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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

# Daily Quiz — April 17, 2026

17 April 2026



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## DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

# Daily Quiz — April 17, 2026

17 April 2026 · 13 Questions · Answers &amp; Explanations Included

**Question 1**

of 13

[Source →](#)

India's Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) operate under the Ministry of Home Affairs and number five distinct forces. Which of the following correctly identifies all five CAPFs?

- A CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and NSG
- B CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB ✓**
- C CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and Assam Rifles
- D CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, and NSG

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

**EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), all under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), are: **CRPF** (Central Reserve Police Force), **BSF** (Border Security Force), **CISF** (Central Industrial Security Force), **ITBP** (Indo-Tibetan Border Police), and **SSB** (Sashastra Seema Bal). The total combined strength is approximately 9.5 lakh personnel.

**ANALYSIS:** **NSG (National Security Guard)** is also under MHA but is officially classified as a "specialised counter-terror force" rather than a CAPF. **Assam Rifles** is administratively under MHA but operationally under the Army (Ministry of Defence) — making its CAPF status anomalous. The CAPF Conference of April 17, 2026 (the first PM-chaired one) brought together precisely these five forces.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

CAPFs differ from the **armed forces** (Army, Navy, Air Force — under MoD) and from **state police** (under state governments). Constitutionally, CAPFs operate primarily under **Article 355** — the Centre's duty to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance.

Each CAPF has a distinct statutory basis: CRPF Act 1949; BSF Act 1968; CISF Act 1968; ITBP Force Act 1992; SSB has executive-order origin with statutory framework being formalised. Functional roles: CRPF (largest, ~3.25 lakh personnel — internal security, anti-LWE, election duty); BSF (~2.65 lakh — Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh borders); CISF (~1.75 lakh — airports, PSUs, metros, critical infrastructure); ITBP (~90,000 — India-China LAC); SSB (~95,000 — Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders).

The Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) is the institutional mechanism for inter-agency intelligence integration.

**Q1**
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Including NSG or Assam Rifles in the CAPF list. NSG is a specialised counter-terror force; Assam Rifles is administratively MHA but operationally Army. Only the five named forces qualify as CAPFs proper.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 — Internal Security (CAPF roles, LWE, border security); GS2 — Polity (Article 355, MHA, Centre-state security cooperation).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

CAPF, CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, MHA, Article 355, MAC, Multi-Agency Centre, LWE, internal security, OGAS.

 **EXAM TIP**

Match each CAPF to its primary role and the border it guards — UPSC routinely tests force-to-role mapping. ITBP = LAC (China); BSF = Pak/Bangladesh; SSB = Nepal/Bhutan.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should Assam Rifles be reorganised as a full CAPF (currently dual-control) — does the unique Northeast operational environment justify the Army-MHA hybrid structure?

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**Question 2**

of 13

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Project Him Sarovar, launched in Ladakh on April 14, 2026 by LG Vinai Kumar Saxena, addresses water scarcity through a specific design approach. Which of the following best describes the project's core methodology?

- A Construction of three large multi-purpose dams across the Indus river system to generate hydropower and provide irrigation water
- B Creation of 50 small water bodies (each 40m × 30m × 2m deep) that capture and store snowmelt and glacial-melt that historically ran off unused ✓
- C Inter-basin water transfer from the Beas and Sutlej rivers to Ladakh through tunnel infrastructure across the Pir Panjal range
- D Installation of large-scale desalination plants converting salt-water lakes (Pangong Tso, Tso Moriri) to freshwater

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Project Him Sarovar creates **50 small water bodies**, each measuring approximately **40 metres × 30 metres × 2 metres deep** (~2,400 cubic metres each), distributed across Leh district (Nimoo, Nubra, Diskit) and Kargil district (Suru, Padum). The water bodies use **gravity-fed and solar lift mechanisms** to capture snowmelt and glacial-melt that previously ran off without being stored.

**ANALYSIS:** The project rejects the large-dam paradigm because Ladakh's fragile high-altitude ecosystem and seismic vulnerability make large reservoirs risky. Inter-basin transfer is geographically impractical — the Pir Panjal blocks westward transfer routes.

Desalination of high-altitude salt lakes is technically possible but extraordinarily energy-intensive and not part of the project. The decentralised storage model is climate-adaptive: as glacial retreat accelerates, distributed storage becomes more critical than centralised.






 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Ladakh is a **cold desert** — receiving less than 100 mm of annual precipitation, dependent on glacial and snow melt. Climate change accelerates glacial retreat (Himalayan glaciers losing 10–60 metres/year on average); some Ladakh glaciers retreat at twice the global average rate.

The 2023 ICIMOD assessment projected one-third of Hindu Kush Himalayan glaciers will disappear by 2100 even under 1.5°C warming. Compounding water stress: tourism (5+ lakh annual arrivals to Ladakh by 2024) and armed forces presence.

Project Him Sarovar implementation partners include the Indian Army, ITBP, and BRO. The project complements existing schemes — Jal Jeevan Mission (drinking water access), PMKSY (Per Drop More Crop micro-irrigation), and the National Mission on Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE). Sonam Wangchuk's community-led "ice stupa" innovation pioneered the principle that institutionalises in Project Him Sarovar.

**Q2**  **CONCEPT KIT**

 <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b>	Confusing Project Him Sarovar with the Indus Water Treaty regime — Him Sarovar deals with internal Ladakh water management, not transboundary water sharing with Pakistan.
 <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>	GS3 — Environment (cold desert ecosystem, glacial retreat, climate adaptation); GS1 — Geography (cold desert geography, Karakoram, Zaskar, Indian Himalayan Region).
 <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b>	Project Him Sarovar, Ladakh, snow harvesting, glacial retreat, ice stupa, NMSHE, Jal Jeevan Mission, PMKSY, cold desert, climate adaptation, Sonam Wangchuk.
 <b>EXAM TIP</b>	Know the three distinct Ladakh-relevant frameworks: NMSHE (climate adaptation), PMKSY (irrigation), and Project Him Sarovar (UT-specific water security).
 <b>INTERVIEW</b>	Should Ladakh's water security framework include the Sixth Schedule autonomy debate — and would tribal-area autonomy improve community-led water management?

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**Question 3**

of 13

[Source →](#)

The India-New Zealand FTA scheduled for signing on April 27, 2026 includes a structured visa pathway for Indian skilled workers. Which of the following correctly describes this provision?

- A Up to 10,000 Indian workers per year for 5 years, restricted to medical and IT professionals
- B Up to 5,000 Indian workers per year for an initial 3-year period, covering IT, healthcare, engineering, and hospitality skills ✓
- C Up to 2,500 Indian workers per year for 7 years, with an automatic permanent residency pathway after 4 years of employment
- D Up to 15,000 Indian workers per year, but limited to seasonal agricultural labour during the New Zealand harvest season

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The India-NZ FTA provides for **up to 5,000 skilled Indian workers per year for an initial 3-year period**.

Coverage includes IT/ITeS, healthcare professionals, engineering, and hospitality skills shortlisted by New Zealand based on its labour market shortages.

The pathway includes **simplified credential recognition** for Indian degrees in approved categories. **ANALYSIS:** The visa pathway addresses one of India's historic FTA priorities — services mobility — which had been blocked in earlier rounds by NZ's domestic political constraints.

The 5,000-cap is calibrated: large enough to be meaningful for India, contained enough to not overwhelm NZ's domestic labour market. There is no automatic permanent residency provision; that remains under NZ's domestic immigration policy.

Seasonal agricultural labour was not a primary focus of negotiations.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's FTA strategy 2024-2026 has accelerated significantly: India-UAE CEPA (operational since May 2022); India-Australia ECTA (operational since December 2022); India-EFTA TEPA (signed March 2024); India-UK FTA (signed 2026); India-NZ FTA (signing April 27, 2026). The India-NZ FTA targets doubling bilateral merchandise trade to USD 5 billion within 5 years (current ~USD 1.3 billion in 2024-25), USD 20 billion cumulative bilateral investment over 15 years.

India secures **zero-duty access** for 100% of its export tariff lines to NZ; in return, 95% of NZ tariff lines receive reduced Indian tariffs phased over 10 years. Sensitive sectors retained — Indian dairy farmer protection through tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) on dairy products, addressing concerns about Operation Flood-era cooperative dairy economy.

NZ is also a Five Eyes intelligence partner, making the FTA strategically relevant beyond trade.

**Q3**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Assuming India-NZ FTA provides full Mode 4 services liberalisation (free movement of natural persons). The actual provision is calibrated — 5,000 workers/year, 3-year initial period, specific skill categories.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — IR (India-NZ relations, Indo-Pacific, Five Eyes, diaspora diplomacy); GS3 — Economy (FTA negotiations, services mobility, dairy sector politics).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

India-NZ FTA, Bharat Mandapam, dairy TRQ, skilled visa pathway, Indo-Pacific, IPOI, Five Eyes, India FTA strategy, second-generation FTAs.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know India's major operational FTAs in chronological order — UAE CEPA (May 2022), Australia ECTA (Dec 2022), EFTA TEPA (March 2024), UK FTA (2026), NZ FTA (April 2026).

 **INTERVIEW**

Has India's post-RCEP FTA strategy successfully shifted from defensive to proactive engagement, or are sensitive-sector exemptions diluting the strategic gains?

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**Question 4**

of 13

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A Supreme Court bench ruled (April 17, 2026) that dowry givers cannot be prosecuted as aggrieved parties under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. Which specific provision was central to the Court's reasoning?

- A The provision that defines "dowry death" — death of a woman within seven years of marriage in connection with dowry demands
- B **The provision under the Dowry Prohibition Act that explicitly bars prosecution of the aggrieved party for statements made under the Act ✓**
- C The provision that defines and punishes cruelty by husband or his relatives toward a married woman
- D The provision under the Dowry Prohibition Act that punishes the act of demanding dowry from the bride or her family

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The bench of **Justices Sanjay Kumar and K. Vinod Chandran** relied centrally on **Section 7(3) of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**, which states: "Notwithstanding anything contained in any provision of this Act, a statement made by the person aggrieved by the offence shall not subject him to a prosecution under this Act." This provision specifically protects brides and their families from being prosecuted as dowry-givers when they file complaints about matrimonial cruelty. **ANALYSIS:** Section 304B/Section 80 BNS deals with dowry death and is not the protective shield in question.

Section 498A/Section 86 BNS defines cruelty but does not provide the prosecutorial bar. Section 4 of DPA punishes dowry demands.

The Court invoked Article 141 (binding nature of SC law) to standardise lower-court practice on this specific point.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 is India's primary anti-dowry statute. **Section 2** defines dowry; **Section 3** punishes giving and taking (minimum 5 years + ₹15,000 fine); **Section 4** punishes demanding dowry (6 months to 2 years + fine); **Section 4A** bans dowry advertising; **Section 7(3)** bars prosecution of aggrieved parties; **Section 8** makes offences cognisable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable.

NCRB data shows ~6,000+ dowry deaths annually across multi-year averages. Beyond DPA, dowry cruelty is addressed through **Section 498A IPC / Section 86 BNS** (cruelty) and **Section 304B IPC / Section 80 BNS** (dowry death within 7 years of marriage).

The Supreme Court in *Armesh Kumar v. State of Bihar* (2014) had imposed arrest safeguards for Section 498A complaints to prevent misuse. The April 2026 ruling complements that jurisprudence — protecting genuine complainants from counter-prosecution.

**Q4**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing IPC sections (498A, 304B) with Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 sections (86, 80). The BNS replaced the IPC effective July 2024; corresponding new section numbers must be known.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — Polity (SC interpretive role, Article 141, statutory interpretation); GS1 — Society (dowry as social institution, gender-based violence).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, Section 7(3), Section 86 BNS, Section 80 BNS, dowry death, Justices Sanjay Kumar and K. Vinod Chandran, Article 141, substantive equality, Armesh Kumar judgment.

 **EXAM TIP**

Memorise the IPC-to-BNS section mapping for the most-tested provisions: 302→103 (murder), 376→64 (rape), 498A→86 (cruelty), 304B→80 (dowry death).

 **INTERVIEW**

Does protecting dowry givers from prosecution risk softening the deterrent effect on the giving practice itself, or is it a necessary precondition for victim reporting?

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**Question 5**

of 13

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Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal announced India's FY26 patent filings rose 30.2% to a record level. What was the approximate share of domestic filings (by Indian residents/entities) in this total?

- A Approximately 35% — foreign filings continued to dominate as multinationals sought broader Indian market protection
- B Approximately 50% — domestic and foreign filings reached parity for the first time in FY26
- C **Approximately 70% — domestic filings significantly outpaced foreign filings, reflecting maturing Indian R&D** ✓
- D Approximately 85% — domestic filings now overwhelmingly dominate, with foreign filings declining year-over-year

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** India's **FY26 patent filings reached 1,43,729** (up from 1,10,375 in FY25, a +30.2% YoY growth). **Domestic filings reached 99,721** — accounting for **69.4% of total filings** (rounding to approximately 70%), up from 61.8% the previous year.

Domestic filings grew at +46.2% YoY, while foreign filings grew at only +4.3% YoY. **ANALYSIS:** This represents the maturing of India's domestic R&D ecosystem — Indian universities (IITs, IISc, IISER), pharma companies (Sun Pharma, Dr. Reddy's, Cipla, Biocon), and tech firms are filing patents at significantly higher rates. Foreign filings continue but have not grown at the same pace.

The 70% domestic share is a structural shift compared to previous decades when foreign filings often constituted a majority.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's patent regulator is the **Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trademarks (CGPDTM)** under the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**. Patent examination time has been reduced from over 5 years (pre-2016) to under 18 months in 2026 through office modernisation.

The **Startup India IPR fee waiver** provides 80% rebate on patent filing fees for recognised startups. Other policy drivers: National IPR Policy 2016, Patent (Amendment) Rules 2024, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Anusandhan National Research Foundation (NRF) Act 2023 (₹50,000 crore mobilisation target by 2028).

India ranked **39th in the WIPO Global Innovation Index 2024** — up from 81st in 2015. However, India's gross R&D spending remains low at ~0.65% of GDP (vs world average 2.7%), so the patent surge reflects rising R&D output efficiency rather than spending volume.

Comparable countries: South Korea (4.8% R&D/GDP), Israel (5.4%), USA (3.4%), China (2.4%).

**Q5**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Conflating patent filings with patent grants — filing is the application; granting is the post-examination outcome. India's grant rate has been improving but remains lower than US/EU.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 — Science & Technology (IP regime, R&D ecosystem); GS3 — Economy (Innovation-led growth, Startup India, PLI).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Indian Patent Office, CGPDTM, DPIIT, National IPR Policy 2016, Startup India, NRF, R&D as percentage of GDP, WIPO GII, PCT, TRIPS, Patent Amendment Rules 2024.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know the institutional architecture: CGPDTM (regulator) under DPIIT (department) under Ministry of Commerce & Industry.  
WIPO is the international body; TRIPS is the international agreement.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India increase R&D spending to 2% of GDP at the cost of immediate welfare priorities, or is the current 0.65% a defensible balance given India's development stage?

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**Question 6**

of 13

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The Karnataka High Court anchored its menstrual leave ruling in two specific constitutional concepts — the right to life with dignity AND the doctrine that allows special provisions for women. Which two articles of the Constitution were primarily invoked?

- A Article 14 (equality) and Article 19 (freedoms) — emphasising freedom of movement and equal treatment
- B **Article 21 (right to life with dignity) and Article 15(3) (special provisions for women and children) ✓**
- C Article 39 (DPSP — equal pay) and Article 42 (DPSP — humane working conditions)
- D Article 38 (DPSP — promote welfare) and Article 47 (DPSP — improve public health)

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Karnataka High Court anchored the ruling in **Article 21** (Right to Life with Dignity) and **Article 15(3)** (constitutional empowerment of the State to make special provisions for women and children). The Court held menstrual health is integral to dignity under Article 21, and that menstrual leave is not preferential treatment but corrective accommodation under Article 15(3).

**ANALYSIS:** Article 14 (equality) was referenced as the foundational equality principle, but the operative special-provision authority is Article 15(3). DPSPs (Articles 38, 39, 42, 47) are non-justiciable and cannot independently sustain a court order — though they inform judicial reasoning.

The substantive equality doctrine recognises that formal equality (treating men and women identically) can perpetuate substantive inequality when starting positions differ.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's constitutional framework on women's rights includes: **Article 14** (equality before law); **Article 15(1)** (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex); **Article 15(3)** (special provisions for women and children — overriding Article 15(1) prohibition); **Article 16(2)** (no discrimination in public employment); **Article 39(d)** (equal pay for equal work — DPSP); **Article 39A** (free legal aid — DPSP); **Article 42** (just and humane working conditions, maternity relief — DPSP); **Article 51A(e)** (fundamental duty to renounce practices derogatory to women's dignity). State-level menstrual leave provisions exist in Bihar (1992 — 2 days/month for government employees), Kerala (2023 — for higher education students), and now Karnataka (workplace policy).

Globally: Spain became the first EU country to legislate menstrual leave (2023); Japan (1947), South Korea (1953), and Indonesia (1948) have older statutory provisions, though uptake is often limited by stigma. Maternity Benefit Act 1961 (amended 2017) provides 26 weeks paid maternity leave in India.

**Q6**
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Citing only Article 14 (equality) without recognising that menstrual leave specifically requires Article 15(3) — the special-provisions authority — to justify gender-specific accommodation without violating equality.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — Polity (Article 21, Article 15(3), substantive equality jurisprudence); GS1 — Society (women's labour force participation, gender stigma).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Karnataka High Court, menstrual leave, Article 21, substantive equality, Article 15(3), Dr. Jaya Thakur PIL, unorganised sector workers, Maternity Benefit Act, dysmenorrhoea, workplace gender justice.

 **EXAM TIP**

Distinguish Article 15(3) (women + children) from Article 15(4) (socially-educationally backward classes/SC/ST) and Article 15(5) (educational reservation) — these are separate sub-clauses with different protected groups.

 **INTERVIEW**

Does mandated menstrual leave risk creating a hidden hiring penalty against women, reversing the intended effect — and how should policy design mitigate this?

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**Question 7**

of 13

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The Ayush Chintan Shivir 2026 was held to align India's traditional medicine systems with Viksit Bharat 2047. Which of the following correctly identifies the systems formally covered under the AYUSH framework?

- A Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy (the original AYUSH only)
- B Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, Homoeopathy ✓
- C Ayurveda, Yoga, Acupuncture, Reiki, Homoeopathy
- D Ayurveda, Yoga, Reiki, Pranayama, Homoeopathy

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

**FACT:** The AYUSH framework formally covers **Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy**. Sowa-Rigpa (Tibetan medicine, practised in Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of Himachal Pradesh) was formally added in 2010, expanding the original AYUSH system.

The Ministry of AYUSH was created in November 2014 (upgraded from Department of AYUSH under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare). **ANALYSIS:** Acupuncture and Reiki are not part of the AYUSH framework — they are practised in India but not officially regulated under AYUSH. Pranayama is a component of Yoga, not a separate system.

The Ministry oversees research councils (CCRAS for Ayurveda, CCRYN for Yoga & Naturopathy, CCRUM for Unani, CCRS for Siddha, CCRH for Homoeopathy), educational institutions, and the regulatory framework for traditional medicine.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The Ministry of AYUSH was created in November 2014, upgrading the Department of AYUSH that operated under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Sowa-Rigpa was added in 2010.

Key institutions: **CCRAS** (Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences); **CCRYN** (Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy); **CCRUM** (Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine); **CCRS** (Central Council for Research in Siddha); **CCRH** (Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy); **PCIM&H** (Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy). Educational flagships: All India Institute of Ayurveda (Delhi), AIIA Goa, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga.

International: **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine, Jamnagar** (established 2022) — first WHO outpost dedicated to traditional medicine. India's AYUSH industry size is approximately ₹1.5 lakh crore (USD 18+ billion); annual exports ~USD 500 million.

Approximately 8 lakh registered AYUSH practitioners and ~700 educational institutions.

**Q7**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Forgetting Sowa-Rigpa's 2010 inclusion or assuming AYUSH includes Acupuncture/Reiki. AYUSH is a precise statutory category with six recognised systems, not all "alternative medicine."

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — Health & Schemes (Ministry of AYUSH, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, NHM); GS1 — Society & Culture (Indian medical traditions, knowledge systems).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

AYUSH, Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, Homoeopathy, Ayush Chintan Shivir 2026, Viksit Bharat 2047, WHO Global Centre Jamnagar, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, PCIM&H, ICMR-AYUSH.

 **EXAM TIP**

AYUSH research councils all start with CCR (Central Council for Research) followed by the system code: CCRAS, CCRYN, CCRUM, CCRS, CCRH. Memorise this pattern.

 **INTERVIEW**

Has AYUSH integration with primary healthcare outpaced the evidence base — and how should policy reconcile cultural validation with rigorous RCT requirements?

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**Question 8**

of 13

[Source →](#)

The Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Private Limited (TSMPL) facility at Dholera, Gujarat — notified under SEZ Rules in April 2026 — is significant in India's semiconductor strategy primarily because:

- A** It is India's first commercial semiconductor wafer fabrication (fab) plant — moving India from chip design to actual silicon manufacturing ✓
- B** It is India's largest defence-grade semiconductor research facility, focused entirely on military chip development for DRDO
- C** It is the only semiconductor facility globally permitted to manufacture sub-3 nanometre chips outside the United States and Taiwan
- D** It is India's first chip-packaging-only facility, with all wafer fabrication outsourced to overseas foundries

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing facility at **Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), Gujarat** is **India's first commercial wafer fabrication (fab) plant**, marking India's transition from being primarily a chip-design destination to having actual silicon manufacturing capability. The fab will produce silicon wafers using **mature-node technology** in partnership with **Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC) of Taiwan**.

The SEZ notification under **SEZ Rules, 2006 (amended 2025)** grants tax benefits, streamlined customs procedures, and single-window clearances. **ANALYSIS:** India has multiple announced facilities but Dholera is the first commercial-scale fab.

Sub-3nm chips are not currently being manufactured at Dholera (the focus is mature-node, more relevant for automotive, industrial, and consumer electronics). India's separate ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, Packaging) facilities — including Tata at Jagiroad, Assam, and Micron at Sanand — are distinct from wafer fabrication.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's semiconductor strategy operates under the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**, established under MeitY in 2021 with USD 10 billion outlay (approximately ₹76,000 crore). Major approved projects: **Tata-PSMC fab at Dholera (Gujarat)** — first commercial wafer fab; **Tata ATMP at Jagiroad (Assam)**; **Micron ATMP at Sanand (Gujarat)**; **CG Power-Renesas-Stars Microelectronics ATMP at Sanand**; **Kaynes Semicon ATMP at Sanand**.

The SEZ Rules, 2006 framework (amended 2025) governs special economic zone benefits — duty-free imports, tax holidays, single-window clearance. Dholera SIR (Special Investment Region) is part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), conceived as a greenfield smart industrial city.

India's semiconductor demand is projected to reach USD 110 billion by 2030 (currently ~USD 35 billion) — driven by mobile, automotive, defence, and IoT applications. Key policy frameworks: ISM, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) for semiconductors, Modified Scheme for Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing.

**Q8**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing wafer fabrication (fab) with assembly-testing-marking-packaging (ATMP). Fab actually produces silicon wafers; ATMP packages already-fabricated chips.  
India has multiple ATMP plants but Dholera is the first commercial fab.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 — Science & Technology (semiconductor strategy, ISM, supply chain security); GS3 — Economy (PLI schemes, Atmanirbhar Bharat, FDI in manufacturing).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

India Semiconductor Mission, ISM, Tata-PSMC, Dholera SIR, ATMP, wafer fabrication, mature node, MeitY, PLI semiconductors, DMIC, Modified Scheme.

 **EXAM TIP**

Distinguish India's semiconductor projects by stage: Dholera (fab) vs Jagiroad/Sanand (ATMP). Also know the global vs Indian terminology — "fab" = wafer fabrication; OSAT = outsourced semiconductor assembly and test (similar to ATMP).

 **INTERVIEW**

Does India's mature-node focus risk locking the country out of cutting-edge (sub-3nm) chip manufacturing — or is it a defensible first step?

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**Question 9**

of 13

[Source →](#)

Israel and Lebanon entered a US-brokered ceasefire on April 17, 2026, with an unusual mediating party. Which country emerged as a backchannel mediator between Washington and Tehran in connection with the West Asia tensions?

- A Saudi Arabia, through Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's direct engagement with both administrations
- B Pakistan, through diplomatic and intelligence channels facilitating indirect Washington-Tehran communication ✓
- C Qatar, leveraging its existing Gaza-related mediation framework with Hamas and Iran
- D Turkey, building on President Erdogan's personal relationship with Iranian leadership

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** **Pakistan** emerged as the unconventional backchannel mediator between Washington and Tehran during the April 2026 West Asia tensions and the resulting Israel-Lebanon 10-day ceasefire. Pakistan's diplomatic and intelligence channels facilitated indirect communication on nuclear enrichment terms and ceasefire architecture.

**ANALYSIS:** Saudi Arabia and the UAE remain the primary Gulf interlocutors but did not play the backchannel role in this specific cycle. Qatar continues its Gaza-Hamas mediation but did not feature prominently in the Lebanon-Iran track.

Turkey's engagement with Iran is direct rather than as a US backchannel. Pakistan's role reflects its complex geopolitical positioning — close defence ties with the US, simultaneous Iran border relationship, and post-Houthi-disruption interest in Strait of Hormuz stability.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Israel-Lebanon 10-day ceasefire announced by President Trump began at 21:00 GMT but faced immediate violations with reports of continued shelling in Khiam and Dibbine in southern Lebanon. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun consulted Hezbollah leadership while Pakistan facilitated US-Tehran indirect dialogue.

The wider context: West Asia energy disruption sparked by Strait of Hormuz risk, India's ~60% Hormuz crude exposure, and global oil markets oscillating around USD 95-100/barrel for Brent. India's diplomatic posture has prioritised energy import continuity (discounted Iranian crude option), Chabahar Port investment protection (under repeated US sanctions waiver requests), and broader strategic autonomy.

The April 2026 dynamics also affected India's 2025-26 trade data — March exports to West Asia collapsed 57.95%; total Indian merchandise exports for FY26 reached USD 441.78 billion, only marginally above FY25 levels.

**Q9**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Assuming backchannel mediation is always conducted by traditional Gulf powers (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar). Pakistan's role demonstrates that non-traditional intermediaries can emerge based on specific bilateral relationships.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — IR (West Asia diplomacy, US-Iran, India-Pakistan, Indo-Pacific energy security); GS3 — Economy (oil import bill, CAD, Strait of Hormuz).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, Pakistan backchannel, Hezbollah, Strait of Hormuz, Brent crude, India energy security, Chabahar Port, strategic autonomy.

 **EXAM TIP**

Track which countries have historically played mediator roles: Norway (Sri Lanka, Israel-Palestine Oslo Accords); Switzerland (Algiers Accord US-Iran 1981); Qatar ( Hamas-Israel 2024); now Pakistan in this West Asia cycle.

 **INTERVIEW**

What does Pakistan's emergence as a US-Iran backchannel reveal about India's regional positioning — and should India seek a similar mediator role for its long-term strategic interest?

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**Question 10**

of 13

[Source →](#)

In the West Bengal Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the Supreme Court ruled that voting rights depend on the appellate tribunal status of the voter's exclusion appeal. Which of the following correctly describes the Court's ruling?

- A All voters whose names were excluded retain voting rights pending appeal disposal, regardless of tribunal status
- B Voters whose appeals are accepted by appellate tribunals retain voting rights; those with pending appeals cannot vote ✓
- C Only voters whose appeals are filed within 30 days of exclusion retain voting rights; late filers are permanently excluded
- D All exclusion decisions are stayed pending Supreme Court review; no voter may be excluded under SIR until the SC issues final guidance

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

**FACT:** The Supreme Court ruled that voters whose appeals against electoral roll exclusion (under West Bengal's SIR) have been **accepted** by appellate tribunals retain voting rights, but those with **pending** appeals cannot vote. The Court directed Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to publish supplementary electoral rolls promptly after each tribunal disposal, ensuring real-time integration of accepted appeals.

**ANALYSIS:** Over **34 lakh appeals are pending across 19 appellate tribunals**, each headed by a retired High Court judge. Default-retention of voting rights for all excluded voters (option A) was rejected as it would dilute the SIR's electoral integrity purpose.

The 30-day filing window restriction (option C) was not part of the ruling. The Court did not impose a blanket stay on SIR (option D) but instead provided procedural clarity.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is conducted under the Representation of the People Act, 1950, which empowers the Election Commission to revise electoral rolls. Standard revision is **summary revision** (annual updating); SIR is invoked when more thorough verification is required, often triggered by allegations of large-scale roll inaccuracies.

West Bengal SIR has generated significant litigation given political sensitivities about voter exclusion. The 19 appellate tribunals are each headed by a retired High Court judge — independent quasi-judicial bodies.

**Process:** ERO (Electoral Registration Officer) initially excludes; voter appeals to tribunal; tribunal disposes; if accepted, ERO publishes supplementary roll; the voter then becomes eligible to vote. The Supreme Court's ruling balances electoral integrity (preventing fraud) with voting rights (preventing wrongful exclusion).

**Constitutional anchors:** Article 326 (universal adult suffrage), Article 324 (Election Commission's superintendence), and Article 21 (right to participate in democratic life as part of dignity).

**Q10**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing summary revision (annual) with Special Intensive Revision (SIR — exceptional, triggered by specific concerns). Different procedures and litigation patterns apply.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — Polity (Election Commission, electoral roll revision, RP Act 1950, voter rights); GS2 — Governance (administrative law, quasi-judicial tribunals).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

SIR, Special Intensive Revision, Representation of the People Act 1950, Electoral Registration Officer, West Bengal electoral rolls, appellate tribunals, retired HC judges, Article 326, Article 324.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know the institutional architecture: Article 324 (ECI); Article 326 (universal adult suffrage); RP Act 1950 (electoral roll preparation); RP Act 1951 (election conduct). The two RP Acts have distinct subject matter.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should the SIR framework be standardised nationally with independent oversight, or do regional variations reflect legitimate state-level political contexts?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

**Question 11**

of 13

[Source →](#)

The newly described plant species *Dillenia nagalim* was discovered along the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur. The species is found within which global biodiversity hotspot, and what is the most distinctive feature of the species?

- A Western Ghats and Sri Lanka Hotspot; species features red flowers and coniferous needle-like foliage
- B Himalaya Hotspot; species features blue flowers and adaptation to alpine high-altitude conditions above 4,000 metres
- C Indo-Burma Hotspot; species features bright yellow flowers and double-serrated leaves, found at 250–350 m altitude ✓
- D Sundaland Hotspot; species features purple flowers with carnivorous insect-trapping leaves

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** *Dillenia nagalim* was discovered in **Kamjong district, Manipur**, along the Indo-Myanmar border — within the **Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot**. The small shrub features **bright yellow flowers and double-serrated leaves**, found at **250–350 m altitude** in tropical deciduous forests.

It belongs to family Dilleniaceae and flowers in May–June. The species name "nagalim" honours the Naga people of the discovery region.

**ANALYSIS:** Manipur falls within the Indo-Burma hotspot (not Himalaya, which covers the Himalayan mountain belt). The Western Ghats and Sri Lanka hotspot covers India's southwest.

Sundaland covers parts of Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia) but does not extend to Northeast India. Dilleniaceae is a flowering plant family — the genus is not coniferous or carnivorous.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India hosts **three global biodiversity hotspots**: (1) **Western Ghats and Sri Lanka** — India's southwest, exceptional plant and amphibian endemism; (2) **Himalaya** — the mountain belt from northern Pakistan to Yunnan, China, high alpine biodiversity; (3) **Indo-Burma** — Northeast India and mainland Southeast Asia, globally highest freshwater fish diversity and consistent new species discoveries. A region qualifies as a hotspot under the **Conservation International** criteria if it has: (a) at least 1,500 endemic vascular plant species, AND (b) has lost at least 70% of its primary vegetation.

India's total biodiversity hotspot area: ~330,000 sq km (about 10% of India's land area). Manipur, like the rest of Northeast India, falls within Indo-Burma.

The neighbouring Painted Leopard Gecko (*Eublepharis pictus*) was recorded in Bastar, Chhattisgarh — central India is at the boundary of multiple biogeographic zones. Northeast India yields consistent new species discoveries given its terrain complexity and historically limited scientific survey coverage.

**Q11**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Assuming Northeast India is part of the Himalaya Hotspot — it is not; it falls in the Indo-Burma Hotspot, which has a distinct biogeographic character (Southeast Asian affinities).

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 — Environment (biodiversity hotspots, species discovery, Northeast India biodiversity); GS1 — Geography (biogeographic regions, Indian subcontinent flora).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Indo-Burma Hotspot, Conservation International, Dillenia nagalim, biodiversity hotspot criteria, Western Ghats, Himalaya hotspot, Northeast India biodiversity, Manipur.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know the Indian three hotspots and their approximate geographic extents.  
Hotspot criteria: 1,500+ endemic vascular plants AND 70%+ primary vegetation loss.

 **INTERVIEW**

With Northeast India consistently yielding new species discoveries, what institutional framework should India build for systematic biodiversity surveys aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's 30×30 commitments?

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**Question 12**

of 13

[Source →](#)

A World Economic Forum outlook report projected global GDP would expand by approximately USD 56 trillion over the next five years, driven by specific technology categories. Which of the following correctly identifies the primary drivers identified by the report?

- A Oil and gas exploration, traditional banking expansion, and shipping infrastructure
- B **Artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and digital innovation** ✓
- C Coal mining expansion, industrial dairy production, and land-based agriculture
- D Defence procurement, conventional pharmaceuticals, and traditional retail expansion

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The WEF outlook report identified **artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and digital innovation** as the primary drivers of the projected USD 56 trillion global GDP expansion over five years. Top beneficiary sectors include **IT services, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism** (leisure).

**ANALYSIS:** Sectors flagged as **at-risk** in the same report include real estate, electronics (paradoxically, due to AI-driven supply restructuring), insurance/pensions (AI-driven claims and risk modelling reducing intermediary roles), and bulk chemicals. The report is part of WEF's broader Future of Jobs and Future of Industries outlook tradition.

India is positioned to benefit significantly given its IT services dominance, advanced manufacturing growth (under PLI schemes), and healthcare R&D ecosystem.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** is a Geneva-based international NGO founded by Klaus Schwab in 1971. Its annual flagship event is the **Davos Annual Meeting** in Switzerland (January).

Major WEF outputs: **Global Competitiveness Report, Global Risks Report, Future of Jobs Report, Travel & Tourism Development Index, Global Gender Gap Report, Energy Transition Index**. WEF is distinct from the World Bank (lending institution), IMF (monetary fund), and OECD (developed-country club).

India is a long-standing WEF participant; PM Modi has addressed the Davos plenary multiple times. The April 2026 report on AI-driven GDP expansion comes amid global discourse on AI regulation — including India's evolving framework on AI governance, the EU AI Act, the US Executive Order on AI, and the UK AI Safety Institute.

India's domestic AI ecosystem includes the Bhashini language platform, AI Mission (₹10,372 crore outlay), and India AI Innovation Centre.

**Q12**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing WEF (World Economic Forum) with WTO (World Trade Organization) — WEF is a private foundation publishing reports and convening; WTO is an intergovernmental rules-based body for trade.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 — Economy (AI economic impact, future of work, global growth projections); GS3 — Science & Technology (AI, quantum computing, digital transformation).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

World Economic Forum, Davos, USD 56 trillion AI growth, Future of Jobs Report, India AI Mission, Bhashini, EU AI Act, AI governance, quantum computing.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know the major WEF reports: Global Competitiveness Index, Global Risks Report, Future of Jobs, Energy Transition Index, Travel & Tourism Index, Gender Gap Index.  
UPSC frequently tests rankings from these.

 **INTERVIEW**

Will AI-driven productivity growth lead to broader prosperity, or will it concentrate gains in capital-owning classes — and what redistributive policy framework should India adopt to manage the transition?

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**Question 13**

of 13

[Source →](#)

India and Germany marked 75 years of diplomatic relations in April 2026, with a commemorative logo launched in Berlin during the Foreign Office Consultations. Which of the following correctly identifies the co-chairs of these consultations?

- A External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar (India) and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock
- B **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri (India) and German State Secretary Dr. Géza Andreas von Geyr** ✓
- C Prime Minister Narendra Modi (India) and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz
- D Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (India) and German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius

## ANSWER &amp; ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The India–Germany Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) were co-chaired by **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** (India) and German State Secretary **Dr. Géza Andreas von Geyr**. The commemorative logo for 75 years of diplomatic relations was launched on **April 14, 2026, in Berlin**.

**ANALYSIS:** Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) are an institutionalised dialogue mechanism between Foreign Ministry leadership at the **Foreign Secretary level** — distinct from minister-level Joint Commissions or summit-level engagements (PM-Chancellor). India-Germany FOC has been the principal periodic working-level coordination forum since the 1990s.

The April 2026 FOC focused on green hydrogen cooperation, defence procurement (including the P-75I submarine programme), skilled worker mobility, and Indo-Pacific maritime security.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India-Germany diplomatic relations were established in 1951, four years after Indian independence and six years after WWII. Major bilateral frameworks: **Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC)** at PM-Chancellor level (held biennially); **Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)** at Foreign Secretary level (annual); **Strategic Dialogue** on security; **Joint Commission for Industrial and Economic Cooperation**. Bilateral trade in 2024-25 was approximately USD 30 billion, with Germany among India's top European trading partners.

Areas of expanding cooperation: **green hydrogen** (India-Germany Green Hydrogen Roadmap signed 2022); **P-75I submarine programme** (Indian Navy's next-generation submarine procurement, with German ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems as a leading contender); **skilled worker mobility** (German labour shortage in nursing, IT, engineering opening pathways for Indian professionals); **Indo-Pacific** (Germany's 2020 Indo-Pacific Guidelines aligning with India's strategic outlook); **R&D cooperation** including the Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC).

**Q13**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing the levels of India-Germany engagement: PM-Chancellor (IGC), Foreign Secretary level (FOC), and minister-level (Joint Commissions). UPSC tests these distinctions.

 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 — IR (India-Germany relations, Indo-Pacific, defence cooperation, skilled migration); GS3 — Science & Technology (green hydrogen, R&D cooperation, IGSTC).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

India-Germany 75 years, Foreign Office Consultations, FOC, Vikram Misri, Géza Andreas von Geyr, Inter-Governmental Consultations, IGC, P-75I submarine, green hydrogen, Indo-Pacific Guidelines, IGSTC.

 **EXAM TIP**

Foreign Secretary is India's highest-ranking diplomat (a career civil servant), distinct from the Foreign Minister (External Affairs Minister, a political appointee).  
Know this distinction.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India formalise a strategic partnership treaty with Germany on the model of India-France or India-Japan — and what would such a treaty add beyond the existing FOC and IGC architecture?

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