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**DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED**

# Daily Quiz — April 7, 2026

7 April 2026



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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## DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

# Daily Quiz — April 7, 2026

7 April 2026 · 25 Questions · Answers &amp; Explanations Included

**Question 1**

of 25

[Source →](#)

With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India, which of the following is correct?

- A The MPC was constituted in 2015 under the RBI Act and has 7 members
- B The MPC was constituted in 2016 under the amended RBI Act and has 6 members; the Governor has the casting vote in case of a tie ✓
- C The MPC was constituted in 2018 under the Finance Act and has 6 members; the Finance Secretary has the casting vote
- D The MPC is a non-statutory advisory body to the RBI Governor

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The MPC was constituted in 2016 following the RBI Act amendment under the Finance Act, 2016, replacing the earlier system where the Governor had sole authority. It has 6 members — 3 RBI officials (Governor, Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one RBI nominee) and 3 government appointees.

The Governor has the casting vote in case of a 3-3 tie. **ANALYSIS:** This statutory institutional design brings transparency and shared accountability to interest rate decisions.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The MPC operates under the Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework — CPI inflation target of 4% with a tolerance band of  $\pm 2\%$  (range 2-6%). If inflation breaches this band for three consecutive quarters, the RBI must explain to Parliament.

The target was retained in March 2026 for the period April 2026 to March 2031. The MPC meets at least four times per financial year (currently bi-monthly, six times).

Each meeting concludes with a published resolution and minutes are released after 14 days. Members other than RBI officials are appointed for a four-year term, non-renewable.

The current Governor Sanjay Malhotra (December 2024 onwards) succeeded Shaktikanta Das.

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

GS3 — Monetary policy, RBI Act, central bank independence; GS2 — Statutory bodies and their composition.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

MPC, FIT, RBI Act amendment 2016, casting vote, transparency.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Saying the MPC was constituted under the original RBI Act 1934 — it was constituted only after the 2016 amendment.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2017 tested MPC composition; know 6 members (3 RBI + 3 government), 4-year non-renewable term for external members.

 **INTERVIEW**

Does the structure of the MPC adequately protect monetary policy from political pressure, or does the equal split create deadlock risk?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 2**

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A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court must consist of how many judges, and under which constitutional provision is this requirement laid down?

- A Minimum 3 judges, under Article 124
- B Minimum 5 judges, under Article 145(3) ✓
- C Minimum 7 judges, under Article 143
- D Minimum 9 judges, under Article 142

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** A Constitution Bench must consist of at least 5 judges under Article 145(3), which requires that any case involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution be heard by a bench of not less than five judges. Larger benches (7 or 9 judges) are constituted for landmark questions or to overrule earlier judgments.

The Sabarimala review case (April 2026) is being heard by a 9-judge bench led by CJI Surya Kant. **ANALYSIS:** The 9-judge bench size signals the constitutional gravity of the questions involved.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

Article 145(3) is the constitutional source of the Constitution Bench requirement. The original 2018 Sabarimala verdict (*Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala*) was delivered by a 5-judge bench by 4-1 majority, with Justice Indu Malhotra dissenting.

In 2019, a 5-judge bench (3-2 majority) referred the review to a larger bench, framing seven questions about the scope of Articles 25, 26, the essential religious practices doctrine, and the relationship between individual and group religious rights.

The current 9-judge bench will answer these constitutional questions before deciding the Sabarimala-specific issue.

Article 124 deals with establishment and composition of the Supreme Court; Article 142 with the SC power to do complete justice; Article 143 with the President seeking advisory opinions.

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

GS2 — Supreme Court, judicial review, Articles 25 and 26, essential religious practices doctrine; GS1 — Religion in Indian society.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Constitution Bench, Article 145(3), essential religious practices, religious denomination, judicial review.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing Article 145(3) (Constitution Bench requirement) with Article 144 (civil and judicial authorities to act in aid of SC).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 tested Sabarimala; remember Article 145(3) requires minimum 5 judges for constitutional interpretation cases.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should constitutional courts intervene in religious practices, or does this constitute judicial overreach into matters of faith?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 3**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Which of the following best describes the rationale for India's three-stage nuclear power programme?

- A To reduce dependence on hydroelectric power for baseload generation
- B To exploit India's abundant uranium reserves through gradual technology transfer
- C To leverage India's vast thorium reserves despite limited uranium reserves through a multi-stage fuel conversion strategy ✓
- D To replace coal-based thermal generation with imported reactor technology

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** India's three-stage nuclear programme, designed by Dr. Homi Bhabha in the 1950s, was created specifically because India has limited uranium reserves but vast thorium reserves. Stage 1 (PHWRs) uses natural uranium and produces plutonium-239 as a byproduct.

Stage 2 (Fast Breeder Reactors) uses MOX fuel (Pu-239 + U-238) and breeds more fissile material plus converts thorium-232 to U-233. Stage 3 will use thorium-based reactors fueled by U-233.

**ANALYSIS:** This is a uniquely Indian strategy designed for a unique resource endowment.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India has approximately 25-30% of global thorium reserves (~12 lakh tonnes) but only ~1-2% of global uranium reserves. Thorium-232 is fertile, not fissile — it cannot directly fuel a reactor; it must first be converted to fissile U-233 by neutron capture in a fast reactor.

The PFBR at Kalpakkam, which achieved first criticality in April 2026, is the first commercial-scale Indian fast breeder reactor. India is now only the second country after Russia to operate a commercial-scale fast breeder reactor.

India has 24 operational PHWRs with installed capacity of 8,180 MW. The target is 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047, supported by the SHANTI Act 2025 which opens civil nuclear projects to private participation up to 49%.

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


GS3 — Nuclear energy, three-stage programme, energy security; GS2 — DAE institutional structure.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Three-stage programme, thorium, MOX fuel, fast breeder reactor, Homi Bhabha, energy security.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking thorium can directly fuel a reactor — it cannot; it must first be converted to U-233 through neutron capture in a fast reactor.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2018 tested India's nuclear programme; know the three stages with reactor type and fuel for each.

 **INTERVIEW**

Has India's commitment to the thorium cycle been justified by progress, or should resources have shifted to renewables and imported nuclear technology?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 4**

of 25

[Source →](#)

In the context of the Cabinet-approved Small Hydro Power Scheme, which ministry has jurisdiction over hydropower projects up to 25 MW capacity in India?

- A Ministry of Power
- B Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) ✓
- C Ministry of Jal Shakti
- D Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Hydropower projects up to 25 MW capacity fall under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), which classifies them as Small Hydro Power. Projects above 25 MW fall under the Ministry of Power.

This jurisdictional split is institutional, not constitutional, and is based on the policy goal of promoting decentralised renewable generation under MNRE while keeping large grid-connected hydropower under the conventional power ministry. **ANALYSIS:** The 25 MW threshold is the key dividing line.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

India categorises hydropower by capacity: pico (under 5 kW), micro (5-100 kW), mini (100 kW to 2 MW), small (2-25 MW under MNRE), and medium/large (above 25 MW under Ministry of Power). India has identified SHP potential of approximately 21,000 MW with installed capacity around 5,000 MW — leaving most untapped.

The Cabinet-approved SHP Development Scheme covers FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31 and provides higher Central Financial Assistance to NE States and border districts compared to other states. The MNRE was formerly the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources, renamed in 2006.

India's renewable target is 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030 (Panchamrit commitment at COP26 Glasgow).

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

GS3 — Renewable energy, MNRE, energy policy; GS2 — Centre-State financing, ministry jurisdiction.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

SHP, MNRE, Panchamrit, run-of-the-river, renewable energy targets.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Placing all hydropower under the Ministry of Power — only above 25 MW falls under Power; up to 25 MW falls under MNRE.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2023 tested renewable energy; remember Panchamrit five commitments at COP26 — 500 GW non-fossil, 50% non-fossil share, 1 billion tonne CO2 reduction, 45% emissions intensity reduction, net zero by 2070.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should hydropower above 25 MW also be classified as renewable, or does the environmental impact of large dams justify the current distinction?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 5**

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[Source →](#)

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), what rights does a coastal state have in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)?

- A Full territorial sovereignty including the right to regulate navigation and overflight
- B **Sovereign rights only over exploration and exploitation of natural resources; navigation and overflight remain free for other states ✓**
- C Exclusive jurisdiction over all activities including foreign military exercises
- D No sovereign rights; the EEZ is part of the high seas

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Within the EEZ (extending 200 nautical miles from the baseline), a coastal state has sovereign rights over exploration, exploitation, conservation, and management of natural resources (fisheries, oil, gas, minerals) — but freedom of navigation and overflight is preserved for all states. This is the central distinction between the Territorial Sea (0-12 nm, full sovereignty) and the EEZ (resource rights only).

**ANALYSIS:** This sovereignty vs resource rights distinction is the most commonly tested UNCLOS concept.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

UNCLOS, adopted in 1982 and ratified by India in 1995, defines four maritime zones from the baseline: Territorial Sea (0-12 nautical miles, full sovereignty), Contiguous Zone (12-24 nm, enforcement of customs and immigration laws), Exclusive Economic Zone (0-200 nm, sovereign resource rights with free navigation), and Continental Shelf (up to 350 nm in some cases, seabed resource rights). India's EEZ covers approximately 24 lakh sq km, nearly three times its land area.

India's coastline is 11,099 km. The Indian Ocean carries approximately 50% of global container traffic and 70% of global petroleum trade.

India is exploring deep-sea mining in the Central Indian Ocean Basin under International Seabed Authority allocations. NITI Aayog's Blue Economy strategy aims to develop deep-sea and offshore fisheries in three phases.

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

GS2 — UNCLOS, maritime law, India's ocean policy; GS3 — Blue Economy, deep-sea fisheries, marine resources.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

UNCLOS, EEZ, territorial waters, continental shelf, freedom of navigation, blue economy.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Treating EEZ rights as full sovereignty — sovereignty is only in the Territorial Sea (12 nm); EEZ confers resource rights only.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested UNCLOS zones; memorise the four-zone hierarchy with exact distances and rights.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India's deep-sea mining ambitions in the Central Indian Ocean be balanced against the goal of protecting deep-ocean biodiversity?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 6**

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[Source →](#)

Which of the following statements about the Television Rating Policy (TRP) 2026 is **INCORRECT** ?

- A The policy is notified by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as executive guidelines, not statutory legislation
- B The policy mandates that at least 50% of directors on a rating agency board be independent
- C Landing-page viewership has been excluded from measurement to prevent manipulation
- D The policy gives statutory regulatory powers to BARC India over television rating ✓

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**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**


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**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The TRP Policy 2026 does NOT give statutory regulatory powers to BARC India. BARC remains a self-regulatory industry body and the policy is notified by MIB as executive guidelines, not as a statute conferring regulatory authority.

Statements A, B, and C are correctly stated. **ANALYSIS:** This is the structural weakness of the TRP regime in India — even after reforms, the rating system remains industry self-regulation rather than statutory oversight.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

BARC India (Broadcast Audience Research Council) was set up in 2010 as a joint industry body and became operational in 2015. It is currently the sole TRP agency in India.

The 2020 TRP scam involving Republic TV exposed serious weaknesses in BARC governance. The TRP Policy 2026 introduces structural reforms: 50% independent directors, lower net worth requirement to enable competition, expanded sample size, and exclusion of landing-page viewership.

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995, the TRAI Act 1997 (as amended for broadcasting), and the IT Rules 2021 form the broader legal framework for media regulation. India has approximately 200 million TV households.

Information and Broadcasting falls under Union List Entry 31 (Posts, telegraphs, telephones, wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communication).

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

GS2 — Media regulation, MIB, conflict of interest in self-regulation; GS3 — Advertising market dynamics.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

TRP, BARC, MIB, self-regulation, Cable TV Act 1995, audience measurement.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking TRP Policy is statutory — it is executive guidelines from MIB and BARC remains a self-regulatory body.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC has tested media regulation; know that I&B falls under Union List Entry 31 and TRAI shares jurisdiction over broadcasting.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should television audience measurement in India be brought under statutory regulation through legislation, or is industry self-regulation with stronger oversight sufficient?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 7**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about India's nuclear command and control architecture:

- 1 Nuclear weapons in India operate under the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), which has two councils — Political and Executive.
- 2 The Strategic Forces Command (SFC) is a tri-service command that manages nuclear delivery vehicles and warheads.
- 3 The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) reports directly to the Prime Minister.
- 4 India's nuclear doctrine of No First Use was officially adopted in 2003.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

A 1, 2 and 4 only

B 1, 3 and 4 only

C 2 and 4 only

D 1, 2, 3 and 4 ✓

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** All four statements are correct. The NCA has a Political Council chaired by the Prime Minister (which is the sole authority to authorise nuclear use) and an Executive Council chaired by the National Security Advisor. The SFC was established in January 2003 as a tri-service command. The DAE reports directly to the Prime Minister's Office, not to the Defence Ministry.

India formally announced its nuclear doctrine in January 2003 with No First Use as a core pillar. **ANALYSIS:** This institutional design separates civilian political authority (PM) from military operational control (SFC), which is rare in nuclear weapon states.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Nuclear Command Authority was constituted in January 2003. The Political Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes other senior cabinet members; only the PM can authorise nuclear use.

The Executive Council is chaired by the National Security Advisor and provides technical and operational oversight. The Strategic Forces Command, also constituted in 2003, manages all three legs of the nuclear triad — land-based Agni missiles, air-launched nuclear weapons (Rafale, Mirage 2000), and submarine-launched ballistic missiles from SSBNs (INS Arihant, INS Arighat, INS Aridhaman).

India's nuclear doctrine has four key pillars: No First Use, credible minimum deterrent, massive retaliation against nuclear attack on Indian territory or forces anywhere, and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. India is not a member of the NPT but maintains a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing since Pokhran-II (May 1998).

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

GS3 — Nuclear deterrence, internal security; GS2 — Civilian control of military, NCA structure.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

NCA, SFC, No First Use, credible minimum deterrent, nuclear triad, DAE, Pokhran-II.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking the Defence Minister has authority to order nuclear use — only the PM (through the Political Council) has this authority.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested India's nuclear doctrine; know the four pillars and the NCA structure.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India revise its No First Use policy given Pakistan's tactical nuclear weapons doctrine and China's expanding nuclear arsenal?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 8**

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[Source →](#)

In the context of fiscal federalism, the Finance Commission is established under which Article of the Constitution and what is its primary mandate?

- A Article 270; to administer the divisible pool of taxes
- B **Article 280; to recommend distribution of tax revenues between Centre and States and principles for grants-in-aid ✓**
- C Article 275; to issue grants-in-aid to states from Consolidated Fund of India
- D Article 282; to authorise discretionary grants by the Union

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**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**


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**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Finance Commission is constituted under Article 280 by the President of India, every five years (or earlier if needed). Its primary mandate is to recommend (a) the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Centre and States, (b) the principles governing grants-in-aid to States from the Consolidated Fund of India, and (c) measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State.

Article 270 deals with the actual distribution of certain taxes; Article 275 covers statutory grants; Article 282 covers discretionary grants. **ANALYSIS:** Each article has a distinct role in fiscal federalism.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The Finance Commission is a constitutional body chaired by a Chairman with four other members. The 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya, was set up in November 2023 with terms of reference covering the period 2026-31.

Its report is expected by October 2025. The 14th Finance Commission under Y.V. Reddy made the historic recommendation to raise states' share in the divisible pool from 32% to 42%, retained at 41% by the 15th FC. The divisible pool excludes cesses and surcharges, which have grown from approximately 6% of gross tax revenue (2009-10) to approximately 16% (2022-23) — reducing effective state devolution.

The first Finance Commission was constituted in 1951 under K.C. Neogy.

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

GS2 — Article 280, Finance Commission, Centre-State relations; GS3 — Fiscal federalism, divisible pool, cesses and surcharges.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Article 280, divisible pool, cesses, surcharges, vertical and horizontal devolution, cooperative federalism.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing Article 280 (Finance Commission) with Article 270 (distribution of taxes) or Article 275 (grants-in-aid) — they are related but distinct.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2018 tested Finance Commission; know that the 14th FC raised state share from 32% to 42% — the largest single increase in history.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should cesses and surcharges be brought into the divisible pool to restore the spirit of fiscal federalism, or do they serve legitimate Centre-only purposes?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 9**

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[Source →](#)

In the context of India's nuclear programme, MOX fuel used in the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam consists of which two elements?

- A Uranium-235 enriched to 5% and natural uranium
- B Uranium-238 (fertile) and Plutonium-239 (fissile) in oxide form ✓
- C Thorium-232 and Uranium-233
- D Plutonium-239 enriched and depleted uranium

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** MOX (Mixed Oxide) fuel for the PFBR consists of Uranium-238 and Plutonium-239 in oxide form. Uranium-238 is fertile (not fissile by itself) while Plutonium-239 is fissile.

In a fast breeder reactor, fast neutrons from Pu-239 fission convert U-238 into more Pu-239 through neutron capture, producing more fissile material than is consumed — hence the term "breeder." **ANALYSIS:** This chemistry is what makes Stage 2 of India's nuclear programme possible — using Pu-239 byproduct from Stage 1 PHWRs as fuel for Stage 2 FBRs.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

A fissile material can sustain a nuclear chain reaction (U-235, Pu-239, U-233). A fertile material cannot directly sustain a chain reaction but can be converted into a fissile material through neutron capture ( $U-238 \rightarrow Pu-239$ ;  $Th-232 \rightarrow U-233$ ).

Natural uranium contains approximately 0.7% U-235 (fissile) and 99.3% U-238 (fertile). The PFBR is sodium-cooled because sodium does not slow down (moderate) neutrons, allowing fast neutrons to drive the breeder reaction.

The negative void coefficient is a key safety feature — if sodium boils away, reactor power decreases. The reactor uses a pool-type design where all major components are immersed in a single pool of liquid sodium for passive safety.

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

GS3 — Nuclear chemistry, three-stage programme, fast reactors; GS3 — Energy security.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

MOX fuel, fertile vs fissile, U-238, Pu-239, fast breeder reactor, sodium coolant.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing fissile materials (U-235, Pu-239, U-233) with fertile materials (U-238, Th-232) — only fissile materials sustain chain reactions; fertile materials must first be converted.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 tested isotopes; know natural uranium is 0.7% U-235 + 99.3% U-238.

 **INTERVIEW**

Fast breeder technology has been delayed worldwide due to safety concerns and high costs. Should India persist with the thorium cycle or accept dependence on imported nuclear fuel?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 10**

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[Source →](#)

The "essential religious practices" doctrine, which is central to the Sabarimala review case, was first articulated by the Supreme Court in which landmark case?

- A Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)
- B **Commissioner, HRE v. Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha (Shirur Mutt, 1954) ✓**
- C S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)
- D Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)

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**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**


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**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The essential religious practices doctrine was first articulated in the Shirur Mutt case (Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments v. Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt, 1954). The doctrine holds that constitutional protection under Articles 25 and 26 extends only to practices that are essential and integral to the religion — not to every religious observance.






**ANALYSIS:** This judicial doctrine has been applied across decades to determine which religious practices receive constitutional protection.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The essential religious practices doctrine has been applied in several landmark cases: Mohd Hanif Quareshi v. State of Bihar (1958, cow slaughter not essential to Islam); Acharya Jagdishwarananda v. Commissioner of Police (2004, tandava dance not essential to Ananda Marga); Shayara Bano v. Union of India (2017, triple talaq not essential to Islam); Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala (2018, age-based bar at Sabarimala violated Articles 14 and 25). The 2018 Sabarimala verdict by a 5-judge bench was 4-1 with Justice Indu Malhotra dissenting.

The current 9-judge review bench led by CJI Surya Kant will reconsider the scope of the doctrine itself.

**Q10**  **CONCEPT KIT**

 <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>	GS2 — Articles 25 and 26, judicial review, religious freedom; GS1 — Religion in Indian society.
 <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b>	Essential religious practices, Article 26, religious denomination, Shirur Mutt, Sabarimala.
 <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b>	Crediting Kesavananda Bharati (basic structure) or Indra Sawhney (Mandal) for the essential religious practices doctrine — those are entirely different doctrines.
 <b>EXAM TIP</b>	UPSC 2019 tested Sabarimala; know that the essential religious practices doctrine originated in Shirur Mutt (1954) and has been applied in successive cases.
 <b>INTERVIEW</b>	Should secular courts determine what is essential to a religion, or is this an internal matter for religious communities?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 11**

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[Source](#) →

**ASSERTION (A)**

The Assertion-Reason question below is about India's Blue Economy. Assertion (A): India has a vast Exclusive Economic Zone but most fishing operations occur within 12 nautical miles of the coast.

**REASON (R)**

The Indian fishing fleet is dominated by small mechanised boats that lack the range and capability for deep-sea operations. Select the correct answer:

**A** Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A ✓

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

**C** A is true but R is false

**D** A is false but R is true

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A. India's EEZ is approximately 24 lakh sq km but most fishing is concentrated near the coast. The reason is precisely the structural composition of India's fishing fleet — small mechanised boats under 20 m length cannot safely operate in deep-sea conditions, lack the range, and lack the cold storage for multi-day voyages.

NITI Aayog's Blue Economy strategy specifically addresses this gap by proposing capacity building of larger vessels (20-50 m). **ANALYSIS:** This is the structural cause of India's under-utilised marine resources.






**CONCEPT NOTE**

India is the world's second largest fish producer (after China), contributing approximately 8% of global fish production with seafood exports of Rs 62,408 crore in FY 2024-25 and supporting approximately 30 million livelihoods. However, inland aquaculture accounts for approximately 63% of India's fish production while marine fisheries account for only 37%.

Within marine fisheries, most operations are concentrated in territorial waters (within 12 nm) — leaving the EEZ beyond 12 nm largely untapped. NITI Aayog's phased Blue Economy strategy proposes Phase 1 (2025-28) for foundation building, Phase 2 (2029-32) for scale-up, and Phase 3 (2033 onwards) for full maturity.

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) launched in 2020 with Rs 20,050 crore outlay is the flagship fisheries scheme. India is a member of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

**Q11**  **CONCEPT KIT**

 <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>	GS3 — Blue economy, fisheries, EEZ utilisation; GS2 — UNCLOS, IOR, SAGAR doctrine.
 <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b>	Blue economy, deep-sea fisheries, EEZ, PMMSY, fishing fleet capacity, marine resources.
 <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b>	Assuming India's marine fisheries are dominant — actually inland aquaculture is 63% and marine fisheries is only 37% of India's fish production.
 <b>EXAM TIP</b>	UPSC 2022 tested PMMSY; know the launch year (2020) and that India is the second-largest fish producer globally.
 <b>INTERVIEW</b>	Can deep-sea fishing meaningfully expand without disrupting traditional coastal fisherfolk communities?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 12**

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[Source →](#)

Match List I (Institution) with List II (Role) related to India's nuclear ecosystem:

LIST I (INSTITUTION)	LIST II (ROLE)
<b>A. BARC</b>	1. Apex R&D laboratory under DAE; nuclear fuel and reactor research
<b>B. IGCAR</b>	2. Fast reactor R&D; located at Kalpakkam
<b>C. NPCIL</b>	3. Operates India's commercial PHWR fleet
<b>D. AERB</b>	4. Independent nuclear safety regulator

**A** A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4 ✓

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

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

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

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** A-1 (BARC = Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, apex R&D under DAE, located in Mumbai), B-2 (IGCAR = Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, fast reactor R&D, located at Kalpakkam), C-3 (NPCIL = Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited, operates the commercial PHWR fleet), D-4 (AERB = Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, independent nuclear safety regulator established 1983). **ANALYSIS:** These are the four pillars of India's nuclear ecosystem with distinct mandates — research, fast reactor R&D, commercial operations, and safety regulation.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

India's nuclear ecosystem is structured under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), which reports directly to the Prime Minister. BARC (Mumbai) is the apex R&D facility focused on the entire nuclear fuel cycle and reactor technologies. IGCAR (Kalpakkam) was established in 1971 specifically for fast reactor R&D, and operated the Fast Breeder Test Reactor since 1985 — providing the foundation for the PFBR. NPCIL operates 24 commercial PHWRs and 2 BWRs, with installed capacity of 8,180 MW. BHAVINI (Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited) is a separate entity that operates the PFBR. AERB is the independent regulator established in 1983 — it is functionally autonomous but reports to the Atomic Energy Commission. Other key entities: Nuclear Fuel Complex (Hyderabad, fuel fabrication), Heavy Water Board (Mumbai), Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL).

**Q12**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 — Nuclear ecosystem, DAE, S&T institutions; GS2 — Independent regulators (AERB), institutional design.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

BARC, IGCAR, NPCIL, BHAVINI, AERB, DAE, three-stage programme.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing BHAVINI (operates PFBR fast reactor) with NPCIL (operates PHWR fleet) — they have distinct operational mandates.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2020 tested DAE institutions; remember the four pillars — BARC, IGCAR, NPCIL, AERB — with their distinct roles.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is the AERB sufficiently independent of the DAE to be considered a credible nuclear safety regulator, or does its administrative location create a conflict of interest?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 13**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Cesses and surcharges levied by the Union government have grown significantly as a share of gross tax revenue. Which of the following constitutional implications follows directly from this?

- A States receive a higher share because cesses are added to the divisible pool
- B States receive a lower effective share because cesses and surcharges are excluded from the divisible pool under Article 270 ✓
- C The Finance Commission has the power to compel inclusion of cesses in the divisible pool
- D The Comptroller and Auditor General must approve all cess collections

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Cesses and surcharges are excluded from the divisible pool of taxes under Article 270, which means they are NOT shared with states. As cesses and surcharges have grown from approximately 6% of gross tax revenue (2009-10) to approximately 16% (2022-23), the effective share of states has fallen even though the headline statutory share remains at 41% of the divisible pool.

**ANALYSIS:** This is the structural mechanism by which the Union has reduced effective devolution without changing the headline percentage.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Article 270 of the Constitution specifies which Union taxes are shared with states. It explicitly excludes surcharges (Article 271 — surcharges are for Union purposes only) and cesses (which are levied for specific purposes).

The 14th Finance Commission under Y.V. Reddy raised the states' share from 32% to 42%; the 15th Finance Commission retained it at 41%. The 16th Finance Commission under Arvind Panagariya is expected to submit its report by October 2025 for the period 2026-31.

Examples of cesses: Health and Education Cess, GST Compensation Cess, Krishi Kalyan Cess, Swachh Bharat Cess. The 15th FC recommended that the Centre limit cesses and surcharges to a strict minimum, but this recommendation has not been implemented.

Critics argue this practice undermines the spirit of cooperative federalism while the Centre argues that some cesses fund earmarked national priorities.

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

GS2 — Article 270, Article 271, fiscal federalism, Centre-State relations; GS3 — Public finance, divisible pool.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Article 270, Article 271, cesses, surcharges, divisible pool, fiscal federalism, cooperative federalism.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking cesses are part of the divisible pool — they are explicitly excluded under Article 270.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2018 tested Finance Commission; know that Article 270 excludes cesses and surcharges from the divisible pool.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should constitutional amendment cap the use of cesses and surcharges to prevent erosion of fiscal federalism?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 14**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about Independent Directors in Indian listed companies:

- 1 Independent Directors are defined under Section 149(6) of the Companies Act 2013.
- 2 SEBI LODR Regulations 2015 require at least one-third of the board to be independent directors in listed companies.
- 3 Independent Directors must complete a mandatory certification by IICA before appointment.
- 4 The Audit Committee of a listed company must consist entirely of independent directors.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

A 1, 2 and 3 only

B 1, 3 and 4 only

C 2 and 4 only

D 1, 2, 3 and 4 ✓

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** All four statements are correct. Section 149(6) of the Companies Act 2013 defines an Independent Director. SEBI LODR Regulations 2015 require at least 1/3 of the board to be independent directors (or 50% if the chairman is a non-independent or promoter director). The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) maintains the Independent Director Database since 2019, and certification is mandatory for new appointments. The Audit Committee under SEBI LODR must consist entirely of independent directors with the chairman being independent. **ANALYSIS:** This is the multi-layered regulatory framework for independent directors in India.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Companies Act 2013 introduced the concept of Independent Director as a mandatory board composition requirement, replacing the more flexible 1956 Act framework. Tenure: maximum 2 consecutive terms of 5 years each, with a 3-year cooling-off period before reappointment. The Schedule IV of the Companies Act prescribes a Code of Conduct for Independent Directors. SEBI LODR Regulations 2015 (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) provide additional governance requirements for listed companies. The IICA Independent Director Database, set up under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, maintains a pool of qualified candidates and conducts the mandatory certification examination. The Kotak Committee (2017) on corporate governance recommended several reforms that subsequently became part of SEBI regulations. India has approximately 5,400 listed companies on BSE and NSE.

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

GS3 — Corporate governance, SEBI, Companies Act 2013; GS2 — Independent regulatory bodies, conflict of interest.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Independent Director, Section 149(6), SEBI LODR, IICA, Audit Committee, Kotak Committee.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Saying the Audit Committee can have a mix of independent and non-independent directors — under SEBI LODR for listed companies, it must consist entirely of independent directors.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC has tested corporate governance; know Section 149(6) defines Independent Director and SEBI LODR requires at least 1/3 of board to be independent.

 **INTERVIEW**

Are independent directors in promoter-controlled Indian companies genuinely independent, or does their dependence on promoter goodwill compromise their effectiveness?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 15**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Which of the following correctly describes the gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) on the IUCN Red List, and the legal protection it receives in India?

- A Vulnerable; Schedule II of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972
- B Endangered; Schedule III of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972
- C **Critically Endangered; Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 ✓**
- D Near Threatened; Schedule IV of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972

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**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**


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**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The gharial is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and receives the highest level of protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. It is also listed under Appendix I of CITES, prohibiting international trade.

The species is the only surviving member of the family Gavialidae and is distinct from crocodiles and alligators. The largest wild population is in the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, established in 1979.

**ANALYSIS:** The combination of IUCN Critically Endangered status, Schedule I protection, and CITES Appendix I represents the maximum legal protection available for any species in India.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The IUCN Red List has nine categories: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Least Concern, Data Deficient, Not Evaluated. The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 has six schedules: Schedule I and II provide highest protection (no hunting, harshest penalties); Schedule III and IV provide lower-tier protection; Schedule V lists vermin (no protection); Schedule VI lists protected plants.

The National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary was established in 1979 and spans Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh along approximately 600 km of the Chambal River. Other Critically Endangered species in India include the red-crowned roofed turtle, Great Indian Bustard, Bengal florican, Indian vulture, and several gibbon species.

The Wildlife Protection Amendment Act 2022 restructured the schedules.

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

GS3 — Wildlife conservation, IUCN, biodiversity, sand mining; GS3 — Environmental protection law.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Gharial, IUCN Critically Endangered, Schedule I, CITES, National Chambal Sanctuary, sand mining mafia.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing the gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Critically Endangered) with the mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*, Vulnerable) — they share habitats but have different conservation status.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 tested IUCN status; remember the gharial is Critically Endangered and Schedule I — the highest protection level.

 **INTERVIEW**

Can flagship species conservation succeed when the underlying threat is illegal sand mining backed by political and economic interests?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 16**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the Sabarimala temple case:

- 1 The 2018 verdict in *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala* was delivered by a 5-judge bench by 4-1 majority.
- 2 Justice Indu Malhotra was the sole dissenter and argued that constitutional courts should not interfere in religious practices essential to faith.
- 3 The 2018 verdict allowed women aged 10 to 50 to enter the Sabarimala temple.
- 4 The current 9-judge review bench is headed by CJI Surya Kant.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** All four statements are correct. The 2018 Sabarimala verdict was delivered by a 5-judge bench (CJI Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar, R.F. Nariman, D.Y. Chandrachud, and Indu Malhotra) by 4-1 majority.

Justice Indu Malhotra dissented, arguing that "rationality cannot be invoked to invalidate religious practices." The verdict allowed women aged 10 to 50 to enter the temple. The current 9-judge review bench is led by CJI Surya Kant.

**ANALYSIS:** This is a complete and accurate statement of the Sabarimala case facts.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The Sabarimala temple is located in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala, dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, attracting 40-50 million devotees annually during the Mandala-Makaravilakku season (November-January). The age restriction was based on the tradition that Lord Ayyappa is a Naishtika Brahmachari (celibate deity) — women of menstruating age were considered an obstacle to this celibacy.

Despite the 2018 verdict, no woman in the 10-50 age group has formally entered the temple under court protection due to mass protests in Kerala. The 2019 reference to a 9-judge bench framed seven questions about the scope of Articles 25, 26, the essential religious practices doctrine, and the relationship between individual and group religious rights.

The temple is managed by the Travancore Devaswom Board, a statutory body under the Kerala government.

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

GS2 — Articles 25 and 26, judicial review, religious freedom; GS1 — Religion and gender in Indian society.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Sabarimala, essential religious practices, NALSA, Article 26, religious denomination, gender equality.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Saying the 2018 verdict was unanimous — it was 4-1 with Justice Indu Malhotra dissenting.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2019 tested Sabarimala; remember the 4-1 split and the role of the dissenting opinion.

 **INTERVIEW**

Justice Malhotra argued courts should respect religious autonomy. Is this view consistent with India's commitment to gender equality?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 17**

of 25

[Source →](#)

In the context of media regulation in India, which of the following pairs the entity with its correct constitutional or statutory source?

- A Information and Broadcasting — Concurrent List Entry 31
- B Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act — enacted in 1995 ✓
- C TRAI jurisdiction over broadcasting — under the Constitution Article 19(2)
- D Press Council of India — established under the IT Rules 2021






**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act was enacted in 1995 to regulate cable television networks in India. Information and Broadcasting falls under Union List Entry 31 (NOT Concurrent List).  
 TRAI's jurisdiction over broadcasting is under the TRAI Act 1997 as amended in 2000 (NOT under Article 19(2)). The Press Council of India was established under the Press Council Act 1978 (NOT under IT Rules 2021).  
**ANALYSIS:** This question tests precise knowledge of the regulatory framework.

**📖 CONCEPT NOTE**

India's media regulatory framework includes: Press Council of India (Press Council Act 1978, statutory body for print media self-regulation); Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 (cable TV networks); TRAI Act 1997 (telecom and broadcasting regulator); Cinematograph Act 1952 (film certification); IT Act 2000 (digital intermediaries); IT Rules 2021 (social media and OTT regulation); Cable TV Rules; the proposed Broadcasting Services Regulation Bill (pending).  
 Information and Broadcasting falls under Union List Entry 31: "Posts and telegraphs; telephones, wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communication." MIB (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) is the apex policy ministry for media.  
 The TRP Policy 2026 was notified by MIB as executive guidelines, not statutory legislation.

**Q17**  **CONCEPT KIT**

 <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>	GS2 — Media regulation, Union List Entry 31, MIB, statutory bodies; GS3 — Digital governance.
 <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b>	Cable TV Act 1995, Press Council Act 1978, TRAI Act 1997, IT Rules 2021, Union List Entry 31.
 <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b>	Placing Information and Broadcasting on the Concurrent List — it is on the Union List (Entry 31).
 <b>EXAM TIP</b>	UPSC has tested media regulation; know that I&B is a Union List subject and the Press Council was established in 1978.
 <b>INTERVIEW</b>	Should India have a single converged media regulator covering print, TV, OTT, and digital, or do the different forms of media require distinct regulatory frameworks?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 18**

of 25

[Source →](#)
**ASSERTION (A)**

The Assertion-Reason question below is about RBI's policy stance. Assertion (A): The RBI MPC paused rate cuts in April 2026 despite earlier aggressive easing because of rising external risks.

**REASON (R)**

Further rate cuts would widen the interest rate differential with the US Federal Reserve, accelerating capital outflows and rupee depreciation. Select the correct answer:

**A** Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A ✓

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

**C** A is true but R is false

**D** A is false but R is true

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A. The RBI MPC paused after 125 bps of cumulative cuts since February 2025 because of multiple external risks — Iran conflict, energy shock, and rupee pressure. The interest rate differential argument (R) is one of the key reasons: when Indian rates are cut while US rates remain higher, foreign portfolio investors find Indian fixed-income assets relatively less attractive, leading to capital outflows that further depreciate the rupee.

R correctly explains why the pause was strategically necessary. **ANALYSIS:** This is a textbook A-R pair where the reason is the causal mechanism.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The RBI MPC has paused rates in both February 2026 and April 2026 after a cumulative 125 bps of cuts from February 2025 to December 2025 — moving the repo rate from a peak of 6.50% to the current 5.25%. India operates under a managed floating exchange rate regime — the rupee floats but the RBI intervenes to smooth excessive volatility. The current rupee level around Rs 95 to the US dollar is the historic low. India's strategic petroleum reserves cover only approximately 9.5 days of imports, making the country highly vulnerable to crude oil price spikes from West Asia. Approximately 60% of India's crude imports transit through the Strait of Hormuz. India imports approximately 85% of its crude requirement.

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


GS3 — Monetary policy, exchange rate, capital flows; GS2 — India's external sector exposure.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Repo rate, neutral stance, capital outflows, interest rate differential, rupee depreciation.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking interest rate parity is the only factor — exchange rate dynamics also depend on inflation differentials, current account, and risk sentiment.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested currency dynamics; know that capital flows respond to interest rate differentials and risk perception.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India accept a weaker rupee as a competitive advantage for exports, or defend the currency through aggressive intervention?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 19**

of 25

[Source →](#)

World Health Day is observed annually on April 7. The World Health Organization (WHO) is headquartered in which city, and India hosts which of WHO's six regional offices?

- A Headquarters in New York; India hosts no WHO regional office
- B Headquarters in Geneva; India hosts the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO)
- C **Headquarters in Geneva; India hosts the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) ✓**
- D Headquarters in Rome; India hosts the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO)

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**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**


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**✓ EXPLANATION**

FACT: WHO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland (NOT Rome, which is FAO; not New York, which is the UN HQ). WHO's SEARO (South-East Asia Regional Office) is hosted by India in New Delhi.

WHO has six regional offices: WHO Africa (AFRO, Brazzaville), Americas (PAHO, Washington), Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO, Cairo), Europe (EURO, Copenhagen), South-East Asia (SEARO, New Delhi), and Western Pacific (WPRO, Manila). ANALYSIS: India hosts SEARO — making New Delhi the WHO regional capital for South-East Asia.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

WHO was founded on April 7, 1948 — World Health Day commemorates this founding and has been observed annually since 1950. WHO has 194 member states.

India is a founding member. The current Director-General is Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

WHO's major initiatives include smallpox eradication (declared eradicated 1980), polio eradication (nearly complete), the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), and the Expanded Programme on Immunisation. India has the world's largest TB burden (~28% of global cases) and is implementing the National TB Elimination Programme with a target of TB-free India by 2025.

UN agencies in Rome: FAO, WFP, IFAD. UN agencies in Geneva: WHO, ILO, WTO, WIPO, UNCTAD, OHCHR, WMO, UNHCR. UN HQ is in New York.

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

GS2 — UN system, WHO, international health governance; GS3 — Public health, disease eradication.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

WHO, World Health Day, SEARO, IHR 2005, smallpox eradication, India hosting.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing WHO HQ (Geneva) with FAO HQ (Rome) or UN HQ (New York) — these are three distinct locations for three distinct UN entities.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2021 tested WHO; remember India hosts SEARO in New Delhi.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India use its hosting of WHO SEARO to assert greater leadership in global health governance, especially on equitable access to medicines and vaccines?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 20**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about Article 280 of the Constitution and the Finance Commission:

- 1 The Finance Commission is constituted by the President of India every five years.
- 2 The Finance Commission's recommendations are binding on the Union Government under Article 280.
- 3 The Finance Commission consists of a Chairman and four other members.
- 4 The 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya, will make recommendations for the period 2026 to 2031.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

**A** 1, 3 and 4 only ✓

**B** 1 and 4 only

**C** 2, 3 and 4 only

**D** 1, 2, 3 and 4

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Statements 1, 3, and 4 are correct. Statement 2 is **INCORRECT** — the Finance Commission's recommendations are **NOT** legally binding on the Union Government.

They are advisory in nature; the Union Government places them before Parliament along with an Action Taken Report. By convention, most major recommendations are accepted, but there is no constitutional compulsion.

**ANALYSIS:** This is a critical distinction — the constitutional architecture relies on convention and political accountability rather than binding force.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The Finance Commission is constituted by the President under Article 280 every five years (or earlier if necessary). It consists of a Chairman and four other members appointed by the President.

The qualifications of members are specified in the Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1951 — the Chairman should have experience in public affairs, and the other members should be (a) high court judge or qualified to be one, (b) special knowledge of finance and accounts, (c) wide experience in financial matters and administration, (d) special knowledge of economics. The 16th Finance Commission was set up in November 2023 with Arvind Panagariya as Chairman, with terms of reference covering 2026-31 and the report due by October 2025.

Panagariya was previously the first Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog (2015-2017).

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

GS2 — Article 280, Finance Commission, constitutional bodies, fiscal federalism; GS3 — Public finance.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Article 280, Finance Commission, advisory body, Action Taken Report, divisible pool.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Saying Finance Commission recommendations are binding — they are advisory, though most are accepted by convention.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2018 tested Finance Commission; know it has 1 Chairman + 4 members and is advisory not binding.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should Finance Commission recommendations be made constitutionally binding to strengthen fiscal federalism, or would that undermine democratic accountability of fiscal decisions?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 21**

of 25

[Source →](#)

In the context of India's nuclear energy ecosystem, which of the following correctly describes the role of BHAVINI?

- A Apex regulator of nuclear safety in India
- B Operator of India's commercial PHWR fleet at Tarapur, Kakrapar, and Kudankulam
- C **Public sector enterprise specifically incorporated to build and operate Fast Breeder Reactors ✓**
- D Research and development laboratory for thorium-based reactors at Trombay

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**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**


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**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** BHAVINI (Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited) is a public sector enterprise incorporated in 2003 specifically to build and operate Fast Breeder Reactors. It operates the PFBR at Kalpakkam — the only entity in India with this mandate.

The apex regulator is AERB (Atomic Energy Regulatory Board); the commercial PHWR operator is NPCIL; thorium R&D is conducted at BARC and IGCAR. **ANALYSIS:** BHAVINI's narrow focus on fast reactor operations distinguishes it from other DAE entities.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

BHAVINI was incorporated in 2003 under the Companies Act and is wholly owned by the Government of India. Its sole mandate is to construct, commission, and operate fast breeder reactors.

The PFBR at Kalpakkam achieved first criticality in April 2026 — making BHAVINI the operator of India's first commercial-scale fast breeder reactor. The institutional separation from NPCIL (commercial PHWRs) and IGCAR (R&D) ensures clear accountability.

BHAVINI plans to construct two additional commercial fast reactors after PFBR. The Atomic Energy Act 1962 provides the legal framework for nuclear activities in India and places all nuclear materials, facilities, and activities under central government control.

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

GS3 — Nuclear ecosystem, fast breeder reactors, DAE; GS2 — Public sector enterprises, institutional design.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

BHAVINI, PFBR, Kalpakkam, fast breeder reactor, three-stage programme, NPCIL distinction.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing BHAVINI with NPCIL — NPCIL operates the commercial PHWR fleet (Stage 1); BHAVINI operates the PFBR (Stage 2).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2020 tested DAE institutions; remember BHAVINI is the dedicated fast reactor operator.

 **INTERVIEW**

Was creating a separate entity (BHAVINI) for fast reactors institutionally necessary, or could NPCIL have managed fast reactors alongside its PHWR operations?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 22**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Match List I (Maritime Zone under UNCLOS) with List II (Distance from Baseline):

LIST I (MARITIME ZONE)	LIST II (DISTANCE)
<b>A. Territorial Sea</b>	1. 0 to 12 nautical miles
<b>B. Contiguous Zone</b>	2. 12 to 24 nautical miles
<b>C. Exclusive Economic Zone</b>	3. Up to 200 nautical miles
<b>D. Continental Shelf (extended)</b>	4. Up to 350 nautical miles in some cases

**A** A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4 ✓

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

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

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

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** A-1 (Territorial Sea: 0 to 12 nautical miles, full sovereignty), B-2 (Contiguous Zone: 12 to 24 nm, customs and immigration enforcement), C-3 (EEZ: up to 200 nm from baseline, sovereign resource rights with free navigation), D-4 (Continental Shelf: extending up to 350 nm in some cases under Article 76, seabed resource rights). **ANALYSIS:** This is the standard four-zone hierarchy under UNCLOS that every coastal state must understand.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1994. India ratified UNCLOS in 1995.

The four maritime zones are measured from the baseline (the low water line along the coast). Within the Territorial Sea, the coastal state has full sovereignty (subject only to innocent passage).

The Contiguous Zone allows enforcement of customs, fiscal, immigration, and sanitary laws. The EEZ confers sovereign resource rights but preserves freedom of navigation, overflight, and laying of submarine cables.

The Continental Shelf extends naturally — and under Article 76, a state can claim seabed resources up to 350 nm if it can scientifically demonstrate the continental margin extends that far. India has filed an extended continental shelf submission with the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS).

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

GS2 — UNCLOS, maritime law, India's ocean policy; GS3 — Blue economy, seabed resources, deep-sea mining.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

UNCLOS, territorial sea, contiguous zone, EEZ, continental shelf, baseline, Article 76.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing the EEZ (200 nm, resource rights only) with the Territorial Sea (12 nm, full sovereignty) — these are fundamentally different zones.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC 2022 tested UNCLOS zones; memorise the four-zone hierarchy: 12 nm (territorial), 24 nm (contiguous), 200 nm (EEZ), 350 nm (continental shelf).

 **INTERVIEW**

Should the international community revise UNCLOS to address new challenges like deep-sea mining, climate change impacts on baselines, and autonomous maritime systems?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 23**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the SHANTI Act 2025 and India's civil nuclear sector:

- 1 The SHANTI Act enables private sector participation in civil nuclear projects up to 49% equity.
- 2 The Atomic Energy Act 1962 previously placed all nuclear activities under central government monopoly.
- 3 India targets 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047.
- 4 The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010 allows operators to seek recourse against equipment suppliers under Section 17(b).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** All four statements are correct. The SHANTI Act 2025 (Strategic and Hybrid Atomic Nuclear Technology Initiative) opens civil nuclear projects to private participation up to 49% equity, breaking the state monopoly that the Atomic Energy Act 1962 had established.

India targets 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047 (announced in 2024) — a major scale-up from the current 8,180 MW. The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010 contains the controversial Section 17(b) which allows the operator to seek recourse against equipment suppliers — this provision has deterred foreign nuclear vendors. **ANALYSIS:** This is a complete picture of India's civil nuclear policy framework.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The Atomic Energy Act 1962 provides the legal framework for nuclear activities in India and historically placed all nuclear materials, facilities, and activities under central government monopoly. The SHANTI Act 2025 represents a paradigm shift by enabling private participation in commercial nuclear power, while preserving Stage 1, 2, and 3 strategic technology under government control.

The 100 GW target by 2047 requires building reactors at a pace 5-10x current capacity addition — necessitating private sector capital and expertise. The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010 was passed in the context of the India-US nuclear deal but Section 17(b) (supplier liability) has been a major hurdle for foreign reactor sales — companies like Westinghouse and Areva have cited this provision as a deterrent.

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

GS3 — Nuclear energy policy, private sector, SHANTI Act; GS2 — India's civil nuclear diplomacy, NSG waiver.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

SHANTI Act, Atomic Energy Act 1962, Civil Liability Act 2010, Section 17(b), 100 GW target.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking the Civil Liability Act follows the international convention strictly — Section 17(b) is unique to India and has been controversial.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC has tested India's nuclear policy; know SHANTI Act 2025 opens private participation up to 49% and the Section 17(b) issue.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India amend Section 17(b) of the Civil Liability Act to attract foreign nuclear vendors, or does supplier liability serve a legitimate public policy purpose?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 24**

of 25

[Source →](#)

Which of the following best describes the legal status of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 in relation to the Constitution?

- A Enacted under State List Entry 17 (Forests, wildlife)
- B Enacted under Concurrent List after the 42nd Amendment shifted Forests and Wildlife from State List to Concurrent List in 1976 ✓
- C Enacted under Article 252 with consent of all states
- D Enacted under Article 253 to give effect to international conventions

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 was enacted under the Concurrent List. Until 1976, Forests and Wildlife were on the State List (Entry 17 of List II) — but the 42nd Constitutional Amendment shifted them to the Concurrent List (Entries 17A and 17B of List III).

This shift gave Parliament the power to legislate uniformly across India on wildlife protection, while still allowing states to make their own laws subject to Centre's primacy. **ANALYSIS:** This is a critical example of how the 42nd Amendment expanded Parliament's legislative competence.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act 1976 made several changes to the federal balance, including shifting Forests, Education, and Weights and Measures from the State List to the Concurrent List. This expansion of Parliament's legislative competence has been criticised as a centralising move during the Emergency period.

The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 was originally enacted on the basis of state consent under Article 252 — but after the 42nd Amendment, it became a Concurrent List subject. The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022 restructured the schedules and brought Indian wildlife law in line with CITES requirements.

India is a signatory to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity), and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

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

GS2 — 42nd Amendment, Centre-State relations, Concurrent List; GS3 — Wildlife protection, biodiversity.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

42nd Amendment, Concurrent List, Wildlife Protection Act, Forests, Article 252.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking Forests and Wildlife are still on the State List — they were moved to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Amendment 1976.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC has tested the 42nd Amendment; remember it shifted Forests, Education, and Weights and Measures from State to Concurrent List.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should environmental subjects be moved to a separate "Environment List" to reflect their cross-cutting nature, or does the Concurrent List adequately accommodate Centre-State coordination?

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**Question 25**

of 25

[Source →](#)

In which Indian Constitution List does "Information and Broadcasting" fall, and what is the implication for media regulation?

- A State List — states have exclusive jurisdiction
- B Concurrent List — both Centre and states can legislate
- C Union List — only the Centre can legislate ✓
- D Residuary subject — Parliament legislates by default

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Information and Broadcasting falls under Union List Entry 31, which reads: "Posts and telegraphs; telephones, wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communication." Only the Union Parliament can legislate on this subject. State governments have no constitutional authority to make laws regulating broadcasting — though they can regulate ancillary matters like cable operator licensing through state-specific laws.

**ANALYSIS:** This is why the TRP Policy 2026, IT Rules 2021, Cable TV Act 1995, and Cinematograph Act 1952 are all Central legislation/policy.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution divides legislative subjects into three lists: Union List (List I, 97 subjects, exclusive Union jurisdiction), State List (List II, 66 subjects, exclusive state jurisdiction subject to Article 249, 250, 252, 253), and Concurrent List (List III, 47 subjects, shared jurisdiction with Union primacy). Article 246 governs the distribution of legislative powers.

Information and Broadcasting on the Union List means the Centre has exclusive constitutional authority over print, television, radio, and digital media regulation. The MIB (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) is the apex policy ministry.

The Press Council of India (Press Council Act 1978) is a statutory self-regulatory body for print media. TRAI (TRAI Act 1997, amended 2000) shares jurisdiction over broadcasting with MIB.

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

GS2 — Seventh Schedule, Union List, distribution of legislative powers, Article 246; GS2 — Media regulation.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Union List Entry 31, MIB, Article 246, Seventh Schedule, Cable TV Act, IT Rules.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Thinking media regulation is on the Concurrent List — Information and Broadcasting is exclusively on the Union List (Entry 31).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC has tested the Seventh Schedule; remember Union List has 97 subjects and broadcasting is Entry 31.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should the constitutional placement of media regulation be revisited given the federal challenges of regulating regional languages, state-specific content, and local cultural sensitivities?

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*“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”*

— Chinese Proverb