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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Current Affairs Quiz — May 4, 2026

4 May 2026



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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Current Affairs Quiz — May 4, 2026

4 May 2026 · 32 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1 of 32

Mission Drishti, launched on May 3, 2026, is described as the world's first satellite of which type?

- A Hyperspectral Earth observation satellite
- B OptoSAR satellite combining SAR and Multispectral Imaging ✓
- C All-electric ion-propulsion communication satellite
- D Dual-frequency GNSS navigation satellite

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Mission Drishti, launched by Bengaluru startup GalaxEye via SpaceX Falcon 9 on May 3, 2026, is the world's first OptoSAR satellite — a platform that fuses Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) and Multispectral Imaging (MSI) on a single spacecraft. SAR enables all-weather, day-night imaging using microwave pulses; MSI provides colour spectral detail.

Combined, the satellite achieves 1.2–1.8 m resolution imaging through clouds and in darkness — capabilities impossible for either sensor alone. The satellite weighs ~190 kg and orbits at ~500 km Sun-Synchronous Orbit.

GalaxEye plans a constellation of 8–12 satellites by 2029.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) uses microwave pulses to image the Earth's surface regardless of cloud cover or lighting conditions. "OptoSAR" is the fusion of optical (Multispectral) and SAR sensors on one satellite — previously this required separate platforms. GalaxEye was founded by IIT Madras alumni.

Q1  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 2

of 32

GalaxEye's Mission Drishti was launched aboard which rocket from which location?

- A ISRO PSLV-C61 from Sriharikota
- B SpaceX Falcon 9 from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California ✓
- C SpaceX Falcon Heavy from Kennedy Space Center, Florida
- D Arianespace Vega-C from Kourou, French Guiana

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Mission Drishti was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket (rideshare mission) from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, USA on May 3, 2026 at 12:29 PM IST. It was placed into a ~500 km Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO). SSO is preferred for Earth observation satellites because it maintains a consistent sun angle, enabling comparable imagery across time — essential for change detection.

Indian private space startups routinely use foreign launch vehicles for their missions while awaiting enhanced domestic capacity from ISRO and Skyroot Aerospace/AgniKul Cosmos.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO): A nearly polar orbit where the satellite passes over any given point at the same local solar time each day. Ideal for Earth observation — consistent lighting conditions for image comparison.

Vandenberg Space Force Base (California) is used for polar/SSO launches; Kennedy Space Center (Florida) is used for equatorial/ISS launches.

Q2  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 3

of 32

INS Mahendragiri, delivered to the Indian Navy on April 30, 2026, belongs to which ship class and project?

- A Visakhapatnam-class; Project 15B
- B Nilgiri-class stealth frigate; Project 17A ✓
- C Shivalik-class frigate; Project 17
- D Kamorta-class corvette; Project 28

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

INS Mahendragiri (hull Y-12654) is a Nilgiri-class stealth frigate built under Project 17A — the Indian Navy's follow-on frigate programme after Project 17 (Shivalik-class). Project 17A comprises 7 ships total: 4 built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, and 3 by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.

INS Mahendragiri is MDL's 4th (and final) P17A ship, making it the 6th P17A ship delivered overall. All P17A frigates are designed by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB) of the Indian Navy.

Key systems include BrahMos missiles, Barak-8 SAM, and advanced sonar suites.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Project 17A vs other projects: Project 15B = Visakhapatnam-class destroyers (larger, 7,400 tonnes); Project 17A = Nilgiri-class stealth frigates (medium); Project 28 = Kamorta-class anti-submarine corvettes (smaller). INS Mahendragiri marks the 100th vessel milestone for the Warship Design Bureau.

Named after Mahendragiri mountain, Eastern Ghats, Odisha.

Q3  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 4

of 32

Which Chief Justice of India declared Sikkim as India's first fully paperless state judiciary, and on what occasion?

- A CJI D Y Chandrachud at Supreme Court's Platinum Jubilee
- B CJI Sanjiv Khanna at National Law Day
- C **CJI Surya Kant at the National Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education ✓**
- D CJI B R Gavai at Constitution Day celebrations

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

CJI Surya Kant declared Sikkim the country's first fully paperless state judiciary at the National Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education held at Chintan Bhawan, Gangtok on May 2, 2026. The milestone coincides with Sikkim's 50th statehood year (it became India's 22nd state on May 16, 1975). Systems deployed include e-filing, Digital Case Management System (DCMS), NSTEP (National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes) for electronic summons via SMS/email, video conferencing, and e-Seva Kendras. CJI Surya Kant assumed office in November 2024; his predecessor CJI Sanjiv Khanna retired. CJI D Y Chandrachud retired in November 2024.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

CJI succession: D Y Chandrachud (retired Nov 2024) → Sanjiv Khanna → Surya Kant (current). NSTEP = National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes — the platform for electronic summons delivery. Sikkim's paperless judiciary is especially significant given its mountainous terrain that creates barriers to physical court access.

Q4  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 5

of 32

Which electronic process system allows courts in Sikkim to send summons via SMS and email, as part of its paperless judiciary initiative?

- A NGDRS (National Generic Document Registration System)
- B eCourts Services App
- C **NSTEP (National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes) ✓**
- D NALSA e-Lok Adalat Portal

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

NSTEP (National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes) is the platform through which Indian courts send electronic summons — delivered via SMS and email — and track acknowledgement of delivery. In Sikkim's fully paperless judiciary, NSTEP replaces physical summons delivery (which required bailiffs to travel to homes or workplaces).

NSTEP also tracks whether the summons was received, reducing the grounds for adjournment based on non-service of summons. It is part of the broader e-Courts Mission Mode Project, which has been rolled out in phases since 2007.

The National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) tracks real-time case pendency across 18,500+ courts.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

e-Courts Mission Mode Project phases: Phase I (2007–2015) = hardware; Phase II (2015–2023) = NJDG, video conferencing; Phase III (2023–2027) = AI, e-filing, paperless. Total pending cases in India: ~4.7 crore.

Supreme Court: ~83,000; High Courts: ~62 lakh; District courts: ~4.3 crore.

Q5  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 6

of 32

In the USTR Special 301 Report 2026, which country was designated as a "Priority Foreign Country" — the most serious category — for the first time since 2013?

- A China
- B India
- C Vietnam ✓
- D Indonesia

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

Vietnam was designated a "Priority Foreign Country (PFC)" in the 2026 USTR Special 301 Report — the first time since 2013. PFC is the most serious designation under the Special 301 framework and can trigger a formal Section 301 investigation, potentially leading to US trade sanctions or tariff increases.

Vietnam was flagged for inadequate copyright protection, weak pharmaceutical IP enforcement, and large-scale piracy of US software, films, and music. India was retained on the less severe "Priority Watch List" — as it has been for 34 consecutive years.

China remained on the Priority Watch List alongside India, Chile, Indonesia, Russia, Venezuela, and the newly added European Union.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

Special 301 tiers: (1) Priority Foreign Country — most severe, can trigger Section 301; (2) Priority Watch List — significant IP concerns; (3) Watch List — moderate concerns. The Special 301 Report is published annually under Section 182 of the Trade Act of 1974. 2026 = 38th edition.

India has been on Priority Watch List since 1993.

Q6  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 7

of 32

India's Section 3(d) of the Patents Act 1970 — frequently cited by USTR — prevents which practice in the pharmaceutical sector?

- A Compulsory licensing of patented drugs
- B Evergreening — patenting minor modifications of existing molecules ✓
- C Data exclusivity for clinical trial data
- D Patent linkage between drug approvals and patent status

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Section 3(d) of India's Patents Act 1970 (amended 2005) prohibits the grant of patents for new forms of known substances (salts, esters, polymorphs, etc.) unless they demonstrate significantly enhanced efficacy compared to the known substance. This prevents "evergreening" — the pharmaceutical industry practice of making minor modifications to an existing drug molecule just before patent expiry, obtaining a new patent, and extending market exclusivity.

The landmark *Novartis v. Union of India* case (Supreme Court, 2013) upheld Section 3(d), ruling that Gleevec (imatinib) did not meet the enhanced efficacy threshold. USTR considers Section 3(d) to improperly restrict patent protection; India defends it as essential for affordable generic medicines and public health.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Novartis v. Union of India (2013): SC upheld rejection of Gleevec patent under Section 3(d). This was a landmark ruling on patent law and access to medicines.

Compulsory Licensing (Section 84, Patents Act): different provision — allows a third party to produce a patented drug without patent holder's consent under public health emergencies. India granted its first CL in 2012 (Nexavar/sorafenib by Natco Pharma).

Q7  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 8

of 32

The Santa Marta Climate Conference (April 2026) was notable for being held outside which framework?

- A G20 Climate Finance Working Group
- B IPCC assessment cycle
- C UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) ✓
- D Basel Convention on hazardous wastes

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Santa Marta Climate Conference was held outside the UNFCCC framework — the primary multilateral climate treaty under which annual COP meetings occur. This was deliberate: the UNFCCC operates by consensus, meaning any single country (including major fossil fuel producers or exporters) can block or water down decisions. COP28 (Dubai, 2023) was the first COP to include language on "transitioning away from fossil fuels" — but "phase-out" language was blocked by oil-producing states. By meeting outside UNFCCC, the Santa Marta coalition of 57 countries (April 24–29, 2026) can develop binding national roadmaps without requiring global consensus. India, the US, and China — three of the world's largest emitters and fossil fuel users — were absent from Santa Marta.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 (Rio Earth Summit); entered into force 1994; 197 parties. Annual COPs: COP28 = Dubai 2023; COP29 = Baku, Azerbaijan 2024; COP30 = Belém, Brazil 2025; COP31 = 2026 (venue being finalised). The "coalition of the willing" approach — acting outside consensus frameworks — mirrors the approach used for nuclear non-proliferation and arms control when full global agreement was impossible.

Q8  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 9 of 32

The EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) entered full compliance from January 1, 2026. Which of the following is **NOT** one of the six sectors initially covered by CBAM?

- A Cement
- B Aluminium
- C Pharmaceuticals ✓
- D Hydrogen

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The six sectors covered by CBAM are: (1) Cement, (2) Iron and Steel, (3) Aluminium, (4) Fertilizers, (5) Electricity, and (6) Hydrogen. Pharmaceuticals are NOT included.

CBAM works by requiring EU importers to purchase "CBAM certificates" for the embedded carbon in their imports — at a price equivalent to what they would have paid under the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). During the transitional phase (October 2023 – December 2025), only reporting of embedded carbon was required.

From January 1, 2026, actual certificate purchases are mandatory. India exports significant steel and aluminium to the EU, making CBAM a significant trade concern.

India is exploring an India Border Adjustment Mechanism (IBAM) to retain carbon revenues domestically.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

CBAM transitional phase: Oct 2023 – Dec 2025 (reporting only). Full compliance: from Jan 1, 2026.

EU ETS carbon price: ~€55–65/tonne CO₂. IBAM (India Border Adjustment Mechanism): proposed Indian domestic carbon charge on the same sectors — if implemented, would give Indian exporters a credit against their CBAM liability, keeping revenue in India rather than flowing to EU.

Q9

 **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 10 of 32

India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) was expanded in January 2026 to cover 490 entities. Under which legislation is the CCTS established?

- A Environment Protection Act, 1986
- B Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022 ✓
- C Climate Change Action Plan Act, 2023
- D Electricity Act, 2003

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) was established under the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022 — which amended the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 to empower the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) to set up India's domestic carbon market. Under CCTS, 1 Indian Carbon Credit (ICC) = 1 tonne CO₂ equivalent. In January 2026, India added 208 new entities (petroleum refineries, petrochemicals, secondary aluminium, textiles), expanding total coverage to 490 entities. The scheme uses a "Perform, Achieve, Trade (PAT)" model initially, with carbon credits tradable on exchanges designated by the Ministry of Power (BSE/NSE). The scheme is regulated by BEE under the Ministry of Power, not the Ministry of Environment.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

BEE (Bureau of Energy Efficiency): Under Ministry of Power; implements PAT scheme, CCTS, energy labelling. PAT (Perform, Achieve, Trade): Energy efficiency trading scheme — entities that overperform their efficiency targets earn Escerts (Energy Saving Certificates) which they can sell to under-performers. CCTS is separate but uses similar infrastructure. ICC = Indian Carbon Credit.

Q10  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 11

of 32

Tamil Nadu became India's top marine fish producer in 2025 with 6.85 lakh tonnes production. What was Gujarat's production and what was the percentage change for Gujarat?

- A 7.1 lakh tonnes; -5%
- B 6.43 lakh tonnes; -15% ✓**
- C 5.8 lakh tonnes; -20%
- D 6.9 lakh tonnes; -2%

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Gujarat's marine fish production declined 15% to 6.43 lakh tonnes in 2025 — a significant drop that allowed Tamil Nadu (6.85 lakh tonnes, +1%) to overtake it as India's top marine fish producer. The decline in Gujarat is attributed to extended fishing ban periods in the Arabian Sea, cyclone disruptions, and overfishing pressure on some species. Tamil Nadu benefits from access to both the Bay of Bengal and the Palk Strait, with a large artisanal fishing fleet. The data comes from CMFRI (Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute), headquartered in Kochi, Kerala, under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

India's total marine fish production reached 35.7 lakh tonnes (+3%), with a retail value of Rs 97,702 crore. Top species: Indian mackerel (0.27 million tonnes).

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

CMFRI: Est. 1947; HQ Kochi; under ICAR, Ministry of Agriculture. Key distinction: CMFRI covers marine fisheries; CIFA (Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture) covers inland fisheries.

India's EEZ = 2.02 million sq km. India's coastline (mainland) = 7,516.6 km.

India is the 3rd largest fish producer globally (after China and Indonesia/Peru depending on year).

Q11  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 12 of 32

The MoSPI "Women and Men in India 2025" report (27th edition) revealed that female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is:

A 24.5 — still below male GER of 28.9

B 30.2 — above male GER of 28.9 ✓

C 28.9 — exactly equal to male GER

D 33.6 — well above male GER of 25.1

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The 27th edition of "Women and Men in India 2025" (MoSPI) reveals that the female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is 30.2 — surpassing male GER of 28.9. This means proportionally more women are enrolled in higher education than men — a Gender Parity Index (GPI) above 1.0.

GER is calculated as total enrolment (regardless of age) divided by the total population in the relevant official age group, multiplied by 100. This reversal is a remarkable change from historical patterns where male enrolment consistently exceeded female.

Drivers include Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, scholarship schemes, hostels for girls, and changing social attitudes. The report also found: sex ratio improved to 917 (from 904), rural female LFPR at 45.9%, rural TFR at replacement level 2.1.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

GPI (Gender Parity Index) = female GER / male GER. GPI = 1.0 means parity; >1.0 means female advantage; <1.0 means male advantage. For UPSC: India has achieved GPI > 1.0 in higher education as of 2025 — an important data point for Essay and GS1/GS2 questions on women's empowerment.

Sex ratio 917 is still below global average of ~980 — India has structural challenges despite improvement.

Q12  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 13 of 32

The Supreme Court ruling that allowed a 15-year-old rape survivor to terminate a 30-week pregnancy directed Parliament to amend which legislation?

- A Indian Penal Code (now BNS 2023) provisions on abortion
- B **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act** ✓
- C Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act
- D Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Supreme Court bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan allowed a 15-year-old rape survivor to terminate a 30-week pregnancy and directed Parliament to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act to extend the gestational limit for rape survivors. The current MTP Act (as amended in 2021) allows termination up to 20 weeks on the opinion of one registered medical practitioner, and up to 24 weeks for "vulnerable women" (rape survivors, minors, differently-abled) on the opinion of two practitioners.

Beyond 24 weeks, termination requires approval of a State Medical Board. The Court held that reproductive autonomy is a fundamental right under Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty) and that the woman's health and welfare must be the primary consideration.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

MTP Act timeline: MTP Act 1971 → MTP (Amendment) Act 2021 (raised upper limit from 20 to 24 weeks for vulnerable women). Current limits: General: up to 20 weeks; Vulnerable women (rape, minors, differently-abled, fetal abnormality): up to 24 weeks; Beyond 24 weeks: State Medical Board approval.

The SC's May 2026 direction would extend this further for rape survivors. Article 21 jurisprudence: Right to life includes reproductive autonomy — K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) upheld right to privacy, including bodily autonomy.

Q13  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 14 of 32

The LR-AShM missile successfully tested by India on May 2, 2026 has a range of:

- A 500 km
- B 800 km
- C 1,500 km ✓
- D 3,000 km

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India's Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LR-AShM) was successfully tested on May 2, 2026 from APJ Abdul Kalam Island (Integrated Test Range, ITR), Odisha — achieving a "perfect score" by striking its target at 1,500 km range. The missile travels at speeds exceeding Mach 5 (hypersonic speed, classified as above Mach 5) and reaches up to Mach 10 during its boost phase.

It uses a two-stage solid rocket motor with a quasi-ballistic trajectory and an unpowered glide phase — making it a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) type. DRDO Chairman Samir V Kamat stated the glide missile programme is more advanced than India's existing cruise missile variant.

BrahMos (supersonic, ~290–800 km depending on variant) is a cruise missile; LR-AShM at 1,500 km and Mach 5+ represents a new class.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Speed classification: Subsonic (Mach 5). BrahMos = supersonic cruise missile (Mach 2.8–3); LR-AShM = hypersonic glide vehicle (Mach 5–10).

APJ Abdul Kalam Island = Integrated Test Range (ITR), Wheeler Island, Odisha. DRDO = Defence Research and Development Organisation under Ministry of Defence.

Q14  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 15

of 32

PMGSY Phase IV launched in Odisha covers 827 road projects spanning 1,701.84 km. What is the Centre-State funding ratio for PMGSY-IV?

A 5410

B 4525

C 3640 ✓

D 3050

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

Under PMGSY Phase IV (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Phase IV), the Centre-State funding ratio is 60:40 — meaning the Central government provides 60% of the project cost and the State government bears 40%. For PMGSY-IV in Odisha specifically: 827 road projects, 1,701.84 km, Rs 1,698.04 crore cost, benefiting 898 habitations across 8 districts (Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Khordha, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Sambalpur). PMGSY was launched in 2000 under Atal Bihari Vajpayee government to provide all-weather connectivity to unconnected habitations. Earlier phases had 60:40 for general states; 90:10 for Himalayan/NE states. Phase IV maintains 60:40 for general states.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

PMGSY history: Phase I (2000–2019): connectivity to habitations 500+ population (250+ in hilly/tribal areas). Phase II: upgradation of existing rural roads. Phase III (2019–2025): road upgradation + safe mobility. Phase IV: new connectivity + aspirational districts + LWE areas. PMGSY is under Ministry of Rural Development; implemented through NRRDA (National Rural Roads Development Agency).

Q15  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 16

of 32

The Critical Mineral Recycling Incentive Scheme (IS-PCMR) approved 58 companies with a total outlay of Rs 1,500 crore. The scheme targets recycling of which materials?

- A Rare earth elements, gold, and platinum group metals
- B Lithium-ion batteries, e-waste, and secondary aluminium ✓
- C Silicon wafers, solar panels, and wind turbine magnets
- D Cobalt ores, manganese nodules, and deep-sea polymetallic nodules

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

The Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling (IS-PCMR) — approved by the Ministry of Mines — targets three main material streams: (1) Lithium-ion batteries (from EVs, electronics, and energy storage systems), (2) E-waste (electronic and electrical equipment waste), and (3) Secondary aluminium (recycled aluminium scrap). The scheme approved 58 companies with Rs 1,500 crore total outlay, Rs 5,000 crore pledged investment, and an 850 KTPA (kilo-tonne per annum) target capacity.

The application window was October 2, 2025 – April 1, 2026. The scheme is part of India's National Critical Mineral Mission — reducing import dependency for critical minerals (lithium, cobalt, nickel, etc.) essential for clean energy technology, EVs, and defence.

CONCEPT NOTE

National Critical Mineral Mission: Launched 2024; identifies 30 critical minerals for India. India imports ~75% of lithium needs.

Secondary aluminium = aluminium produced by recycling scrap rather than primary bauxite smelting — much lower energy intensity. KTPA = kilo-tonne per annum (thousand tonnes per year).

Q16  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 17 of 32

India's first barrier-less tolling system was launched at which toll plaza on which National Highway?

A Khed Shilapur, NH-48, Pune–Mumbai

B Chorayasi, NH-48, Surat–Bharuch ✓

C Rajokri, NH-48, Delhi–Gurgaon

D Vapi, NH-48, Ahmedabad–Mumbai

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India's first barrier-less tolling system was launched at the Chorayasi Toll Plaza on NH-48 (Surat–Bharuch corridor), Gujarat by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. The system uses ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras with AI analytics combined with FASTag RFID — enabling contactless, seamless toll deduction without vehicles needing to stop.

Traditional toll plazas require vehicles to slow/stop at boom barriers even with FASTag. In barrier-less tolling, vehicles pass at normal speed; cameras read the number plate or RFID tag; the toll account is automatically debited. Benefits: reduced congestion, lower emissions, faster journey times, less fuel wastage at toll plazas. NH-48 is the Delhi–Bangalore National Highway (passes through Surat–Bharuch corridor in Gujarat).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

FASTag: RFID-based electronic toll collection tag; issued by NHAI; mandatory for all 4-wheelers on national highways since February 2021. ANPR = Automatic Number Plate Recognition — AI-based camera system that reads vehicle registration plates.

Barrier-less tolling eliminates the boom gate while retaining electronic payment — the next evolution after FASTag. NHAI (National Highways Authority of India) is the implementing agency.

Q17  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 18 of 32

IPPB (India Post Payments Bank) launched a zero-balance savings account for which category of customers in May 2026?

- A Senior citizens above 60 years
- B Women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs) ✓
- C Scheduled Tribe communities in tribal districts
- D Divyangjan (persons with disabilities)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) launched a zero-balance, zero-charges savings account exclusively for women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs) — a product designed to advance financial inclusion under NRLM (National Rural Livelihoods Mission) objectives. Key features: maximum balance Rs 2 lakh; interest 2% (up to Rs 1 lakh) and 2.25% (Rs 1–2 lakh); quarterly interest payouts; zero charges on deposits, withdrawals, closure, and maintenance; linked with NABARD. SHGs are typically groups of 10–20 rural women who save collectively and access micro-credit — NRLM (now DAY-NRLM: Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–NRLM) has federated ~1 crore SHGs across India. IPPB leverages India Post's 1.65 lakh post offices and 3 lakh postmen as last-mile banking touchpoints.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

IPPB: Set up under India Post (Department of Posts); operates on payments bank model (cannot issue credit, cannot lend); maximum deposit per customer Rs 2 lakh. DAY-NRLM = Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission — largest SHG movement in the world.

NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) provides refinance and support for SHG-Bank linkage programme.

Q18  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 19 of 32

The C-ART (Coastal Atmospheric Research Testbed) observatory inaugurated in May 2026 is India's first east coast coastal weather research facility. Where is it located?

- A IIT Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- B Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh ✓
- C NIOT, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- D NIO, Goa

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Coastal Atmospheric Research Testbed (C-ART) open-field observatory was inaugurated at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on May 1, 2026 — making it India's first such facility on the east coast. It was inaugurated by Dr M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, at a cost of Rs 180 crore. It operates under Mission Mausam (India's modernised weather observation programme) and is managed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune. The east coast location is significant for improving cyclone prediction — India's eastern coastline (Bay of Bengal) is among the most cyclone-prone in the world. Complementary C-ART facilities exist at Bhopal, Mumbai, and Mahabaleshwar on the west coast and central India.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Mission Mausam: India's programme to modernise weather observation and forecasting infrastructure. IITM (Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology): Pune; under Ministry of Earth Sciences; runs India's Monsoon Mission.

Bay of Bengal cyclone season: typically October–December (post-monsoon) and April–June (pre-monsoon). IMD (India Meteorological Department) is the primary forecasting agency; C-ART provides research data to improve models.

Q19  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 20

of 32

Which country co-hosted the Santa Marta Climate Conference (April 24–29, 2026) along with the Netherlands?

A Brazil

B Colombia ✓

C Tuvalu

D Costa Rica

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

The Santa Marta Climate Conference was co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands. Santa Marta is a coastal city in Colombia, and the location was chosen to symbolise the vulnerability of tropical coastal nations to climate change. Colombia under President Gustavo Petro has been a vocal advocate for fossil fuel phase-out, positioning Colombia as a leader in climate ambition despite being an oil-exporting nation. The Netherlands, a major European emitter with significant coastal vulnerability (much of the country is below sea level), has taken a progressive stance on fossil fuel phase-out.

The next conference is planned for early 2027 in Tuvalu (one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations), co-hosted by Ireland.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Tuvalu: Pacific Island nation; one of the world's lowest-lying countries; existential threat from sea level rise; has signed treaties allowing citizens to migrate to Australia and New Zealand. Ireland: committed to significant fossil fuel phase-out; co-hosting signals European-Pacific solidarity.

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT): proposed by SIDS, Timor-Leste; not yet a formal UN treaty.

Q20  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 21 of 32

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) was established on May 1, 1956. It enforces which of the following legislation? (Select all that apply to ED's mandate)

- A PMLA 2002 and FEMA 1999
- B Competition Act 2002 and Consumer Protection Act 2019
- C PMLA 2002, FEMA 1999, and Fugitive Economic Offenders Act 2018 ✓
- D Income Tax Act 1961 and GST Act 2017

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) was established on May 1, 1956 — completing 70 years in 2026. It functions under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

ED enforces three primary legislations: (1) PMLA 2002 (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) — for attachment, adjudication, and prosecution in money laundering cases; (2) FEMA 1999 (Foreign Exchange Management Act) — for foreign exchange violations, replacing the older FERA 1973; and (3) Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA) 2018 — to confiscate assets of economic offenders who flee Indian jurisdiction (e.g., Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi). ED operates 10 Zonal Offices and 11 Sub-Zonal Offices across India, headquartered in New Delhi.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

PMLA vs FEMA: PMLA is criminal (money laundering, imprisonment possible); FEMA is civil (foreign exchange violations, penalties). FEOA 2018: Passed to deal with economic fugitives; threshold: Rs 100 crore+ default; allows confiscation of domestic + overseas assets.

ED was earlier called "Enforcement Unit" under FERA — renamed when FEMA replaced FERA in 1999–2000. Income Tax = CBDT jurisdiction; GST = GSTN/GST Council/CBIC jurisdiction.

Q21  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 22

of 32

The Citizenship (Amendment) Rules 2026 (effective April 30, 2026) introduced which key new feature for OCI cardholders?

- A Dual passport option for minors
- B e-OCI — electronic version of the OCI card with digital database ✓
- C OCI card valid as a voter ID in state elections
- D OCI holders allowed to purchase agricultural land

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Citizenship (Amendment) Rules 2026, notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs and effective April 30, 2026, introduced the e-OCI card — giving OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) cardholders the option of receiving either a physical card or a fully electronic card, with all data stored in a central digital database. The rules also introduced a fully online OCI application process for registration, renunciation, and acknowledgements. Importantly, the Rules prohibit dual passports for minor children. e-OCI aligns with India's broader Digital India and paperless governance push. OCI status gives holders life-long visa-free travel to India and rights to work, study, and own property (except agricultural/plantation land and farmhouses). OCI cardholders are NOT citizens and cannot vote, contest elections, or hold constitutional positions.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

OCI vs PIO vs NRI: PIO (Person of Indian Origin) cards were merged into OCI in 2015. OCI ≠ citizenship — they are not Indian citizens and have no voting rights. OCI cannot hold constitutional positions like President, Vice President, Governor. OCI can own property in India except agricultural/plantation land. Indian-origin people who were citizens of Pakistan/Bangladesh at Constitution time cannot get OCI.

Q22  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 23

of 32

The Exercise CINBAX-II 2026 (India–Cambodia bilateral military exercise) focuses on which type of operations?

- A Amphibious landing and naval warfare
- B Counter-terrorism in sub-conventional and semi-urban environments ✓
- C High-altitude warfare and glacier rescue
- D Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Exercise CINBAX-II 2026 (May 4–17, 2026) held at Techo Sen Phnom Thom Mreas Prov RCAF Training Centre, Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia, focuses on counter-terrorism operations in sub-conventional and semi-urban environments — under a UN Chapter VII mandate framework. The Indian contingent comprises 120 personnel from the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment; the Cambodian contingent has 160 personnel from the Royal Cambodian Army. Specialized training includes drone operations, mortar employment, and sniper tactics. CINBAX stands for Cambodia–India Bilateral Army Exercise.

The exercise is part of India's Act East Policy engagement with ASEAN nations and reflects expanding India-Cambodia defence ties under India's growing engagement with mainland Southeast Asia.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

UN Chapter VII: Authorizes military action when the Security Council determines a threat to peace — "peace enforcement" operations. Maratha Light Infantry: One of India's oldest infantry regiments; HQ Belgaum (Belagavi), Karnataka.

Act East Policy: India's strategic engagement with ASEAN and East Asia — successor to Look East Policy (2014 transition). India has bilateral army exercises with most ASEAN nations.

Q23  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 24

of 32

Ishank Singh, who set a world record in the Palk Strait crossing, was recognised by which record-keeping organisation?

- A Guinness World Records
- B World Records Union (WRU)
- C Universal Records Forum (URF) ✓
- D Limca Book of Records

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Seven-year-old Ishank Singh from Ranchi, Jharkhand, swam the Palk Strait — 29 km from Talaimannar, Sri Lanka to Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu in 9 hours 50 minutes on April 30, 2026 — and was recognised by the Universal Records Forum (URF). He became the youngest and fastest person to swim the Palk Strait, breaking the previous record of 10 hours 30 minutes set by Jay Jashwanth (then 10 years old) in 2019.

The crossing was escorted by the Sri Lankan Navy and Indian Coast Guard. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren congratulated Ishank.

The Palk Strait (between India and Sri Lanka) is one of the world's notable open water swimming routes — about 29 km across at its narrowest point.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Palk Strait geography: Narrow strait separating Tamil Nadu (India) from Sri Lanka; connects the Bay of Bengal with the Gulf of Mannar. **Dhanushkodi:** India's southernmost point accessible by road; near Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu.

Talaimannar: Northwestern tip of Sri Lanka. **Universal Records Forum (URF)** is a record certification body — different from Guinness World Records (UK-based, most internationally recognised).

The **Limca Book of Records** is India-specific (Coca-Cola India publication).

Q24  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 25

of 32

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT) concept is modelled after which existing international treaty?

- A Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
- B Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ✓
- C Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)
- D Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT) concept is explicitly modelled after the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — using the same framework structure of: (1) non-proliferation (no new fossil fuel extraction), (2) phase-out (reduce existing production), and (3) transition support (just transition, like NPT's disarmament + peaceful use pillars). The NPT (1968, entered into force 1970) distinguishes nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

Similarly, FFNPT advocates distinguish high-historical-emitters (like G7 nations) who should phase out faster, from developing nations who need transition support. The FFNPT was initially championed by Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu, and has been supported by many SIDS and academics.

It has not been adopted as a formal UN treaty.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty): Three pillars — non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy. India is NOT a signatory to NPT (India conducted nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998).

CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty): Bans all nuclear explosions; India signed but has not ratified. CWC

(Chemical Weapons Convention): India signed and ratified; OPCW is the implementing body (Nobel Peace Prize 2013).

Q25  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 26

of 32

Under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) provides real-time data on which metric across Indian courts?

- A Judge-wise salary and service records
- B Case pendency, disposal, and status across 18,500+ district/subordinate courts ✓
- C Supreme Court and High Court judgement text repository
- D Legal aid statistics across district legal services authorities

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
 **EXPLANATION**

The National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) provides real-time case pendency, disposal, and case status data across 18,500+ District Courts and Subordinate Courts in India. It was launched under Phase II of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project (2015–2023) and is maintained by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in partnership with the Supreme Court of India.

NJDG allows the public, lawyers, and policymakers to track: number of pending cases (by court, by type, by duration); monthly disposal rates; case filing rates; cases pending for over 5, 10, 15+ years. The total pendency visible on NJDG is approximately 4.3 crore cases at district level.

The Supreme Court has its own separate National Court Management System (NCMS). NJDG data is publicly accessible at njdg.ecourts.gov.in.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

e-Courts Phase III (2023–2027) aims to add: AI-assisted legal research, automated cause lists, interoperable digital records, and extension to tribunals and specialised courts. Total Indian court pendency (all levels): ~4.7 crore.

Solving pendency requires both technology and structural reforms (judges' vacancies — currently ~5,000+ posts vacant across High Courts).

Q26  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 27 of 32

Section 3(d) of the Indian Patents Act 1970 was upheld by the Supreme Court in which landmark pharmaceutical patent case?

- A F. Hoffmann-La Roche v. Cipla (2008)
- B **Novartis AG v. Union of India (2013)** ✓
- C Bayer Corporation v. Natco Pharma (2014)
- D Merck Sharp & Dohme v. Glenmark Pharmaceuticals (2015)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The landmark case upholding Section 3(d) of the Indian Patents Act was *Novartis AG v. Union of India (2013)* — decided by a 2-judge bench of the Supreme Court (Justices Aftab Alam and Ranjana Prakash Desai). Novartis sought a patent for imatinib mesylate (brand name Gleevec/Glivec) — a beta crystalline form of imatinib, a cancer drug.

The Supreme Court rejected the patent, holding that the beta crystalline form did not demonstrate "enhanced efficacy" over the known imatinib free base — as required by Section 3(d). The ruling was globally significant: it validated India's anti-evergreening provision and affirmed that minor chemical modifications cannot secure new patents.

Bayer v. Natco (2014) is a separate case on compulsory licensing — the Controller of Patents granted India's first compulsory licence to Natco Pharma for Bayer's Nexavar (sorafenib tosylate).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Compulsory Licensing (CL): Under Section 84 of Patents Act — allows third party to produce a patented drug without patent holder's permission, subject to royalty payment, on grounds of public health emergency or non-availability at reasonable price. India's first CL: Sorafenib tosylate (Nexavar) for liver/kidney cancer — *Bayer v. Natco Pharma (2012 decision)*.

CL ≠ Section 3(d): CL is about access after patent granted; 3(d) is about preventing certain patents from being granted.

Q27  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 28

of 32

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) operates under which business model that prevents it from issuing loans?

- A Commercial bank model
- B Regional Rural Bank model
- C Payments bank model ✓
- D Small Finance Bank model

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) operates as a payments bank — a special category of bank introduced by the RBI in 2015 based on the Nachiket Mor Committee recommendations. Payments banks can: accept deposits (up to Rs 2 lakh per customer), offer payment and remittance services, issue debit cards, and provide internet banking. Payments banks cannot: issue credit (no loans, no credit cards), accept NRI deposits, or issue credit cards. This distinguishes IPPB from commercial banks (like SBI) and Small Finance Banks (which can lend). IPPB leverages India Post's extensive network of 1.65 lakh post offices and ~3 lakh postmen as banking correspondents — reaching rural areas where traditional bank branches are absent. The recently launched SHG account has a maximum balance of Rs 2 lakh — consistent with the payments bank deposit cap.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Payments bank licence holders (as of 2026): Airtel Payments Bank, Jio Payments Bank, Fino Payments Bank (converted to SFB), Paytm Payments Bank (surrendered licence 2024), India Post Payments Bank, NSDL Payments Bank. Small Finance Banks (SFBs) CAN lend — their licence is more restrictive than commercial banks but they have lending powers. Nachiket Mor Committee (2014): Recommended differentiated banking licences including payments banks and SFBs.

Q28  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 29

of 32

The Warship Design Bureau (WDB) of the Indian Navy achieved which milestone with the delivery of INS Mahendragiri?

- A 50th ship designed and built in India
- B 75th warship commissioned since Independence
- C 100th vessel built to WDB designs ✓
- D First stealth frigate delivered ahead of schedule

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

The delivery of INS Mahendragiri marks the 100th vessel built to designs produced by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB) of the Indian Navy. WDB is the in-house naval design organisation responsible for designing all major Indian Navy warships — from concept through detailed design — reducing dependence on foreign design houses. WDB designs span: frigates (P17, P17A), destroyers (P15, P15A, P15B), corvettes (P28), landing ships, survey vessels, and auxiliary craft. The WDB evolved from the earlier Directorate of Naval Design. The 100th vessel milestone reflects India's indigenous naval design capability built over decades — from the first indigenously designed warship INS Delhi (1948 vintage) to the modern P17A Nilgiri-class frigates.

CONCEPT NOTE

Key WDB-designed ships: INS Nilgiri (1972 — first major indigenously designed frigate); INS Mysore (Rajput/Delhi-class destroyer); INS Vikramaditya (Russian base, Indian modifications); INS Vikrant (IAC-1: designed by WDB; commissioned 2022 — India's first fully indigenous aircraft carrier design). WDB ≠ Warship Builders (MDL, GRSE build the ships; WDB designs them).

Q29  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 30

of 32

The rural Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in India as reported in Women and Men in India 2025 is 2.1 — which is described as:

- A Above replacement level — India's rural population is still growing rapidly
- B At replacement level — rural population growth is stabilising ✓
- C Below replacement level — rural population will decline
- D Equal to urban TFR, indicating uniform demographic transition

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

A TFR (Total Fertility Rate) of 2.1 is the "replacement level fertility" — the rate at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next (accounting for child mortality and sex ratio at birth). India's rural TFR reaching 2.1 (as reported in Women and Men in India 2025) means rural India is at the threshold of population stabilisation. The urban TFR of 1.5 is well below replacement — meaning urban India's population would decline without migration from rural areas or abroad. India achieved the national replacement-level TFR in 2021 (TFR = 2.0 per NFHS-5). For UPSC context: India's population crossed 1.4 billion in 2023; India surpassed China as most populous nation (UN estimate, 2023). The demographic dividend window (larger working-age population) is expected until around 2040–2045 for India.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

TFR at different levels: TFR > 2.1 = growing population; TFR = 2.1 = replacement; TFR < 2.1 = eventual population decline. India's TFR trajectory: 5.9 (1970) → 3.4 (1993) → 2.1 (2021 per NFHS-5) → ~2.0 (2025 estimate).

All states below 2.1 TFR by 2025 except a few — Meghalaya, Manipur have slightly higher TFR. Demographic dividend requires investment in education, health, and employment for the large working-age cohort.

Q30  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 31

of 32

The India-EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) dispute has implications for India's exports to the EU. India's proposed IBAM (India Border Adjustment Mechanism) would primarily help by:

- A Exempting Indian exports from CBAM certificates entirely
- B Retaining carbon revenues in India rather than allowing them to flow to the EU ✓
- C Blocking all EU imports until CBAM is renegotiated
- D Replacing the EU CBAM with a WTO-administered carbon tariff

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The core advantage of India implementing an IBAM (India Border Adjustment Mechanism) is that it would create a domestic carbon price on the same six sectors covered by CBAM (cement, steel, aluminium, fertilizers, electricity, hydrogen). Under the CBAM rules, if an exporting country already imposes a domestic carbon price equivalent to the EU ETS price, the exporter gets a credit (reduction) in their CBAM certificate liability.

This means: without IBAM, the full carbon cost is paid to the EU Treasury; with IBAM, the same carbon cost is paid to the Indian government. India retains the revenue for its own green transition rather than transferring it to Europe. IBAM does not exempt India from CBAM — it changes who receives the revenue. This is also India's strategic leverage in India-EU FTA negotiations.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

CBAM WTO compatibility: Debated — developing countries argue CBAM is discriminatory and violates WTO's Most Favoured Nation and non-discrimination principles. The WTO Appellate Body has not yet ruled definitively on carbon border taxes.

India has raised concerns at WTO. EU ETS: Established 2005; covers ~40% of EU greenhouse gas emissions; cap-and-trade system; carbon price ~€55–65/tonne in 2025–26.

Q31  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 32 of 32

Which of the following statements about India's e-Courts Mission Mode Project is correct?

- A Phase I introduced AI-assisted legal research across all High Courts
- B Phase II introduced NJDG (National Judicial Data Grid) and video conferencing in districts ✓
- C Phase III was completed in 2020 making all district courts paperless
- D The project is implemented by the Ministry of Law and Justice alone without Supreme Court involvement

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Phase II of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project (2015–2023) introduced the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) — providing real-time case pendency data across 18,500+ courts — and deployed video conferencing infrastructure in district courts and prisons. Phase I (2007–2015) focused on computer hardware installation and basic LAN connectivity in courts.

Phase III (2023–2027, ongoing) aims for AI-assisted legal research, nationwide e-filing, paperless courts (as achieved in Sikkim), and extension to tribunals. The project is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Law and Justice (Department of Justice) and the Supreme Court of India, with technical support from the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

The e-Committee of the Supreme Court — chaired by a sitting SC judge — is the key steering body.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

e-Committee of Supreme Court: Set up in 2004; headed by a sitting SC judge; drives e-Courts implementation. Key achievements under e-Courts: NJDG, eFiling, eSeva Kendras, JustIS mobile app, FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records) for SC orders to courts.

FASTER: Allows SC orders to reach all courts and jails in real-time electronically — prevents wrongful detention after bail.

Q32  **CONCEPT KIT**



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