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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Daily Quiz — March 15, 2026

15 March 2026

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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

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15 March 2026 · 10 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Q 1 R. Vairamuthu has been conferred which edition of the Jnanpith Award for the year 2025?

A 58th Jnanpith Award

B 59th Jnanpith Award

C 60th Jnanpith Award ✓

D 61st Jnanpith Award

EXPLANATION

R. Vairamuthu received the 60th Jnanpith Award for the year 2025, announced on March 15, 2026. The award has been given annually since 1965, making this the 60th edition. Vairamuthu is the third Tamil writer to receive this honour, after P.V. Akilan (1975) and D. Jayakanthan (2002).

CONCEPT

The Jnanpith Award is India's highest literary honour, given by the Bharatiya Jnanpith trust (founded 1944). It carries a cash prize of ₹11 lakh, a citation, and a bronze statuette of Vagdevi (goddess Saraswati). It is open to Indian citizens writing in any of the 22 Eighth Schedule languages plus English.

Q 2 Which of the following is NOT a component of the Jnanpith Award prize package?

A Cash prize of ₹11 lakh

B Bronze statuette of Vagdevi

C A gold Saraswati idol ✓

D A citation plaque

EXPLANATION

The Jnanpith Award comprises a cash prize of ₹11 lakh, a citation, and a bronze statuette of Vagdevi (Saraswati) — NOT a gold idol. This is a frequently tested detail in UPSC Prelims. Confusing 'bronze statuette of Vagdevi' with 'gold idol' is a common trap.

CONCEPT

Vagdevi is another name for Saraswati, the goddess of learning and arts. The Jnanpith statuette is bronze, not gold. The award selection committee for the 2025 cycle was chaired by Odia writer Pratibha Ray, herself the 2011 Jnanpith laureate.

Q 3 A new plant species named *Osbeckia zubeengargiana* was discovered in which protected area of Assam?

- A Kaziranga National Park
- B Manas National Park ✓
- C Dibru-Saikhowa National Park
- D Nameri National Park

EXPLANATION

Osbeckia zubeengargiana was discovered in the grasslands of Manas National Park (Baksa district, Assam) by botanists from Gauhati University. It was named after Assamese musician Zubeen Garg. The discovery was published in the international taxonomic journal *Phytotaxa*.

CONCEPT

Manas National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (since 1985), a Project Tiger Reserve (since 1973), a Project Elephant Reserve, and a Biosphere Reserve. Its grassland habitat is critical for species like the Golden Langur, Pygmy Hog (world's smallest wild pig), Hispid Hare, and Indian Rhinoceros.

Q 4 The plant family Melastomataceae, to which the newly discovered *Osbeckia zubeengargiana* belongs, is best characterised by which feature?

- A Latex-producing stems and compound leaves
- B Typically distinctive veined leaves and ornamental flowers, often with prominent anthers ✓
- C Exclusively carnivorous plants found in wetlands
- D Root nodules for nitrogen fixation

EXPLANATION

Melastomataceae is a large family of flowering plants known for distinctive leaf venation (multiple parallel veins arching from base to tip) and showy flowers with prominent anthers. *Osbeckia zubeengargiana* is a perennial shrub growing 2.5–3.5 metres with pink flower clusters of 2.5–3 cm, flowering from mid-September to January.

CONCEPT

The IUCN classified *Osbeckia zubeengargiana* as 'Data Deficient' — not Endangered — because long-term ecological data is lacking. This classification highlights the gap in India's grassland biodiversity documentation. India's grasslands lack a dedicated legal protection framework equivalent to the Forest Conservation Act.

Q 5 The Haldia Bulk Terminal inaugurated by PM Modi on March 15, 2026 is operated under which PPP model?

- A BOT (Build, Operate, Transfer) — 20-year concession
- B **DBFOT (Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer) — 30-year concession ✓**
- C BOO (Build, Own, Operate) — permanent ownership
- D BOOT (Build, Own, Operate, Transfer) — 25-year concession

EXPLANATION

The Haldia Bulk Terminal is based on the DBFOT (Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer) model with a 30-year concession awarded to APSEZ (Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd) via HDC Bulk Terminal Ltd. Under DBFOT, the private operator designs, builds, finances, and operates the asset, then transfers it back to the government at the end of the concession period.

CONCEPT

PPP (Public–Private Partnership) models in Indian port infrastructure include: BOT (Build–Operate–Transfer), BOOT (Build–Own–Operate–Transfer), BOO (Build–Own–Operate), and DBFOT (Design–Build–Finance–Operate–Transfer). DBFOT places greater financial and design risk on the private partner compared to a plain BOT. Haldia Dock Complex is part of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (renamed from Kolkata Port Trust in 2021).

Q 6 Haldia Bulk Terminal is located on which river, and is described as India's first fully automated dry bulk terminal on that river?

- A Damodar River
- B Rupnarayan River
- C **Hooghly River ✓**
- D Brahmaputra River

EXPLANATION

The Haldia Bulk Terminal is located on the Hooghly River at Haldia Dock Complex. It is India's first fully automated dry bulk terminal on the Hooghly. The terminal has a capacity of 4 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) and handles coal, bauxite, and limestone for eastern India's power, steel, and aluminium industries.

CONCEPT

The Hooghly River is not a tributary but a distributary of the Ganga — it branches off at Nabadwip, West Bengal, and flows into the Bay of Bengal. This distinction is important: it means siltation is a chronic problem at Haldia (the Ganga carries high sediment loads). Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port handles approximately 60% of India's dry bulk imports for the eastern region.

Q 7

Zydus Lifesciences received China's NMPA approval for Desidustat to treat anaemia in patients with which condition?

- A Thalassaemia
- B Aplastic Anaemia
- C Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) ✓
- D Iron-Deficiency Anaemia due to malnutrition

EXPLANATION

Desidustat (brand name: Oxemia) is approved for treating anaemia in Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) patients not on dialysis. It received China's NMPA approval in March 2026. It was already approved in India in 2022, with over 1,00,000 Indian patients treated. CKD patients are especially burdened by injectable treatments, making the oral Desidustat a clinical advantage.

CONCEPT

Desidustat belongs to the HIF-PHI class (Hypoxia-Inducible Factor–Prolyl Hydroxylase Inhibitors) — a new therapeutic category that mimics altitude-induced red blood cell stimulation by elevating erythropoietin. India's drug regulator is CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation); China's equivalent is NMPA (National Medical Products Administration). Zydus Lifesciences was formerly Cadila Healthcare, rebranded in 2022.

Q 8

The ₹23,550 crore infrastructure projects launched by PM Modi in Silchar are aimed at developing which valley as a trade hub?

- A Brahmaputra Valley
- B Barak Valley ✓
- C Imphal Valley
- D Dhansiri Valley

EXPLANATION

PM Modi launched ₹23,550 crore projects in Silchar (Assam) to develop Barak Valley as a trade and logistics hub for Northeast India. Barak Valley (districts: Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi) is in southern Assam and shares borders with Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Bangladesh. It is linked to the Act East Policy and PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.

CONCEPT

The Barak River flows from southern Assam into Bangladesh, where it becomes the Surma River. The Sutarkandi Land Port (Cachar district) is a key India–Bangladesh border crossing in this region. Barak Valley is geographically and culturally distinct from the Brahmaputra Valley (which includes Guwahati) and is less commonly tested but increasingly relevant for Northeast India connectivity questions.

Q 9 Manas National Park was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in which year?

A 1973

B 1979

C 1985 ✓

D 1992

EXPLANATION

Manas National Park was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. It was declared a Project Tiger Reserve earlier in 1973 — one of the original 9 Tiger Reserves under Project Tiger. The park is also a Biosphere Reserve and Project Elephant Reserve. It is located in Baksa district, Assam, on the foothills of the Bhutan Himalaya.

CONCEPT

Manas NP's key endemic and endangered species: Golden Langur (IUCN Endangered, found only in Assam and Bhutan), Pygmy Hog (world's smallest wild pig — IUCN Critically Endangered, reintroduced to Manas), Hispid Hare (also Assam grasslands), and Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros. The park was in the 'List of World Heritage in Danger' from 1992–2011 due to insurgency and poaching, before being delisted after recovery.

Q 10 Which of the following is NOT one of India's six officially designated Classical Languages?

A Odia

B Malayalam

C Bengali ✓

D Telugu

EXPLANATION

India's six Classical Languages are Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia. Bengali is NOT a Classical Language, though it is an important Eighth Schedule language and the language of Rabindranath Tagore. Tamil was the first language to receive Classical Language status in 2004; Odia was the most recently added in 2014.

CONCEPT

Criteria for Classical Language status in India: the language must have a recorded history of over 1,500–2,000 years; a body of ancient literature/texts considered a valuable heritage; an original literary tradition not borrowed from another speech community; and a distinctness of the classical language and literature from its modern form. This topic connects the current affairs item about Vairamuthu (Tamil) to the broader Polity & GS-1 syllabus.

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