



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Daily Quiz — March 27, 2026

27 March 2026



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotesFree UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →

ADVERTISE

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com

DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Daily Quiz — March 27, 2026

27 March 2026 · 30 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Under the Paris Agreement, each party must submit progressively ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) at what interval?

- A Every 3 years
- B Every 5 years ✓
- C Every 7 years
- D Every 10 years

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

The correct answer is every 5 years, mandated under Article 4.9 of the Paris Agreement, which establishes a ratchet mechanism requiring progressively ambitious climate pledges. India submitted NDC 3.0 covering 2031-2035 on 25 March 2026.

The first Global Stocktake was completed at COP28 in Dubai (December 2023), providing the evidence base for the next NDC round. COP21 in Paris (12 December 2015) adopted the agreement with 196 parties; it entered into force on 4 November 2016 after ratification by 55 countries representing 55% of global emissions.

CONCEPT NOTE

The Paris Agreement architecture rests on three pillars: NDCs (Article 4), Global Stocktake (Article 14, every 5 years), and transparency framework (Article 13). The CBDR-RC principle under Article 2.2 is India core negotiating position, distinguishing developed (Annex I) from developing countries.

India ratified on 2 October 2016 (Gandhi Jayanti). Related policies: LiFE mission launched at COP27 Sharm El-Sheikh (November 2022), Green Credit Programme notified October 2023 under EPA 1986.

Prelims 2023 asked about the Global Stocktake mechanism. Exam tip: UPSC tests the difference between NDCs (country-specific pledges) and the Global Stocktake (collective assessment) — they are complementary but distinct instruments.

The Kyoto Protocol (1997) used top-down binding targets; Paris shifted to bottom-up voluntary pledges.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 2 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

What is India's emissions intensity reduction target from 2005 levels under NDC 3.0 (approved March 2026)?

- A 45% by 2030
- B 50% by 2035
- C 47% by 2035 ✓
- D 55% by 2035

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

India NDC 3.0 (approved 25 March 2026) commits to a 47% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP from 2005 levels by 2035. This builds on NDC 2.0 (August 2022) which targeted 45% by 2030.

India had already achieved a 36% reduction by 2020 per its Third Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC. India per-capita emissions stand at approximately 2.4 tonnes CO₂, well below the global average of 6.3 tonnes — a fact India consistently cites in climate negotiations to justify its development-first approach.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

Emissions intensity measures CO₂ per unit GDP, not absolute emissions — a critical distinction UPSC frequently tests. India absolute emissions are the third highest globally (~3.9 billion tonnes), but on a per-capita basis they remain among the lowest major economies.

Key policy instruments supporting NDC 3.0: National Green Hydrogen Mission (Rs 19,744 crore, January 2023), Green Credit Programme (October 2023, under EPA 1986), Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (June 2023, under Energy Conservation Act 2001 as amended 2022), and NAPCC with 8 national missions (2008). The Perform Achieve Trade (PAT) scheme under NMEEE has avoided ~92 million tonnes of CO₂.

Exam tip: Previous year questions have tested the difference between intensity-based and absolute emission targets — India follows the intensity-based approach, while the EU commits to absolute cuts.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 3 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The International Solar Alliance (ISA), co-founded by India and France at COP21, has its headquarters at which location?

- A New Delhi
- B Gurugram, Haryana ✓
- C Geneva, Switzerland
- D Paris, France

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

ISA is headquartered at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) campus in Gwal Pahari, Gurugram, Haryana. It was jointly launched by PM Modi and French President Francois Hollande at COP21 Paris on 30 November 2015.

The ISA Framework Agreement entered into force on 6 December 2017. As of 2026, ISA has 125+ signatory countries and 107+ full members.

Ajay Mathur serves as the Director General since March 2021. ISA received UN Observer status in October 2018.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

ISA was initially restricted to countries fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, but the Fifth Amendment (2020) opened membership to all UN member states. ISA is one of only two treaty-based international organisations headquartered in India (the other being CDRI, New Delhi, launched at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit).

The US withdrew from ISA on 7 January 2026. Key ISA programmes: One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG), Solar Risk Mitigation Initiative, and the Affordable Finance at Scale initiative.

Prelims 2021 tested ISA membership criteria. Exam tip: ISA has a unique India-France co-founding — this connects to GS2 (India-France strategic partnership, Indo-Pacific cooperation) alongside GS3 (renewable energy).

Previous year question (2018) asked about ISA founding location.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 4 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Which of the following correctly defines the Panchamrit commitments announced by India at COP26 in Glasgow (November 2021)?

- A** 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030, 50% energy from renewables, 1 billion tonnes emission reduction, 45% carbon intensity cut, net zero by 2070 ✓
- B** 400 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030, 40% energy from renewables, 2 billion tonnes emission reduction, 35% carbon intensity cut, net zero by 2060
- C** 600 GW non-fossil capacity by 2035, 60% energy from renewables, 1.5 billion tonnes emission reduction, 50% carbon intensity cut, net zero by 2070
- D** 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2035, 50% energy from renewables, 1 billion tonnes emission reduction, 47% carbon intensity cut, net zero by 2070

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

The five Panchamrit goals announced by PM Modi on 1 November 2021 at COP26 Glasgow are: (1) 500 GW non-fossil fuel installed capacity by 2030, (2) 50% energy from renewables by 2030, (3) 1 billion tonnes cumulative emission reduction by 2030, (4) 45% carbon intensity cut from 2005 levels by 2030, (5) net-zero emissions by 2070. These were formally incorporated into India NDC 2.0, submitted to UNFCCC in August 2022.

India non-fossil capacity had already crossed 52.57% of installed capacity by February 2026.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

Panchamrit (Sanskrit: five nectars of immortality) is a political declaration, distinct from the legally binding NDC submitted to the UNFCCC. India net-zero target of 2070 is 20 years behind the US, EU, and UK (2050), and 10 years behind China (2060) — reflecting the CBDR-RC principle. Key implementation instruments: PM-KUSUM (solar for farmers, Rs 34,035 crore), National Solar Mission (target revised to 100 GW, later exceeded), Green Hydrogen Mission (Rs 19,744 crore), and the rooftop solar scheme PM Surya Ghar (2024).

Exam tip: distinguish Panchamrit (COP26 political pledge) from NDC (formal UNFCCC submission) from Long-Term Low-Carbon Development Strategy (LT-LEDS, submitted November 2022 at COP27). UPSC Prelims 2023 tested Panchamrit targets.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 5 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) regional connectivity scheme was launched under which parent policy?

- A National Aviation Safety Policy 2015
- B National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016 ✓
- C Civil Aviation Requirement 2014
- D Air Services Agreement Framework 2017

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

UDAN was conceptualised under the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016, approved by the Union Cabinet on 15 June 2016. The scheme was formally launched on 21 October 2016 by MoCA. The first UDAN flight (Shimla-Delhi) was flagged off by PM Modi on 27 April 2017 operated by Alliance Air. Over four phases, UDAN operationalised 663 routes across 95 airports. However, only 7-10% of routes proved commercially viable after the Viability Gap Funding subsidy was withdrawn, exposing structural weaknesses in the demand model.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

NCAP 2016 is a comprehensive aviation framework covering far more than UDAN — it includes MRO (Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul) policy, 5/20 rule relaxation (replaced with 0/20), bilateral air service rights, Route Dispersal Guidelines, and the vision to make flying affordable. UDAN had four phases: 1.0 (2017, fixed-wing), 2.0 (2018, added helicopters for NE and hilly regions), 3.0 (2018, seaplanes, tourism routes), 4.0 (2020, priority to smaller cities).

Modified UDAN (March 2026, Rs 28,840 crore) addresses failures by extending VGF from 3 to 5 years and introducing Challenge Mode. Exam tip: UPSC may test the difference between UDAN (regional connectivity subsidy scheme) and NCAP 2016 (the overarching policy).

Also know NABH Nirman target of 220 airports and India current count (~150 operational airports).

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 6 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

What is Viability Gap Funding (VGF) in the context of the Modified UDAN scheme?

- A A tax levied on airlines to fund airport development
- B A financial subsidy to bridge the gap between airline operating costs and capped fare revenue on unviable routes ✓
- C A loan provided by RBI to regional airlines at concessional rates
- D A capital grant given to states for building new airports

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

VGF bridges the gap between airline operating costs and revenue earned from government-capped fares (Rs 2,500 for a one-hour flight). Under Modified UDAN, VGF totals Rs 10,043 crore over 10 years, tapering over 5 years per route — extended from the original 3-year period.

The Regional Connectivity Fund, sourced from a Rs 5,000 levy per departing domestic flight and state government contributions (10-20%), finances the VGF. In the original UDAN, premature VGF withdrawal caused over 90% of routes to become unviable.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

VGF is a broader government mechanism for PPP projects beyond aviation — the DEA-administered VGF Scheme (revised April 2024) provides up to 30% of Total Project Cost as capital grant for social infrastructure and 20% for economic infrastructure. Under Modified UDAN, the Rs 28,840 crore package includes Rs 12,159 crore for 100 airport infrastructure projects, Rs 3,661 crore for 200 helipads, Rs 2,577 crore for O&M, and Rs 400 crore for indigenous HAL aircraft procurement.

The Challenge Mode mechanism allows states to compete for airport development funds based on readiness parameters. Exam tip: VGF connects to GS3 (Infrastructure, PPP models) and GS2 (Centre-State cooperation). UPSC previously tested VGF in the context of highway BOT projects — understand it as a cross-sector instrument, not aviation-specific.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 7 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The HAL Dornier 228, proposed for procurement under Modified UDAN, is manufactured at which HAL facility?

- A HAL Bengaluru
- B HAL Nashik
- C HAL Kanpur ✓
- D HAL Hyderabad

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

The HAL Dornier 228 is manufactured at HAL Transport Aircraft Division in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. HAL acquired the production licence from Dornier GmbH (now part of Airbus) in November 1983.

Over 125 aircraft have been produced as of 2022. It is a 19-seater twin-turboprop STOL aircraft suited for short unpaved runways.

Alliance Air operated India first commercial Dornier 228 flight on 12 April 2022 on the Dibrugarh-Pasighat route in Arunachal Pradesh, a milestone for NE regional connectivity.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, established 23 December 1940 by Walchand Hirachand, Navratna PSU under MoD) has production divisions mapped to specific platforms: Bengaluru (LCA Tejas, ALH Dhruv, LCH Prachand), Nashik (Su-30MKI licence production), Kanpur (Dornier 228, HTT-40 Trainer), Koraput (engine overhaul), and Lucknow (Shakti helicopter engine). Under Modified UDAN, Rs 400 crore is allocated for 2 Dornier 228 aircraft (Alliance Air) and 2 Dhruv helicopters (Pawan Hans).

HAL achieved Rs 28,000+ crore revenue in FY2024-25 with an order book exceeding Rs 94,000 crore. Exam tip: HAL division-product-location mapping is a Prelims favourite.

Also know the distinction between Navratna (HAL, BEL) and Maharatna PSUs (ONGC, IOC) — financial autonomy limits differ significantly.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 8 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Kavach, India indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system, was developed by which organisation?

- A Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)
- B RailTel Corporation of India
- C **Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) ✓**
- D Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Kavach was developed by RDSO (Research Designs and Standards Organisation), headquartered in Lucknow, in collaboration with three Hyderabad-based firms: Medha Servo Drives, Kernex Microsystems, and HBL Power Systems. RDSO is the sole R&D wing of Indian Railways, established in 1957 by merging RDSO and Railway Testing and Research Centre.

Kavach received SIL-4 certification (highest safety level under IEC 61508) in 2019 and costs approximately Rs 50 lakh per route-km — four to five times cheaper than Europe ETCS at roughly Rs 2 crore per km.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

Kavach (formerly Train Collision Avoidance System or TCAS) uses Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio instead of GSM-R used by ETCS, enabling distributed deployment without expensive centralized Radio Block Centres. The Balasore triple train collision on 2 June 2023 (294 deaths, Odisha) dramatically accelerated government commitment to Kavach deployment.

Target: 44,000 route-km coverage by 2032. Budget 2024-25 allocated Rs 1,112.57 crore for Kavach.

The Railway Board signed a bulk contract in March 2024 for 3,000 route-km in South Central Railway. Exam tip: UPSC tests Kavach vs ETCS technology differences (UHF vs GSM-R, cost comparison) and SIL certification levels (SIL-1 lowest to SIL-4 highest under IEC 61508).

Previous year question tested RDSO role in railway standardization.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 9 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

What does Safety Integrity Level 4 (SIL-4) certification signify for the Kavach train protection system?

- A It meets the lowest safety standard for non-critical railway operations
- B **It is the highest international safety level defined under IEC 61508, ensuring near-zero risk in mission-critical systems ✓**
- C It indicates the system has been tested for medium-speed rail operations only
- D It certifies the system for freight-only operations

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

SIL-4 is the highest of four Safety Integrity Levels defined under IEC 61508, the international standard for functional safety of electrical/electronic systems. It requires a probability of dangerous failure below 10^{-8} per hour of continuous operation — essentially one failure in 11,400 years.

Kavach received SIL-4 certification from an independent assessor in 2019. This places it at the same safety tier as the European Train Control System (ETCS), which is deployed across the EU, Japan, and South Korea for high-speed rail.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

Railway-specific safety standards complement IEC 61508: CENELEC standards EN 50126 (RAMS — Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, Safety), EN 50128 (software), and EN 50129 (hardware). Kavach integrates features from both ETCS Level 2 (continuous radio-based communication) and Level 3 (moving block signalling, eliminating fixed block sections).

India chose indigenous development over importing ETCS for two reasons: cost sovereignty (Rs 50 lakh vs Rs 2 crore/km) and technology independence. The 2023 National Rail Plan targets zero-fatality operations.

Vande Bharat trains are among the first with Kavach-compatible onboard equipment. Exam tip: UPSC may frame a question around why India did not adopt ETCS directly — answer lies in cost, spectrum availability (UHF vs GSM-R), and Aatmanirbhar Bharat policy.

Over 20 countries have expressed interest in Kavach, making it a potential defence-style export.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 10 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK), a dedicated railway safety fund, was created in which year?

- A 2015-16
- B 2016-17
- C 2017-18 ✓
- D 2019-20

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

RRSK was created in 2017-18, announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in Union Budget 2017-18 as a dedicated non-lapsable safety fund. The corpus was Rs 1 lakh crore over five years, funded through Rs 15,000 crore annual Gross Budgetary Support plus Rs 5,000 crore from Railways internal resources, totalling Rs 20,000 crore per year.

In the first five-year term, Rs 1,05,378 crore was actually spent. RRSK was extended for a second term from 2022-23 with Rs 45,000 crore allocated from GBS over five years.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

RRSK was created following recommendations of the High Level Safety Review Committee chaired by Dr Anil Kakodkar (former AEC Chairman, submitted report in February 2012), which estimated Rs 1 lakh crore was needed for comprehensive safety upgrades. Key achievements funded through RRSK: elimination of over 5,000 unmanned level crossings, replacement of 1,500+ overaged bridges, transition to LHB coaches with anti-climbing features across all mainline trains, and initial Kavach deployment.

RRSK is a non-lapsable fund — meaning unspent allocations carry forward to the next fiscal year. Exam tip: distinguish RRSK (dedicated safety corpus) from the Railway Capital Expenditure (general capex in the Union Budget).

The non-lapsable nature parallels other dedicated funds like CAMPA (compensatory afforestation) and NIIF (national investment). GS3 (Infrastructure) and GS2 (governance of public safety) are the relevant papers.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 11 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Which of the following is NOT a member of the G7?

A Canada

B Australia ✓

C Italy

D Japan

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Australia is NOT a member of the G7. The seven members are the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, and Japan.

The European Union participates as a permanent invitee (since 1981 Ottawa Summit) without full voting status, sometimes called a "non-enumerated member." The G7 originated as the G6 at the Rambouillet Summit in France on 15-17 November 1975; Canada joined at San Juan, Puerto Rico in June 1976. Russia was admitted in 1998 to form the G8 but was suspended indefinitely in March 2014 following the annexation of Crimea.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

G7 presidency rotates annually in a fixed sequence: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, US. France holds the 2026 presidency with the summit scheduled at Evian-les-Bains (15-17 June 2026). G7 nations collectively represent approximately USD 52 trillion in GDP (~28-30% of global output, down from 50%+ in the 1980s).

The G7 has no permanent secretariat, charter, or binding authority — it is purely informal. India has been a frequent G7 guest (2019 Biarritz, 2021 Cornwall, 2023 Hiroshima, 2026 Evian).

Exam tip: UPSC tests the G7 vs G20 distinction carefully — G20 includes India, China, Brazil, and other emerging economies while G7 is limited to advanced economies. Prelims 2023 asked about G7 composition. Also distinguish from the Quad (US, India, Japan, Australia) — note Australia is in the Quad but not the G7.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 12 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

India holds the BRICS chairship in 2026 for the fourth time. When did India previously chair BRICS?

- A 2010, 2014, and 2018
- B 2012, 2016, and 2021 ✓
- C 2011, 2015, and 2019
- D 2013, 2017, and 2022

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India chaired BRICS in 2012 (4th Summit, New Delhi — first on Indian soil, the Delhi Declaration), 2016 (8th Summit, Goa — focus on counter-terrorism), and 2021 (13th Summit, virtual due to COVID, theme: BRICS@15). The 2026 chairship theme is "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability" (forming the acronym BRICS).

Chairship rotates alphabetically among the original five founding members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa. The 2025 chair was Brazil (Brasilia Summit).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

BRICS has undergone significant expansion: originally BRIC (coined by Jim O Neill of Goldman Sachs in 2001), South Africa joined in 2010. Major expansion in January 2024 added Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE; Indonesia joined in 2025 — making it BRICS-11.

The New Development Bank (NDB, HQ Shanghai, operational 2015, first president K.V. Kamath, current president Dilma Rousseff) has approved over USD 32 billion in loans. The Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) pool stands at USD 100 billion.

India 2026 flagships include promoting Digital Public Infrastructure (UPI, Aadhaar, DigiLocker) for the Global South. Exam tip: BRICS nations represent 45%+ of world population and approximately 37% of global GDP (PPP).

UPSC tests BRICS vs G7 as competing governance frameworks under GS2 (International Relations). Previous year questions have tested NDB headquarters and BRICS founding year.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 13 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

India established its first strategic partnership with a Western nation in **1998**. Which country was it?

A United Kingdom

B United States

C France ✓

D Germany

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India established its Strategic Partnership with France on 26 January 1998 (Republic Day) during President Jacques Chirac state visit to India. This was India first strategic partnership with any Western nation. Critically, France did not impose sanctions after India Pokhran-II nuclear tests in May 1998, unlike the US (Glenn Amendment sanctions), Japan, and others. In February 2026, the partnership was elevated to "Special Global Strategic Partnership" — the highest tier in India bilateral framework, above the "Strategic Partnership" level held with most major powers.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

France has never sanctioned India and consistently supports India bid for permanent UNSC membership. Key defence pillars: 36 Rafale jets (Rs 59,000 crore, September 2016 IGA), 6 Scorpene submarines under Project-75 (Mazagon Dock, Mumbai), and 26+74 Rafale-Marine jets for INS Vikrant. Nuclear cooperation: Jaitapur EPR reactors (6 x 1,650 MW, Maharashtra) and joint Small Modular Reactor R&D. Space: joint TRISHNA thermal imaging satellite (launch ~2026). Counter-terrorism: first Joint Working Group signed 2001; joint exercises include Shakti (Army), Varuna (Navy), Garuda (Air Force). The Horizon 2047 Roadmap (signed 2023) guides the next 25 years. Exam tip: France is a "resident Indo-Pacific power" (Reunion, Mayotte, New Caledonia, French Polynesia — 1.6 million citizens in the region). This makes the India-France maritime partnership distinct from the India-US or India-UK ones.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 14 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The Shaurya Squadrons, dedicated drone sub-units embedded within armoured regiments, were validated during which exercise?

A Exercise Sindhu Sudarshan

B Exercise Amogh Jwala ✓

C Exercise Gagan Shakti

D Exercise Vajra Prahar

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Shaurya Squadrons were validated during Exercise Amogh Jwala, a 13-day mechanised manoeuvre drill conducted from 6 to 19 March 2026 at the Babina Field Firing Ranges near Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. The exercise was executed by the 31 Armoured Division (White Tiger Division) under XXI Corps (Sudarshan Chakra Corps), headquartered at Bhopal.

It was reviewed by Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth, GOC-in-C Southern Command, Pune. The exercise validated real-time drone-tank coordination in offensive and defensive armoured operations for the first time.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Shaurya Squadrons represent India doctrinal shift toward drone-integrated combined-arms warfare, directly influenced by lessons from the Russia-Ukraine conflict where inexpensive FPV drones and loitering munitions devastated expensive main battle tanks. Six Shaurya Squadrons are currently active across five Army commands (Northern, Western, Southern, Central, Eastern); the target is integration across all 67 armoured regiments.

Each squadron operates three drone types: surveillance quadcopters, attack drones, and loitering munitions (including Nagastra-1). The Ladakh standoff (2020-ongoing) and Pakistan desert border also drove urgency for ISR drone capability.

Exam tip: connects to GS3 (Security and internal security) — UPSC may pair this with Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) and the Shekatkar Committee (2016) recommendations on defence modernization. The concept of "attritional warfare" using cheap drones against expensive platforms is a potential Mains essay theme.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 15 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The Nagastra-1, India indigenous loitering munition, was developed by Economic Explosives Limited (a subsidiary of Solar Industries) in collaboration with which startup?

- A ideaForge, Mumbai
- B Garuda Aerospace, Chennai
- C Z-Motion Autonomous Systems, Bengaluru ✓
- D NewSpace Research, Hyderabad

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Nagastra-1 was developed by Economic Explosives Limited (EEL), a subsidiary of Solar Industries India Limited (Nagpur), in collaboration with Bengaluru-based startup Z-Motion Autonomous Systems. The Indian Army received all 480 units of the initial order by December 2024.

Specifications: 8-9 kg total UAV weight, 15 km range in man-in-loop mode and 30-40 km in autonomous GPS/NavIC-guided mode, 1-1.5 kg HE fragmentation warhead, and 2-metre CEP (Circular Error Probable) accuracy for precision strikes.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Loitering munitions occupy a hybrid space between drones and missiles — they loiter over the target area, identify and track threats using onboard sensors, then execute a terminal dive-strike. The Russia-Ukraine conflict validated their tactical effectiveness (Turkey Bayraktar TB2, Iran Shahed-136, Israel Harop). Nagastra-1 uses India indigenous NavIC navigation system (7-satellite constellation: 3 GEO + 4 GSO, operational since 2018) instead of GPS alone, ensuring sovereign navigation. The iDEX programme (launched April 2018 under Defence Innovation Organisation, MoD) has catalysed India defence startup ecosystem with 676+ onboarded startups.

Exam tip: UPSC tests indigenous defence programmes under Aatmanirbhar Bharat — India targets 75% domestic defence procurement by 2029. Know the difference between loitering munitions (expendable, one-use) and armed UAVs (reusable platforms like Heron TP or Predator).

Previous year questions have tested iDEX and defence innovation frameworks.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 16 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

How many armoured regiments does the Indian Army maintain, all of which are targeted to eventually receive Shaurya drone sub-units?

A 45

B 55

C 67 ✓

D 75

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Indian Army Armoured Corps maintains 67 regiments, including the President Bodyguard (the oldest regiment, raised in 1773). Six Shaurya Squadrons are currently active across five commands as of March 2026, with eventual integration planned across all 67 regiments.

India operational tank fleet consists of approximately 5,000 vehicles: T-90S Bhishma (~2,078 in service), T-72 Ajeya (~1,900), and Arjun Mk1A (124 delivered, 118 more on order from HVF Avadi, Chennai). India is the world fourth-largest tank operator.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The strategic rationale for drone integration is cost asymmetry: a Nagastra-1 loitering munition costs approximately Rs 10-15 lakh while a T-90S tank costs Rs 17-20 crore — a ratio of roughly 1:150. India Army plans to procure around 30,000 loitering munitions across all commands over the next decade.

Three strategic drivers accelerated this reform: Ukraine conflict lessons (cheap FPV drones destroying expensive armour), the China standoff in Eastern Ladakh (high-altitude ISR requirements at 14,000+ feet), and Pakistan border surveillance in the Rajasthan desert sector. The Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV) project to replace T-72s will integrate drone-tank teaming from inception.

Exam tip: UPSC may test India combined-arms reforms alongside Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs), Theatre Commands (CDS-led reform), and the Shekatkar Committee recommendations. GS3 (Security) frequently features defence modernization questions — know specific procurement numbers and indigenous content percentages.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 17 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Under Article 110 of the Indian Constitution, who has the final authority to decide whether a Bill is a Money Bill?

- A The President of India
- B The Chief Justice of India
- C **The Speaker of the Lok Sabha ✓**
- D The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Article 110(3) of the Indian Constitution explicitly states that the decision of the Speaker of Lok Sabha as to whether a Bill is a Money Bill shall be final and shall not be questioned in any court or either House of Parliament. Article 110(1) defines a Money Bill as dealing exclusively with taxation, government borrowing, appropriation from the Consolidated Fund, or Contingency Fund.

Under Article 109, a Money Bill can only be introduced in Lok Sabha, and Rajya Sabha gets a maximum of 14 days to return it with recommendations, which Lok Sabha may accept or reject.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Money Bill provision was tested in several landmark cases. The Aadhaar Act 2016 was controversially passed as a Money Bill — upheld 4:1 in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2018), with Justice D.Y. Chandrachud dissenting strongly, calling it a "fraud on the Constitution." The Finance Act 2017, which restructured 26 tribunals, was also routed as a Money Bill — struck down in *Rojer Mathew v. South Indian Bank* (2019).

Article 110 is inspired by the British Parliament Act 1911, which curtailed the House of Lords veto over finance bills. The Rajya Sabha has repeatedly protested the misuse of the Money Bill route to bypass its scrutiny.

Exam tip: UPSC frequently tests Money Bill vs Finance Bill (Part A: tax proposals, Part B: expenditure) vs Appropriation Bill (Article 114). Also know the distinction between Consolidated Fund (Article 266(1)), Contingency Fund (Article 267), and Public Account — all appear in Article 110(1) definitions.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 18 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The Payments Regulatory Board (PRB), which reviewed the RBI Payments Vision 2028, was established under which legislation?

- A Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934
- B Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 ✓
- C Banking Regulation Act, 1949
- D National Payments Corporation Act, 2008

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The PRB was created under Section 3 of the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007, as amended by Section 162 of the Finance Act, 2017. It replaced the earlier Board for Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).

The PRB is chaired by the RBI Governor (ex-officio); current chair is Sanjay Malhotra, who assumed office on 11 December 2024, succeeding Shaktikanta Das. The PRB regulates and supervises all payment systems in India, including UPI, IMPS, NEFT, RTGS, and card networks.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

UPI processed over 16 billion transactions worth Rs 23 lakh crore in January 2026, making it the world largest real-time payment system by volume. NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India, incorporated 25 March 2009 under Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956) operates UPI, RuPay, IMPS, AePS, and BBPS under Section 4(3) of the PSS Act.

The Payments Vision 2028 focuses on offline UPI (for rural areas with poor connectivity), cross-border interoperability (UPI-PayNow linkage with Singapore launched February 2023, UPI-DuitNow with Malaysia), and the Digital Rupee (e-Rupee/CBDC, piloted from December 2022). Exam tip: PRB (regulator) is distinct from NPCI (operator of retail payment systems) — UPSC tests this distinction.

Also know the Watal Committee (2016) recommended creating PRB as an independent statutory body, though currently it remains within RBI. The PSS Act 2007 is the parent legislation for India entire payments regulation architecture.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 19 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The PRISM-SG portal, jointly launched by Ministers Nitin Gadkari and Ashwini Vaishnaw, reduces the approval timeline for Road Over Bridges (ROBs) from approximately 12 months to what duration?

- A 6-8 months
- B 3-4 months ✓**
- C 1-2 months
- D 8-10 months

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

PRISM-SG (Portal for Rail-Road Inspection and Stages Management - Steel Girders), launched on 25 March 2026, reduces the ROB approval timeline from approximately 12 months to 3-4 months — a reduction of 70-75%. It digitises the entire lifecycle: Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) submissions, Welding Procedure Specification Sheet (WPSS) approvals, fabrication stage inspections, dispatch clearances, and real-time progress tracking.

The portal replaces a paper-based process involving multiple rounds of correspondence between MoRTH and the Ministry of Railways.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

ROBs and RUBs (Road Under Bridges) replace level crossings at railway-highway intersections — a critical safety priority under RRSK, as unmanned level crossings were responsible for ~40% of railway accidents. PRISM-SG is part of a broader e-governance push in infrastructure: PM GatiShakti (multimodal logistics planning on a GIS platform, launched October 2021), PARIVESH (single-window environmental and forest clearances), PRAGATI (PM monthly ICT-based project monitoring), and Bhoomi Rashi (land acquisition monitoring).

The portal brings MoRTH and Railways onto a single digital platform for the first time, reducing inter-ministerial coordination delays. Exam tip: this connects to GS2 (e-governance and institutional reform) and GS3 (Infrastructure development).

UPSC tests the PM GatiShakti framework frequently — it integrates 16 ministries on a unified logistics master plan. The National Logistics Policy 2022 (target: reduce logistics cost from 14% to 8% of GDP) provides the overarching policy context.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 20 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The Television Rating Policy 2026, notified by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, mandates what minimum percentage of independent directors on TV rating agency boards?

A 25%

B 33%

C 50% ✓

D 75%

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The TV Rating Policy 2026 (notified 27 March 2026 by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) mandates at least 50% independent directors on TV rating agency boards, with no ties to broadcasters, advertisers, or advertising agencies. Key provisions include: expanded sample of 80,000 metered homes (up from ~50,000 under 2014 guidelines), scaling to 120,000 homes; a dual audit system (internal plus independent); net worth requirement reduced from Rs 20 crore to Rs 5 crore to allow competition; and mandatory compliance with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 for viewer data.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council, established 2010, operational since July 2015) is India's sole TV rating agency, jointly promoted by IBF (Indian Broadcasting Foundation), ISA (Indian Society of Advertisers), and AAI (Advertising Agencies Association of India). The 2020 TRP manipulation scandal — involving allegations against Republic TV and a Mumbai Police investigation into panel home tampering — exposed serious weaknesses in the 2014 TRAI guidelines.

The 2026 policy introduces technology-neutral measurement covering cable, DTH, OTT, and connected TV viewership. Annual establishment surveys will cover 10x the metered sample for calibration.

Exam tip: this connects to GS2 (Media regulation, freedom of press) and GS4 (Ethics in media and advertising).

UPSC may test TRAI vs I&B Ministry jurisdiction — TRAI recommends, the Ministry notifies policy.

Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 and IT Act 2000 are the parent legislative frameworks.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 21 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Japan first Shinkansen bullet train line, the Tokaido Shinkansen connecting Tokyo and Osaka, was inaugurated in which year?

A 1954

B 1964 ✓

C 1972

D 1980

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

The Tokaido Shinkansen began commercial service on 1 October 1964, nine days before the opening of the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics. It was the world first dedicated high-speed railway line, covering 552.6 km between Tokyo and Osaka (then reduced to 515.4 km after a route adjustment).

Initial speed was 210 km/h using the iconic 0 Series trainsets, designed by Hideo Shima. The project was championed by Japanese National Railways (JNR) president Shinji Sogo against considerable political opposition.

Current Nozomi services cover the route in 2 hours 21 minutes at 285 km/h.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

The Shinkansen has maintained a zero-fatality record in over 60 years of operation — a benchmark frequently cited in railway safety comparisons for UPSC. Japan 2024 Problem (nationwide truck driver shortage triggered by overtime regulations effective April 2024) prompted JR East to launch freight-only Shinkansen services in March 2026. India Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor (508 km, using E5 Series Shinkansen technology) is funded through Japanese ODA loan of approximately Rs 88,000 crore at 0.1% interest over 50 years with a 15-year moratorium — the most concessional bilateral loan India has received.

Target commercial operations: 2028-2030. Exam tip: UPSC tests India-Japan infrastructure cooperation under GS2 (bilateral relations) — also know DMIC (Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor), Western DFC (Japanese-funded), and the Act East Policy framework.

The India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership (upgraded 2014) is the context for these mega-projects.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 22 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The J-6W drone fleet deployed by China near the Taiwan Strait is a modified version of which Cold War-era fighter jet?

- A MiG-21 (Soviet)
- B MiG-19 (Soviet) ✓
- C F-86 Sabre (American)
- D MiG-29 (Soviet)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The J-6 is a Chinese-produced variant of the Soviet MiG-19, a twin-engined supersonic fighter first flown in 1953. China manufactured over 4,500 J-6 aircraft at the Shenyang Aircraft Corporation before production ended in 1986.

The J-6W is a drone conversion with automatic flight control systems, terrain-matching navigation, and pre-programmed mission profiles. According to a March 2026 Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies report, approximately 200+ J-6W drones are deployed at six air bases near the Taiwan Strait — five in Fujian Province and one in Guangdong Province.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The J-6W drone fleet embodies the "attritional saturation" strategy — overwhelming sophisticated air defence systems with large numbers of expendable platforms, exhausting interceptor missile stocks before deploying crewed aircraft. This mirrors lessons from Ukraine where Iranian-origin Shahed-136 kamikaze drones (costing ~USD 20,000 each) were used to saturate Ukrainian air defences.

The Taiwan Strait is approximately 180 km wide at its narrowest point. For India, China drone capabilities validate the indigenous loitering munition programme (Nagastra-1) and the Shaurya Squadrons concept. Exam tip: this connects to GS2 (China-Taiwan relations, One China Policy — India position since 2003) and GS3 (emerging security technologies, asymmetric warfare). UPSC may test China grey-zone tactics in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait alongside India LAC concerns.

The concept of converting retired aircraft into drones is relevant to India own fleet of retiring MiG-21s and Jaguar aircraft.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 23 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

The new cockroach species *Neoloboptera peninsularis*, discovered in Pune, was identified by researchers from which institution?

- A Wildlife Institute of India (WII)
- B Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) ✓
- C Indian Institute of Science (IISc)
- D Botanical Survey of India (BSI)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered and described *Neoloboptera peninsularis* from the Nathachiwadi area near Pune, Maharashtra. ZSI was founded on 1 July 1916 and is headquartered in Kolkata, operating under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) with 16 regional centres across India.

This was the first use of DNA barcoding techniques for cockroach identification in India, raising the country total of documented cockroach species to 190. The species was described in the journal *ZooKeys*.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

India is one of 17 megadiverse countries (a concept introduced by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in 1998), hosting approximately 7-8% of the world recorded species despite occupying only 2.4% of global land area. India has four biodiversity hotspots: Western Ghats, Eastern Himalayas, Indo-Burma, and Sundaland (Nicobar Islands).

DNA barcoding uses the mitochondrial Cytochrome C Oxidase subunit I (COI) gene for rapid molecular species identification — pioneered by Paul Hebert (University of Guelph, 2003). ZSI (zoology) and BSI (Botanical Survey of India, est. 1890, Kolkata) form India core taxonomic research infrastructure.

Exam tip: the Biological Diversity Act 2002 and National Biodiversity Authority (NBA, Chennai) govern genetic resource access and benefit-sharing under the Nagoya Protocol (2010, in force 2014). UPSC Prelims 2022 tested megadiverse country criteria and India hotspot locations.

Know the difference between ZSI, BSI, WII (Dehradun), and BNHS (Mumbai) — all serve distinct conservation mandates.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 24 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Sushila Karki, who stepped down in March 2026 as Nepal interim PM, holds what historic distinction?

- A Youngest PM of Nepal
- B First woman to serve as Prime Minister of Nepal ✓
- C Longest-serving PM of Nepal
- D First non-party PM of Nepal

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Sushila Karki was the first woman to serve as Prime Minister of Nepal. A former Chief Justice of Nepal (2016-2017, also the first woman CJ), she was appointed interim PM on 12 September 2025 under Article 76(7) of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 after K.P. Sharma Oli resigned amid Gen Z-led anti-corruption protests that paralysed Kathmandu.

She oversaw parliamentary elections held on 5 March 2026 and stepped down on 27 March 2026 when Balen Shah of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) was sworn in as Nepal new PM with the first single-party majority since 1999.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

Nepal abolished its 240-year-old Shah monarchy on 28 May 2008 via the first Constituent Assembly, becoming a federal democratic republic. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 establishes a federal structure with 7 provinces and 753 local government units (6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities, 460 rural municipalities).

India-Nepal relations: 1,770 km open border, Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950 (governs trade, transit, and residency rights), Mahakali Treaty 1996 (water sharing), and growing Chinese Belt and Road Initiative influence as a strategic concern. Balen Shah (an engineer and rapper) represents a generational political shift in Nepal. Exam tip: Nepal political transitions are frequently tested under GS2 (India and its neighbourhood). Know the key constitutional provisions — Article 76 (PM appointment), Article 274 (provincial governance) — and India border disputes with Nepal (Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura, reflected in Nepal revised map of June 2020).

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 25 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Operation Searchlight, the military crackdown by Pakistan in East Pakistan that triggered the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, was launched on which date?

- A 14 August 1971
- B 26 March 1971
- C 25 March 1971 ✓
- D 16 December 1971

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Operation Searchlight was launched on the night of 25 March 1971 under orders from General Yahya Khan, targeting Bengali nationalists, intellectuals, students, and Awami League supporters. This followed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Awami League winning 167 of 169 East Pakistan seats in the December 1970 general elections, which West Pakistan refused to honour.

Bangladesh marks 25 March as Genocide Day (officially declared in 2017). Mujib declared independence on 26 March 1971 via radio (Bangladesh Independence Day).

The war ended on 16 December 1971 with Pakistan formal surrender in Dhaka.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The 1971 war is core GS1 (Post-Independence Indian History) content. India intervention was led by COAS Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw (the only officer besides Cariappa to hold the rank); Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora accepted the surrender of approximately 93,000 Pakistani troops in Dhaka — the largest military surrender since World War II. The subsequent Simla Agreement (2 July 1972, signed by Indira Gandhi and Z.A. Bhutto) converted the ceasefire line into the Line of Control (LoC) and established that all disputes would be resolved bilaterally — the foundation of India position on Kashmir against third-party mediation.

The refugee crisis saw approximately 10 million East Pakistani refugees flood into India (primarily West Bengal, Tripura, Assam), which was a direct trigger for India military intervention. Exam tip: UPSC tests the Simla Agreement provisions, the refugee crisis as casus belli, and the role of the Mukti Bahini.

Previous year questions have appeared on the 1971 war in both Prelims and Mains (GS1). The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation (August 1971) provided strategic cover for India intervention.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 26 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Consider the following statements about India NDC 3.0 (March 2026):

1. India has committed to achieving 60% non-fossil fuel installed power capacity by **2035**.
2. India net-zero target year has been advanced from 2070 to 2060 under NDC 3.0.
3. India achieved over 52% non-fossil fuel installed capacity by February 2026, surpassing its NDC 2.0 target ahead of schedule.

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

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. NDC 3.0 targets 60% non-fossil fuel installed power capacity by 2035, and India achieved 52.57% non-fossil capacity by February 2026 per CEA data, surpassing the NDC 2.0 target of 50% by 2030 a full five years ahead of schedule.

Statement 2 is incorrect — India net-zero target remains firmly at 2070, unchanged since PM Modi announced it at COP26 Glasgow on 1 November 2021. India consistently cites its development needs, low per-capita emissions (~2.4 tonnes vs global average ~6.3 tonnes), and the CBDR-RC principle to justify the 2070 timeline.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

NDC progression shows increasing ambition: NDC 1.0 (October 2016) targeted 40% non-fossil capacity and 33-35% emissions intensity cut by 2030; NDC 2.0 (August 2022) raised these to 50% and 45%; NDC 3.0 (March 2026) further increases to 60% and 47% by 2035. For comparison, net-zero timelines: US/EU/UK target 2050, China 2060, India 2070.

NDC 3.0 also introduces a new forest sink target of 3.5-4 billion tonnes CO₂-equivalent additional carbon sink through enhanced forest and tree cover by 2035. Key policy instruments: Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (June 2023, under Energy Conservation Act 2001 as amended 2022), National Action Plan on Climate Change with 8 missions (2008), and the proposed Carbon Border Adjustment response mechanism.

Exam tip: UPSC statement-based questions on climate targets test exact numbers and timelines — memorize the NDC 1.0/2.0/3.0 targets as a progression table. Also know the Article 6 carbon market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 27 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Consider the following statements about the Modified UDAN scheme:

1. The total outlay for Modified UDAN is Rs 28,840 crore over a 10-year period from FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36.
2. Under the original UDAN scheme, over 90% of routes remained viable after VGF subsidy withdrawal.
3. The Modified UDAN includes procurement of indigenous HAL aircraft and helicopters worth Rs 400 crore.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 and 3 only ✓

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Modified UDAN (approved 25 March 2026) has a total outlay of Rs 28,840 crore over FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36, broken down as: Rs 12,159 crore for 100 airports, Rs 10,043 crore for VGF, Rs 3,661 crore for 200 helipads, Rs 2,577 crore for O&M, and Rs 400 crore for HAL aircraft (2 Dornier 228 for Alliance Air and 2 Dhruv helicopters for Pawan Hans).

Statement 2 is incorrect — only 7-10% of routes were viable after VGF withdrawal; over 90% failed, and 327 of 663 operationalised routes were discontinued entirely.

CONCEPT NOTE

Key improvements in Modified UDAN over the original scheme: VGF extended from 3 to 5 years per route (addressing premature withdrawal failures), Challenge Mode for airport development (states compete based on infrastructure readiness, land availability, and demand indicators), and an infrastructure-first approach ensuring airports are operational before routes are awarded. Alliance Air (transferred to AI Assets Holding Ltd post-Air India privatization) operates the largest UDAN network.

India had approximately 150 operational airports in 2025 versus the NABH Nirman target of 220 airports. The original UDAN was part of PM Modi vision of "Hawa-i Chappal to Hawai Jahaz" (from slippers to airplanes).

Exam tip: UDAN connects to GS3 (Infrastructure, inclusive growth) and GS2 (Centre-State cooperation, as states provide 20% VGF share and subsidies). UPSC may test the specific VGF mechanism — the Regional Connectivity Fund sourced from the Rs 5,000 levy on departing domestic flights.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 28 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Consider the following statements about the G7:

1. The G7 was originally founded as the G6 in 1975, with Canada joining in 1976 to form the G7.
2. Russia was suspended from the G8 in 2014 following its annexation of Crimea.
3. The European Union is a full voting member of the G7 with the same status as other member countries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 and 3 only

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Statements 1 and 2 are correct. The G6 was founded at the Rambouillet Summit in France on 15-17 November 1975 (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan); Canada joined at San Juan, Puerto Rico in June 1976, forming the G7.

Russia joined in 1998 to form the G8 but was suspended indefinitely in March 2014 following Crimea annexation — the scheduled 2014 Sochi G8 summit was replaced by a Brussels G7 meeting. Statement 3 is incorrect — the EU is a "non-enumerated member" or permanent invitee (since the 1981 Ottawa Summit) and does not have full voting status equal to the seven member states.

CONCEPT NOTE

The G7 combined GDP stands at approximately USD 52 trillion (2025), representing 28-30% of global GDP — a significant decline from over 50% in the 1980s, reflecting the rise of emerging economies. The G7 has no permanent secretariat, charter, or legally binding authority — it functions as an informal leaders forum.

The G7 vs BRICS narrative is a key geopolitical framework: G7 represents the Western-led rules-based order while expanded BRICS (11 members since 2025) represents a Global South alternative. India EAM Jaishankar attended the March 2026 G7 Foreign Ministers meeting in France, showcasing India multi-alignment strategy. Exam tip: UPSC tests G7/G20/BRICS membership distinctions and India engagement with each forum. Note that the EU presence in the G7 without voting rights parallels the EU observer status in other forums — a potential comparison question.

Previous year questions have tested the year of G7/G8 formation and Russia suspension.

[Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 29 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Consider the following statements about the Kavach train protection system:

1. Kavach uses Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio for communication between trains and stations.
2. Kavach costs approximately Rs 2 crore per route-km, similar to the European ETCS system.
3. RailTel Corporation, which operates over 61,000 route-km of optical fibre on Railway right-of-way, received Navratna PSU status in August

2024.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 and 3 only ✓

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ **EXPLANATION**

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Kavach uses UHF radio for train-to-station communication, unlike the European ETCS which uses GSM-R. This technology choice enables cost-effective distributed deployment without centralized Radio Block Centres.

RailTel Corporation (founded 26 September 2000) received Navratna PSU status on 30 August 2024, becoming the 22nd Navratna enterprise, and operates approximately 62,000 route-km of optical fibre along Railway right-of-way. Statement 2 is incorrect — Kavach costs roughly Rs 50 lakh per route-km, which is four to five times CHEAPER than ETCS at approximately Rs 2 crore per km.

The question reverses the cost advantage.

💡 **CONCEPT NOTE**

RailTel optical fibre backbone provides critical backhaul connectivity for Kavach station equipment, enabling real-time data transmission between trackside units. RailTel also operates RailWire public Wi-Fi at 6,100+ railway stations — one of the world largest public Wi-Fi networks, initially set up with Google partnership. Navratna status grants enhanced financial autonomy: investment decisions up to Rs 1,000 crore without government approval (vs Miniratna limit of Rs 500 crore). ETCS has three operational levels: Level 1 (trackside balises, intermittent supervision), Level 2 (continuous radio via GSM-R, cab signalling), Level 3 (moving block, no fixed signals).

Kavach integrates features from both Level 2 and Level 3. Exam tip: the Kavach cost advantage (indigenous UHF vs imported GSM-R infrastructure) is a classic UPSC Prelims distractor — questions are designed to

make candidates confuse which system is cheaper.

Know also that Kavach is SIL-4 certified, matching ETCS safety standards despite the lower cost.

 [Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)

Question 30 of 30

[Read Article →](#)

Consider the following statements about India drone ecosystem:

1. The iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) programme was launched in 2018 and has onboarded over 676 startups and MSMEs.
2. The Liberalised Drone Rules of 2021 introduced mandatory security clearance for all drone operations in India.
3. The Drone Shakti scheme announced in Budget 2026 has an estimated outlay of Rs 10,000 crore over five years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 and 3 only ✓

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. iDEX (launched April 2018 under the Defence Innovation Organisation, Ministry of Defence) has onboarded 676+ startups and MSMEs with cumulative business exceeding Rs 13,000 crore through Defence India Startup Challenges (DISCs). Drone Shakti (announced in Budget 2026-27) allocates Rs 10,000 crore over 5 years for incentive-based domestic drone manufacturing.

Statement 2 is incorrect — the Liberalised Drone Rules 2021 (notified 25 August 2021) ABOLISHED the mandatory security clearance requirement, dramatically simplified compliance by reducing forms from 25 to 5, fee types from 72 to 4, and eliminated the need for certificate of conformance and pilot licence for nano drones.

💡 CONCEPT NOTE

India drone policy timeline shows progressive liberalisation: Drone Regulations 1.0 (December 2018, restrictive, multiple approvals needed), UAS Rules (March 2021, digitised but still complex), Liberalised Drone Rules (August 2021, game-changer — abolished most restrictions), PLI for Drones and Drone Components (September 2021, Rs 120 crore over 3 years), Drone Certification Scheme (January 2022), and Drone Shakti (2026, Rs 10,000 crore). India drone market was approximately USD 1,581 million in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 4,836 million by 2030 (CAGR 20.4%).

The Indian Army plans procurement of approximately 30,000 loitering munitions across all commands. Exam tip: the Liberalised Drone Rules 2021 ABOLISHED (not introduced) security clearance — this reversal is a common UPSC trap designed to test whether candidates actually know the policy direction.

Also know the drone classification by weight: Nano (<250g), Micro (250g-2kg), Small (2-25kg), Medium (25-

150kg), Large (>150kg). iDEX operates through DISC challenges and has a dedicated fund (Defence Innovation Fund) of Rs 500 crore managed by a Fund of Funds structure.

 [Why in News — Read Full Article →](#)



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[LinkedIn](#)[Read Full Edition](#)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR**

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — notes across all 4 GS papers, MCQs, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free.**

bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE WITH UJIYARI**

Reach **thousands of UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website & social channels.

Coaching • EdTech • Publishers • Exam apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe