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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Daily Quiz — April 3, 2026

3 April 2026



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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Daily Quiz — April 3, 2026

3 April 2026 · 30 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1

of 30

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INS Taragiri, recently commissioned into the Indian Navy, is the _____ frigate to be commissioned under Project 17A.

A Second

B Third

C Fourth ✓

D Fifth

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: INS Taragiri is the fourth frigate commissioned under Project 17A (Nilgiri class), built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL). Project 17A comprises 7 frigates in total — 4 from MDL and 3 from GRSE. **ANALYSIS:** The rapid commissioning of P-17A ships signals India's accelerating indigenous naval shipbuilding capability, with over 75% indigenous content — a benchmark for Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence.






CONCEPT NOTE

Project 17A (P-17A) is India's most ambitious warship programme, comprising seven advanced stealth frigates — four from MDL (Mumbai) and three from GRSE (Kolkata). The Nilgiri-class frigates displace approximately 6,670 tonnes and feature advanced stealth features, BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, MRSAM (Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles), and CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas) propulsion.

The Warship Design Bureau (WDB) under the Indian Navy designed these platforms indigenously. P-17A represents an evolution over the earlier Shivalik-class (P-17) with improved stealth, sensors, and weapons.

With >75% indigenous content, P-17A is a flagship project under the 'Make in India' initiative in defence. The series started with INS Nilgiri, followed by INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, and now INS Taragiri.

Q1  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Defence indigenisation, Aatmanirbhar Bharat; GS2 —” India's maritime security policy.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Project 17A, indigenous content, naval modernisation, Warship Design Bureau.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Students confuse P-17A with P-75I (submarine programme) —” P-17A is frigates, P-75I is submarines.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2023 Prelims tested stealth features in naval platforms; know BrahMos as a joint India-Russia venture (now indigenised).
 INTERVIEW	How does India's naval indigenisation compare with China's rapid shipbuilding, and what are the strategic implications for Indian Ocean dominance?

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Question 2

of 30

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Consider the following statements about Project 17A frigates:

- 1 The total programme consists of seven frigates — four from MDL and three from GRSE.
- 2 INS Dunagiri, commissioned during the same 48-hour period as INS Taragiri, is a GRSE-built frigate.
- 3 The Warship Design Bureau (WDB) designed the P-17A frigates.

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: All three statements are correct. Project 17A has 7 frigates — 4 MDL + 3 GRSE. INS Dunagiri is indeed a GRSE-built P-17A frigate commissioned during the same 48-hour window that saw four warships inducted.

WDB (Warship Design Bureau) is the in-house design authority of the Indian Navy that designed the P-17A.

ANALYSIS: The commissioning of four warships in 48 hours is unprecedented in recent Indian naval history, underlining the pace of fleet expansion.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

India commissioned four warships in 48 hours in early April 2026 — INS Taragiri (P-17A MDL frigate), INS Dunagiri (P-17A GRSE frigate), INS Sanshodhak (a naval survey vessel), INS Malwan, and INS Agray (an ASW SWC — Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft). The Warship Design Bureau (WDB), established under the Indian Navy, has been the design authority for major warship programmes including P-17, P-17A, and P-28 (corvettes).

GRSE (Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers) in Kolkata and MDL (Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited) in Mumbai are the two premier defence PSUs handling complex naval warship projects. This commissioning blitz reflects India's goal of becoming a top-5 naval power by 2030.

Q2  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Defence production, PSU role, indigenisation; GS2 —” India's maritime security doctrine.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Warship Design Bureau, GRSE, MDL, naval self-reliance, ASW capability.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing survey vessels (INS Sanshodhak) with frigates —” survey vessels serve hydrographic/oceanographic roles, not combat.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2022 tested naval indigenisation; remember MDL and GRSE are both listed PSUs with defence shipbuilding mandates.
 INTERVIEW	Should India prioritise submarine fleet expansion over surface warship numbers given China's undersea capabilities?

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Question 3

of 30

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Which of the following correctly describes Rupee Non-Deliverable Derivatives (NDDs) that the RBI recently banned from offshore markets?

- A NDDs are settled in Indian Rupees and require physical delivery of the underlying currency
- B NDDs are offshore contracts settled in a convertible currency (like USD) with no physical delivery of the underlying asset ✓
- C NDDs are onshore forward contracts regulated by SEBI under the Foreign Exchange Management Act
- D NDDs are exchange-traded derivatives listed on NSE and BSE under RBI supervision

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Assertion A is correct —” the RBI banned Rupee NDD contracts to reduce offshore speculative activity that was depreciating the Rupee, which subsequently recovered to ₹93.10/USD. However, Reason R is false: NDD contracts are settled in a convertible currency (like USD), NOT in the domestic currency, and there is NO physical delivery of the underlying asset —” they are cash-settled derivatives. ANALYSIS: This distinction is crucial for understanding why NDDs pose a regulatory challenge —” they operate outside domestic forex market jurisdiction.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**






Non-Deliverable Derivatives (NDDs), particularly Non-Deliverable Forwards (NDFs), are offshore forex contracts where two parties agree on an exchange rate for a future date but settle the difference in a hard currency (usually USD) rather than the domestic currency. Because they are settled offshore in USD, they bypass domestic forex regulations.

India's Rupee NDF market is active in financial centres like Singapore, London, and Dubai. These offshore contracts can influence onshore Rupee rates significantly, especially during periods of volatility.

The RBI's ban is aimed at preventing speculative positions from amplifying currency depreciation. After the ban, the Rupee recovered to ₹93.10/USD from sharper depreciation levels.

India has historically been cautious about full capital account convertibility, and this move reinforces managed-float exchange rate policy.

Q3  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Monetary policy, exchange rate management, capital account convertibility.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Non-Deliverable Forward, managed float, RBI forex intervention, capital account convertibility.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Students confuse NDF with domestic forward contracts —” NDFs are offshore, settled in USD, with no physical delivery; domestic forwards are onshore and RBI-regulated.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2021 tested capital account convertibility and Tarapore Committee; link NDD ban to India's managed float policy.
 INTERVIEW	Does India's reluctance to allow full capital account convertibility limit the Rupee's ambition to become an international trade currency?

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Question 4

of 30

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With reference to the General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) in India, which of the following is correct?

- A GAAR applies to all investments made before April 1, 2015
- B GAAR was made effective from April 1, 2017 and exempts pre-April 2017 investments under Rule 10U ✓
- C GAAR was recommended by the Kelkar Committee and targets domestic tax evasion only
- D GAAR provisions override all bilateral Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: GAAR (General Anti-Avoidance Rules) was made effective from April 1, 2017 in India. CBDT Rule 10U explicitly exempts investments made before April 1, 2017 from GAAR scrutiny.

The Parthasarathi Shome Committee had recommended a phased and investor-friendly implementation of GAAR.

ANALYSIS: The Tiger Global Supreme Court ruling brought GAAR back into focus, particularly regarding the India-Mauritius DTAA and whether treaty benefits could be denied under GAAR for arrangements deemed to lack commercial substance.



 **CONCEPT NOTE**

GAAR was introduced in the Finance Act 2012 (originally proposed in Budget 2012 by Pranab Mukherjee) but its implementation was repeatedly deferred due to investor concerns. The Parthasarathi Shome Expert Committee (2012) recommended significant safeguards, including the exemption of investments made before a cut-off date.

GAAR was finally made operative from April 1, 2017, with CBDT Rule 10U providing that arrangements entered into before this date are not subject to GAAR. GAAR allows tax authorities to deny tax benefits to arrangements that are deemed to be 'impermissible avoidance arrangements' — those that lack commercial substance and are primarily structured to obtain a tax benefit. The India-Mauritius DTAA was famously misused for round-tripping investments through Mauritius to avoid capital gains tax — a loophole partially addressed by the 2016 treaty amendment.

The Tiger Global case at the Supreme Court tested whether GAAR could override treaty protections for pre-2017 structures.

Q4  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Taxation, Black money, International tax avoidance; GS2 —” India's treaty obligations.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	GAAR, impermissible avoidance, DTAA, Parthasarathi Shome Committee, treaty shopping.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing GAAR with SAAR (Specific Anti-Avoidance Rules) —” GAAR is a broad principle-based override; SAAR targets specific transactions.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2019 tested DTAA and Mauritius treaty; know the 2016 amendment that phased out capital gains exemption for Mauritius-routed FPI.
 INTERVIEW	Does India's application of GAAR risk deterring legitimate FDI flows through treaty jurisdictions like Singapore and Mauritius?

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Question 5

of 30

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The RoSCTL Scheme, recently extended to September 2026, provides rebates to which of the following sectors?

A Pharmaceutical and chemical exports

B Garment and apparel exports ✓

C Electronics and semiconductor exports

D Agricultural commodity exports

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme specifically targets the garment and apparel export sector. It was extended to September 2026 to continue providing competitive support to textile exporters.

ANALYSIS: RoSCTL rebates embedded taxes (like electricity duty, mandi tax, stamp duty) that are not refunded through GST, making Indian garment exports price-competitive in global markets against Bangladesh and Vietnam.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

RoSCTL (Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies) was introduced to replace the earlier ROSL (Rebate of State Levies) scheme. It is notified by the Ministry of Textiles and refunds all embedded taxes and levies —” State taxes (electricity duty, VAT on fuel, mandi tax) and Central taxes (CGST on inputs not covered by ITC) —” that are incurred during the production and export of garments and made-ups.

The scheme operates through scrip-based rebates administered by DGFT. It is crucial for India's garment export competitiveness as textile exports are labour-intensive and employ millions, especially women. India's textile and apparel sector is the second-largest employer after agriculture.

The extension to September 2026 provides policy certainty to exporters who need advance planning for order books.

RoSCTL is distinct from RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products), which covers most other sectors.

Q5  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Export competitiveness, Trade policy, Textile sector employment.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	RoSCTL, embedded taxes, export promotion, garment sector, DGFT.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing RoSCTL with RoDTEP —” RoSCTL is specifically for garments/made-ups (Textiles Ministry); RoDTEP covers all other goods (Commerce Ministry).
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2023 tested export promotion schemes; remember the garment sector—women employment —rural livelihoods linkage.
 INTERVIEW	Should India's export promotion focus shift from tax rebate schemes to competitiveness infrastructure (logistics, technology) to compete with Bangladesh's duty-free access to EU markets?

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Question 6

of 30

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about India's E20 fuel mandate:

- 1 E20 refers to a blend of 20% ethanol and 80% petrol by volume.
- 2 E20 fuel requires a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) of 95
3. The National Biofuel Policy that underpins E20 was introduced in 2018

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: All three statements are correct. E20 is a 20% ethanol + 80% petrol blend.

The mandated specification requires a minimum 95 RON (Research Octane Number) for E20 fuel. The National Biofuel Policy 2018 provided the framework for the phased blending roadmap, including the E20 target.

ANALYSIS: Higher RON in E20 actually improves engine efficiency and reduces particulate emissions compared to regular E10 or straight petrol, making this a fuel quality upgrade alongside an environmental mandate.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's National Biofuel Policy 2018 set the framework for blending targets: E10 by 2022 (largely achieved), E20 by 2025 (now being phased in). E20 (20% ethanol, 80% petrol) reduces crude oil import dependence, cuts CO2 emissions by ~6%, and supports farmers by creating additional demand for sugarcane and damaged grain.

E20 requires engine modifications in some older vehicles as higher ethanol concentrations can affect rubber seals and fuel system materials. The 95 RON specification ensures compatibility and performance.

India's ethanol supply chain draws from sugarcane (first generation) and increasingly from cellulosic sources (second generation) under 2G ethanol projects. The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana supports 2G ethanol plants.

India achieved ~12% ethanol blending in 2023—24, ahead of schedule.

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

GS3 —” Renewable energy, Energy security, Agriculture linkages; GS2 —” Policy implementation.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

E20, National Biofuel Policy 2018, ethanol blending, energy security, RON.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse E20 (20% ethanol in petrol) with B20 (20% biodiesel in diesel) —” these are separate blending programmes for different fuel types.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested biofuel policy; remember 2G ethanol (from agricultural residue) vs 1G (from sugarcane/grain).

 **INTERVIEW**

Can India realistically achieve E20 nationwide given the tension between ethanol diversion from food crops and food security concerns?

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Question 7

of 30

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The 'Antariksh' Venture Capital Fund, announced for space startups, has been sponsored by which organisation?

A ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC)

B SIDBI Venture Capital Limited (SVCL) ✓

C Department of Space, Government of India

D Indian Space Association (ISpA)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: The Antariksh VC Fund is a SEBI-registered Category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) sponsored by SIDBI Venture Capital Limited (SVCL), a subsidiary of SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India). IN-SPACE is also an investor in the fund.

The fund targets space startups and is expected to begin operations from FY2027. **ANALYSIS:** SIDBI's involvement signals the government's intent to treat space startups on par with other MSME/startup sectors, channelling patient capital into high-risk deep-tech ventures.

CONCEPT NOTE

The Antariksh VC Fund is part of India's push to develop a commercial space ecosystem following the Space Policy 2023 and the operationalisation of IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre). IN-SPACE was created as a nodal body to regulate and promote non-government entities (NGEs) in the space sector.

SIDBI Venture Capital Limited (SVCL) manages several government-backed VC funds targeting MSME and startup ecosystems. The Antariksh fund being a SEBI Category II AIF means it pools capital from institutional and accredited investors and invests in unlisted space startups.

India's space startup ecosystem has grown significantly —" companies like Skyroot Aerospace, Agnikul Cosmos, Pixxel, and GalaxEye have received funding. The fund is expected to fill the gap in early and growth-stage funding for deep-tech space ventures.

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

GS3 —" Space technology, Startup ecosystem, Deep-tech funding; GS2 —" IN-SPACe regulatory role.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Antariksh VC Fund, IN-SPACe, SIDBI, Category II AIF, commercial space.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing IN-SPACe (regulator/promoter for private space) with NSIL (New Space India Limited —" commercial arm of ISRO for launch services).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2023 tested India's space policy and private sector role; know the ISRO—IN-SPACe—NSIL triangle of roles.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India follow the US model of purely private VC funding for space, or does a government-backed fund like Antariksh create market distortions?

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Question 8

of 30

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ISRO's YUVIKA programme, which recently selected students for its 2026 cohort, was first launched in which year?

A 2017

B 2018

C 2019 ✓

D 2021

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: ISRO's YUVIKA (YUva Vlgyani KAryakram) was launched in 2019. The programme is a 3-week residential programme for Class 9 students, with a priority for students from rural areas.

ANALYSIS: YUVIKA is part of ISRO's science outreach mission —” creating a pipeline of young talent interested in space science by providing hands-on exposure to ISRO facilities and scientists, aligned with the National Education Policy's emphasis on experiential learning.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

YUVIKA (YUva Vlgyani KAryakram) is ISRO's flagship outreach programme for school students. It targets Class 9 students (post-Class 9 entry) and provides a 3-week residential programme at various ISRO centres, exposing students to basic space science, rocket science, remote sensing, and hands-on experiments.

A key priority is rural students —” a certain percentage of seats are reserved for rural area students to democratise access to science education. The programme covers theoretical sessions, practical experiments, visits to launch facilities, and interaction with ISRO scientists.

YUVIKA was launched by then-ISRO Chairman K. Sivan in 2019. It aligns with NEP 2020's push for STEM education and the broader national goal of building scientific temperament (a Fundamental Duty under Article 51A(h) of the Constitution). The 2026 cohort continues this tradition of inspiring the next generation of space scientists.

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

GS2 —” Education policy, Government outreach programmes; GS3 —” Space science, ISRO programmes.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

YUVIKA, ISRO outreach, rural STEM, space education, scientific temperament.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing YUVIKA with SPARK (ISRO's internship for engineering students) —” YUVIKA is for school students (Class 9); SPARK targets engineering/science undergraduates.

 **EXAM TIP**

Article 51A(h) —” Fundamental Duty to develop scientific temper; UPSC 2020 tested ISRO outreach initiatives.

 **INTERVIEW**

How can India scale ISRO's outreach programmes like YUVIKA to address the persistent urban-rural gap in STEM aspiration among school students?

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Question 9

of 30

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Rice's Whale, recently in news due to exemptions granted under the US Endangered Species Act, is found in which region?

A Coral Triangle, Indo-Pacific

B Gulf of Mexico ✓

C Arctic Ocean near Alaska

D Bay of Bengal

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Rice's Whale (*Balaenoptera ricei*) is found exclusively in the Gulf of Mexico. It is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, with a population of fewer than 100 individuals.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 is considered a key threat that severely impacted this species. **ANALYSIS:** ESA exemptions for activities in the Gulf of Mexico raise conservation alarms because even a single additional mortality could push this species toward extinction given its tiny population.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Rice's Whale was only formally recognised as a distinct species in 2021 (previously lumped with Bryde's whales). It is named after Dale Rice, a prominent American cetologist.

With fewer than 100 individuals remaining, it is one of the rarest whales in the world and one of the most endangered marine mammals. It inhabits the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, particularly the De Soto Canyon area.

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster (BP oil spill —" the largest marine oil spill in US history) caused significant harm through oil exposure and noise from cleanup operations. Threats include vessel strikes, noise pollution from oil/gas operations, entanglement in fishing gear, and continued oil exploration.

The IUCN Critically Endangered designation (population threshold: <250 mature individuals with specific decline criteria) applies here based on small population and ongoing threats.

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

GS3 —" Biodiversity, Marine conservation, Environmental law; GS2 —" International conventions (ESA equivalent —" Convention on Biological Diversity).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Rice's Whale, IUCN Critically Endangered, Gulf of Mexico, Deepwater Horizon, ESA.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing Rice's Whale (Gulf of Mexico, *Balaenoptera ricei*) with the North Atlantic Right Whale (also critically endangered, ~360 individuals, Atlantic coast) —" different species, different regions.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC frequently tests IUCN categories —" know the threshold: Critically Endangered = <250 mature individuals or >80% decline in 10 years.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should commercial oil and gas extraction rights in the Gulf of Mexico be suspended given the existential threat to Rice's Whale, and how does this reflect the tension between energy security and biodiversity conservation?

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Question 10

of 30

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The 'Nyaya Setu' AI chatbot, launched to provide legal information to citizens, is built on which AI translation platform?

- A DigiLocker AI
- B **BHASHINI** ✓
- C Aarogya Setu NLP Engine
- D iGOT Karmayogi AI

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Nyaya Setu is built on BHASHINI, India's AI-powered language translation platform, enabling the chatbot to support 36 text languages and 23 voice languages. It was launched under the DISHA programme of the Department of Justice with mascot 'Dishika'.

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan launched it. **ANALYSIS:** BHASHINI's multilingual capability makes Nyaya Setu particularly valuable for India's legally underserved population who are not proficient in English —” the dominant language of the legal system.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

BHASHINI (Bhasha Interface for India) is a national public digital infrastructure platform developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to support AI-powered translation and transcription in Indian languages. It is part of the National Language Translation Mission.

Nyaya Setu (meaning 'Bridge of Justice') is deployed under the DISHA (Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice) programme of the Department of Justice. The chatbot assists citizens in understanding their legal rights, court procedures, available legal aid, and relevant laws —” bridging the access to justice gap.

India has a massive legal literacy deficit: only ~3% of citizens have ever consulted a lawyer. The DISHA programme aligns with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and the constitutional mandate under Article 39A (free legal aid).

Mascot 'Dishika' represents the programme's approachable, citizen-first ethos.

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

GS2 —" Access to justice, Article 39A, Legal aid; GS4 —" Ethical governance, Citizen-centric administration.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Nyaya Setu, BHASHINI, DISHA, access to justice, legal aid, Article 39A.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing Article 39A (free legal aid —" DPSP) with Article 22 (protection against arbitrary arrest) —" 39A is about equal justice and free legal aid being a state responsibility.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2021 tested Article 39A and NALSA (National Legal Services Authority); Nyaya Setu is the digital implementation of the same principle.

 **INTERVIEW**

Can an AI chatbot truly democratise access to justice, or does it risk replacing the essential human judgment required in legal advice, particularly for marginalised communities?

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Question 11

of 30

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Gangotri National Park, which recently reopened for visitors, is located in which district of Uttarakhand?

- A Chamoli
- B Pithoragarh
- C Uttarkashi ✓
- D Rudraprayag

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Gangotri National Park is located in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand. It covers an area of 2,390 sq km and is home to approximately 35 snow leopards.

The park contains the Gangotri Glacier —” one of the largest Himalayan glaciers and the source of the Bhagirathi River (which joins the Alaknanda at Devprayag to form the Ganga). **ANALYSIS:** The seasonal reopening of the park marks the end of harsh winter conditions and is important for both biodiversity conservation and the Char Dham pilgrimage circuit.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**






Gangotri National Park (established 1989) spans 2,390 sq km in the Garhwal Himalaya of Uttarkashi district. It is a high-altitude park ranging from 1800m to over 7,000m elevation.

Key ecological features include: Gangotri Glacier (30.2 km long —” one of India's largest), Gaumukh (the glacier snout, the source of the Bhagirathi), alpine meadows (bugyals), and diverse wildlife including snow leopard (~35 individuals), Himalayan brown bear, bharal (blue sheep), musk deer, and golden eagle. The park is part of the Western Himalayan Ecoregion —” a biodiversity hotspot.

Snow leopard conservation here is monitored by the Snow Leopard Trust and Wildlife Institute of India. The Bhagirathi originates at Gaumukh and joins the Alaknanda at Devprayag to form the Ganga.

Climate change-induced glacial retreat is a major concern —” the Gangotri Glacier has retreated by ~22 metres annually in recent decades.

Q11  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Biodiversity, Glaciers, Climate change; GS1 —” Rivers of India, Himalayan geography.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Gangotri National Park, Snow leopard, Gangotri Glacier, Bhagirathi, glacial retreat.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing Gangotri Glacier (source of Bhagirathi) with Satopanth Glacier (source of Alaknanda) —” both are in Uttarakhand but in different districts.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC PYQ 2019 —” Himalayan glaciers and river systems; know the Panch Prayag (five confluences) on the route from Gangotri to Haridwar.
 INTERVIEW	Should Gangotri National Park limit pilgrimage traffic to Gaumukh more strictly to protect the fragile high-altitude ecosystem from both climate change and human pressure?

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Question 12

of 30

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Consider the following statements about the SAMPANN platform of the Department of Telecommunications:

- 1 SAMPANN is a digital pension management platform launched by the Department of Telecommunications.
- 2 Goa and Cochin Port Authority have adopted SAMPANN for their pension management.
- 3 SAMPANN was launched on December 29,

2024

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 only

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. SAMPANN is indeed a DoT digital pension management platform, and Goa and Cochin Port Authority have adopted it.

Statement 3 is incorrect —” SAMPANN was launched on December 29, 2018, not 2024. **ANALYSIS:** SAMPANN's adoption by Port Authorities and State governments signals its scalability beyond telecom —” a common pattern in India where government-built digital platforms (like GSTN, FASTag) are later extended to other sectors.






CONCEPT NOTE

SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) is a web-based pension management platform developed and operated by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). It was launched on December 29, 2018 to digitise and streamline pension processing for telecom PSU retirees (BSNL/MTNL pensioners).

The platform automates pension calculation, processing, and disbursement, reducing delays and manual errors. Its recent adoption by Goa state government and Cochin Port Authority demonstrates cross-sectoral scalability of DoT's digital infrastructure.

This is consistent with India's 'Government as Platform' philosophy —” where one ministry's digital solution is shared with other government entities. SAMPANN integrates with PFMS (Public Financial Management System) for payment processing and provides pensioners with digital access to their pension details, reducing office visits.

Q12  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 —” E-governance, Digital India, Pension reform; GS3 —” Public finance management.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	SAMPANN, DoT, digital pension management, e-governance, Government as Platform.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing SAMPANN (DoT pension platform) with SPARSH (Defence pension platform, launched 2021) —” both are digital pension systems but for different government employee categories.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC tests e-governance platforms frequently; remember SAMPANN (DoT, 2018), SPARSH (Defence, 2021), and NPS (New Pension System, 2004) as distinct systems.
 INTERVIEW	India has multiple siloed digital pension platforms across ministries —” does this duplication indicate a failure of the 'One Government' vision, or is specialisation by sector appropriate?

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Question 13

of 30

[Source →](#)

UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) was established by which UN Security Council Resolution, and in which year?

- A Resolution 242 in 1967
- B Resolution 338 in 1973
- C Resolution 425 in 1978 ✓
- D Resolution 1701 in 2006

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: UNIFIL was established by United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 in 1978, following Israel's first invasion of southern Lebanon. Three Indonesian peacekeepers were recently killed while serving in UNIFIL in south Lebanon.

ANALYSIS: UNIFIL's mandate has evolved significantly —" originally to confirm Israeli withdrawal, it was expanded under Resolution 1701 (2006) after the Israel-Hezbollah war to its current strength of ~10,000 troops from 48 countries with a more robust mandate.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) was established on March 19, 1978 by UNSC Resolution 425, following Israel's Operation Litani —" the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon in response to PLO attacks. The mission was originally mandated to confirm Israeli withdrawal, restore peace, and assist the Lebanese government in re-establishing authority in southern Lebanon.

Despite being called 'Interim', UNIFIL has operated continuously for over 45 years. After the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war (Second Lebanon War), UNSC Resolution 1701 expanded UNIFIL's mandate and troop ceiling to ~15,000.

India is one of the largest contributors to UNIFIL, with an infantry battalion deployed. The recent killing of Indonesian peacekeepers highlights the dangerous operating environment where UNIFIL forces are caught between Hezbollah and Israeli military operations.

Under the UN Charter, attacks on peacekeepers may constitute war crimes.

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

GS2 —” UN system, Peacekeeping, India's foreign policy (troop contributions); GS1 —” West Asia geopolitics.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

UNIFIL, UNSC Resolution 425, Resolution 1701, peacekeeping, south Lebanon, Hezbollah.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing UNIFIL (Lebanon) with UNDOF (Disengagement Observer Force —” Golan Heights, Syria) —” both involve Israel's borders but are different missions established by different UNSC resolutions.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2018 tested India's contribution to UN peacekeeping; India is consistently among the top 5 troop-contributing countries.

 **INTERVIEW**

Does UNIFIL's inability to prevent violence in south Lebanon expose a structural weakness in UN peacekeeping mandates that are dependent on host country cooperation?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 14

of 30

[Source →](#)

Samrat Samprati, who is associated with the construction of over 1,25,000 Jain temples, was the _____ Mauryan Emperor and is known as the 'Jain Ashoka'.

- A Son of Ashoka and fourth Mauryan Emperor
- B Grandson of Ashoka and fifth Mauryan Emperor ✓
- C Son of Bindusara and third Mauryan Emperor
- D Great-grandson of Chandragupta and sixth Mauryan Emperor

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Samrat Samprati was the grandson of Ashoka and is generally regarded as the fifth Mauryan Emperor, ruling approximately c.224—215 BCE. He is called the 'Jain Ashoka' for his extensive patronage of Jainism and is credited with constructing 1,25,000 Jain temples and sending Jain missionaries abroad. A museum dedicated to him is located at Koba, Gandhinagar.

ANALYSIS: Samprati's reign illustrates that the post-Ashoka Mauryan period, though considered a decline phase, still witnessed significant religious patronage and missionary activity.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE






Samrat Samprati ruled the Mauryan Empire after a period of succession struggles following Ashoka's death. He was the grandson of Ashoka (son of Kunala, who was Ashoka's son).

Samprati was a devout Jain and under the influence of Jain monk Suhasti Suri became a great patron of Jainism. The Jain tradition credits him with constructing 1,25,000 Jain temples across India and sending Jain missionaries to regions including Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and even the Middle East.

He is compared to Ashoka in terms of religious missionary zeal —" hence 'Jain Ashoka'. The Samprati Museum at Koba, Gandhinagar (Gujarat) is a major Jain cultural institution showcasing his legacy.

The Mauryan succession after Ashoka: Ashoka → Kunala (blinded) → Samprati → later emperors until Brihadratha (last Mauryan, killed by Pushyamitra Shunga c.185 BCE).

Q14  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS1 —” Mauryan Empire, Jainism, Art and Culture; Ancient Indian History.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Samprati, Jain Ashoka, Mauryan succession, Jainism patronage, Suhasti Suri.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing Samprati as Ashoka's son (he was the grandson —” son of Kunala); also confusing Jain Ashoka (Samprati) with Ashoka himself who patronised Buddhism.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC PYQ 2015 tested Mauryan succession; remember Chandragupta → Bindusara → Ashoka → Kunala → Samprati (approximate sequence).
 INTERVIEW	Why does mainstream Indian historiography tend to overshadow Samprati's legacy compared to Ashoka, despite his comparable missionary achievements?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 15

of 30

[Source →](#)

India recently sent 1,000 metric tonnes of rice aid to Burkina Faso. Which of the following best describes Burkina Faso's current humanitarian context?

- A A Pacific island nation facing sea-level rise, with a population of approximately 4.5 million
- B A West African Sahel nation facing food insecurity for 4.5 million people due to Islamist insurgency ✓
- C An East African nation devastated by drought and facing a cholera epidemic
- D A Central Asian nation affected by the Russia-Ukraine conflict's grain supply disruption

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Burkina Faso is a landlocked nation in West Africa's Sahel region, where approximately 4.5 million people face food insecurity, primarily driven by an ongoing Islamist insurgency that has displaced populations and disrupted agricultural livelihoods. India sent 1,000 metric tonnes of rice as humanitarian aid.

ANALYSIS: India's rice aid to Burkina Faso reflects the 'Global South solidarity' dimension of India's foreign policy — providing food aid to conflict-affected nations demonstrates India's emergence as a responsible global actor.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE






Burkina Faso (capital: Ouagadougou) is a landlocked country in the Sahel region of West Africa, sharing borders with Mali, Niger, CÔte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin. It has been severely destabilised by Islamist jihadist insurgencies linked to Al-Qaeda (JNIM) and ISIS-affiliated groups since 2015.

Two military coups occurred in 2022, with the current junta expelling French forces and pivoting toward Russia and Wagner Group. The humanitarian crisis is severe — over 4.5 million people are food insecure and over 2 million internally displaced.

India's 1,000 MT rice aid is part of its 'Voice of the Global South' initiative and demonstrates food diplomacy. India is the world's largest rice exporter and has used food aid as a foreign policy tool across Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme also provides development assistance to African nations.

Q15  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 —” India-Africa relations, Food diplomacy, South-South cooperation; GS1 —” Sahel geopolitics.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Burkina Faso, Sahel insurgency, food insecurity, India-Africa relations, Global South.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Placing Burkina Faso in East Africa —” it is in West Africa (Sahel), landlocked, between Mali and Niger.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2023 tested India-Africa ties; remember India's rice diplomacy: Sri Lanka (2022 crisis), Afghanistan (wheat aid, 2022), now Burkina Faso.
 INTERVIEW	Is India's food aid to conflict-ridden Sahel states a strategic move to counter China's growing African influence, or is it genuinely humanitarian and development-driven?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 16

of 30

[Source →](#)

Newcastle Disease, recently reported to be spreading in Europe, is caused by which pathogen?

- A A bacterium of the genus Clostridium
- B An avian paramyxovirus ✓
- C A fungal pathogen of the Aspergillus genus
- D An influenza A virus (H5N1 subtype)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Newcastle Disease is caused by an avian paramyxovirus (specifically Avian Orthoavulavirus 1, formerly Newcastle Disease Virus). It is NOT caused by influenza and is NOT zoonotic —” it does not transmit from birds to humans under normal circumstances.

ANALYSIS: Newcastle Disease's non-zoonotic nature is important to communicate publicly to prevent unnecessary panic, as it is distinct from Avian Influenza (Bird Flu/H5N1) which has zoonotic potential.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Newcastle Disease (ND) is a highly contagious and fatal viral disease of birds caused by Avian Paramyxovirus type 1 (APMV-1). It affects all species of birds and causes major economic losses in the poultry industry globally.

Newcastle Disease is NOT a zoonotic disease —” it does not cause illness in humans except for mild conjunctivitis in people with direct exposure to infected birds (e.g., poultry workers). This distinguishes it critically from Avian Influenza (H5N1, H7N9) which can infect humans.

The disease manifests in three forms: lentogenic (mild), mesogenic (moderate), and velogenic (severe). Newcastle Disease should not be confused with Avian Influenza —” ND is caused by paramyxovirus while AI is caused by influenza A virus.

India mandates ND vaccination in commercial poultry. The OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health, now WOA) classifies ND as a notifiable disease.

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

GS3 —” Animal diseases, Zoonosis, Poultry sector; GS2 —” One Health framework, Disease surveillance.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Newcastle Disease, avian paramyxovirus, non-zoonotic, poultry, WOH.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing Newcastle Disease (paramyxovirus, non-zoonotic) with Avian Influenza/Bird Flu (influenza A virus, zoonotic potential) —” a very common error in news-based MCQs.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 tested zoonotic diseases; create a table: Avian Influenza (H5N1 —” zoonotic), Newcastle Disease (paramyxovirus —” NOT zoonotic), Lumpy Skin Disease (cattle, NOT zoonotic).

 **INTERVIEW**

India's poultry industry is the world's third largest —” how vulnerable is it to Newcastle Disease outbreaks, and is the current vaccination coverage adequate?

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Question 17

of 30

[Source →](#)

The MSME TEAM Initiative, supported by the World Bank, aims to benefit how many Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), with what share reserved for women-owned enterprises?

- A 2 lakh MSEs, with 30% women-owned
- B 5 lakh MSEs, with 50% women-owned ✓
- C 10 lakh MSEs, with 40% women-owned
- D 3 lakh MSEs, with 60% women-owned

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: The MSME TEAM (Technology, Enhancement, Access to Market) Initiative has a total outlay of ₹277.35 crore, supported by the World Bank under the RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) programme. It targets 5 lakh Micro and Small Enterprises with 50% of benefits earmarked for women-owned enterprises.

Platforms like ONDC and NSIC are being used for implementation. **ANALYSIS:** The 50% women-ownership target is notable as it directly addresses the gender gap in entrepreneurship —” women-owned MSMEs are chronically underrepresented in formal credit and market access.

CONCEPT NOTE

MSME TEAM (Technology, Enhancement, Access to Market) is a flagship initiative under the RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) scheme, which is a World Bank-supported programme of the Ministry of MSME. RAMP was approved with a total outlay of ₹6,062.45 crore (with World Bank loan of \$500 million). The TEAM initiative specifically focuses on technology upgrading, enhancing market access through digital platforms (ONDC —” Open Network for Digital Commerce), and formalisation of micro enterprises.

NSIC (National Small Industries Corporation) plays a key role in implementation. The ₹277.35 crore TEAM initiative aims to benefit 5 lakh MSEs with a strong gender focus (50% women-owned enterprises).

India's MSME sector contributes ~30% to GDP and ~49% of exports, employing over 11 crore people. Women-owned MSMEs face barriers including limited collateral, social norms, and lower digital literacy —” targeted programmes like TEAM address these structural gaps.

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

GS3 —” MSME sector, Women entrepreneurship, Digital commerce; GS2 —” Government schemes, World Bank cooperation.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

MSME TEAM, RAMP, ONDC, NSIC, women entrepreneurship, digital market access.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance —” World Bank supported) with REAP (Rural Entrepreneurship and Agri-business Promotion) or other MSME schemes.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested MSME sector's contribution to GDP/exports; remember MSME = ~30% GDP, ~49% exports, 11 crore employment.

 **INTERVIEW**

Can ONDC genuinely democratise market access for micro enterprises in rural India, or does digital infrastructure deficit mean the benefits largely accrue to urban MSMEs?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 18

of 30

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about 'Earthquake Lights', recently observed in Turkey and Greece:

- 1 Earthquake Lights are caused by the piezoelectric effect —” electrical charges generated when quartz-bearing rocks are compressed during seismic activity.
- 2 Earthquake Lights have been confirmed as reliable earthquake precursors and are used in operational early warning systems.
- 3 Earthquake Lights appear as ionised plasma phenomena and have been observed before, during, and after earthquakes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Earthquake Lights are attributed to the piezoelectric effect in quartz-bearing rocks generating electrical charges that ionise surrounding air into plasma.

They have been observed before, during, and after seismic events. Statement 2 is incorrect —” while they are studied as potential precursors, Earthquake Lights are NOT currently used in any operational early warning system due to their unpredictability and inconsistent occurrence.

ANALYSIS: The scientific study of earthquake lights represents a frontier area where geophysics intersects with atmospheric physics.






 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Earthquake Lights (EQLs) are unusual luminous phenomena associated with seismic activity, reported for centuries but only recently studied systematically. The leading scientific explanation involves the piezoelectric effect —” when quartz crystals in rocks are subjected to intense mechanical stress during fault movement, they generate electrical charges. These charges can migrate to the surface, ionise air molecules, and create plasma-like luminous effects visible as glowing orbs, columns of light, or flashes. EQLs have been reported before (precursor), during, and after earthquakes.

Historical records from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, 1995 Kobe earthquake, and recent Turkey/Greece seismic events include EQL observations. However, they are NOT reliably predictable —” they do not occur before all earthquakes and can occur without subsequent major seismic events, making them unsuitable for operational early warning systems currently.

The Multi-Hazard Early Warning System under India's Mission Mausam focuses on meteorological and hydrological hazards, not seismic EQL monitoring.

Q18  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —" Disaster management, Earthquake science, Atmospheric physics.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Earthquake Lights, piezoelectric effect, ionised plasma, seismic precursor, disaster early warning.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Assuming Earthquake Lights are a confirmed precursor used in warnings —" they are a studied phenomenon but NOT operationally deployed for earthquake prediction anywhere in the world.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2022 tested earthquake types and disaster management; know the difference between seismic early warning (P-wave detection, seconds of warning) vs earthquake prediction (days-weeks —" not yet possible reliably).
 INTERVIEW	Given India's high seismic vulnerability (35% of land in Zone III-V), should NDMA invest in frontier research on earthquake precursors like EQLs, or focus resources on building resilience and response capacity?

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Question 19

of 30

[Source →](#)

Uchral Nyam-Osor, recently appointed Prime Minister of Mongolia, is the country's _____ Prime Minister.

A 30th

B 31st

C 33rd ✓

D 35th

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Uchral Nyam-Osor is Mongolia's 33rd Prime Minister, marking the third change of Prime Minister in the country within nine months — a sign of significant political instability. **ANALYSIS:** Mongolia's political churn reflects challenges in a democratic system sandwiched between two authoritarian giants (Russia and China), with governance complicated by commodity price volatility (Mongolia is heavily dependent on coal and copper exports) and domestic political factionalism.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Mongolia is a landlocked nation between Russia (north) and China (south), with a population of approximately 3.4 million. It operates as a parliamentary democracy — the Great Khural (parliament) elects the Prime Minister.

Mongolia's economy is heavily dependent on mineral exports (copper, coal, gold), making it vulnerable to commodity price cycles and Chinese demand fluctuations. The country has experienced frequent governmental changes reflecting coalition instability.

Mongolia pursues a 'Third Neighbour' foreign policy — maintaining strong ties with the US, EU, Japan, South Korea, and India as counterbalances to Russian and Chinese dominance. India-Mongolia relations are warm: India provides development assistance, and Mongolia is a Buddhist nation with historical cultural ties to India through Tibetan Buddhism. Mongolia's coal exports through China have been a source of tension, and recent economic reforms aim to diversify export routes (including a rail line through Russia to avoid China dependence).

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

GS2 —” Mongolia, India's neighbourhood (extended), Third Neighbour Policy; GS1 —” Central/East Asian geopolitics.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Mongolia, Third Neighbour Policy, Great Khural, landlocked nation, India-Mongolia ties.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Placing Mongolia in Central Asia —” it is in East/Inner Asia, bordering Russia and China directly.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2021 tested Mongolia's 'Third Neighbour Policy'; remember India's strategic partnership with Mongolia (2015) and the Atal Bihari Vajpayee visit being the first Indian PM visit to Mongolia.

 **INTERVIEW**

How should India leverage its 'Third Neighbour' relationship with Mongolia to expand strategic depth in its competition with China?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 20

of 30

[Source →](#)

Min Aung Hlaing was recently elected as Myanmar's President. He first came to international prominence following which event?

- A The Rohingya genocide in 2017, for which he faced ICJ proceedings
- B **The military coup of February 2021 in which the elected government was ousted ✓**
- C The Cyclone Nargis response in 2008 that drew international criticism
- D The 2015 general elections that first brought Aung San Suu Kyi to power

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Min Aung Hlaing led the military coup of February 1, 2021, in which the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi was overthrown. He was subsequently elected as Myanmar's 11th President with 429 of 584 votes.

ANALYSIS: The election of Min Aung Hlaing as President consolidates military control over Myanmar's political structure, with the junta using a carefully controlled electoral process to legitimise power that was initially seized by force.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

Min Aung Hlaing was Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar's military (Tatmadaw) when he orchestrated the coup on February 1, 2021, detaining State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint. The coup was justified by the military's false claims of massive electoral fraud in the November 2020 elections (which the NLD had won in a landslide).

Since the coup, Myanmar has descended into civil war —" the People's Defence Force (PDF) and ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) have fought the Tatmadaw, with the military losing significant territory. Min Aung Hlaing faces international sanctions (US, EU, UK), ICC investigation referral, and ICJ proceedings related to the Rohingya genocide (pre-coup).

His election as President (429/584 votes) through the SAC-controlled process is widely viewed internationally as illegitimate. India has taken a cautious approach to Myanmar —" balancing border security concerns, the Kaladan Multimodal Project, and not wanting to push Myanmar further toward China.

Q20  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 —” India’s neighbourhood policy, ASEAN, Myanmar; GS1 —” Rohingya crisis, migration.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Min Aung Hlaing, Myanmar coup 2021, Tatmadaw, NLD, Rohingya, India-Myanmar relations.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing Myanmar’s coup date —” February 1, 2021 (not 2020); the 2020 elections were held in November but the coup occurred in February 2021.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2022 tested India-Myanmar relations; remember the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and India’s border fencing in Manipur/Mizoram context.
 INTERVIEW	How should India navigate its policy toward Min Aung Hlaing’s Myanmar —” engagement to prevent Chinese encirclement or principled isolation to support democratic restoration?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 21

of 30

[Source →](#)

India's Multi-Hazard Early Warning System, recently upgraded under Mission Mausam, has improved the forecast range from 5 days to how many days, with what level of automation?

- A 10 days, with >80% automation
- B 7 days, with >90% automation ✓
- C 14 days, with >75% automation
- D 7 days, with >85% automation

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Under Mission Mausam, India's Multi-Hazard Early Warning System has been upgraded to a 7-day forecast (from 5 days) with over 90% automation in weather forecasting and warning dissemination. Mission Mausam is implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

ANALYSIS: The shift from 5 to 7 days gives communities, especially farmers and disaster managers, significantly more lead time to prepare for extreme weather events —” critical as climate change intensifies cyclone frequency and intensity.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Mission Mausam is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) aimed at transforming India's weather and climate science capabilities. It focuses on three pillars: (1) upgrading observational infrastructure (radar network, radiosonde stations, ocean buoys), (2) enhancing weather modelling capabilities (next-generation NWP models, supercomputing), and (3) improving dissemination of weather warnings to the last mile.

The Multi-Hazard Early Warning System improvement —” extending forecasts from 5 to 7 days and achieving >90% automation —” enables India to issue colour-coded alerts (Green/Yellow/Orange/Red) for cyclones, heavy rainfall, heat waves, cold waves, fog, and thunderstorms well in advance. IMD (India Meteorological Department) is the nodal agency. India has been globally recognised for cyclone early warning —” the dramatically reduced mortality in recent cyclones (Amphan, Yaas, Biparjoy) compared to historical disasters is largely attributed to improved early warning and evacuation systems.

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

GS3 —” Disaster management, Climate science, Mission Mausam; GS2 —” Government schemes, Institutional frameworks.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Mission Mausam, Multi-Hazard Early Warning, IMD, 7-day forecast, disaster resilience.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing Mission Mausam (weather forecasting/disaster warning —” MoES) with MISHAP or NDMA schemes —” Mission Mausam is specifically about weather science infrastructure.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2020 tested India's cyclone preparedness; remember Odisha model of disaster preparedness (zero casualty target) built on IMD early warnings.

 **INTERVIEW**

India has dramatically improved cyclone warnings but heat wave early warning dissemination to agricultural workers in remote areas remains poor —” what systemic changes are needed to make early warning truly last-mile effective?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 22

of 30

[Source →](#)

Form 6, recently in controversy related to West Bengal, is associated with which of the following?

- A Application for issuance of a new Aadhaar card for citizens above 18 years
- B Registration of a new voter under the Representation of the People Act, 1950 ✓
- C Application for an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card
- D Declaration of assets and liabilities by election candidates under the RPA, 1951

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: Form 6 is the application form for registration of a new voter (first-time voter or transfer of voter registration) under the Representation of the People Act, 1950. The West Bengal controversy relates to allegations of bulk Form 6 submissions to manipulate electoral rolls.

ANALYSIS: Electoral roll integrity is foundational to democracy — manipulation of Form 6 submissions affects who can vote, making it a tool for potential electoral fraud through fake voter registration.






CONCEPT NOTE

Under the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, several forms govern electoral registration: Form 6 — new voter registration (including 18-year-olds and transfers), Form 6A — overseas voter registration, Form 7 — objection to another person's inclusion, Form 8 — correction of entries, Form 8A — transposition of entry. The Election Commission of India (ECI) conducts Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls annually, during which Form 6 submissions spike.

Controversies arise when political parties allege that forms are submitted in bulk for ghost voters or for transferring voter blocs to specific constituencies — a practice called 'booth capturing' through roll manipulation. The West Bengal controversy likely involves allegations of mass enrolment of non-existent or ineligible voters.

The ECI has digital safeguards — Voter Helpline 1950, Voter Portal, and NVSP (National Voters' Service Portal) for verification.

Q22  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 —” Election Commission, Electoral rolls, Representation of People Act 1950; Polity.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Form 6, Representation of People Act 1950, electoral rolls, voter registration, Election Commission of India.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing Form 6 (new voter registration under RPA 1950) with Form 26 (affidavit of criminal antecedents filed by election candidates under RPA 1951) —” two entirely different forms under different acts.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2023 tested ECI's role in maintaining electoral rolls; know the difference between RPA 1950 (elections to Parliament/State legislatures —” electoral rolls) and RPA 1951 (conduct of elections —” model code, disqualifications).
 INTERVIEW	Should India move to automatic voter registration (AVR) using Aadhaar data to eliminate Form 6 manipulation, and what are the privacy and inclusion trade-offs?

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Question 23

of 30

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the RoSCTL and RoDTEP schemes:

- 1 RoSCTL covers garment and made-up exports while RoDTEP covers all other goods.
- 2 Both schemes operate through scrip-based rebates administered by the DGFT.
- 3 RoSCTL is notified by the Ministry of Commerce while RoDTEP is notified by the Ministry of Textiles.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 only

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. RoSCTL covers garments/made-ups (notified by Ministry of Textiles); RoDTEP covers all other export goods (notified by Ministry of Commerce).

Both operate through scrip-based rebates via DGFT. Statement 3 is incorrect —" the ministry notifications are reversed: RoSCTL is a Textiles Ministry scheme while RoDTEP is a Commerce Ministry scheme. **ANALYSIS:** The scrip mechanism allows exporters to transfer rebates to other importers who owe customs duty —" creating a market for these instruments.


CONCEPT NOTE

RoSCTL (Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies) was introduced for the garment and made-up textile sector, replacing ROSL (Rebate of State Levies). RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) replaced the older MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme) for all other export categories.

Both schemes were designed to comply with WTO rules —" MEIS was challenged at WTO by the US as an export subsidy; RoDTEP and RoSCTL are structured as tax remission (refunding embedded taxes), not subsidies, making them WTO-compliant. DGFT (Directorate General of Foreign Trade) under the Ministry of Commerce administers both through electronic scrips credited to exporters' ICEGATE accounts.

These scrips can be used to pay basic customs duty or transferred to other importers. Rates are notified periodically by the respective ministries based on an independent assessment of embedded tax incidence.

Q23  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —” Export policy, WTO compliance, Textile sector; GS2 —” Ministry roles, DGFT.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	RoSCTL, RoDTEP, DGFT, embedded taxes, WTO-compliant export support, scrip.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Thinking RoDTEP covers textiles —” it does not; textiles (garments/made-ups) are covered by the separate RoSCTL scheme under the Textiles Ministry.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2021 tested WTO and export subsidies; MEIS was WTO-challenged, replaced by RoDTEP (WTO-compliant remission).
 INTERVIEW	India's export incentive schemes have evolved from direct subsidies (MEIS) to tax remission (RoDTEP/RoSCTL) —” does this reflect genuine WTO compliance or a cosmetic renaming of the same support structure?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 24

of 30

[Source →](#)

Under CBDT Rule 10U, investments made before which date are exempt from the General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) in India?

- A April 1, 2012
- B April 1, 2015
- C April 1, 2017 ✓
- D April 1, 2020






ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Both Assertion A and Reason R are true, and R correctly explains A. The Parthasarathi Shome Committee (2012) explicitly recommended against retrospective application of GAAR and suggested a cut-off date to protect existing investors. This recommendation was accepted and codified in CBDT Rule 10U —” exempting investments made before April 1, 2017 from GAAR. **ANALYSIS:** This case illustrates how expert committee recommendations directly shape tax policy, providing a model for evidence-based policymaking.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

The Parthasarathi Shome Expert Committee was constituted in 2012 after Budget 2012 proposed GAAR (and controversially also proposed retrospective tax amendments targeting the Vodafone deal). The committee's key recommendations included: (1) GAAR should not apply retrospectively, (2) a monetary threshold (transactions below ₹3 crore tax benefit should be exempt), (3) GAAR should be invoked only as a last resort after considering treaty provisions, (4) the burden of proof should shift to tax authorities after initial notice. CBDT Rule 10U implemented the safe-harbour: investments made before April 1, 2017 are exempt from GAAR. This was crucial for FIIs and PE funds with pre-2017 Mauritius-routed investments. The retrospective tax controversy (Vodafone, Cairn India) cost India significantly in investor confidence and resulted in international arbitration losses —” the Shome Committee's anti-retrospective stance was directly responsive to this reputational damage.

Q24  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —" Tax policy, FDI, GAAR; GS2 —" Expert committees, Policy implementation.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Parthasarathi Shome, GAAR, Rule 10U, retrospective taxation, investor confidence.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing the Shome Committee (GAAR, 2012) with the Kelkar Committee (fiscal consolidation, 2012) —" both reported in 2012 on different aspects of tax/fiscal policy.
 EXAM TIP	Retrospective tax and Vodafone case is a frequent UPSC interview topic; know the sequence: Budget 2012 retrospective amendment → Vodafone arbitration → India loses → 2021 amendment repealing retrospective tax → Vodafone settles.
 INTERVIEW	India's reversal of retrospective taxation in 2021 was welcomed by investors —" does this episode demonstrate that executive overreach in tax policy creates long-term costs exceeding short-term revenue gains?

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Question 25

of 30

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Match the following warships commissioned recently with their correct categories: List I (Warship) — List II (Type) A. INS Taragiri — 1. Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft B. INS Sanshodhak — 2. Project 17A Guided Missile Frigate C. INS Agray — 3. Naval Survey Vessel D. INS Dunagiri — 4. Project 17A Guided Missile Frigate Choose the correct match:

LIST I
LIST II

A A-2, B-3, C-1, D-4 ✓

B A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4

C A-2, B-1, C-3, D-4

D A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: INS Taragiri (A-2) is a P-17A guided missile frigate built by MDL. INS Sanshodhak (B-3) is a naval survey vessel. INS Agray (C-1) is an Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC).

INS Dunagiri (D-4) is also a P-17A guided missile frigate built by GRSE. All four were commissioned within a 48-hour period. **ANALYSIS:** This commissioning pattern shows India's diversified naval expansion — simultaneously building frigates, survey vessels, and ASW craft to address different operational requirements.






CONCEPT NOTE

The commissioning of four warships in 48 hours represents India's most intensive naval induction period in recent history. Each vessel type serves a distinct strategic role: P-17A frigates (INS Taragiri, INS Dunagiri) — blue-water combat, surface warfare, ASW, and air defence using BrahMos and MRSAM. Naval survey vessels (INS Sanshodhak) — hydrographic survey, oceanographic research, navigational chart preparation for safe maritime passage.

ASW SWCs (INS Agray) — coastal and shallow-water anti-submarine warfare, protecting harbours and approaches from submarine threats. INS Malwan was also commissioned in this window (possibly a patrol vessel or small craft).

This fleet expansion supports India's goal of achieving 200 warships by 2027 and becoming a 'net security provider' in the Indian Ocean Region, aligned with the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision.

Q25  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 —" Naval modernisation, Defence indigenisation; GS2 —" India's maritime security, SAGAR doctrine.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	ASW Shallow Water Craft, hydrographic survey, P-17A frigate, naval induction, SAGAR.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Assuming survey vessels are combat ships —" INS Sanshodhak performs hydrographic/oceanographic surveys, not combat operations; confusing it with a frigate or corvette.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2021 tested India's naval expansion plans; know the three-fleet structure: Western (Mumbai), Eastern (Visakhapatnam), Southern (Kochi) Naval Commands.
 INTERVIEW	As India rapidly expands its warship fleet, is there a proportional investment in trained naval personnel and maintenance infrastructure, or does hardware expansion risk outpacing operational capability?

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Question 26

of 30

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INS Taragiri is equipped with which of the following weapons and propulsion systems? Select the correct combination.

- A BrahMos missiles, MRSAM, and CODLAG propulsion
- B BrahMos missiles, MRSAM, and CODOG propulsion ✓
- C BrahMos missiles, Akash SAM, and CODAG propulsion
- D Nirbhay missiles, MRSAM, and CODOG propulsion

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: INS Taragiri is equipped with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and MRSAM (Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles) for air defence, using CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas) propulsion —” which uses diesel engines for cruising and gas turbines for high-speed sprints. CODLAG and CODAG are different propulsion configurations.

ANALYSIS: The BrahMos-MRSAM combination gives P-17A frigates a potent offensive-defensive weapons package, while CODOG propulsion provides fuel efficiency at cruise speeds combined with high-speed capability when needed.

CONCEPT NOTE

CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas) propulsion is a naval propulsion architecture where the ship uses diesel engines for economical cruising and gas turbines (which provide much higher power output) for high-speed runs. Alternatives include: CODAG (Combined Diesel and Gas —” both run simultaneously for maximum power), CODLAG (Combined Diesel-Electric and Gas —” diesel drives electric motors; gas turbines for high speed), and CODAD (Combined Diesel and Diesel).

BrahMos is a joint India-Russia supersonic cruise missile (Mach 2.8) with a range of ~300+ km —” now being upgraded to a hypersonic variant (BrahMos-II/NG). MRSAM (Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile) is a joint India-Israel development (DRDO + IAI) providing fleet air defence against aircraft and missiles up to 70+ km.

The combination makes P-17A frigates among the most capable in the Asia-Pacific for multi-domain operations.

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

GS3 —” Defence technology, India-Israel relations (MRSAM), India-Russia relations (BrahMos); Naval systems.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

BrahMos, MRSAM, CODOG propulsion, P-17A, multi-domain naval warfare.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing CODOG (diesel OR gas —” not simultaneous) with CODAG (diesel AND gas —” simultaneous) —” the OR vs AND distinction changes the power architecture fundamentally.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested BrahMos as India-Russia joint venture; know it is produced by BrahMos Aerospace Ltd —” a JV between DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

 **INTERVIEW**

India is now exporting BrahMos to Philippines, Vietnam, and potentially other nations —” how does this weaponry diplomacy reshape India's strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific?

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Question 27

of 30

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The Gangotri National Park is significant for which combination of features? Identify the **INCORRECT** match from the options below.

A Gangotri Glacier —” one of India's largest glaciers, source of the Bhagirathi River

B Snow leopard —” approximately 35 individuals in the park

C Gaumukh —” the glacier snout, starting point of the Bhagirathi

D Location —” Chamoli district, Uttarakhand ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Option D is INCORRECTLY matched. Gangotri National Park is located in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand, NOT Chamoli district.

Chamoli district is home to Nanda Devi National Park and Valley of Flowers National Park. Options A, B, and C are all correctly matched.

ANALYSIS: This type of question tests precise geographical knowledge —” both Uttarkashi and Chamoli are Uttarakhand districts bordering Tibet with high-altitude national parks, making them easily confused.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**






Uttarakhand's major protected areas by district: Uttarkashi district —” Gangotri National Park (2,390 sq km), Govind Pashu Vihar National Park. Chamoli district —” Nanda Devi National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Valley of Flowers National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Rudraprayag district —” Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary. Dehradun district —” Rajaji National Park (shared with Haridwar, Pauri Garhwal).

The Gangotri-Gaumukh ecosystem is critical for the Ganga river system: Bhagirathi (from Gaumukh/Gangotri Glacier) + Alaknanda (from Satopanth Glacier, Chamoli) meet at Devprayag to form the Ganga. Nanda Devi NP is home to the Snow Leopard Conservation Programme and is a biosphere reserve.

Gaumukh (meaning 'cow's mouth') marks the snout of the Gangotri Glacier at ~3,900m altitude.

Q27  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS1 —” Himalayan geography, River systems; GS3 —” Biodiversity, Protected areas.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Gangotri National Park, Uttarkashi, snow leopard, Gaumukh, Bhagirathi.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Placing Gangotri NP in Chamoli (it is Uttarkashi); placing Valley of Flowers in Uttarkashi (it is Chamoli) —” a very common geographic confusion in Uttarakhand's high-altitude protected areas.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2019 mapped Uttarakhand's UNESCO sites —” Valley of Flowers (Chamoli) is a WHS; Nanda Devi (Chamoli) is a WHS; Gangotri is NOT a UNESCO WHS but is an important national park.
 INTERVIEW	Gangotri Glacier has retreated ~22 metres annually —” what are the implications for the Ganga's perennial character and the 500 million people who depend on its waters?

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Question 28

of 30

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Which of the following statements about the Nyaya Setu AI chatbot is **NOT** correct?

- A It supports 36 text languages and 23 voice languages through the BHASHINI platform
- B It is deployed under the DISHA programme of the Department of Justice
- C Its mascot is named Dishika
- D It was launched by the Chief Justice of India as part of the e-Courts project ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: Option D is incorrect. Nyaya Setu was launched by Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan — NOT by the Chief Justice of India.

It is part of the Department of Justice's DISHA programme, not the Supreme Court's e-Courts project (which is a separate judiciary-led initiative). Options A, B, and C are all factually correct.

ANALYSIS: The distinction between the Department of Justice (executive) and the e-Courts Mission Mode Project (judiciary) is important — Nyaya Setu is an executive-branch citizen service, not a court administration tool.






CONCEPT NOTE

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project is a separate Supreme Court-led initiative for digitising court records, implementing case management systems, and providing online access to case status — it is under the judiciary's administration with technical support from NIC. Nyaya Setu, in contrast, is an executive-branch (Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice) initiative under DISHA to provide legal information to citizens. DISHA (Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice) has multiple components: Tele-Law (legal advice through Common Service Centres), Nyaya Mitra (retired judicial officers as para-legal guides), Pro Bono Legal Services, and now Nyaya Setu (AI chatbot).

BHASHINI provides the multilingual backbone. VP C.P. Radhakrishnan is a former MP and member of the Rajya Sabha who became VP in 2022 (14th Vice President).

The mascot Dishika reflects DISHA's approachable branding for access-to-justice services.

Q28  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 —” Access to justice, Article 39A, e-Governance, Ministry of Law and Justice.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	DISHA, Nyaya Setu, BHASHINI, Department of Justice, e-Courts, access to justice.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Conflating the Department of Justice (executive —” Legal Aid, DISHA) with the judiciary-administered e-Courts project —” two distinct institutional mandates for digitising different aspects of the justice system.
 EXAM TIP	Article 39A (DPSP) mandates free legal aid; NALSA (National Legal Services Authority) is the apex body; DISHA is the DoJ's programme —” three different institutions, one constitutional mandate.
 INTERVIEW	Is creating a separate AI chatbot for legal information (Nyaya Setu) duplicative when NALSA's Tele-Law already exists, and how should India integrate these justice delivery platforms?

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Question 29

of 30

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Consider the following statements about UNIFIL's mandate and India's peacekeeping role:

- 1 UNIFIL was established following Israel's first invasion of Lebanon in 1978
2. UNSC Resolution 1701 (2006) expanded UNIFIL's mandate and troop ceiling after the Second Lebanon War.
- 3 India is NOT a troop contributor to UNIFIL.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1 only

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. UNIFIL was established following Israel's 1978 Operation Litani (first invasion of Lebanon) under UNSC Resolution 425.

Resolution 1701 in 2006 expanded the mandate after the Second Lebanon War (Israel-Hezbollah conflict).

Statement 3 is **INCORRECT** — India IS a significant troop contributor to UNIFIL, with an infantry battalion deployed in southern Lebanon.

ANALYSIS: India's peacekeeping contributions across UN missions (including UNIFIL) are a core pillar of its 'Responsible Global Power' self-presentation.






CONCEPT NOTE

India is consistently among the top 5—7 troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations globally. India's peacekeeping heritage dates to 1950 (Korean War medical support) and has expanded through missions in Congo, Cyprus, Lebanon (UNIFIL), South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and over 50 missions historically.

India has lost over 168 peacekeepers in UN missions — the highest among troop contributors. In UNIFIL specifically, India's infantry battalion has served in southern Lebanon, operating in a volatile environment between Hezbollah and Israeli forces.

The killing of Indonesian peacekeepers in 2026 highlights the inherent dangers of peacekeeping in active conflict zones. Under Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, all member states are prohibited from the use of force against UN peacekeepers — attacks on peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international humanitarian law.

Q29  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 —” UN peacekeeping, India's foreign policy, UNSC; International Relations.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	UNIFIL, UNSC Resolution 425, Resolution 1701, India's peacekeeping, UN troop contributions.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Underestimating India's peacekeeping role —” India is a TOP contributor to UN peacekeeping (not a marginal participant), which is a key argument for India's UNSC permanent membership bid.
 EXAM TIP	UPSC 2022 tested India's UNSC permanent membership arguments; peacekeeping contributions (~168 martyrs, ~250,000+ troops deployed historically) is the strongest argument.
 INTERVIEW	India's peacekeeping troops are mostly infantry deployed in conflict zones, yet India does not have a UNSC veto to influence when and where peacekeeping missions are deployed —” does this create a strategic imbalance?

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Question 30

of 30

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The SAMPANN pension management platform was launched by the Department of Telecommunications on December 29,

2018. Which of the following best explains why other government bodies like Goa state and Cochin Port Authority are now adopting it?

- A A Supreme Court order mandated all government bodies to switch to a unified pension platform by 2025
- B **SAMPANN is now a shared digital public infrastructure under the Government as Platform model, scalable beyond its original DoT user base ✓**
- C The Union Budget 2026-27 allocated funds specifically for mandatory SAMPANN adoption by all PSUs
- D Cochin Port Authority and Goa are pilot states for the National Pension System migration programme

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The adoption of SAMPANN by Goa and Cochin Port Authority reflects India's 'Government as Platform' philosophy —" where digital infrastructure built by one ministry is shared with other government entities to avoid duplication and leverage existing investments. There is no Supreme Court mandate or Budget allocation specifically for this purpose.

ANALYSIS: This model mirrors how India's other digital platforms (GSTN, DigiLocker, BHASHINI, Aarogya Setu API) were extended beyond their original domains to become shared public digital infrastructure.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's 'Government as Platform' approach is a core principle of Digital India —" the government builds robust, reusable digital infrastructure (platforms, APIs, identity systems) that any government entity or even private sector players can plug into, rather than each department building siloed systems. Examples: Aadhaar (identity platform used across dozens of government services), GSTN (tax compliance platform), UPI (payment infrastructure), DigiLocker (document storage), BHASHINI (multilingual AI), and now SAMPANN (pension management).

The IndiaStack ecosystem represents this layered public digital infrastructure approach. SAMPANN's extension to Goa and Cochin Port Authority demonstrates horizontal scaling: the DoT's pension processing expertise and system become available to other government bodies without them building from scratch.

This saves public money, ensures consistency, and accelerates digital governance adoption across smaller entities that lack IT development capacity.

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

GS2 —” E-governance, Digital India, IndiaStack, Government as Platform; GS4 —” Efficiency in governance.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Government as Platform, SAMPANN, digital public infrastructure, IndiaStack, pension digitisation.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking each government department must build its own digital system —” India's DPI model specifically avoids this by building once and sharing widely (Aadhaar, UPI, etc.).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2023 tested India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI); G20 2023 under India's presidency highlighted DPI as a global development model —” know the Aadhaar-UPI-DigiLocker stack.

 **INTERVIEW**

India champions its Digital Public Infrastructure model at G20 as a template for developing nations —” but how does India ensure that DPI adoption in diverse governance contexts doesn't lead to data concentration risks or exclusion of the digitally marginalised?

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