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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Daily Quiz — March 29, 2026

29 March 2026



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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Daily Quiz — March 29, 2026

29 March 2026 · 30 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1

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Which of the following correctly describes the WTO Appellate Body as of March 2026?

- A** It has a sanctioned strength of 7 members and has been non-functional since December 2019 due to the US blocking judicial appointments ✓
- B It has a sanctioned strength of 9 members and has been non-functional since January 2021 due to EU objections
- C It has a sanctioned strength of 5 members and was dissolved formally at MC13 in Abu Dhabi
- D It has a sanctioned strength of 7 members and was restored at MC14 in Yaounde with reduced powers

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: The WTO **Appellate Body** has a sanctioned strength of **7 members** with a minimum quorum of **3**. It has been **non-functional since December 10, 2019**, when the US blocked all judicial appointments, reducing membership below quorum.

At MC14 (Yaounde, 2026), members agreed only to a work programme on dispute settlement reform — no concrete restoration mechanism was established. **ANALYSIS:** This paralysis means any losing party can now appeal into the void, blocking panel rulings from taking legal effect — fundamentally undermining the rules-based trading order and creating what trade lawyers call legal uncertainty at the core of the WTO system.

CONCEPT NOTE

The WTO Appellate Body was created in 1995 alongside the WTO itself and handled approximately 500+ appellate proceedings before its paralysis. Its 7-member bench was designed to prevent any single country from dominating dispute outcomes.

The **Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA)** — used by ~54 WTO members since 2020 — is a workaround under Article 25 of the DSU (Dispute Settlement Understanding). Critically, **India, the US, and Russia are NOT MPIA participants**, leaving them unable to appeal panel rulings against them.

India participates in the Appellate Body process but chose not to join MPIA. The DSB (Dispute Settlement Body) itself still functions as the General Council in a different capacity — only the **appellate tier** is paralysed. The practical consequence: any country losing a WTO panel ruling can file an appeal into the void, delaying compliance indefinitely — a legal loophole that undermines the entire enforcement architecture of global trade law.

Q1  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (international institutions, WTO structure and crisis) + GS-3 (trade policy, India's export interests, dispute settlement) + Essay (crisis of multilateralism).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the Appellate Body (7-member appellate tier hearing appeals against panel rulings) with the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB — the General Council in a different capacity that establishes panels, adopts reports, and authorises retaliation); the DSB still operates normally — only the appellate tier is paralysed.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

rules-based multilateralism, appellate paralysis, forum shopping, MPIA workaround.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 asked about WTO dispute resolution mechanisms — the Appellate Body crisis is now a recurring theme in UPSC Mains; know the timeline (non-functional since December 10, 2019), the cause (US blocking appointments), and what MC14 achieved (only a work programme, no restoration).

 **INTERVIEW**

Can a trade body survive without a functioning enforcement mechanism, and what does the Appellate Body crisis reveal about the limits of rules-based multilateralism?

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Question 2

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The Public Stockholding (PSH) peace clause that shields India from WTO legal challenges on food security subsidies was first agreed at which Ministerial Conference?

- A MC10, Nairobi (2015)
- B MC9, Bali (2013) ✓
- C MC11, Buenos Aires (2017)
- D MC12, Geneva (2022)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The **peace clause** on Public Stockholding (PSH) was agreed at the **Bali Ministerial (MC9) in December 2013**. It provides a temporary shield to developing countries from WTO legal challenges if they breach the **10% de minimis subsidy cap** under PSH programmes.

India has been pushing for a **permanent, unconditional solution** since 2013, but no breakthrough was achieved at MC14 (Yaounde, 2026) either. **ANALYSIS:** The peace clause remains interim and conditional — India must notify the Committee on Agriculture each time it exceeds the 10% cap, creating procedural vulnerability for the government's food security programmes under the NFSA 2013.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Under the WTO **Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)**, domestic support calculations use **1986-88 reference prices** — a methodology that artificially inflates India's subsidy estimates by ignoring 35+ years of inflation and currency changes. Under this formula, India's Minimum Support Price (MSP)-based procurement appears far more trade-distorting than it actually is.

India's key PSH programmes include the **Public Distribution System (PDS)** and the **National Food Security Act (NFSA, 2013)**, which together cover ~67% of India's population (~80 crore beneficiaries). The peace clause was extended at each subsequent MC (MC10 Nairobi, MC11 Buenos Aires, MC12 Geneva, MC13 Abu Dhabi, MC14 Yaounde) — but always as a temporary fix, never a permanent solution.

India's stated position is that any permanent solution must be **unconditional** (not requiring annual notification) and **retrospective** (covering existing programmes, not just future ones). The de minimis subsidy cap distinction matters: **10% for developing countries** vs **5% for developed countries** of the total value of agricultural production.

Q2  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (WTO structure, India's trade positions, food sovereignty) + GS-3 (agriculture policy, AMS, food security) + GS-1 (agrarian issues, rural economy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the de minimis caps — **10% for developing countries** and **5% for developed countries** of the total value of agricultural production; also confuse the peace clause (protection from legal challenge for exceeding the cap) with a waiver from the cap itself — the cap still applies, only the legal challenge is shielded.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

aggregate measurement of support (AMS), amber box subsidies, food security sovereignty, Bali Package.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2020 Prelims tested AoA's three pillars — market access, domestic support, and export subsidies; know all three pillar definitions and the de minimis thresholds.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India push for a fundamental renegotiation of AoA reference prices rather than continuing to seek temporary peace clause extensions?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 3

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[Source →](#)
ASSERTION (A)

India opposed the permanent extension of the WTO e-commerce moratorium on customs duties at MC14.

REASON (R)

India argues that the moratorium causes revenue loss for developing countries and constrains their ability to regulate digital trade.

A Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A ✓

B Both A and R are correct, but R is NOT the correct explanation of A

C A is correct, but R is incorrect

D A is incorrect, but R is correct

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: India, along with **South Africa and Indonesia**, actively opposed making the e-commerce moratorium permanent at MC14. Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal** cited **revenue loss** for developing countries and the lack of a common understanding on the moratorium's scope.

The moratorium was first imposed in **1998** and has been extended at every subsequent Ministerial. R is the correct explanation because India's opposition is precisely rooted in the dual concerns of customs revenue forgone and the loss of policy space to regulate digital trade domestically.

ANALYSIS: Both A and R are correct and R correctly explains why India opposed the moratorium — preventing developing countries from taxing cross-border digital services flows dominated by American and European tech giants.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The WTO e-commerce moratorium was first introduced in **1998** at the second Ministerial Conference in Geneva, when cross-border electronic commerce was in its infancy. India's **Equalisation Levy** (2016, expanded 2020) taxes digital services domestically — but this is a separate instrument from WTO-governed customs duties on electronic transmissions. At MC14, **66 WTO members** (~70% of global trade) adopted an **interim e-commerce framework** — the moratorium was extended again but not made permanent, which India counts as a partial win. The moratorium specifically covers **customs duties on electronic transmissions** (downloading software, streaming services, cross-border data flows) — NOT domestic digital taxation, NOT VAT/GST on digital services, and NOT the Equalisation Levy.

India's concern is that a permanent moratorium would lock in tariff-free treatment for cross-border digital services dominated by American and European technology firms, preventing developing countries from building digital trade policy

space as their digital economies scale. UNCTAD estimates developing countries lose ~\$10 billion annually in potential customs revenue due to this moratorium.

Q3  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (international institutions, WTO, digital trade governance) + GS-3 (e-commerce, digital taxation, Equalisation Levy) + Essay (digital sovereignty vs. free trade, platform capitalism).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume the moratorium covers all digital transactions — it specifically and only covers **customs duties on electronic transmissions** (cross-border data flows); India's Equalisation Levy on digital services is an entirely separate domestic instrument unaffected by the WTO moratorium.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

digital sovereignty, regulatory policy space, platform capitalism, digital trade asymmetry.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests India's positions at WTO Ministerials — know India's precise objections to PSH (reference prices), fisheries subsidies (S&DT for artisanal fishers), and e-commerce moratorium (revenue loss + regulatory policy space).

 **INTERVIEW**

Is the WTO e-commerce moratorium a structural tool of digital colonialism that permanently disadvantages the Global South?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 4

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The India-Japan Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) of \$75 billion was first signed at this amount in which year?

- A 2013, when PM Manmohan Singh visited Tokyo
- B 2019, when Union Cabinet approved the enhanced BSA
- C 2018, during PM Modi's visit to Tokyo with PM Shinzo Abe ✓
- D 2022, during the first renewal of the arrangement

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The \$75 billion BSA was signed on **October 29, 2018**, during PM Modi's visit to Tokyo with PM **Shinzo Abe** — representing a 50% increase from the previous \$50 billion level (2013). Union Cabinet approved it on **January 10, 2019**, and it became effective **February 28, 2019**.

The arrangement was renewed in 2022 and again in **February 2026** (third amendment and restatement).

ANALYSIS: The 25-fold increase from \$3 billion (2008) to \$75 billion over a decade reflects deepening India-Japan strategic convergence driven by shared concerns over China's economic and military assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific — the BSA is as much a geopolitical signal as a financial instrument.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The BSA timeline shows the trajectory of India-Japan financial diplomacy: **\$3 billion (2008)**, signed during Governor Y.V. Reddy's tenure at RBI → **\$15 billion (2012)** → **\$50 billion (2013)** → **\$75 billion (2018)**. The BSA is a **two-way arrangement** — Japan can also access Indian rupees against US dollars if needed.

Critically, India has **never actually drawn** on the BSA in any of its iterations; it functions primarily as a **confidence signal** to markets, credit rating agencies (Moody's, S&P, Fitch), and foreign investors — a financial backstop that deters speculative attacks on the rupee without requiring actual disbursement. The third amendment and restatement (February 2026) extended the arrangement for another period, signalling continuity in the India-Japan strategic partnership.

Currency swap arrangements like the BSA are part of India's broader **Global Financial Safety Net (GFSN)** architecture alongside IMF resources, bilateral swaps, and the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

Q4  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, Quad) + GS-3 (external sector, balance of payments, foreign exchange reserves, monetary policy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the India-Japan BSA (USD-denominated bilateral crisis facility, RBI-Bank of Japan) with the India-UAE currency swap (local currency INR-AED, designed for bilateral trade settlement to reduce dollar dependence) — these serve fundamentally different purposes.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

macroeconomic resilience, forex backstop, strategic financial diplomacy, global financial safety net.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2014 asked about currency swap agreements in the SAARC context — now extend this to bilateral arrangements (India-Japan \$75B) and multilateral (BRICS CRA \$100B, CMIM \$240B); know India's position in each.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India prioritise diversifying swap arrangements beyond bilateral USD-based mechanisms toward local-currency multilateral arrangements?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 5

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Which of the following is **NOT** a component of the financial safety net architecture available to India for balance of payments crises?

- A India-Japan BSA of \$75 billion
- B BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (India's share: \$18 billion)
- C **Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM)** ✓
- D SAARC Currency Swap Framework of \$2 billion

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The **Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM)** is a \$240 billion multilateral currency swap arrangement among **ASEAN+3 countries** (10 ASEAN members plus China, Japan, and South Korea). **India is NOT a member** of CMIM. India has access to the India-Japan BSA (\$75B), BRICS CRA (\$100B total, India's commitment \$18B), and the SAARC Currency Swap Framework (\$2B, where India acts as sole provider).

ANALYSIS: India's absence from CMIM, despite being Asia's third-largest economy, highlights a structural gap — the largest multilateral regional safety net in Asia is closed to India because it is exclusively for ASEAN members and their +3 partners.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Chiang Mai Initiative was originally established in **2000** as bilateral swaps among ASEAN+3 countries following the devastating **Asian Financial Crisis (1997-98)**, which exposed the absence of regional liquidity support mechanisms. It was multilateralised (CMIM) in 2010, creating a single pooled arrangement of \$240 billion.

India accesses US dollar liquidity via the **FIMA Repo Facility** (Federal Reserve standing facility for foreign central banks, introduced permanently in 2021) — this is NOT a swap but a collateralised borrowing facility where the RBI pledges US Treasury securities as collateral. India's financial safety net hierarchy: SAARC (\$2B, India as provider) → BRICS CRA (\$18B India's committed share of \$100B total) → India-Japan BSA (\$75B bilateral) → FIMA Repo Facility (uncapped, against collateral).

India's total forex reserves (~\$640 billion as of 2026) dwarf these committed lines, making the BSA and CRA more about market confidence than actual liquidity need.

Q5  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (ASEAN, ASEAN+3, regional groupings, India's neighbourhood) + GS-3 (external sector, forex reserves, BoP management, regional financial architecture).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume CMIM includes all major Asian economies — it is strictly **ASEAN+3** (10 ASEAN + China + Japan + South Korea = 13 members); India, despite being Asia's third-largest economy, is excluded because membership requires being an ASEAN country or one of the designated +3 partners.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

regional financial architecture, liquidity safety nets, ASEAN+3, multilateral vs bilateral mechanisms.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests ASEAN-related groupings frequently — build a table of groupings India is in vs. not in (India is NOT in CMIM, RCEP; India IS in BIMSTEC, IORA, Quad, SCO).

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India negotiate CMIM observer status or build a parallel Indo-Pacific financial stability mechanism?

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Question 6

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Match List I (Defence System/Platform) with List II (Manufacturer/Country of Origin):

LIST I	LIST II
<p>A A-2, B-1, C-3, D-4 ✓</p>	
<p>B A-1, B-2, C-4, D-3</p>	
<p>C A-2, B-1, C-4, D-3</p>	
<p>D A-3, B-1, C-2, D-4</p>	

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The **Tunguska 2K22** (NATO designation: SA-19 Grison) is manufactured by **KBP Instrument Design Bureau, Tula, Russia** (A-2). The **P8I Poseidon** is manufactured by **Boeing Defense, Space & Security, USA** (B-1) — a military derivative of the Boeing 737-800ERX commercial airframe.

Akash Mk-2 is developed by **DRDO** as India's indigenous medium-range surface-to-air missile system (C-3). The **Barak-8 / MRSAM** is a joint development between **IAI (Israel Aerospace Industries)** and **DRDO, India-Israel** (D-4).

ANALYSIS: India's layered air defence architecture deliberately combines Russian, American, Israeli, and indigenous systems — a conscious strategic diversification to prevent supply-chain leverage by any single supplier.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's integrated air defence architecture is organised in concentric range layers: **S-400 Triumf** (long-range, ~400 km interception, Russia, 5 squadrons contracted in 2018 at \$5.43B) → **Barak-8/MRSAM** (medium-range, 70-100 km, India-Israel joint, manufactured by BDL) → **Akash Mk1/Mk2** (medium-range, 25-40 km, indigenous DRDO, BEL production) → **Tunguska 2K22** (SHORAD: 8 km missile / 4 km gun, Russia, Army air defence for armoured columns) → **Igla-S MANPADS** (man-portable, ~6 km, Russia). The Tunguska combines **30mm autocannons** with **9M311 missiles** on a tracked chassis, providing a dual-mode (gun + missile) capability for protecting armoured formations against helicopters and low-flying aircraft.

The Rs 445 crore contract for Tunguska ammunition/spares signed in 2026 falls under DAP 2020's **Buy (Global)** category.

Q6
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (defence technology, security, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence) + GS-2 (India's defence partnerships — Russia, Israel, USA, and indigenous DRDO ecosystem).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume Barak-8 is a purely Israeli system — it is a **joint DRDO-IAI development** with significant Indian engineering contribution and manufactured by **BDL (Bharat Dynamics Limited)** in Hyderabad; Israel provides the radar and seeker, India provides integration and propulsion elements.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

layered integrated air defence, strategic autonomy, defence diversification, Make in India defence.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests missile systems by range category and manufacturer — memorise all four layers with ranges: S-400 (400 km), Barak-8 (70-100 km), Akash (25-40 km), Tunguska (8 km missile / 4 km gun).

 **INTERVIEW**

Is India's deliberate multi-vendor air defence architecture a strategic hedge against supplier leverage or an operational vulnerability due to supply-chain complexity?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 7

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Under the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020, which procurement category has the HIGHEST priority?

- A Buy (Indian) with minimum 60% Indigenous Content
- B Buy (Indian-IDDM) — Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured ✓
- C Buy and Make (Indian) with minimum 50% Indigenous Content
- D Buy (Global — Manufacture in India) with minimum 50% IC

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: Under **DAP 2020**, the highest priority category is **Buy (Indian-IDDM)** — Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured — with minimum 50% Indigenous Content. The priority descends: Buy (Indian-IDDM, 50% IC) → Buy (Indian, 60% IC) → Buy and Make Indian (50% IC) → Buy (Global-Mil, 50% IC) → Buy (Global, 30% offset). The Tunguska contract falls under **Buy (Global)** while the P8I MRO contract falls under **Buy (Indian)** with 100% IC.

ANALYSIS: IDDM is prioritised above plain Buy (Indian) because design indigenisation — not just manufacturing — is the true measure of self-reliance; a country that can design its own weapons need not depend on foreign technology transfers even when manufacturing is local.

CONCEPT NOTE

DAP 2020 replaced **DPP 2016** (Defence Procurement Procedure), introducing several key reforms. The IDDM category was created as a new top tier to incentivise full-cycle indigenisation — from R&D through manufacturing.

Other DAP 2020 innovations: **positive indigenisation lists** (5 lists covering 509+ items) that prohibit import of listed items beyond specified dates, creating a guaranteed domestic market for Indian manufacturers. The IDDM IC threshold is only 50% — lower than Buy (Indian) at 60% — because the design ownership distinguishes IDDM; if you design your own system, the 10% IC difference is acceptable.

Under the offset policy (Buy Global category), at least **30% of the contract value** must be reinvested in India's defence sector. **DPP 2016** had no IDDM category — the escalation of indigenous content requirements across all categories in DAP 2020 reflects the accelerated Aatmanirbhar Bharat push after 2020.

Q7
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (defence procurement, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, DRDO ecosystem) + GS-2 (defence policy, Ministry of Defence, national security).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the IC thresholds — IDDM requires only 50% IC (because design originality is the differentiating factor) while Buy (Indian) requires 60% IC since the design may not be indigenous; higher IC for the lower category compensates for the absence of indigenous design.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

defence self-reliance, IDDM ecosystem, offset policy, positive indigenisation lists, Make in India defence.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 Prelims tested defence procurement categories — know the full priority order and the IC threshold for each: IDDM (50%), Buy Indian (60%), Buy&Make Indian (50%), Global-Mil (50%), Global (30% offset).

 **INTERVIEW**

Has the IDDM priority genuinely transformed India's defence industrial base, or are manufacturers merely relabelling imported components as indigenous?

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Question 8

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Consider the following statements about India's P8I Poseidon aircraft:

1. It is a military derivative of the Boeing 747 commercial airliner.
2. India operates 12 P8I aircraft based at INS Rajali, Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu.
3. The P8I integrates Indian-origin components from BEL, Avantel, and ECIL.

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**

FACT: Statement 1 is **incorrect** — the P8I Poseidon is a military derivative of the **Boeing 737-800ERX** (Extended Range), NOT the Boeing 747. Statement 2 is **correct** — India operates **12 P8I aircraft** (8 original + 4 under option clause), all based at **INS Rajali, Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu**.

Statement 3 is **correct** — the P8I integrates **BEL Data Link II, BEL IFF Interrogator Mark-2, Avantel Mobile Satellite Service**, and **ECIL speech secrecy system**. **ANALYSIS:** The integration of Indian-origin components in a foreign platform demonstrates the progressive Indianisation of defence platforms — aligning with Aatmanirbhar Bharat without waiting for a fully indigenous platform.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

INS Rajali (Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu — about 90 km west of Chennai) is the Indian Navy's premier long-range maritime patrol air station on the east coast. The P8I is based on the **Boeing 737-800ERX** — a twin-engine narrow-body commercial airliner with extended range modifications.

The Boeing 747 is a completely different aircraft (four-engine, wide-body, used for long-haul passenger transport) — a common confusion in examinations. India's 12 P8I aircraft (contracted in two batches: 8 in 2009 and 4 in 2016) represent the largest foreign P-8 fleet outside the United States.

The Indian-origin components integrate into what is called the **Mission System**: BEL contributes Data Link II and IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) Interrogator Mark-2, Avantel contributes Mobile Satellite Service for in-flight communication, and ECIL (Electronics Corporation of India Limited, under Dept. of Atomic Energy, Hyderabad) contributes the speech secrecy system for encrypted voice communication. The MRO (Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul) contract signed in 2026 falls under DAP's **Buy (Indian)** category with 100% Indigenous Content.

Q8
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (defence technology, maritime security, indigenous defence industry) + GS-2 (India-US defence relations — P8I was acquired under LEMOA/COMCASA framework agreements).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students write Boeing 747 instead of 737-800ERX — the 747 is a four-engine wide-body used for passenger transport; the P8I is derived from the twin-engine narrow-body 737-800ERX with an unpressurised weapons bay modification.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

maritime domain awareness, MRO localisation, defence PSU ecosystem (BEL, ECIL), anti-submarine warfare.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests defence platform specifications and associated institutions — know P8I's base airframe (737-800ERX), base station (INS Rajali, Arakkonam), Indian integrators (BEL, Avintel, ECIL), and roles (LRMP, ASW, ASUW, ISR).

 **INTERVIEW**

Given India's 7,500 km coastline and dependence on sea lanes for 90% of trade, should developing an indigenous maritime patrol aircraft be treated as a national security imperative?

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Question 9

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GST in India is constitutionally mandated under which Article, introduced by which Constitutional Amendment?

- A Article 246A, introduced by the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016 ✓**
- B Article 279A, introduced by the 100th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2015
- C Article 248A, introduced by the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2017
- D Article 246A, introduced by the 122nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: GST draws its constitutional authority from **Article 246A**, introduced by the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016**. This Article confers **concurrent power** on Parliament and State Legislatures to make laws with respect to GST. Article 279A (also introduced by the same amendment) establishes the **GST Council** with the Union Finance Minister as its Chairman.

GST was rolled out on **July 1, 2017**. **ANALYSIS:** The concurrent power under Article 246A was a constitutional revolution — for the first time, both Parliament and State Assemblies can legislate on the same indirect tax, breaking the strict separation of the Union List and State List that had governed Indian fiscal federalism since 1950.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016** inserted four new provisions: **Article 246A** (concurrent GST power for Parliament and States), **Article 269A** (IGST on inter-state supply of goods and services, credited to the Consolidated Fund of India and apportioned between Centre and States as recommended by the GST Council), **Article 279A** (Constitution of the GST Council), and amended Article 268A (service tax sharing, subsequently replaced). The **7th Schedule** was simultaneously amended — service tax was removed from the Union List and specific goods were removed from the State List.

GST replaced 17 different central and state taxes including Central Excise Duty, Service Tax, VAT, Central Sales Tax, Entry Tax, and Octroi. GST was implemented on **July 1, 2017**, replacing what PM Modi called a "tax on tax" system.

The Constitutional Bill was the **122nd Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2014** when introduced — it became the **101st Amendment Act, 2016** when enacted after ratification by more than half the State legislatures (a constitutional requirement for amendments affecting Centre-State relations).

Q9  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (constitutional amendments, fiscal federalism, Centre-State relations) + GS-3 (indirect taxation reform, GST structure, fiscal policy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the 101st Amendment (GST, 2016) with the 100th Amendment (land boundary agreement with Bangladesh, 2015) and the 102nd Amendment (constitutional status to National Commission for Backward Classes, 2018) — know the sequence of recent amendments.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

fiscal federalism, cooperative federalism, destination-based taxation, concurrent legislative power.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2018 asked about the constitutional basis of GST — you must know Article 246A (concurrent power), 269A (IGST apportionment), 279A (GST Council), and the 101st Amendment Act 2016.

 **INTERVIEW**

Has the introduction of GST through a constitutional amendment strengthened or weakened India's federal fiscal architecture?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 10

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The Jal Jeevan Mission was launched on which date, and what is the supply standard mandated under the mission?

A August 15, 2019; 55 litres per capita per day (lpcd) ✓

B October 2, 2019; 40 litres per capita per day (lpcd)

C January 26, 2020; 70 litres per capita per day (lpcd)

D June 5, 2019; 55 litres per capita per day (lpcd)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The **Jal Jeevan Mission** was launched on **August 15, 2019** (Independence Day) by PM Modi from the ramparts of the Red Fort. The supply standard mandated is **55 litres per capita per day (lpcd)** through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs)**.

Meghalaya became the **12th state** to sign the reform-linked MoU under JJM 2.0 on March 27, 2026, with over 83% household coverage already achieved. JJM 2.0 has an additional outlay of **Rs 1.51 lakh crore** targeting 100% coverage by **December 2028**.

ANALYSIS: JJM 2.0 marks a philosophical shift — from building infrastructure (pipes and taps) to ensuring actual service delivery (reliable water quality and quantity), addressing the gap between 'connected' and 'functional' connections.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

At JJM 1.0 launch (August 15, 2019), only ~17% of rural households (~3.23 crore of 19.4 crore) had household tap connections. The mission's nodal ministry is the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation).

Goa was the first state, and **Puducherry** the first Union Territory, to achieve 100% FHTC. **Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs)** or **Pani Samitis** are the community-level bodies managing O&M, expected to collect user charges for 5-10% of O&M costs from beneficiaries. JJM 2.0 introduces **reform-linked tranches** — states receive funding only after implementing governance reforms (metering, cost recovery, online grievance redressal).

The 55 lpcd standard is based on WHO guidelines for minimum water needs; the earlier NRDWP (National Rural Drinking Water Programme) had a lower 40 lpcd standard. Meghalaya's MoU (March 27, 2026) signals the North-East's gradual progress — challenging terrain and dispersed habitation make pipeline connectivity difficult.

Q10  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (governance, welfare schemes, Centre-State relations in implementation) + GS-3 (infrastructure, water resources management, rural development).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse JJM launch (August 15, 2019) with Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 launch (October 1, 2021) — both are flagship PM-announced sanitation/water schemes but for different purposes, different ministries, and different launch dates.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

rural water governance, last-mile connectivity, service delivery vs infrastructure creation, community ownership of water assets.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2021 tested JJM comprehensively — know the lpcd standard (55 lpcd), launch date (August 15, 2019), nodal ministry (Ministry of Jal Shakti — DDWS), FHTC definition, and first state (Goa).

 **INTERVIEW**

The gap between 'connected' households and 'functionally served' households reveals a deeper governance challenge — how can water quality surveillance be ensured at the last mile in remote areas?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 11

of 30

[Source →](#)
ASSERTION (A)

The CERT-In and SIA-India space cyber security guidelines adopt a Defence in Depth approach.

REASON (R)

A single layer of cyber protection is sufficient for satellite systems due to their isolation from terrestrial networks.

- A Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A
- B Both A and R are correct, but R is NOT the correct explanation of A
- C A is correct, but R is incorrect ✓
- D A is incorrect, but R is correct

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The Assertion is **correct** — the CERT-In and SIA-India guidelines released at **DefSat 2026** (February 24-26, 2026, New Delhi) adopt **Defence in Depth** as the central principle, requiring multiple overlapping layers of protection across the entire space system ecosystem. The Reason is **incorrect** — satellite systems are NOT isolated from terrestrial networks; they are connected to ground stations, communication uplinks/downlinks, vendor supply chains, software update channels, and user terminal interfaces — each a potential attack vector.

The guidelines specifically adopt a **whole-of-ecosystem approach** covering all these connections. **ANALYSIS:** Modern space cyber threats include jamming, spoofing, data interception, ground station hacking, software supply chain attacks, and physical damage to uplink infrastructure — none of which can be countered by a single protection layer.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) was established in **2004** under **Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000**, inserted by the IT Amendment Act of **2008**. It functions under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** — NOT MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs), a common confusion.

SIA-India (Space Industry Association-India) is the national apex body of private space companies. India currently has **54 operational satellites** managed by ISRO, and **IN-SPACe** (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, established under the Indian Space Policy 2023) has registered 150+ private space startups.

The **Indian Space Policy 2023** opened the sector to private participation, dramatically expanding the attack surface for cyber threats. Defence-in-Depth is a concept borrowed from military doctrine — multiple overlapping defence layers so that if one fails, others maintain protection.

Applied to space systems, it means: encrypted communications, authenticated command uplinks, hardened ground stations, supply chain verification, and continuous monitoring.

Q11  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (science and technology, space policy, internal security — cyber threats to critical infrastructure) + GS-2 (governance — MeitY, IN-SPACE, institutional framework for space regulation).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students place CERT-In under MHA (Home Affairs) — it is under **MeitY** (Ministry of Electronics and IT), established under Section 70B of the IT Act 2000 as amended in 2008.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

critical infrastructure protection, cyber resilience, defence in depth, space domain awareness, supply chain security.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests ministry attribution for technical bodies — CERT-In is under MeitY, National Cyber Security Coordinator is under PMO/NSC, NCIIPC (National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre) is under NTRO.

 **INTERVIEW**

Given India's rapidly privatising space sector with 150+ startups, should space cyber security guidelines be mandatory or advisory, and who should enforce them — MeitY, MoD, or IN-SPACE?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 12

of 30

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2026:

1. India will host WCEF 2026 in autumn 2026, making it the first time the forum is held in continental Asia.
2. The forum is co-hosted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra.
3. CPCB is a statutory body established under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Statement 1 is **correct** — India will host WCEF 2026 in autumn 2026, the **first time in continental Asia** (previous editions were in Europe and Latin America). Statement 2 is **correct** — co-hosted by **CPCB** (under MoEFCC) and **Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra**, the founder of WCEF. Statement 3 is **incorrect** — CPCB is a statutory body established under the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974**, NOT the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

The EPA 1986 empowers the Central Government directly but did not create CPCB. **ANALYSIS:** WCEF 2026 positions India as the Global South's champion in circular economy advocacy, with India's circular economy potential estimated at \$2 trillion by 2050.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

WCEF was founded by the **Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra** and has been held annually since 2017, rotating across continents. WCEF 2025 was held in **Brazil** (Latin America).

WCEF 2026 in India is significant because it is the first in continental Asia — Japan hosted a related event but not the main WCEF. India's circular economy framework includes: **NITI Aayog's 11 sectoral strategies (2021)** targeting 2 trillion USD opportunity by 2050, and CPCB's **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** rules covering plastics (EPR portal launched 2022), e-waste (revised 2022), tyres, and used oil. Both **CPCB** and **SPCBs** (State Pollution Control Boards) were created under the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974** — Section 3 establishes CPCB and Section 4 establishes SPCBs.

The **Environment Protection Act, 1986** was enacted as an umbrella legislation following the Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984) and empowers the Central Government directly — it did NOT create CPCB. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 also empowers CPCB but did not create it.

Q12  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS-3 (environment, pollution control, circular economy, climate change mitigation).
 COMMON MISTAKE	Students attribute CPCB's establishment to the EPA 1986 (the most prominent environmental law) — CPCB was actually created under the Water Act, 1974 (Section 3); the same Act created SPCBs (Section 4); EPA 1986 empowers the Central Government directly.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	circular economy, design out waste, extended producer responsibility, regenerative production systems.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2023 tested CPCB's statutory basis — always verify the parent Act for pollution control bodies; the sequence is Water Act 1974 (CPCB/SPCB) → Air Act 1981 (empowers CPCB for air quality) → EPA 1986 (empowers Central Government).
 INTERVIEW	Can India genuinely leapfrog from a predominantly linear economy to circular systems without first completing its industrial transition?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 13

of 30

[Source →](#)
ASSERTION (A)

India provided a \$1.4 billion credit and swap package to Sri Lanka during its 2022 balance of payments crisis.

REASON (R)

Under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework, India acts as the provider of dollar liquidity to SAARC member nations.

- A** Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A
- B** Both A and R are correct, but R is NOT the correct explanation of A ✓
- C** A is correct, but R is incorrect
- D** A is incorrect, but R is correct

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Both statements are factually **correct**. India extended **\$1.4 billion in swap and credit lines** to Sri Lanka during its severe 2022 BoP crisis (the worst since independence).

India also operates the **SAARC Currency Swap Framework** (\$2 billion total), extending facilities to Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and the Maldives — with India as sole provider. However, R is NOT the correct explanation of A — the \$1.4 billion Sri Lanka package was a **bilateral emergency credit line** disbursed through the Reserve Bank of India, NOT through the SAARC Currency Swap Framework.

The two instruments are legally separate, have different activation mechanisms, and different ceiling amounts.

ANALYSIS: India operates multiple financial instruments for neighbourhood support — conflating them is the most common student error.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's neighbourhood financial assistance instruments are distinct and must not be conflated: **(1) SAARC Currency Swap Framework** (\$2B total facility, established 2012, India as sole provider, accessed for short-term BoP needs up to \$400M per member); **(2) Bilateral emergency credit lines** (larger in scale, like Sri Lanka's \$1.4B package — RBI extended a \$400M swap plus \$1B credit line); **(3) Lines of Credit via Exim Bank** (project-tied financing for specific infrastructure/development projects); **(4) Grants** (budget support or reconstruction grants). India's **forex reserves (~\$640 billion as of 2026)** provide the macroeconomic backstop for all these commitments.

The Sri Lanka crisis (2022) included India's \$1.4B package, IMF bailout (\$2.9B, 2023), China's debt restructuring negotiations, and World Bank emergency support — making it a landmark in South Asian geopolitical economics. India was the **first country** to respond with financial assistance to Sri Lanka, arriving ahead of IMF and China.

Q13  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (India's neighbourhood first policy, South Asian geopolitics) + GS-3 (external sector, BoP management, forex reserves, financial diplomacy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume all India-SAARC financial assistance flows through the SAARC Currency Swap Framework (\$2B) — but bilateral credit lines, Exim Bank Lines of Credit, and grants are entirely separate instruments with much higher ceilings, different conditionalities, and different legal frameworks.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

neighbourhood first policy, financial first responder, liquidity diplomacy, bilateral vs multilateral instruments.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests India's instruments for neighbourhood engagement — SAARC Swap (\$2B, short-term BoP), bilateral credit (larger, emergency), Exim LoC (project-tied), grant (budget support); know each instrument's purpose and approximate scale.

 **INTERVIEW**

India's first-responder financial role in the Sri Lanka crisis — is this driven by strategic competition with China or genuine South Asian solidarity?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 14

of 30

[Source →](#)

Which of the following statements about Nagaland is/are **INCORRECT** ?

1. Nagaland became a state on December 1, 1963, making it the 16th state of India.
2. Article 371(A) provides special provisions for Nagaland covering customary law, land, and resources.
3. Nagaland recorded the highest GST growth in India at 27% in FY 2025-26.
4. GST is a destination-based tax where revenue accrues to the state where goods are consumed.

A 3 only ✓

B 1 and 3 only

C 2 and 4 only

D 1, 2 and 4 only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: Statement 3 is **incorrect** — Nagaland recorded the highest GST growth at **37%** (not 27%) in FY 2025-26, against a national average of just 6.8%. Statements 1, 2, and 4 are all correct.

Nagaland attained statehood on **December 1, 1963** as the **16th state** (Statement 1). **Article 371(A)** provides special provisions covering customary law, land ownership, and natural resources (Statement 2).

GST is indeed a **destination-based tax** where revenue accrues to the consuming state (Statement 4). **ANALYSIS:** Nagaland's extraordinary 37% GST growth — despite being a small economy — powerfully illustrates the structural benefit of destination-based taxation for net-consuming states with large service sectors and government expenditure.

CONCEPT NOTE

Article 371(A) was inserted by the **13th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1962** (a year before Nagaland attained statehood on December 1, 1963 as the 16th state). It provides that no Act of Parliament shall apply to Nagaland in respect of: (a) religious or social practices of the Nagas; (b) Naga customary law and procedure; (c) administration of civil and criminal justice involving customary law; (d) ownership and transfer of land and its resources — unless the Nagaland Legislative Assembly by a resolution so decides.

Articles 371A through 371J cover different states: **371A** (Nagaland), **371B** (Assam), **371C** (Manipur), **371F** (Sikkim — recognition of existing laws and rights of Sikkim), **371G** (Mizoram — similar to Nagaland), **371H** (Arunachal Pradesh — special role for Governor). Nagaland's GST collections reached **Rs 987.38 crore** by January 31, 2026, surpassing the Rs 949 crore target — driven by increased compliance and government infrastructure spending in the state.

Q14  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (federalism, special provisions under Part XXI of the Constitution, North-East governance) + GS-3 (GST, destination-based taxation, North-East fiscal policy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse Article 371(A) with Article 370 (J&K, abrogated in August 2019) — both are special provisions but Article 370 was temporary and has been abrogated, while Article 371A remains in force as a permanent constitutional protection for Naga customary law and land rights.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

asymmetric federalism, special constitutional provisions, Naga customary law, destination-based taxation.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC frequently tests Article 371 variants — build a comparative table: 371A (Nagaland/customary law), 371B (Assam/Tribal Areas Committee), 371C (Manipur/Hill Areas Committee), 371F (Sikkim/existing laws), 371G (Mizoram/customary law), 371H (Arunachal/Governor's role).

 **INTERVIEW**

Do the special provisions under Article 371(A) that protect Naga land rights actually hinder economic integration and investment in Nagaland?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 15

of 30

[Source →](#)

Match List I (Currency Swap Arrangement) with List II (Size/Amount):

LIST I	LIST II
A A-2, B-4, C-1, D-3 ✓	
B A-4, B-2, C-1, D-3	
C A-2, B-1, C-4, D-3	
D A-1, B-4, C-2, D-3	

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: India-Japan BSA is **\$75 billion** (A-2), the largest bilateral swap India has with any single country. BRICS CRA is **\$100 billion** total (B-4), with India's committed contribution at \$18 billion and China's at \$41 billion (the largest share).

CMIM is **\$240 billion** (C-1), the largest multilateral swap arrangement in Asia, restricted to ASEAN+3 — India is NOT a member. SAARC Currency Swap Framework is **\$2 billion** (D-3), where India acts as the sole provider of dollar liquidity.

ANALYSIS: The size hierarchy (\$240B > \$100B > \$75B > \$2B) reveals an inverse relationship between arrangement size and India's control — India exercises maximum control over the smallest arrangement (SAARC) but has no access to the largest (CMIM).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** was established by the **Fortaleza Declaration (2014)**, with the formal treaty entering into force in 2015. Total pool: \$100 billion; contributions: China \$41B, Brazil/Russia/India \$18B each, South Africa \$5B. Withdrawals above a certain threshold require an IMF programme — often called the "IMF link." The **SAARC Currency Swap Framework** (\$2B) was established in **2012** with India as the sole provider; member countries can access up to \$400M per arrangement.

India also accesses US dollar liquidity from the **FIMA Repo Facility** (Federal Reserve, permanent from 2021) — not a swap but a standing collateralised borrowing facility where RBI pledges US Treasury securities. The full financial safety net picture for India: \$2B (SAARC, provider) + \$18B (BRICS CRA, contributor) + \$75B (Japan BSA, bilateral) + FIMA (collateral-based, uncapped) + \$640B own reserves.

The sum reveals that India's own reserves dwarf all external arrangements — making the BSAs primarily confidence signals rather than actual liquidity backstops.

Q15  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (BRICS, ASEAN, regional groupings, international financial architecture) + GS-3 (external sector, forex reserves, BoP crisis management).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume India's BRICS CRA contribution (\$18B) equals its voting/withdrawal rights — China's \$41B contribution gives it disproportionate influence; India can only withdraw up to 2x its commitment (\$36B) without an IMF programme, similar to other members.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

financial safety net architecture, multilateral vs bilateral mechanisms, strategic financial autonomy.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know exact figures — CMIM \$240B (ASEAN+3, India excluded), BRICS CRA \$100B (India \$18B of \$100B), Japan BSA \$75B (bilateral, two-way), SAARC \$2B (India as sole provider).

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India push for an Indo-Pacific Financial Stability Mechanism analogous to CMIM to address the gap in its multilateral safety net?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 16

of 30

[Source →](#)

The WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement entered into force on which date, and how many members had accepted it by MC14?

- A January 1, 2026; 130 members
- B September 15, 2025; 119 members ✓**
- C June 17, 2022; 95 members
- D March 29, 2026; 166 members

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The **WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement** entered into force on **September 15, 2025**. By MC14 (March 2026), **119 WTO members** had formally accepted it — with three new acceptances at MC14 itself (**Paraguay, Samoa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**).

The agreement was adopted at **MC12, Geneva (June 2022)** after over 20 years of negotiations. It prohibits subsidies for **IUU (Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated) fishing**, subsidies for fishing on overfished stocks, and unregulated high seas fishing.

ANALYSIS: The agreement fulfils **SDG Target 14.6** (eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies by 2020 — the target was missed; achievement came 5 years late in 2025).

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

India has approximately **4 million active fisherfolk** and is the world's **3rd largest fish producer** (after China and Indonesia). India pushed hard for **Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT)** provisions in the agreement to protect the livelihoods of small-scale and artisanal fishers who fish in coastal waters under 12 nautical miles.

WTO agreements require **two-thirds member acceptance** to enter into force (not a simple majority), explaining the 3-year gap between MC12 adoption (June 17, 2022) and entry into force (September 15, 2025). **Phase 2** negotiations — covering subsidies contributing to **overcapacity and overfishing** by non-IUU actors (targeting large-scale commercial fleets) — continue beyond MC14 and are the more contentious issue.

Global fisheries subsidies are estimated at ~\$35 billion annually, of which ~\$22 billion are considered harmful. China and the EU are among the largest providers of harmful subsidies, making Phase 2 negotiations extremely politically sensitive. India's Blue Economy Policy targets **\$1 trillion by 2047**, making sustainable fisheries a core economic and food security interest.

Q16  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (environment, blue economy, fisheries sustainability) + GS-2 (WTO, trade negotiations, India's trade interests) + GS-1 (Indian Ocean resources, coastal communities, geography).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the adoption date (MC12, Geneva, June 17, 2022) with the entry-into-force date (September 15, 2025) — the gap occurs because WTO agreements require formal acceptance by two-thirds of members before entering into force.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

sustainable fisheries, blue economy, SDG Target 14.6, IUU fishing, artisanal livelihood protection.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2023 tested SDG ocean targets — connect SDG 14.6 (end harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity) to the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, its adoption timeline, and India's S&DT demands.

 **INTERVIEW**

Can WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies simultaneously address ecological sustainability and the food security concerns of artisanal fishing communities in developing nations?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 17

of 30

[Source →](#)

Which of the following is **NOT** a role performed by the P8I Poseidon aircraft of the Indian Navy?

- A Long-Range Maritime Patrol (LRMP)
- B Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)
- C **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) ✓**
- D Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: The P8I Poseidon performs **LRMP, ASW, ASUW (Anti-Surface Warfare), and ISR** missions as its core roles. **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD)** is NOT a role of the P8I — India's BMD capability is handled by the **DRDO BMD Programme** using the **Prithvi Air Defence (PAD)** interceptor (exo-atmospheric, 50-80 km altitude) and **Advanced Air Defence (AAD)** interceptor (endo-atmospheric, 15-30 km), guided by the Swordfish Long-Range Tracking Radar. The P8I carries Harpoon anti-ship missiles, Mk-54 torpedoes, and depth charges — none of which are ballistic missile interceptors. **ANALYSIS:** Maritime patrol aircraft operate in the horizontal domain against surface and sub-surface threats; BMD requires vertical engagement against ballistic trajectories at high altitudes — fundamentally different physics, sensors, and intercept mathematics.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **P8I sensor suite** for maritime patrol: **AN/APY-10 maritime surveillance radar** (surface vessel detection), **sonobuoys** (passive and active sonobuoys dropped into the ocean for acoustic submarine detection), **Magnetic Anomaly Detector (MAD)** (detects the magnetic signature of submarine hulls), and **Electro-Optical/Infrared (EO/IR) turret** (visual identification of vessels). Weapons: **Harpoon Block II** anti-ship missiles (surface warfare), **Mk-54** lightweight torpedoes (anti-submarine), and depth charges.

India's **BMD programme** has two tiers: PAD (endo-atmospheric and exo-atmospheric, 50-80 km) using a two-stage interceptor, and AAD (endo-atmospheric, 15-30 km) using a single-stage interceptor. The **Swordfish Long-Range Tracking Radar** (based on Israeli Green Pine radar) provides fire control data.

The Phase-2 BMD programme aims for intercept at ranges beyond 5,000 km using the **AD-1 and AD-2** interceptors currently under development by DRDO.

Q17  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (defence technology — maritime and BMD) + GS-2 (India-US defence relations — P8I acquired under bilateral defence agreements including LEMOA and COMCASA).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse ASUW (Anti-Surface Warfare — targeting surface ships using Harpoon missiles) with BMD (Ballistic Missile Defence — intercepting ballistic missiles in flight using exo/endo-atmospheric interceptors); both involve missiles but the threat domain, engagement geometry, and sensors are completely different.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

maritime domain awareness, anti-submarine warfare, layered ballistic missile defence, defence PSU ecosystem.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests military platform roles and capabilities — P8I roles are LRMP, ASW, ASUW, ISR; BMD is a separate ground-based system under DRDO's dedicated programme.

 **INTERVIEW**

India's 7,500 km coastline carries 90% of trade — given this dependence, should India treat indigenous LRMP development as a national security imperative equivalent to nuclear capability?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 18

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[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) and the Floating LiDAR Buoy:

1. NIOT is an autonomous institute under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
2. The Floating LiDAR Buoy measures wind profiles up to 300 metres above sea level using infrared laser pulses.
3. India targets 30 GW of offshore wind energy by 2030.

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**

FACT: Statement 1 is **incorrect** — NIOT is an autonomous institute under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, NOT the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. **NIWE** (National Institute of Wind Energy, Chennai) is under MNRE. Statement 2 is **correct** — the Floating LiDAR Buoy measures wind speed, direction, and turbulence up to **300 metres** above sea level using infrared laser pulses that scatter off atmospheric aerosols and water droplets (LIDAR principle).

Statement 3 is **correct** — India targets **30 GW of offshore wind** by 2030, though current installed capacity is near zero. **ANALYSIS:** The confusion between NIOT (MoES) and NIWE (MNRE) is one of the most tested ministry-attribution questions in UPSC — both are Chennai-based, both contribute to offshore wind, but under different ministerial mandates.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

NIOT (National Institute of Ocean Technology) is headquartered in **Chennai** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**. Beyond the Floating LiDAR Buoy, NIOT manages India's **tsunami early warning system** and conducts **deep-sea mining research** (manganese nodules at 5,000-6,000m depth in the central Indian Ocean under the Deep Ocean Mission).

The Floating LiDAR Buoy was successfully tested off **Muttom coast, Tamil Nadu** (near Gulf of Mannar). **NIWE** (National Institute of Wind Energy, Chennai) is a separate institute under **MNRE** — NIOT builds the ocean sensing hardware; NIWE conducts wind resource assessment and certifies wind energy sites.

India's offshore wind target of **30 GW by 2030** (from the Offshore Wind Energy Policy, 2015) requires bankable wind data from sensors like the LiDAR buoy before commercial auctions can be triggered. NIOT's indigenous buoy costs 30-40% less than European imports, removing a key cost barrier for offshore wind resource assessment.

Both NIOT and NIWE are in Chennai — making this the most frequently confused ministry-attribution pair in Indian competitive examinations.

Q18  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (S&T, environment, offshore wind energy) + GS-1 (geography — Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean, ocean technology).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse NIOT (MoES, ocean technology, tsunami warning, deep-sea mining, Chennai) with NIWE (MNRE, wind energy assessment, offshore wind policy, Chennai) — same city, completely different parent ministries and mandates; NIOT's work feeds into NIWE's assessments for offshore wind.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

offshore wind energy assessment, blue economy, LiDAR ocean sensing, indigenous technology development, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in ocean science.

 **EXAM TIP**

Ministry attribution is a favourite UPSC question type — NIOT is under MoES, NIWE is under MNRE; both in Chennai; NIOT also runs Deep Ocean Mission under MoES; Deep Ocean Mission is a separate flagship programme announced in Union Budget 2021.

 **INTERVIEW**

Can India realistically achieve 30 GW offshore wind by 2030 when it currently has near-zero installed capacity, and what structural reforms in offshore permitting, grid connectivity, and financing are required?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 19

of 30

[Source →](#)

Match List I (WTO Ministerial Conference) with List II (Venue):

LIST I	LIST II
A A-2, B-3, C-1, D-4 ✓	
B A-3, B-2, C-4, D-1	
C A-1, B-3, C-2, D-4	
D A-2, B-1, C-3, D-4	

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: MC11 — **Buenos Aires, Argentina (December 2017)** (A-2). MC12 — **Geneva, Switzerland (June 2022)** (B-3), where the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement was adopted after 20+ years of negotiations.

MC13 — **Abu Dhabi, UAE (February 2024)** (C-1), where Comoros and Timor-Leste joined, bringing WTO membership to 166. MC14 — **Yaounde, Cameroon (March 26-29, 2026)** (D-4), the first Ministerial held in sub-Saharan Africa.

ANALYSIS: The rotation of MC venues — from Latin America to Europe to the Gulf to sub-Saharan Africa — reflects the WTO's commitment to geographical inclusivity, with each location symbolising the trade priorities of that region at that historical moment.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Full WTO MC sequence with landmark outcomes: MC1 Singapore (1996, Singapore Issues) → MC2 Geneva (1998, e-commerce moratorium begins) → MC3 Seattle (1999, **collapsed** — birth of anti-globalisation movement, developing countries walked out) → MC4 Doha (2001, **launched Doha Development Round**) → MC5 Cancun (2003, **collapsed** — G20 developing nations walked out over agriculture) → MC6 Hong Kong (2005) → MC7 Geneva (2009) → MC8 Geneva (2011) → MC9 Bali (2013, **peace clause** on PSH agreed) → MC10 Nairobi (2015, first in Africa, ministerials commitment on agriculture) → MC11 Buenos Aires (2017) → MC12 Geneva (2022, **Fisheries Subsidies Agreement** adopted) → MC13 Abu Dhabi (2024, 166 members, e-commerce interim framework) → MC14 Yaounde (2026, first in sub-Saharan Africa). The Seattle (1999) and Cancun (2003) collapses shaped India's negotiating posture at subsequent Ministerials, particularly on agriculture and S&DT provisions.

Q19  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (international institutions, WTO history, India's multilateral trade diplomacy) + GS-3 (trade policy, fisheries, agricultural subsidies, e-commerce).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse MC12 (Geneva, 2022, fisheries subsidies agreement adopted) with MC9 (Bali, 2013, peace clause on PSH agreed) — both are landmark MCs but for completely different outcomes; also confuse MC13 Abu Dhabi (2024) with MC10 Nairobi (2015, first MC in Africa but only sub-Saharan).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

multilateral trading system, Doha Round impasse, trade and development, ministerial paralysis.

 **EXAM TIP**

Memorise MC9 onwards with key outcomes — MC9/Bali (peace clause), MC10/Nairobi (commitment on agriculture, first Africa), MC12/Geneva (fisheries agreement), MC13/Abu Dhabi (166 members), MC14/Yaounde (first sub-Saharan Africa, e-commerce interim framework).

 **INTERVIEW**

With the Doha Round effectively dead and two MC collapses in its early history, has the WTO become primarily a forum for declarations rather than binding, enforceable trade agreements?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 20

of 30

[Source →](#)

Which of the following about CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) is **NOT** correct?

- A CAATSA is a US law that can sanction countries purchasing significant Russian defence equipment
- B India received a presidential waiver from CAATSA sanctions for the S-400 deal worth \$5.43 billion
- C CAATSA was enacted in 2017 and also covers sanctions against Iran and North Korea
- D India has been formally sanctioned under CAATSA for the Tunguska missile procurement contract ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Option D is **incorrect** — India has NOT been formally sanctioned under CAATSA for any defence procurement, including the Tunguska contract. All three other options are correct.

CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) was enacted in **2017** and covers sanctions against Russia, Iran, and North Korea. India received a **presidential waiver** for the **S-400 deal (\$5.43 billion, signed October 2018)**.

Future Russian procurements carry CAATSA risk, but no sanctions have been imposed on India to date. **ANALYSIS:** CAATSA creates a structural dilemma for India — it must maintain legacy Russian platforms essential to current operational capability while managing the diplomatic and legal risk of US sanctions for doing so.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Russia's share of India's arms imports has declined from approximately **70% (2009-13)** to approximately **36% (2019-23)**, per SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) data — a deliberate diversification. India continues procuring Russian systems for **legacy platform maintenance** (MiG-29, Su-30MKI, T-90 Bhishma, S-400, Tunguska) while investing in Western platforms (Rafale, P8I, Apache) and indigenous systems (Tejas Mk1A, Akash Mk2, Arjun Mk2).

CAATSA sanctions are NOT automatic — they require a **presidential determination** (formal finding by the US President that a sanctionable transaction occurred) and can be waived entirely based on national security interests. The US granted India a **Presidential waiver** for the S-400 deal under CAATSA Section 231, citing the strategic importance of the India-US relationship.

The Tunguska contract (Rs 445 crore, 2026) is a smaller spare-parts/ammunition procurement — below the threshold likely to trigger a formal sanctions review. India's diversification to French (Rafale), American (P8I, Apache, CH-47F Chinook), and Israeli (Barak-8) platforms reflects a long-term strategy to reduce CAATSA exposure.

Q20  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (India-US-Russia triangular diplomatic dynamics, strategic autonomy) + GS-3 (defence procurement, arms trade, SIPRI data).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume CAATSA automatically sanctions any country buying Russian defence equipment — it requires a formal **presidential determination** that a sanctionable transaction occurred, and the President can issue a waiver based on national security interests; the US has exercised this discretion for India given its strategic importance.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

strategic autonomy, alliance management, defence procurement diversification, sanctions diplomacy.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2020 tested India-US-Russia triangular dynamics — know CAATSA's full scope (targets Russia AND Iran AND North Korea), India's S-400 presidential waiver, and the policy of active diversification from ~70% to ~36% Russian sourcing.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India accelerate its Aatmanirbhar defence programme specifically to eliminate CAATSA vulnerability, or is strategic hedging through diversification a sufficient response?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 21

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[Source →](#)

The India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has been operational since which year?

A 2008

B 2011 ✓

C 2014

D 2018

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The India-Japan **CEPA** has been operational since **August 1, 2011**. It covers trade in goods, services, investment, intellectual property rights, and competition policy — making it far more comprehensive than a plain FTA (which typically covers goods only).

India-Japan bilateral trade stood at approximately **\$25.17 billion** in FY 2024-25. Japan's cumulative FDI in India (April 2000 to December 2025) is approximately **\$39 billion**, with **1,450+ Japanese companies** operating in India. Japan is India's **largest bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) donor**, providing ~\$3 billion annually in yen loans (through JICA — Japan International Cooperation Agency). **ANALYSIS:** The CEPA complements the \$75 billion BSA and the 2014 Special Strategic and Global Partnership, creating a multi-layered India-Japan relationship.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Key India-Japan economic cooperation projects under the strategic partnership: **Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC)** (the largest India-Japan bilateral project, integrating industrial townships along a 1,483 km rail corridor), **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail** (508 km Shinkansen-inspired project, funded by JICA yen loans at 0.1% interest over 50 years), and Metro systems in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai. Japan is India's **largest bilateral ODA donor** (~\$3 billion/year from JICA, making Japan India's biggest bilateral infrastructure financier).

India-Japan **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** (Foreign Minister + Defence Minister format) was launched in **2019**. Both are **Quad** members (India, Japan, US, Australia) — first leaders' summit was held in March 2021.

India-Japan bilateral trade: ~\$25.17 billion (FY 2024-25); Japan FDI cumulative: ~\$39 billion (2000-2025); 1,450+ Japanese companies operating. The CEPA was negotiated under PM Manmohan Singh and PM Naoto Kan — signed in February 2011, entered into force **August 1, 2011**.

Q21  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, Quad architecture, ODA) + GS-3 (trade agreements, infrastructure finance, economic diplomacy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement — covers goods, services, investment, IP, competition) with FTA (Free Trade Agreement — typically covers goods tariffs only); India-Japan have a CEPA, not a plain FTA — a CEPA is broader in scope and includes investment protection.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

CEPA vs FTA distinction, ODA diplomacy, infrastructure corridors, Indo-Pacific economic integration.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests the scope distinction between FTA (goods only), CEPA (comprehensive — goods + services + investment), and PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement, partial tariff reduction only) — know which India has with which country.

 **INTERVIEW**

India-Japan bilateral trade at \$25B is well below the potential of two of Asia's largest economies — has the CEPA meaningfully delivered on its promise to boost trade?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 22

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[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the Ranji Trophy:

1. It was inaugurated in the 1934-35 season and is named after Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji, the Maharaja Jam Saheb of Nawanagar.
2. Mumbai holds the record for most Ranji Trophy titles with 41 championships.
3. Jammu and Kashmir won their maiden Ranji Trophy title in 2025-26, defeating Karnataka in the final at Hubballi.

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**

FACT: All three statements are **correct**. The Ranji Trophy was inaugurated in the **1934-35 season** and is named after **Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji** (Maharaja Jam Saheb of Nawanagar), who played cricket for England in 15 Test matches (Statement 1).

Mumbai holds the record with **41 titles**, the most by any team in Ranji Trophy history (Statement 2). **J&K** won their maiden title in **2025-26**, defeating Karnataka at **KSCA Hubli Cricket Ground, Hubballi**, ending a **67-year wait** since their Ranji debut in 1959-60 (Statement 3).

Player of the Tournament was **Auqib Nabi** with 245 runs and 60 wickets. **ANALYSIS:** J&K's maiden title is historically significant given the team has played most home matches at neutral venues for decades due to the security environment — it represents a sporting breakthrough with deep socio-political resonance.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Ranji Trophy is administered by the **BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India)**, the world's most powerful cricket board. Related domestic cricket tournaments: **Duleep Trophy** (inter-zonal, named after **Duleepsinhji** — Ranjitsinhji's nephew, who also played for England) and the **Irani Cup** (Ranji Trophy champion vs Rest of India).

Ranjitsinhji played **15 Tests for England (1896-1902)**, scored 989 runs at 44.95 average, and famously pioneered the **leg glance** — a batting stroke. He served as the Maharaja Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, a princely state in the Saurashtra region of present-day Gujarat.

J&K Ranji team had to play home matches in neutral venues (typically Jammu, Chandigarh, or Mohali) due to the security environment in the Kashmir Valley — the maiden title in 2025-26 is therefore symbolically significant far beyond cricket.

Auqib Nabi (Player of Tournament: 245 runs + 60 wickets) became a national sports figure from the region.

Q22  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-1 (art and culture, sports history, colonial period — Indian cricket history) + GS-2 (governance — BCCI's autonomous role, sports administration in India).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **Ranjitsinhji** (K.S. Ranjitsinhji, Ranji's uncle figure, played for England 1896-1902, Ranji Trophy named after him) with **Duleepsinhji** (his nephew, also played for England, Duleep Trophy named after him) — two different historical figures, two different domestic cricket trophies.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

sports governance, regional representation, domestic cricket infrastructure, social cohesion through sports.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC Prelims occasionally tests sports awards and tournaments named after historical figures — Ranjitsinhji (Ranji Trophy), Duleepsinhji (Duleep Trophy), Colonel C.K. Nayudu (C.K. Nayudu Trophy for U-19 cricket).

 **INTERVIEW**

How can sports achievement — particularly J&K's maiden Ranji Title — be strategically leveraged to build social cohesion and normalcy in conflict-affected regions?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 23

of 30

[Source →](#)

India's Skill India Mission was launched on which date, and what is significant about that date?

- A January 26, 2015 — Republic Day, symbolising constitutional commitment to employment
- B July 15, 2015 — World Youth Skills Day, as designated by the UN General Assembly ✓**
- C August 15, 2015 — Independence Day, alongside the Digital India programme
- D October 2, 2015 — Gandhi Jayanti, connecting skills to self-reliance philosophy

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The **Skill India Mission** was launched on **July 15, 2015**, which is **World Youth Skills Day** as designated by the **UN General Assembly** (proclaimed in 2014 for the first observance on July 15, 2015). The MSDE (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) signed an MoU with the **GATI Foundation** on March 13, 2026, to accelerate India's journey toward becoming the **Global Skills Capital by 2047**.

India's employability rate has risen to **56.35%** in 2026 (India Skills Report 2026), and India commands **16% of global AI talent**. **ANALYSIS:** The deliberate alignment with World Youth Skills Day underscores the demographic logic — India's median age of ~28 years creates a narrow window before the demographic dividend becomes a demographic burden if skilling fails.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Skill India ecosystem** comprises three main pillars: **PMKVY** (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana — flagship demand-driven scheme, provides short-term training and RPL certification), **NSDC** (National Skill Development Corporation — PPP model, channels private investment into skill development), and **Skill India International Centres (SIICs)** (provide structured global employment pathways for semi-skilled and skilled workers). PMKVY 1.0 was launched in the same month (July 2015) as the Skill India Mission — but PMKVY is a specific scheme within the broader mission; confusing them is a common exam error.

The **GATI Foundation** (PMU at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi) focuses on the Global Skills Capital by 2047 goal and coordinates with foreign governments for recognition of Indian vocational qualifications. India's employability rate: **56.35% (2026)** up from 47% in 2019.

India commands **16% of global AI talent** — a key differentiator in the global skills competition. India's **median age of ~28 years** (2026) provides a 15-20 year window for demographic dividend realisation before the population starts ageing rapidly post-2040.

Q23  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (governance, skills policy, MSDE) + GS-3 (employment generation, demographic dividend, labour economics) + Essay (India's workforce transformation, skilling for global migration).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the Skill India Mission launch (July 15, 2015) with PMKVY launch — PMKVY 1.0 is a specific scheme launched within the same month but is a component of the mission, not the mission itself.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

demographic dividend, global skills mobility, employability gap, skill-migration nexus, PMKVY.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests UN-designated international days — **July 15 = World Youth Skills Day** (proclaimed by UN General Assembly, first observed 2015); this is a high-probability Prelims question.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is India's skills training ecosystem actually aligned with the real demands of global labour markets, particularly in AI, green jobs, and care economy sectors?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 24

of 30

[Source →](#)

Which of the following about LiDAR technology is **NOT** correct?

- A LiDAR stands for Light Detection and Ranging
- B It uses infrared laser pulses to measure distances and build profiles
- C **LiDAR can only be used for ground-based terrain mapping and cannot be deployed on floating platforms ✓**
- D The Floating LiDAR Buoy tested by NIOT measures wind profiles up to 300 metres above sea level

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Option C is **incorrect** — LiDAR can be deployed on **floating platforms** (as NIOT's Floating LiDAR Buoy directly demonstrates), **airborne platforms** (aircraft, helicopters, drones), **ground-based stations**, and **satellites** (e.g., NASA's ICESat-2 uses space-borne LiDAR for ice sheet measurement). NIOT's buoy proves LiDAR can operate effectively on ocean-based floating platforms for offshore wind profiling.

Options A, B, and D are all correct — LiDAR stands for **Light Detection and Ranging**, uses **infrared laser pulses** that scatter off aerosols and water droplets, and NIOT's buoy measures wind profiles up to **300 metres** above sea level. **ANALYSIS:** LiDAR's deployment on floating ocean platforms is the key technical innovation enabling bankable offshore wind resource assessment at significantly lower cost than fixed ocean platforms.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) emits **laser pulses** (typically infrared, 1064 nm wavelength) and measures the time-of-flight of the reflected signal to determine distance, velocity (via Doppler shift), and profile of the target medium.

Applications across sectors: Topographic mapping (ISRO's Cartosat), **forestry canopy assessment** (tree height, biomass), **archaeological discovery** (LiDAR revealed hidden Mayan cities under dense jungle), autonomous vehicles (360-degree point cloud mapping), flood modelling, urban planning, and offshore wind resource assessment.

LiDAR vs RADAR vs SONAR: **LiDAR** uses light/laser (high resolution, shorter range, weather-affected); **RADAR** uses radio waves (lower resolution, longer range, all-weather); **SONAR** uses sound waves (underwater detection). NASA's **ICESat-2** uses photon-counting LiDAR from orbit to measure ice sheet thickness changes to centimetre accuracy.

India's indigenous floating LiDAR buoy reduces assessment costs by **30-40%** compared to European imports — a critical cost reduction for triggering offshore wind commercial auctions in India's exclusive economic zone.

Q24  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (S&T — remote sensing, offshore wind energy) + GS-1 (geography — terrain mapping, ocean surface profiling, Bay of Bengal).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume LiDAR and RADAR are interchangeable — LiDAR uses **light/laser** (optical wavelength ~1000 nm), RADAR uses **radio waves** (microwave wavelength ~1-100 cm); LiDAR provides centimetre-level resolution but is weather-sensitive, while RADAR works in all weather but has lower resolution.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

remote sensing technologies, offshore wind assessment, indigenous ocean technology, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in scientific instruments.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 tested remote sensing technologies — know the three types: LiDAR (light/laser), RADAR (radio waves), SONAR (sound/acoustic waves), and their respective applications and limitations.

 **INTERVIEW**

How can democratisation of LiDAR data from platforms like NIOT's buoy accelerate India's offshore renewable energy transition while also enhancing coastal defence and fisheries management?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 25

of 30

[Source →](#)

The WTO was established on January 1, 1995 as the successor to which multilateral trade agreement?

- A Bretton Woods Agreement (1944)
- B General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, 1947) ✓
- C Havana Charter for the International Trade Organization (1948)
- D United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 1964)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The WTO was established on **January 1, 1995** as the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, 1947)**. The WTO was created through the **Marrakesh Agreement** signed on April 15, 1994, as the culminating document of the **Uruguay Round of trade negotiations (1986-94)**.

The WTO is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland** and had **166 members** as of MC13 (Abu Dhabi, 2024).

ANALYSIS: The WTO represented a qualitative upgrade from GATT — GATT was a provisional treaty (never a formal international organisation), while the WTO is a permanent institution with a legally binding dispute settlement mechanism, a secretariat, and comprehensive coverage of goods, services, and intellectual property.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Havana Charter (1948)** proposed the establishment of an **International Trade Organization (ITO)** as a full UN specialized agency — but the US Senate refused to ratify it, fearing loss of economic sovereignty. GATT (signed 1947, operative from 1948) became the provisional substitute and governed international trade for 47 years through eight negotiating rounds: Kennedy Round (1964-67, tariffs), Tokyo Round (1973-79, non-tariff barriers), **Uruguay Round (1986-94, services/IP/agriculture)**.

The Uruguay Round's three landmark agreements: **GATS** (General Agreement on Trade in Services — first binding rules on international services trade), **TRIPS** (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights — minimum IP standards for all members), and **AoA** (Agreement on Agriculture — three pillars: market access, domestic support, export subsidies).

GATT 1994 still exists as a legal instrument within the WTO framework — it is not the same as the original GATT 1947.

The Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank + IMF) are entirely separate from the WTO and deal with development finance and monetary stability respectively, not trade in goods and services.

Q25  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (international institutions, WTO structure, evolution from GATT) + GS-3 (trade policy, TRIPS, GATS, Agreement on Agriculture).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse GATT (trade in goods agreement, provisional, 1947) with the WTO (permanent institution covering goods + services + IP, created 1995); and confuse the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank + IMF, 1944) with the WTO (1995, entirely separate).
GATT 1994 still exists within WTO as a distinct legal instrument from the original GATT 1947.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

multilateral trading system, Marrakesh Agreement, Uruguay Round, rules-based international trade order.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests the evolution from GATT to WTO — know: Marrakesh Agreement (April 15, 1994), ITO failure (US Senate, Havana Charter), Uruguay Round (1986-94), GATS/TRIPS/AoA as the three major new agreements added at WTO's creation.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is the WTO's rules-based trading system still fit for purpose in an era of US-China trade rivalry, proliferating bilateral FTAs, and deliberate supply-chain decoupling?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 26

of 30

[Source →](#)

Which of the following correctly describes the concept of destination-based taxation under GST?

- A Tax revenue accrues to the state where goods are manufactured
- B Tax revenue is equally divided between the producing and consuming states
- C Tax revenue accrues to the state where goods or services are consumed ✓
- D Tax revenue accrues to the Central Government which distributes it via Finance Commission recommendations

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Under GST, **destination-based taxation** means tax revenue accrues to the state where goods or services are **consumed (destination state)**, not where they are produced (origin state). This structural feature benefits **net-consuming states** like Nagaland (which recorded 37% GST growth against national average of 6.8%) while disadvantaging **net-producing states** like Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Nagaland's GST collections reached **Rs 987.38 crore** by January 31, 2026, surpassing the Rs 949 crore target — demonstrating how destination taxation structurally raises fiscal capacity of consumption-driven economies.

ANALYSIS: This was a fundamental reversal from the pre-GST origin-based Central Sales Tax, which had concentrated indirect tax revenue in manufacturing states.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Under GST's three-tier structure: **CGST** (Central GST) goes to the Consolidated Fund of India, **SGST** (State GST) goes to the Consolidated Fund of the consuming state, and **IGST** (Integrated GST on inter-state supply) is credited to the Centre and apportioned between the Centre and the consuming state under Article 269A. The **GST compensation cess** (designed to protect states from revenue losses for 5 years post-GST) ended in **June 2022**. Pre-GST, **Central Sales Tax (CST)** was origin-based — the producing state retained most revenue, benefiting manufacturing states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Haryana.

The shift to destination-based GST has fundamentally redistributed India's indirect tax revenue map — BIMARU states and North-East states (which are net consumers) now collect more GST than their industrial contribution would have generated under the CST system. The **Mohit Minerals case (2022)** reinforced this by holding that GST Council recommendations are persuasive but not binding on States, preserving their legislative autonomy.

Q26  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (fiscal federalism, cooperative federalism, Centre-State tax relations) + GS-3 (indirect taxation, GST architecture, fiscal policy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse destination-based (consuming state gets revenue) with origin-based (producing state gets revenue) — India's CST was origin-based; GST is destination-based; this shift redistributed ~Rs 1 lakh crore+ annually from manufacturing states to consuming states.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

fiscal federalism, consumption-based taxation, interstate trade neutrality, CGST/SGST/IGST, cooperative federalism.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2017-18 tested GST structure — know CGST/SGST/IGST components, the Article 279A voting mechanism (three-fourths majority, Centre one-third weight, States two-thirds weight), and the landmark Mohit Minerals (2022) SC judgment on binding vs persuasive council recommendations.

 **INTERVIEW**

The shift to destination-based GST has benefited consuming states — should India partially reintroduce origin-based elements to incentivise manufacturing location decisions in industrially laggard states?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 27

of 30

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about India's renewable energy sector:

1. India's total renewable energy capacity is approximately 209 GW as of March 2026.
2. India targets 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030.
3. The National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Statement 1 is **correct** — India's total renewable energy installed capacity is approximately **209 GW** as of March 2026 (solar ~100 GW, wind ~50 GW, small hydro + biomass + others). Statement 2 is **correct** — India targets **500 GW** of non-fossil fuel electricity capacity by 2030, as committed at **COP26, Glasgow (2021)**.

Statement 3 is **incorrect** — **NIWE** (National Institute of Wind Energy) functions under the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, NOT the Ministry of Earth Sciences. NIOT (National Institute of Ocean Technology) is under MoES. Both are headquartered in Chennai — a persistent confusion point.

ANALYSIS: India needs to add approximately 291 GW more in just 4 years (2026-2030) to meet the 500 GW target — a pace that requires massive acceleration in solar manufacturing, grid capacity, and financing.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's **Offshore Wind Energy Policy** was announced in **2015** by MNRE. Pilot projects of approximately 1 GW are planned off the **Gujarat coast** (Pipavav area) and Tamil Nadu coast. India's COP26 Glasgow commitments (NDC enhanced 2022): **(1)** 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030; **(2)** 50% electricity from non-fossil sources by 2030; **(3)** Reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 45% from 2005 levels by 2030; **(4)** Net zero by 2070.

NIOT's indigenous Floating LiDAR Buoy provides the **bankable wind data** needed to trigger commercial offshore wind auctions — previously, this data had to be collected using expensive imported systems. NIWE (MNRE, Chennai) conducts wind resource mapping, turbine testing, and certification.

Deep Ocean Mission (under MoES, NIOT) is a separate flagship programme announced in Union Budget 2021 with Rs 4,077 crore outlay — NIOT manages its technology development component.

Q27  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-3 (energy policy, offshore wind, climate commitments) + GS-2 (international climate diplomacy, NDC, COP26 commitments) + GS-1 (geography — Bay of Bengal, offshore wind resource zones).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse NIWE (MNRE, wind energy, Chennai) with NIOT (MoES, ocean technology, Chennai) — same city, different ministries; NIOT also does deep-sea mining and tsunami warning (MoES), while NIWE focuses entirely on wind energy assessment and certification (MNRE).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

energy transition, 500 GW non-fossil target, offshore wind, COP26 NDC commitments, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in renewable energy.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know India's RE targets — 500 GW total non-fossil (2030), 30 GW offshore wind (2030), 50% electricity from non-fossil (2030), net zero (2070) — and the NIWE (MNRE) vs NIOT (MoES) distinction.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is India's 500 GW renewable energy target by 2030 credible given the current 209 GW baseline, and what structural constraints in grid infrastructure, storage, and financing must be addressed to make it achievable?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 28

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[Source →](#)

Rosoboronexport, which supplied the Tunguska missile systems to India, holds what unique position in Russia's defence export structure?

- A It is one of six competing defence export agencies in Russia
- B It is Russia's sole state intermediary for defence exports ✓
- C It is a private defence company that holds a monopoly licence
- D It is a joint venture between Russia and India for defence technology transfer

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: JSC Rosoboronexport is Russia's sole state intermediary (a monopoly entity) for all defence and dual-use exports, established in **2000** under a presidential decree by Vladimir Putin. The Rs 445 crore Tunguska ammunition/spares contract was signed with Rosoboronexport under the **Buy (Global)** category of DAP 2020. Rosoboronexport handles all Russian defence exports without exception — fighter aircraft (Su-30MKI, MiG-29), tanks (T-90S), air defence (S-400, Tunguska), and naval platforms (INS Vikramaditya refit). **ANALYSIS:** As the sole intermediary, Rosoboronexport gives the Russian state complete control over defence export pricing, technology transfer conditions, end-user certificates, and maintenance support — creating a single point of leverage over all Russian military hardware users including India.

CONCEPT NOTE

Key Russian defence platforms currently in Indian service: **Su-30MKI** (IAF backbone, ~260 aircraft, over 50% of IAF fighter strength), **MiG-29UPG** (IAF) and **MiG-29K** (Indian Navy), **T-90S Bhisma** (Army, 1,000+, licence-manufactured by BEML/Heavy Vehicles Factory Avadi), **S-400 Triumf** (IAF, 5 squadrons contracted, 3 delivered by 2024), **INS Vikramaditya** (Navy carrier, converted Soviet Kiev-class ship), and **Tunguska 2K22** (Army SHORAD). **BrahMos** is a separate India-Russia **joint venture** (BrahMos Aerospace Pvt. Ltd. — DRDO + NPO Mashinostroyeniya) and is NOT routed through Rosoboronexport at all. Russia's share of India's arms imports: **~70% (2009-13) → ~36% (2019-23)** per SIPRI. The decline reflects active diversification to France (Rafale, 36 aircraft, 2016 deal), USA (P8I, Apache, CH-47F Chinook), and Israel (Barak-8, Heron UAVs) — while indigenous systems (Tejas, Akash, Arjun) gradually replace Russian platforms in new procurement cycles.

Q28  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (India-Russia Strategic Partnership, India-US-Russia triangular dynamics) + GS-3 (arms trade, SIPRI data, defence procurement diversification).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume BrahMos is a Rosoboronexport product — BrahMos Aerospace is a **separate joint venture company** (50:50 between DRDO and NPO Mashinostroyeniya) that operates independently outside Rosoboronexport's export control structure.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

state monopoly arms trade, defence diplomacy, supplier diversification, SIPRI arms transfer database.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests institutional structures of key defence partners — Rosoboronexport (Russia's sole state arms export intermediary, established 2000, PSU under Rostec) is distinct from DRDO (India's R&D body) and the joint BrahMos Aerospace.

 **INTERVIEW**

Does India's dependence on a single-entity state monopoly supplier like Rosoboronexport — where all Russian arms flow through one gateway — create an unacceptable strategic supply-chain vulnerability?

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Question 29

of 30

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Which constitutional provision was invoked to establish the GST Council, and who serves as its Chairman?

- A Article 246A; the Prime Minister serves as Chairman
- B Article 279A; the Union Finance Minister serves as Chairman ✓
- C Article 280; the Chairman of the Finance Commission serves as Chairman
- D Article 269A; the Comptroller and Auditor General serves as Chairman

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: The **GST Council** was established under **Article 279A** of the Constitution, inserted by the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016**. The **Union Finance Minister** serves as its Chairman.

The Council also includes the Union Minister of State for Finance and Finance Ministers (or equivalent) of all States and Union Territories with legislatures. Decisions require a **three-fourths majority** — Centre has one-third voting weightage and all States together have two-thirds.

ANALYSIS: Article 279A creates a constitutionally unique cooperative federalism mechanism — the only body in India's constitutional architecture where both Parliament and all State Assemblies have joint decision-making power over taxation rates, exemptions, thresholds, and classifications affecting both.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Mohit Minerals case (Supreme Court, 2022)** is a landmark judgment on GST Council powers: the Court held that GST Council recommendations are **not binding** on Parliament or State legislatures — they are only persuasive. This means any State can deviate from GST Council recommendations through its own legislation, though it would risk the uniform GST regime.

GST Council composition: **Union Finance Minister (Chairman)** + Union MoS Finance + Finance Ministers of all States/UTs with legislatures (total ~35 members). Voting: **three-fourths majority required** — Centre's vote has one-third weight, all States' votes together have two-thirds weight; unanimity is sought in practice.

Key related Articles: **246A** (concurrent power to levy GST), **269A** (IGST apportioned between Centre and States), **279A** (GST Council), **286** (restrictions on state power to tax inter-state supply). The Council's decisions — when followed — represent the highest form of cooperative federalism India has achieved in the fiscal domain.

Q29  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (cooperative federalism, constitutional bodies, 101st Amendment, judicial review — Mohit Minerals) + GS-3 (GST structure, taxation governance, fiscal policy).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse Article 279A (GST Council — constituted by the 101st Amendment, deals with GST rate decisions) with Article 280 (Finance Commission — constituted every 5 years by the President, deals with Centre-State devolution of tax revenues) — both deal with Centre-State fiscal relations but are completely different bodies with different compositions, mandates, and legal authority.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

cooperative federalism, fiscal sovereignty, constitutional fiscal bodies, Mohit Minerals judgment 2022.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested Mohit Minerals — council recommendations are persuasive, not mandatory; UPSC 2018 tested GST constitutional basis; know Article 279A voting (three-fourths majority, Centre one-third weight).

 **INTERVIEW**

Does the one-third/two-thirds voting structure in the GST Council genuinely protect state fiscal autonomy, or does the Centre's de facto veto power (needing two-thirds of states, not simple majority, to override Centre) tilt the balance toward the Union?

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Question 30

of 30

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Which of the following about the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership is **INCORRECTLY** stated?

- A The partnership was upgraded to this level in 2014 during PM Abe's visit to India
- B The 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and Japan was launched in 2019
- C Japan is India's largest bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) donor
- D The India-Japan civil nuclear agreement was signed in 2020 as part of the Quad framework ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: Option D is **incorrect** on two counts — the India-Japan civil nuclear agreement was signed in **November 2016** (not 2020), and it was a **bilateral agreement** (not part of the Quad framework). The Quad did not hold its first leaders' summit until **March 12, 2021**.

Options A, B, and C are correct. The partnership was upgraded to Special Strategic and Global Partnership in **2014** during PM Abe's India visit.

The **India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** (Foreign + Defence Ministers) was launched in **2019**. Japan is India's **largest bilateral ODA donor** at ~\$3 billion per year in yen loans.

ANALYSIS: The 2016 civil nuclear agreement was particularly significant — Japan, uniquely as the only country to have suffered nuclear weapon attacks (Hiroshima, Nagasaki, 1945), agreed to nuclear commerce with India, a non-NPT state, based on India's impeccable non-proliferation record.

CONCEPT NOTE

India-Japan partnership milestones: **2006** — Strategic and Global Partnership (PM Manmohan Singh + PM Junichiro Koizumi); **2014** — upgraded to Special Strategic and Global Partnership (PM Modi + PM Abe, during Abe's visit to India for Republic Day); **2016** — civil nuclear cooperation agreement signed (bilateral, not Quad-related — Japan was the last of the major NSG countries to sign a nuclear deal with India); **2018** — BSA upgraded from \$50B to \$75B (PM Modi visit to Tokyo); **2019** — 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue launched (Foreign Minister + Defence Minister format, annual meetings); **2021** — Quad leaders' summit (first, virtual, March 12, 2021). The **Quad** (India, Japan, US, Australia) is an informal grouping with no treaty, no formal charter, no permanent secretariat, and no collective defence clause — unlike NATO (which has Article 5 mutual defence obligation).

Japan's ODA to India: ~\$3 billion/year through **JICA** (Japan International Cooperation Agency), making Japan India's largest bilateral infrastructure financier for over two decades.

Q30  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS-2 (India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, Quad, Indo-Pacific strategy, ODA diplomacy) + GS-3 (nuclear commerce, trade agreements, infrastructure finance).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume the Quad has a formal treaty or collective defence obligation analogous to NATO — the Quad is an **informal grouping** with no binding legal framework, no permanent secretariat, and no mutual defence clause; its strength comes from regular leader summits and working group outputs, not treaty commitments.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

special strategic partnership, ODA diplomacy, civil nuclear commerce, Indo-Pacific architecture, Quad.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know all key India-Japan milestones by year — 2006 (strategic partnership), 2014 (Special Strategic upgrade, Abe visits India), 2016 (civil nuclear agreement, NOT 2020 and NOT Quad-related), 2019 (2+2 Dialogue), 2021 (first Quad leaders' summit).

 **INTERVIEW**

Is the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership fundamentally driven by shared concern about Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, or is there sufficient intrinsic economic complementarity to sustain it independent of the China factor?

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