tanning
- ✓ Supply of job work in relation to Hides, Skins, & Leather

Footwear priced up to ₹2500 per pair: 5% GST

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Services

- Health and life insurance for individuals: Fully exempted
- Salons, spas, beauty services: GST cut from 18% to 5%
- Hotels with tariff below ₹7,500: GST cut from 12% (with ITC) to 5% (without ITC)
- These reductions are expected to reduce end prices and leave more disposable income in consumers' hands.

Addressing the Inverted Duty Structure (IDS)

What is IDS?

- IDS occurs when tax on inputs is higher than tax on output, leading to refund claims and working capital blockage for businesses.

Sectors Affected

- While the rate rationalisation has helped many sectors, some still suffer from IDS:
 - **Bicycles & E-bikes:** Final product at 5%, but steel (input) at 18%
 - **Textiles:** Polyester fibre inputs taxed higher than output yarn
 - **Corrugated boxes:** Final product at 5%, inputs like kraft paper now at 18%
 - **Fertilisers and tractors:** Still see input tax higher than output tax
- The Government is working on addressing these issues in subsequent updates.

Boosting Household Consumption

- The rate cuts are expected to translate into lower prices for everyday goods and services. To ensure that companies pass on the benefits:
- The Finance Ministry will collect monthly data for six months post-rollout on 54 categories of items, including food, toiletries, and educational supplies.
- **These include items such as:**
 - **Food:** Ghee, milk, cheese, ice cream, chocolates, cornflakes
 - **Toiletries:** Shampoo, toothpaste, soap, shaving cream
 - **Stationery:** Notebooks, pencils, erasers, crayons
- Companies have already started offering discounts, added grammage, and shopping vouchers in anticipation of the GST cuts.

Compliance and Refund Reforms

Simplified Registration and Returns

- Greater use of technology for faster, streamlined registration, especially benefiting startups and MSMEs
- Pre-filled returns to reduce manual errors and increase compliance
- Automated, risk-based refund processing to cut down wait times

Provisional Refunds for IDS

- Amendment to Section 54(6) of the CGST Act will allow 90% provisional refunds for IDS cases, similar to zero-rated exports
- Until legislative changes are implemented, the CBIC will instruct field officers to issue refunds based on system-identified low-risk cases
- Likely to be operational from November 1, or possibly earlier

Outlook and Next Steps

- The GST Bachat Utsav is expected to:
 - Spur consumer demand
 - Improve ease of doing business
 - Reduce litigation over classification disputes (e.g., roti vs parotta)
 - Streamline compliance and refund mechanisms
 - Encourage investment as household consumption improves
- Despite some sectors still facing inversion issues, the reforms signal a strong intent towards a simpler, fairer, and more efficient GST framework.
- The Government has committed to reviewing representations from affected industries and may bring further slab revisions and rate adjustments in future GST Council meetings.
- GST 2.0 is a bold attempt to rationalise India's indirect tax system, correct inefficiencies, and pass tangible benefits to the common consumer.
- With strong focus on easing compliance and reducing costs for essential goods and services, this revamp could play a pivotal role in boosting consumption and economic growth.

QUESTIONS

31. Consider the following statements regarding GST 2.0 (GST Bachat Utsav) implemented from September 22, 2025:

1. The previous GST slab structure of 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28% has been rationalised into three major slabs: Merit (5%), Standard (18%), and Demerit (40%).
2. Bricks continue to remain in the 12% slab, but with a special composition scheme of 6% without Input Tax Credit (ITC) and 12% with ITC.
3. GST 2.0 fully eliminates the Inverted Duty Structure (IDS) across all sectors.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

32. Consider the following items and their GST rates under GST 2.0:

1. Rough diamonds – 0.25%
2. Cut and polished diamonds – 1.5%
3. Essential food items – 5%
4. Sin goods like pan masala – 40%

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

33. Consider the following items:

1. Cereal grains hulled
2. Chicken eggs cooked
3. Fish processed and canned
4. Newspapers containing advertising material

Which of the above items is/are exempted under GST (Good and Services Tax)?

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

34. What is/are the most likely advantages of implementing 'Goods and Services Tax (GST)'?

1. It will replace multiple taxes collected by multiple authorities and will thus create a single market in India.
2. It will drastically reduce the 'Current Account Deficit' of India and will enable it to increase its foreign exchange reserves.
3. It will enormously increase the growth and size of the economy of India and will enable it to overtake China in the near future.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

35. Which of the following correctly describes the composition of the GST Council?

- A. Union Finance Minister, NITI Aayog CEO, and Ministers in charge of Finance from each State
- B. Union Finance Minister, Minister of State for Revenue, and Ministers in charge of Finance from each State
- C. Union Finance Minister, Chief Economic Adviser, and Chief Ministers of States
- D. Union Finance Minister and State Chief Secretaries

36. Consider the following statements regarding the Goods and Services Tax (GST):

1. GST was introduced through the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2017.
2. GST is a value-added tax that replaced multiple indirect taxes levied by both the Centre and the States.
3. Integrated GST (IGST) is applicable only on intra-state transactions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

37. Consider the following statements regarding the GST Council and GST Network (GSTN):

1. The GST Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister and includes representatives from States.
2. GSTN helps taxpayers in India to file returns, make payments, and comply with GST regulations.
3. GSTN is a policy-making body responsible for deciding GST rates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. India's only active volcano erupts twice in a week

- India's only active volcano, located on the uninhabited Barren Island in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, has erupted twice within a week, reigniting scientific attention and concern.



- These minor eruptions, occurring in September 2025, are the fifth and sixth since its reawakening in 1991, after remaining dormant for over two centuries.
- Though the current eruptions are not immediately threatening to nearby populations, experts warn that they are part of a larger tectonic pattern that demands close monitoring.
- The Barren Island volcano first erupted in 1787.
- After that, it lay dormant for 204 years until a significant eruption occurred in 1991.

- Since then, the volcano has shown signs of intermittent activity, with eruptions recorded in 2005, 2017, 2022, and now 2025.
- These eruptions, though relatively minor compared to the 1991 event, suggest increasing volcanic restlessness beneath the Earth's surface, linked to the region's complex and volatile tectonics.
- Located about 140 kilometers east of Port Blair, Barren Island rises about 2 kilometers from the sea floor and spans 3.2 kilometers in width.
- It sits atop the active West Andaman Fault, a critical subduction zone where the Indian Plate slides beneath the Sunda Plate.
- This geological setting makes the region particularly susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic activity.
- The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, one of the most devastating natural disasters in recent history, was triggered along this same fault line.
- In the aftermath of that event, renewed volcanic activity was observed, further reinforcing the link between seismic events and eruptions on Barren Island.
- O.P. Mishra, director of the National Centre for Seismology, emphasized that recent eruptions stemmed from earthquake-induced shaking in a deep-seated magma chamber located 18–20 kilometers beneath the surface.
- This shaking can trigger what he calls “premature magmatic eruptions,” highlighting the unpredictability of volcanic behavior in seismically active zones.
- Despite its remote location and lack of permanent human settlement, Barren Island's activity has significant geological implications.
- The island's sparse vegetation and fragile ecosystem remain protected by law, with landings banned for safety and conservation reasons.
- Nonetheless, fishermen and tourists sometimes glimpse its glowing crater from afar.
- The Geological Survey of India and the National Centre for Seismology continue to monitor the island via satellite and other remote sensing technologies.
- Geologists believe the frequency of eruptions has increased due to the melting of subducted oceanic crust deep within the mantle, leading to the buildup of magma.
- Although these episodic eruptions are currently minor, they reflect deeper and ongoing tectonic processes that could have broader implications for the region's seismic and volcanic future.
- In conclusion, while Barren Island poses no immediate danger to human life due to its isolation, its growing volcanic activity underscores the importance of constant monitoring.
- As part of one of the world's most active subduction zones, the island serves as a crucial indicator of the Earth's internal dynamics—a reminder that even uninhabited places can carry seismic significance.

What is an Earthquake?

- An earthquake is the shaking of the Earth's surface caused by a sudden release of energy in the Earth's crust.
- This energy release typically results from tectonic plate movements, volcanic activity, or man-made explosions.

Causes of Earthquakes

- Tectonic Plate Movement (most common):
 - Plates collide (convergent boundaries)
 - Plates slide past each other (transform boundaries)
 - Plates move apart (divergent boundaries)

Volcanic Activity:

- When magma moves underground, it can trigger tremors.

Human Activity:

- Mining
- Reservoir-induced seismicity (large dams)
- Nuclear testing
- Fracking

Measuring Earthquakes

- **Magnitude:** Measures energy released.
- Richter Scale (outdated)
- Moment Magnitude Scale (Mw) – modern standard.
- **Intensity:** Measures effects on people and structures.
- Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (I to XII)

Where Do They Happen?

- Mostly near plate boundaries, especially:
 - The Ring of Fire (around the Pacific Ocean)
 - The Himalayan region
 - The San Andreas Fault (California)

Earthquake Effects

- Ground shaking
- Landslides
- Tsunamis (if undersea)
- Infrastructure collapse
- Fires (from broken gas lines)
- Casualties and economic loss

What is a Volcano?

- A volcano is an opening in the Earth's surface where magma, gases, and ash escape from beneath the crust. When magma erupts, it is called lava. Volcanoes often form mountains or hills from accumulated lava and ash.

How Do Volcanoes Form?

- Volcanoes form mainly at tectonic plate boundaries where:
 - Plates collide (convergent) → magma forms as one plate subducts.
 - Plates separate (divergent) → magma rises from the mantle.
 - Hotspots → magma rises through the crust far from plate boundaries (e.g., Hawaii).

Structure of a Volcano

- **Magma Chamber** – underground pool of molten rock.
- **Main Vent** – main passage through which magma travels.
- **Crater** – bowl-shaped opening at the top.
- **Lava Flow** – molten rock that erupts and flows.

- **Ash Cloud** – explosion ejects fine rock and ash.
- **Secondary Vents** – smaller outlets around the sides.

Types of Volcanoes

Shield Volcano

- Broad, gently sloping.
- Runny lava, non-explosive.

Example: Mauna Loa (Hawaii)

Stratovolcano (Composite)

- Steep, symmetrical.
- Explosive eruptions; alternating lava and ash.

Example: Mount Fuji (Japan), Mount Vesuvius (Italy)

Cinder Cone

- Small, steep cone.
- Built from ash, cinders, and bombs.
- Short-lived eruptions.

Example: Parícutin (Mexico)

Lava Dome

- Formed from slow, viscous lava.
- Can collapse and cause pyroclastic flows.

Example: Mount St. Helens Lava Dome (USA)

Caldera

- Large depression formed after a massive eruption and collapse of the volcano.

Example: Yellowstone Caldera (USA)

Types of Volcanic Eruptions

- **Effusive:** Lava flows out gently.
- **Explosive:** Violent eruption with ash and gas.
- **Strombolian:** Short, explosive bursts.
- **Vulcanian:** Moderate explosions.
- **Plinian:** Extremely violent, large ash columns.

Volcanic Hazards

- **Lava Flows** – Can destroy everything in their path.
- **Ash Falls** – Affects air quality, aviation, buildings.
- **Pyroclastic Flows** – Fast-moving hot gas and debris.
- **Lahars** – Mudflows from volcanic ash and water.
- **Tsunamis** – Underwater eruptions or landslides.
- **Volcanic Gases** – CO₂, SO₂, toxic fumes.

Benefits of Volcanoes

- **Fertile Soil** – Volcanic ash enriches soil.
- **Geothermal Energy** – Heat from magma powers electricity.
- **Minerals** – Valuable minerals like sulfur, gold.
- **Tourism** – Volcanoes attract millions of tourists.
- **New Land** – Islands like Hawaii formed by volcanoes.

QUESTIONS

38. Consider the following statements:

1. The Barren Island volcano is an active volcano located in the Indian Territory.
2. Barren Island lies about 140 km east of Great Nicobar.
3. The last time the Barren Island volcano erupted was in 1991 and it has remained inactive since then.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

39. Consider the following statements about Barren Island volcano:

1. Barren Island is India's only active volcano.
2. It lies on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and is part of the West Andaman Fault subduction zone.
3. Its eruptions pose immediate threats to large human populations in the vicinity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

40. Consider the following statements about volcanoes:

1. Stratovolcanoes (composite volcanoes) are steep, symmetrical, and typically produce explosive eruptions.
2. Lava domes are formed from fast-flowing, low-viscosity lava.
3. Volcanoes can contribute positively to human activities by providing fertile soil, geothermal energy, and minerals.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. A 1, 2 and 4 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is indeed the highest honour for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** It was instituted in 1969.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The award is presented by the Directorate of Film Festivals under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, not the Ministry of Culture.
- Statement 4 is correct: Recipients receive a Swarn Kamal (Golden Lotus) medal, a shawl, and a cash prize (currently ₹10 lakh).

2. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Dadasaheb Phalke is widely regarded as the Father of Indian Cinema.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** He directed *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913, the first Indian feature film.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Dadasaheb Phalke **did not receive the Bharat Ratna**; the award named after him honours lifetime contribution to Indian cinema.

3. C 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Mohanlal, at 65, is the youngest recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award from Kerala.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** He has acted in nearly 400 films across five Indian languages including Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and Kannada.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The first recipient from Kerala was filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, who received the award in 2004.

4. B Only two

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award is India's highest sporting honour. Awarded for spectacular and most outstanding performance at international level over the previous four years. Includes a medallion, certificate, and cash prize. This matches exactly with the given description. **Arjuna Award** is India's second-highest sporting honour, not a lifetime achievement award. Given for good performance in sports over the previous four years, emphasizing leadership, discipline, and sportsmanship. Lifetime achievement is not the criterion; that is addressed by Dhyan Chand Award. **Dronacharya Award** is specifically designed for coaches who have trained sportspersons to excel internationally. Recognizes outstanding and meritorious coaching over the previous four years. Named after Dronacharya, the legendary teacher in the Mahabharata. **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar** is not for sportspersons; it is given to corporates, voluntary organizations, and sports control boards. Purpose: Promotion and development of sports in India, not recognition of retired athletes. Only Pair 1 (Khel Ratna) and Pair 3 (Dronacharya Award) are correctly matched. Hence, the correct answer is B – Only two pairs are correctly matched.

5. D 1, 2 and 3

Article 18(1) of the Indian Constitution states: "No title, not being a military or academic distinction, shall be conferred by the State." However, the Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are not conferred as titles under Article 18(1). Instead, they are civilian honors recognizing exceptional service to the nation in various fields such as arts, literature, sports, and public service. Additionally, the Supreme Court of India clarified that these awards do not violate Article 18 because they are not

titles; the recipients cannot use these awards as prefixes or suffixes to their names. Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect. Padma Awards were indeed instituted in 1954, however; these awards have been suspended three times: Between 1977–1980 (during Morarji Desai’s government, which questioned the relevance of such awards). Once again briefly during 1978 (as part of a policy review under the Janata government). Between 1993–1997 (due to legal and procedural challenges). Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect. The practice of awarding more than three recipients was first broken in 1999, when the award was given to four people. In 2024, this record was surpassed when five individuals were conferred the award, setting a new maximum for the highest civilian honor in India. The premise that the Bharat Ratna is limited to three recipients per year is a common misconception; there is no official limit, and it has been awarded to five people in 2024, which was the maximum number ever given in a single year. The five recipients in 2024 were: **1.** Karpoori Thakur, a former Chief Minister of Bihar. **2.** L. K. Advani, a former Deputy Prime Minister. **3.** P. V. Narasimha Rao, a former Prime Minister. **4.** Chaudhary Charan Singh, a former Prime Minister. **5.** M. S. Swaminathan, a renowned agricultural scientist. Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.

6. D 1, 3 and 4 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Blue Ports prioritize **sustainability and environmentally friendly practices**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Blue Ports may **use renewable energy where feasible**, but not exclusively; conventional energy is also employed.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** They aim to **protect marine biodiversity** while facilitating economic activity in ports.
- **Statement 4 is correct:** Blue Ports **adhere to international standards**, including IMO and ISO 14001, for environmental management.

7. B 1, 2 and 4 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** **Three pilot harbours (Vanakbara, Karaikal, Jakhau)** have been approved under the FAO technical cooperation programme.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Blue Ports **actively collaborate with industry, R&D agencies, and academic institutions**.
- **Statement 4 is incorrect:** **AI, automation, and 5G** are employed for operational efficiency.

8. A Blue Ports focus on marine ecosystem protection, while Green Ports primarily focus on reducing emissions and energy use.

- Blue Ports emphasize **ocean sustainability and biodiversity protection**, whereas Green Ports mainly target **energy efficiency and emission reduction**.
- Options (b), (c), and (d) are factually incorrect; the article explicitly distinguishes the two.

9. A Carbon captured by oceans and coastal ecosystems

- **Blue carbon** refers to the **carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems**, such as **mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrasses**. These ecosystems act as carbon sinks, capturing CO₂ from the atmosphere and sequestering it in biomass and sediments.
- **Option B is incorrect:** This refers to **terrestrial carbon**, not blue carbon.
- **Option C is incorrect:** Fossil fuels store carbon, but this is not called blue carbon.
- **Option D is incorrect:** Atmospheric carbon is just CO₂ in the air; it is not captured or sequestered.

Key point: Blue carbon ecosystems are crucial for **climate change mitigation**, as they sequester carbon **much faster than terrestrial forests** and help prevent ocean acidification.

10. B Only two pairs

- **Pair 1 is correct:** Kamarajar Port, located near Chennai, is the first major port in India to be registered as a public company, making it corporatized. This allows it operational autonomy and makes it the only corporatized major port under India's port system.
- **Pair 2 is correct:** Mundra port is the largest private port in India. The port of Mundra is located on the north shores of the Gulf of Kutch near Mundra, Kutch district, in the state of Gujarat.
- **Pair 3 is incorrect:** Visakhapatnam is a major port but not the largest container port in India. The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT/Nhava Sheva) holds that distinction.

11. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. Ladakh is strategically located, sharing borders with China and Pakistan.
- **Statement 2:** Incorrect. While Ladakh is geopolitically important, it does **not directly serve as a hub for Indian Ocean trade**.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. Pangong and Tso Moriri are ecologically sensitive and attract tourists for trekking and nature observation.

12. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. ADCs exist only in four northeastern states.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. ADCs have legislative, executive, and judicial powers over specified areas.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. Sixth Schedule does **not automatically cover all tribal areas** in India; Ladakh, for example, is not yet included.

13. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. ADCs have executive powers over local infrastructure.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. They also enjoy financial autonomy in the form of certain taxes and licensing powers.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. ADCs **cannot adjudicate cases involving death penalty or imprisonment exceeding five years**; such cases fall under state/central judiciary.

14. A 1 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. Ladakh was reorganized as a Union Territory on 31 October 2019 after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.
- **Statement 2:** Incorrect. Ladakh **does not have its own Public Service Commission**, which is a key reason for the demand for statehood.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. LAHDC's powers have been curtailed since Ladakh became a UT, reducing its autonomy.

15. A 1, 2, and 4 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. ADCs can have up to 30 members.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. Four are nominated by the Governor; the rest are elected by adult franchise.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. Members are **not all appointed by the State Government**; most are elected.
- **Statement 4:** Correct. The President of India has the power to declare an area as a Scheduled Area in India, as stipulated by Article 244(1) and the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This declaration is made by Presidential order and typically occurs after consultation with the Governor of the respective state.

16. B 1, 2, and 3 only

- Statements 1, 2, and 3 are correct as per WIPO's GII 2025 report.
- Statement 4 is partially incorrect; weaknesses cited in the report are **Business Sophistication, Infrastructure, and Institutions**, not Human Capital & Research.

17. A 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. GERD is ~0.65% of GDP.
- **Statement 2:** Incorrect. The private sector contributes only ~36.4% of India's R&D funding; public sector dominates.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. India ranks 6th globally in patent applications.

18. C 1, 2, and 3

- All three statements correctly describe India's initiatives to support startups, deep-tech R&D, and geographic diversification of innovation.

19. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. The GII was introduced in 2007 to evaluate innovation comprehensively. GII evaluates input and output indicators to measure innovation comprehensively. GII serves as a policy reference for STI development globally.
- **Statement 2:** Incorrect. It is published by the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, not UNDP.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. The UN General Assembly recognizes GII as an authoritative reference for STI policy.

20. A 1–World Bank, 2–World Economic Forum, 3–World Justice Project, 4–World Economic Forum, 5–International Monetary Fund, 6–IFPRI, 7–World Bank, 8–International Monetary Fund

- **Ease of Doing Business Index** → **World Bank**: Measures regulatory environment and business-friendliness across countries.
- **Global Competitiveness Report** → **World Economic Forum (WEF)**: Assesses countries' competitiveness through Global Competitiveness Index.
- **Rule of Law Index** → **World Justice Project (WJP)**: Evaluates rule of law compliance using surveys of households and legal experts.
- **Global Gender Gap Index** → **World Economic Forum (WEF)**: Ranks countries based on economic, political, education, and health gender parity.
- **Global Financial Stability Report** → **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**: Assesses global financial systems, market trends, and emerging market financing.
- **Global Hunger Index** → **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)**: Integrates undernourishment, child stunting, wasting, and mortality to assess hunger.
- **Global Economic Prospects** → **World Bank**: Analyzes global economic trends, particularly for emerging markets and developing economies.
- **World Economic Outlook** → **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**: Publishes projections and analyses of global economic developments.

21. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** H-1B is for specialized occupations typically requiring a bachelor's degree or higher.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The visa is employer-sponsored and initially valid for 3 years, extendable to 6 years.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The H-1B visa program has an annual cap of 65,000 plus 20,000 for U.S. master's degree holders, making it a capped program.

22. C 1, 2, 3 and 4

- The UK, China, South Korea, and Canada have all introduced measures to attract skilled workers following the U.S. fee hike.
- UK: Considering abolishing visa fees for skilled professionals.
- China: Launching a new K Visa for STEM professionals.
- South Korea: Reviewing strategies to attract foreign engineers.
- Canada: Lowered immigration cut-off scores and revived programs for H-1B holders.

23. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Indian nationals historically receive the largest share of H-1B visas.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** 71% of H-1B visas went to Indians, making them most impacted by the hike.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The fee hike applies only to new applicants from September 21 onward and does not affect existing visa holders.

24. A 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** EB-5 was created in 1990 to promote U.S. economic growth through foreign investment.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The minimum investment is \$1.05 million or \$800,000 in targeted employment areas, not \$5 million.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The program reserves 3,000 visas for investment in high-unemployment areas (targeted employment areas).

25. A 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Gold Card program allows wealthy investors to buy a Green Card directly for \$5 million.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Unlike EB-5, the Gold Card program likely does not require job creation.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** EB-5 requires investment in U.S. businesses and creation of at least 10 jobs.

26. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Malawi is indeed a landlocked country in southeastern Africa, bordered by Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zambia.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Lilongwe is the capital (seat of government), while the judiciary meets in Blantyre; legislative capital is also Lilongwe.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Lake Malawi (Lake Nyasa) forms part of the boundary with Tanzania and Mozambique.

27. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Great Rift Valley runs through Malawi north to south.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Mulanje Massif (Sapitwa Peak) is about 3,002 meters above sea level.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Malawi has a sub-tropical climate with a rainy season (Nov–May) and dry season (May–Nov).

28. B Only two pairs

- Argentina's economic crisis and Sudan's internal conflict are accurately reflected.
- Turkey's membership in NATO is intact, so that pair is wrongly matched.

Argentina – Worst economic crisis

Correct. Argentina has been facing severe economic turmoil, including high inflation, debt issues, and currency depreciation.

Sudan – War between the country's regular army and paramilitary forces

Correct. Sudan has experienced violent clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), leading to political instability and humanitarian crises.

Turkey – Rescinded its membership of NATO □

Incorrect. Turkey remains a member of NATO. While it has had disagreements with the alliance, it has **not withdrawn or rescinded its NATO membership**.

29. D None

- **Donbas – Syria**

Incorrect. Donbas is a region in **eastern Ukraine**, not Syria. It has been a major conflict zone since 2014 due to clashes between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists.

- **Kachin – Ethiopia**

Incorrect. Kachin is a state in **northern Myanmar (Burma)**, not Ethiopia. The Kachin conflict involves clashes between the Myanmar military and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

- **Tigray – North Yemen**

Incorrect. Tigray is a region in **northern Ethiopia**, not North Yemen. The Tigray conflict began in 2020 between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

30. D None

- **Analysis of Pairs:**

North Kivu and Ituri – War between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Incorrect. North Kivu and Ituri are provinces in **eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**. The region has experienced prolonged conflicts involving militias and ethnic groups, unrelated to the Armenia-Azerbaijan war.

Nagorno-Karabakh – Insurgency in Mozambique

Incorrect. Nagorno-Karabakh is a **disputed region between Armenia and Azerbaijan**, primarily known for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It has nothing to do with insurgency in Mozambique, which involves groups like **Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a** in Cabo Delgado.

Kherson and Zaporizhzhia – Dispute between Israel and Lebanon

Incorrect. Kherson and Zaporizhzhia are **regions in Ukraine**, which have been in the news due to the **Russia-Ukraine war**. They are unrelated to any Israel-Lebanon dispute.

31. B 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Slabs have been rationalized to 5%, 18%, and 40% for merit, standard, and demerit goods.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Bricks retain a special composition scheme with 6% GST without ITC and 12% with ITC.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** IDS still persists in certain sectors like bicycles, textiles, corrugated boxes, and fertilizers.

32. D 1, 2, 3, and 4

- All the items are correctly matched with the new GST slabs announced under GST 2.0.
- Sin and luxury goods like pan masala are taxed at the highest 40% demerit rate.

33. C 1, 2 and 4 only

- Under the GST regime, certain essential items are exempted to reduce the tax burden on basic necessities. Let's analyze the given items:
- **Cereal grains hulled – Exempted:** Basic food grains are exempt from GST as they are essential for human consumption.
- **Chicken eggs cooked – Exempted:** Eggs (cooked or raw) fall under essential food items and are generally exempted under GST.
- **Fish processed and canned – Not exempted:** Processed and canned fish are considered processed food products and are **taxable under GST**. Raw fish may have exemptions, but processed/canned items attract GST.
- **Newspapers containing advertising material – Exempted:** Printed newspapers are exempt from GST under essential publications; the inclusion of advertising does not make them taxable.

34. A 1 only

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is an indirect tax reform in India aimed at streamlining taxation and creating a unified market. Let's analyze the statements: "It will replace multiple taxes collected by multiple authorities and will thus create a single market in India." – Correct: GST subsumes various central and state taxes such as excise duty, VAT, service tax, etc., into a single tax structure, facilitating a unified market and reducing the cascading effect of taxes. "It will drastically reduce the Current Account Deficit (CAD) of India and will enable it to increase its foreign exchange reserves." – Incorrect: GST primarily affects domestic consumption and tax collection efficiency. While it may indirectly improve ease of doing business and attract investment, it does not directly impact CAD or forex reserves, which are determined by trade balance, exports, imports, and foreign capital flows. "It will enormously increase the growth and size of the economy of India and will enable it to overtake China in the near future." – Incorrect/Exaggerated: While GST can improve efficiency, reduce tax evasion, and slightly boost economic growth, it alone cannot cause India to overtake China's economy. Such claims are speculative and beyond the immediate scope of GST benefits.

35. B Union Finance Minister, Minister of State for Revenue, and Ministers in charge of Finance from each State

- The GST Council, established under Article 279A, is chaired by the Union Finance Minister, includes the Union Minister of State for Revenue or Finance, and Ministers from each state in charge of finance or taxation. Option (a), (c), and (d) include officials like NITI Aayog CEO or Chief Secretaries, which are not part of the Council.

36. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2017, introduced GST in India.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** GST replaced multiple indirect taxes like excise duty, service tax, VAT, etc., levied by Centre and States.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** IGST is applicable on **inter-state transactions**, not intra-state.

37. B 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The GST Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister and includes State representatives.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** GSTN is a technology platform for taxpayers to file returns, make payments, and comply.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** GSTN is **not a policy-making body**; GST rates and policies are decided by the GST Council.

38. A 1 only

Barren Island is located in the Andaman Sea, about 140 km from Port Blair or Sri Vijaya Puram. Barren Island volcano is the only active volcano located in the Indian Territory, Andaman Islands. It is along a volcanic arc connecting Sumatra and Myanmar. The statement that the Barren Island volcano last erupted in 1991 and has been inactive since is incorrect. The volcano, India's only active volcano, re-awoke with a major eruption in 1991 but has since had numerous eruptions, including in 2005–07, 2017–19, 2022, and most recently in September 2025.

39. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Barren Island is the only active volcano in India.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** It is located in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago atop the West Andaman Fault, a subduction zone.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The volcano is on an uninhabited island, so current eruptions do not pose immediate threats to human populations.

40. A 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Stratovolcanoes are steep, symmetrical, and prone to **explosive eruptions**. Examples include Mount Fuji and Mount Vesuvius.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Lava domes are formed from **slow-moving, viscous lava**, not fast-flowing lava. They can collapse to form pyroclastic flows.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Volcanic activity provides **fertile soil, geothermal energy, minerals, and tourism opportunities**, benefiting humans economically and environmentally.