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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Current Affairs Quiz — May 7, 2026

7 May 2026



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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Current Affairs Quiz — May 7, 2026

7 May 2026 · 31 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1 of 31

Operation Sindoor, whose first anniversary falls on May 7, 2026, was launched in response to which terrorist attack?

- A Uri attack (September 2016) — killing of 18 Indian Army soldiers in J&K
- B Pulwama attack (February 2019) — killing of 40 CRPF personnel
- C Pahalgam attack (April 22, 2025) — killing of 26 civilians in J&K ✓
- D Pathankot attack (January 2016) — attack on Indian Air Force base

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Operation Sindoor was launched in the early hours of May 7, 2025 (night of May 6–7), in direct retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22, 2025, which killed 26 civilians — mostly male Hindu tourists in the Baisaran meadow area of Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir. The 15-day gap between the attack and the military response was used for intelligence confirmation and mission planning.

The operation struck nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), eliminating at least 100 terrorists. JeM headquarters at Bahawalpur and LeT's main base at Muridke (both in Punjab province, Pakistan) were among the targets.

The conflict lasted 4 days (May 7–10, 2025). Uri (2016) triggered Surgical Strikes; Pulwama (2019) triggered Balakot air strikes — each represented an escalation in India's cross-border counter-terrorism doctrine.

CONCEPT NOTE

Operation Sindoor timeline: Pahalgam attack April 22, 2025 → Operation Sindoor May 6–7, 2025 → 4-day conflict → Pakistan sought de-escalation → ceasefire May 10, 2025. Nine targets included: Markaz Subhan Allah (Bahawalpur, JeM HQ), Markaz Taiba (Muridke, LeT HQ), plus 7 others in PoK. Doctrine evolution: Surgical strikes 2016 (limited, deniable) → Balakot air strikes 2019 (acknowledged, inside Pakistan) → Operation Sindoor 2025 (multiple targets, deep inside Pakistan, 25-minute campaign).

India's deepest military action inside Pakistan since 1971 war.

Q1  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 2

of 31

India elevated its ties with Vietnam to an "Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" in May 2026. Which of the following statements about this upgrade is CORRECT?

- A It is the first time India has ever used the "Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" designation with any country
- B Vietnam had previously been at the level of "Strategic Partnership" before being elevated directly to "Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership"
- C Vietnam had been a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" since 2016 before this 2026 upgrade ✓
- D The upgrade was triggered solely by the BrahMos cruise missile negotiations with Vietnam

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India-Vietnam relations have evolved through several tiers: Diplomatic relations (1972) → Strategic Partnership (2007) → Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2016) → Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026). The 2026 upgrade during Vietnamese President To Lam's state visit to India is a logical progression, NOT a leap from a lower tier.

India also has "Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" with the USA and Russia. The new trade target set is USD 25 billion by 2030 (from ~USD 16 billion).

Vietnam's significance: it is in advanced negotiations to purchase BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles (~USD 700M deal) — note that the Philippines is India's first BrahMos export customer (deliveries 2022), not Vietnam — and Vietnam shares India's concerns about Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea, making it a key partner for India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific strategy. The BrahMos sale was significant but not the sole trigger for the 2026 upgrade — the overall strategic convergence drove it.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's partnership tiers (rough hierarchy): Strategic Partnership → Comprehensive Strategic Partnership → Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Countries at ECSP level: USA, Russia, Vietnam (2026).

Vietnam key facts: Capital Hanoi; Ho Chi Minh City = largest city; ASEAN member; shares South China Sea dispute with China (Paracel + Spratly Islands). Bilateral exercise: VINBAX (army); naval cooperation also active.

Trade: India exports ~USD 6.11B to Vietnam; imports ~USD 10.35B. Vietnam is India's 5th largest ASEAN trading partner.

Q2  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 3

of 31

The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0 was approved in May 2026. Which of the following correctly describes the GUARANTEE COVERAGE under this scheme?

- A** [object Object] ✓
- B** 75% guarantee for MSMEs; 50% guarantee for airlines
- C** 100% guarantee for MSMEs; 90% guarantee for airlines
- D** 90% guarantee for MSMEs; 75% guarantee for airlines

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

ECLGS 5.0 (approved May 5, 2026) provides 100% government guarantee for both MSMEs and airlines — removing all default risk for lenders. Airlines have a cap of ₹1,500 crore per borrower.

This full guarantee structure is what makes banks willing to lend to these stressed sectors without collateral. The corpus is ₹18,100 crore, enabling ₹2.55 lakh crore additional credit.

Airlines earmark: ₹5,000 crore. Loan terms differ: MSMEs — 5-year loan with 1-year moratorium on principal repayment; Airlines — 7-year loan with 2-year moratorium.

ECLGS was first launched in May 2020 during COVID-19 as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan economic package. The administering body is the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC), set up by the Dept. of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance.

The West Asia conflict (2025–26) triggered ECLGS 5.0 — it raised crude oil prices, disrupted Red Sea shipping, and reduced air traffic on Gulf routes.

CONCEPT NOTE

ECLGS history: 1.0 (2020, COVID), 2.0 (hospitality/healthcare), 3.0 (hospitality/travel), 4.0 (aviation, ₹1,500 crore), 5.0 (2026, West Asia crisis). NCGTC = National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company; administers multiple guarantee schemes.

Max per borrower: 20% of peak working capital in Q1 FY2026, capped at ₹100 crore. Scheme valid until March 31, 2027.

MSMEs: 6.3 crore units; ~30% of GDP; ~45% of exports; ~11 crore employed.

Q3  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 4

of 31

GalaxEye launched "Mission Drishti" in May 2026 — described as the world's first "OptoSAR" satellite. What does OptoSAR specifically refer to?

- A A satellite with optical sensors that uses solar panels for power — making it the first fully solar-powered Earth observation satellite
- B A satellite that combines both optical imaging sensors and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors on a single platform for simultaneous imaging ✓
- C A satellite that uses optical fibre technology for high-speed data transmission to ground stations
- D A satellite that uses optically triggered radar systems, replacing conventional radio-frequency radar entirely

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

OptoSAR is GalaxEye's term for combining two fundamentally different Earth observation technologies on a single satellite: (1) Optical sensors — use visible light like a camera; excellent resolution and easy image interpretation; limited by clouds and night; (2) Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) — uses microwave radio waves that penetrate clouds, rain, and darkness; all-weather, day-and-night capability; lower visual resolution but works in all conditions. Before Mission Drishti, optical and SAR satellites were always separate.

OptoSAR means a single satellite pass over a location captures both optical AND SAR imagery simultaneously — critically important for disaster response (clouds always present during cyclones/floods), defence surveillance (conflict zones may be cloudy), and agricultural monitoring. Mission Drishti: launched May 3, 2026; SpaceX Falcon 9; Vandenberg, California; Sun-synchronous LEO at ~500 km; resolution 1.2–1.8 m; mass ~190 kg (India's largest private satellite); facilitated by IN-SPACe; company: GalaxEye (IIT Madras startup, Bengaluru).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

IN-SPACe = Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (est. 2020 under Dept of Space) — single-window regulator for private space activities. GalaxEye founded 2021 by IIT Madras alumni.

Future plan: 8–12 satellite constellation by 2029. Indian Space Policy 2023 formalized private sector participation.

SAR applications: flood mapping, oil spill detection, agricultural monitoring, military surveillance. Compare: RISAT-2BR1 (ISRO SAR satellite); CartSat series (ISRO optical).

Previous India private satellite record held by Pixxel's Fires satellite.

Q4  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 5

of 31

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), whose first Summit is scheduled for June 2026 in New Delhi, covers how many big cat species? Which of the following lists ALL seven correctly?

- A** Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, Puma ✓
- B** Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Cougar, Clouded Leopard
- C** Tiger, Lion, Cheetah, Snow Leopard, Jaguar, Puma, Ocelot
- D** Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Snow Leopard, Jaguar, Caracal

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), founded in 2023 and headquartered in India, covers exactly seven big cat species: (1) Tiger — India's national animal; India holds ~75% of world wild tigers; Project Tiger 1973; (2) Lion — Asiatic Lion only in Gir Forest, Gujarat; (3) Leopard — most widespread; ~13,000 in India; (4) Snow Leopard — Himalayan states (J&K, HP, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh); (5) Cheetah — reintroduced to Kuno NP, MP from Namibia (2022) and South Africa; (6) Jaguar — range: Americas only (Central + South America); not in India; (7) Puma (also called Cougar or Mountain Lion) — range: Americas only; not in India. India has direct conservation interest in the first five; Jaguar and Puma are included to make IBCA truly global (95 range countries).

The Clouded Leopard and Ocelot are NOT included in IBCA's seven. IBCA was launched by PM Modi on April 9, 2023 — the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger (1973).

First IBCA Summit: June 1–2, 2026, New Delhi.

CONCEPT NOTE

IBCA HQ: New Delhi (India). The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022) provides the global context — 30×30 target (protect 30% of land + oceans by 2030).

IUCN statuses of 7 IBCA species: Tiger (Endangered), Lion (Vulnerable), Leopard (Vulnerable), Snow Leopard (Vulnerable), Cheetah (Vulnerable), Jaguar (Near Threatened), Puma (Least Concern). Cheetah reintroduction: 8 from Namibia (Sep 2022) + 12 from South Africa (Feb 2023) → Kuno National Park, Sheopur district, MP. India's big cat flagship programmes: Project Tiger (1973), Project Snow Leopard, Project Cheetah.

Q5  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 6

of 31

The Union Cabinet amended the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 to protect Vande Mataram. Under this Act, what is the punishment for insulting/obstructing the National Anthem ("Jana Gana Mana")?

- A 1 year imprisonment
- B 2 years imprisonment
- C 3 years imprisonment ✓
- D 5 years imprisonment

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

Under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, all three national symbols carry the SAME maximum punishment of 3 years imprisonment (or fine, or both): (1) National Flag (Tricolour) — insult/disrespect = up to 3 years; (2) National Anthem ("Jana Gana Mana") — insult/obstruction = up to 3 years; (3) National Song ("Vande Mataram") — insult/obstruction = up to 3 years (newly added by 2026 amendment). The 2026 amendment maintains parity across all three national symbols.

Vande Mataram facts: Composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1882); published in the novel Anandamath; first sung at the 1896 Indian National Congress session in Calcutta (by Rabindranath Tagore's troupe); adopted as National Song on January 24, 1950. Distinction: National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana) is mentioned in the Constituent Assembly debates; National Song is not mentioned in the Constitution itself but was given equal status by resolution. Article 51A(a): Fundamental Duty to abide by and respect national symbols.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act 1971 covers: National Flag, National Anthem, Constitution of India. The 2026 amendment adds Vande Mataram.

Flag Code of India 2002 separately governs display/use of the National Flag. Vande Mataram = "Mother, I bow to thee" (Sanskrit).

Jana Gana Mana = "Thou art the ruler of all minds" — composed by Rabindranath Tagore; adopted January 24, 1950; duration: ~52 seconds (full version). Constituent Assembly: Both songs discussed; Vande Mataram acknowledged as having played historic role in freedom struggle.

Q6  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 7 of 31

The Supreme Court expanded the definition of acid attack victims under the RPwD Act 2016 to include those who consumed acid internally. This ruling applies retrospectively. What date does the retrospective effect go back to?

- A January 26, 1950 (Republic Day — Constitution of India came into force)
- B April 14, 2016 (date the RPwD Act was passed in Parliament)
- C **October 19, 2016 (date the RPwD Act came into force / received Presidential assent) ✓**
- D January 1, 2017 (date the RPwD Act rules were notified)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Supreme Court ruling applies retrospectively from October 19, 2016 — the date the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 received Presidential assent and came into force. The logic: the RPwD Act should have always covered internal acid injury survivors, so the Court is clarifying/correcting the interpretation from the Act's very commencement, not creating a new right from 2026.

Impact: Any acid attack survivor who ingested acid and suffered internal injuries after October 19, 2016 (even those who did not previously qualify) can now apply for disability certification under the Act. The RPwD Act 2016 replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

Key features of RPwD 2016: 21 specified disabilities (expanded from 7 in 1995); Schedule I lists "acid attack victim" as a specified disability; enables disability certificate (basis for reservations, benefits); implements India's obligations under UNCRPD (UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006; ratified by India 2007). The ruling also emphasised stricter enforcement of acid sale regulations and called for harsher deterrence.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

RPwD Act 2016: 21 disabilities include locomotor, visual, hearing, intellectual, mental illness, autism, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, acid attack victims, specific learning disabilities, multiple disabilities, and others. IPC Section 326A (now BNS Section 124): acid attack — minimum 10 years, maximum life imprisonment + fine (to be used for victim treatment).

Section 326B (BNS 125): attempt — 5–7 years. Acid sale: Scheduled Chemicals under Environment Act; states regulate sale; buyer ID required; but implementation is poor.

NCRB data: ~200+ acid attack cases per year officially recorded; significant underreporting especially for internal injury cases.

Q7  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 8

of 31

India's Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework is up for its five-year review in 2026. Under this framework, who has the legal authority to SET the inflation target?

- A The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which determines it independently as part of its monetary policy mandate
- B The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which votes on both the target and the policy rate
- C **The Central Government, in consultation with the RBI** ✓
- D The Finance Commission of India, in its quinquennial recommendations

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

Under Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934 (inserted by the Finance Act 2016), the CENTRAL GOVERNMENT is legally empowered to determine the inflation target in consultation with the RBI — NOT the MPC, and NOT the RBI unilaterally. The MPC's role is to SET THE POLICY RATE (repo rate) to ACHIEVE the target, not to determine what the target should be.

This is a critical constitutional/legal distinction. Current target: 4% CPI-Combined (headline) with $\pm 2\%$ tolerance band (2%–6%).

The target is reviewed every 5 years (or triggered if inflation remains outside the band for 3 consecutive quarters — the "failure" clause). The MPC has 6 members: RBI Governor (chairs), 1 RBI DG (monetary policy), 1 RBI Board nominee, and 3 Government nominees (4-year term, non-renewable).

Decisions by majority; Governor has casting vote in case of tie. 2022–23: MPC failed the target (avg CPI ~6.7%) — RBI sent a report to Parliament explaining the failure, as required under Section 45ZN of the RBI Act.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

Key sections of RBI Act for UPSC: Section 45ZA — government sets inflation target; Section 45ZB — MPC constituted; Section 45ZC — RBI DG in charge of monetary policy on MPC; Section 45ZN — failure clause (report to Parliament).

Current repo rate: 6.00% (as of May 2026, after recent cuts).

RBI DG (monetary policy): Poonam Gupta (raised the revision question). CPI vs WPI: MPC targets CPI (consumer), not WPI (wholesale).

FIT adopted: 2016 (agreement signed February 20, 2015 between Gol and RBI; later given statutory basis by Finance Act 2016).

Q8  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 9 of 31

GalaxEye's Mission Drishti was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 from Vandenberg, California — **NOT** by an Indian launch vehicle. What does this indicate about India's New Space Policy?

- A It shows India's private space policy has failed — Indian startups are forced to use foreign rockets because ISRO refused to support them
- B Under the Indian Space Policy 2023 and IN-SPACe framework, Indian private entities are permitted to use foreign launch vehicles for their satellites ✓
- C Using SpaceX violates the Indian Space Policy which mandates all Indian satellites must launch on ISRO vehicles
- D India does not yet have a private launch vehicle capability, so all Indian satellites must use foreign rockets until PSLV privatisation is complete

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Indian Space Policy 2023 and the IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre) framework explicitly allow Indian private companies to use foreign launch vehicles for their satellites. This is an important liberalisation — previously, all Indian satellites had to be launched on ISRO vehicles, limiting launch frequency and flexibility.

Under the new policy: Indian companies can seek IN-SPACe authorisation for any launch (domestic or foreign). GalaxEye chose SpaceX Falcon 9 likely because of timing (SpaceX rideshare missions offer frequent slots), reliability, and potentially cost competitiveness.

India DOES have emerging private launch vehicle capabilities: Skyroot Aerospace launched Vikram-S (2022) — India's first private rocket launch; Agnikul Cosmos successfully launched its semi-cryogenic Agnibaan (2024). IN-SPACe was established in 2020 as a single-window regulator/promoter for private space activities under the Department of Space.

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) is ISRO's commercial arm — handles technology transfer to industry but is different from IN-SPACe.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

IN-SPACe functions: authorize launches (Indian and foreign), manage spectrum, coordinate with ISRO, support startups. Indian Space Policy 2023: formalised private sector roles; ISRO to focus on R&D and national security space; NSIL to commercialise ISRO technology; IN-SPACe to enable private sector.

Indian private space companies: GalaxEye (Earth observation), Pixxel (hyperspectral), Skyroot (launch vehicles), Agnikul Cosmos (launch vehicles), Digantara (space domain awareness), Dhruva Space (small satellites). India space economy target: USD 44 billion by 2033 (from ~USD 8 billion in 2023).

Q9  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 10 of 31

Regarding the Vadinar Ship Repair Facility approved in May 2026 — which two organisations are jointly developing it?

A Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDSL) + Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)

B Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) + Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) ✓

C Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) + Deendayal Port Authority (DPA)

D Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) + Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Vadinar Ship Repair Facility (approved by CCEA in May 2026 at a cost of ₹1,570 crore) is being jointly developed by: (1) Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) — previously known as Kandla Port Trust; located in Gujarat (India's largest port by cargo volume); and (2) Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) — India's largest shipbuilding facility, located in Kochi (Cochin), Kerala; a public sector company under Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. Vadinar is located near Kandla/Deendayal Port in Gujarat.

The facility will have a 650-metre jetty and two large floating dry docks, capable of repairing vessels up to 300 metres (currently India can only handle up to 230 metres). This addresses India's gap in large-vessel ship repair, which currently forces Indian shipowners to send large vessels to Singapore, Dubai, or China for repair — losing significant revenue.

Employment: ~290 direct, ~1,100 indirect jobs. MDSL is the Mumbai-based naval shipbuilder (Project 17A frigates); GRSE is the Kolkata shipbuilder — neither is involved in Vadinar.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India's major ship repair/building yards: Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (Mumbai — naval warships), Garden Reach Shipbuilders (Kolkata — naval warships), Cochin Shipyard (Kochi — commercial + naval), Hindustan Shipyard (Visakhapatnam — naval), Goa Shipyard (Goa — naval patrol vessels). Deendayal Port (formerly Kandla Port): India's largest port by cargo handled; located in Gujarat.

India's ship repair market: ~\$2 billion/year; India captures only ~1% of global ship repair market. Mission: Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 targets making India a global ship repair hub.

Maritime India Vision 2030 includes ship repair as a priority.

Q10  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 11

of 31

The DPIIT revised FDI framework announced in May 2026 identifies 40 sub-sectors for expedited clearance of investments from land-border countries. Within what mandatory timeline must these proposals be processed?

- A 30 days
- B 45 days
- C 60 days ✓
- D 90 days

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

The DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) revised framework for FDI from land-border countries mandates a processing timeline of 60 days — a significant improvement from the previously undefined timelines that caused investor uncertainty. Land-border countries requiring prior government approval for FDI (per Press Note 3 of 2020): China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan.

The 40 sub-sectors across 6 main segments expedited include: capital goods manufacturing, electronic capital goods, advanced battery components, polysilicon and wafers (solar supply chain), rare earth processing, rare earth permanent magnets. Each ministry must establish a dedicated FDI Cell with a nodal officer of minimum Joint Secretary rank.

DPIIT Secretary will hold review meetings every 4–6 weeks. This follows Press Note 2 (2026 series) which eased the threshold for automatic route ($\leq 10\%$ Chinese/HK shareholding + no control).

The 60-day timeline is mandatory — missing it triggers escalation protocols.

📄 CONCEPT NOTE

DPIIT = Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (under Ministry of Commerce and Industry). FDI framework: Press Note 3 (2020) introduced prior approval for land-border nations; Press Note 2 (2026) partially eased for minority stakeholders.

FEMA 1999 + NDI Rules 2019 govern FDI. China's cumulative FDI in India: ~USD 2.51 billion (only 0.32% of total). The 6 main segments under expedited review reflect India's critical sectors: strategic minerals (rare earth), clean energy supply chain (solar, batteries), and capital goods manufacturing — all areas where Chinese technology/investment is needed but also sensitive.

Q11  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 12 of 31

Which of the following was India's first major military operation that was **ACKNOWLEDGED** (not denied) involving air strikes inside Pakistan?

- A Operation Parakram (2001-02) — military mobilisation along Pakistan border
- B Surgical strikes of September 2016 — across LoC, acknowledged by government
- C **Balakot air strikes of February 2019 — inside Pakistan, fully acknowledged ✓**
- D Operation Sindoor of May 2025 — deep inside Pakistan, multiple targets

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Balakot air strikes of February 26, 2019 (following the Pulwama attack of February 14, 2019 which killed 40 CRPF personnel) were India's **FIRST ACKNOWLEDGED** air strikes inside undisputed Pakistani territory since 1971. India officially confirmed the strikes on a JeM (Jaish-e-Mohammed) training camp in Balakot, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan — this was not in PoK but in Pakistan proper, unlike the 2016 surgical strikes. The 2016 surgical strikes (post-Uri) were across the Line of Control (LoC) into Pakistan-administered PoK — India acknowledged them but Pakistan denied they occurred. Operation Sindoor (2025) represents the next escalation: multiple targets, deeper inside Pakistan (Bahawalpur and Muridke are far from the LoC in Punjab province), and lasting 4 days. Operation Parakram (2001-02) was a military mobilisation but no actual strikes occurred. This escalation ladder is important for UPSC: restraint (pre-2016) → surgical strikes (2016) → air strikes Balakot (2019) → precision multi-target operation (2025).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Key dates: Uri attack: September 18, 2016 → Surgical strikes: September 29, 2016. Pulwama attack: February 14, 2019 → Balakot strikes: February 26, 2019. Pahalgam attack: April 22, 2025 → Operation Sindoor: May 7, 2025. Balakot location: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan (not PoK — this was inside Pakistan proper). Pakistan denied Balakot struck any camp; India claimed elimination of a large number of JeM trainees. Operation Sindoor was far more transparent in targets and casualties claimed.

Q12  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 13

of 31

Jannik Sinner won the Madrid Open 2026, becoming the first player to win 5 consecutive ATP Masters 1000 titles. ATP Masters 1000 tournaments — which category do they belong to in the ATP tournament hierarchy?

- A The highest category — above Grand Slams in prize money and ranking points
- B The second tier — below Grand Slams but above ATP 500 and ATP 250 events ✓
- C Equivalent to Grand Slams in ranking points but smaller in duration (3 days vs 2 weeks)
- D The third tier — below Grand Slams and ATP Finals but above ATP 500 events

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

ATP tournament hierarchy: (1) Grand Slams (Australian Open, Roland Garros, Wimbledon, US Open) — highest ranking points (2,000), best-of-5 sets for men, 2 weeks; (2) ATP Finals (year-end) — 1,500 points, top 8 players; (3) ATP Masters 1000 — 1,000 ranking points, mandatory for top players, ~9 tournaments per year including Indian Wells, Miami, Monte-Carlo, Madrid, Rome, Canada, Cincinnati, Shanghai, Paris; (4) ATP 500; (5) ATP 250. Jannik Sinner's achievement: Won 5 consecutive Masters 1000 titles — Paris 2025, Indian Wells, Miami, Monte-Carlo, Madrid 2026.

Note: Rome (Italian Open) is NOT in Sinner's streak; the sequence goes Monte-Carlo → Madrid skipping Rome. This is historically unprecedented in the Open Era.

Sinner became World No. 1 in January 2024. His Madrid win: 6–1, 6–2 vs Alexander Zverev — a dominant performance.

Women's Madrid: Marta Kostyuk (Ukraine) defeated Mirra Andreeva (Russia). Madrid Open venue: Caja Magica (Manolo Santana Stadium).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

ATP Masters 1000 tournaments (9 total): Indian Wells (California), Miami Open, Monte-Carlo (clay), Madrid Open (clay), Italian Open/Rome (clay), Canada (alternates Toronto/Montreal), Cincinnati, Shanghai, Paris Masters. All mandatory for top-50 players (cannot withdraw without penalty except for injury).

Masters 1000 record holder (most titles): Rafael Nadal (40+). Sinner's 9th Masters 1000 title places him in elite company. Alexander Zverev (Germany) is ranked World No. 2. The 5 consecutive M1000 titles: Paris Masters (Nov 2025), Indian Wells, Miami Open, Monte-Carlo, Madrid Open (all 2026).

Q13  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 14 of 31

At the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026 held in Horsens, Denmark, which country won the women's Uber Cup?

- A China — continuing their dominance of women's team badminton
- B Japan — who won the Uber Cup for the first time
- C South Korea — their third Uber Cup title (2010, 2022, 2026) ✓
- D India — their first ever Uber Cup title

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

South Korea won the Uber Cup (women's badminton team championship) 2026 by defeating China 3–1 in the final, clinching their third Uber Cup title. South Korea's three Uber Cup wins: 2010, 2022, and 2026 — notable that they skipped for 12 years (2010 to 2022) before winning again consecutively in 2022 and 2026.

China is historically the most dominant Uber Cup nation (multiple titles) but lost this final 1–3. Men's Thomas Cup: China defeated France 3–1 for their 12th Thomas Cup title.

India: won bronze medal in the Thomas Cup (men), shared with Denmark. India has never won either the Thomas Cup or Uber Cup — it remains an aspiration.

Venue: Forum Horsens, Horsens, Denmark. Dates: April 24 – May 3, 2026.

Thomas Cup = men's badminton team championship; Uber Cup = women's badminton team championship; both held every 2 years.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

BWF (Badminton World Federation) major team events: Thomas Cup (men, since 1949), Uber Cup (women, since 1957), Sudirman Cup (mixed, since 1989), BWF World Team Championships. China Thomas Cup record: 12 titles — most wins. Indonesia holds the record for overall wins historically, but China leads in recent decades. Indonesia has also won multiple Thomas Cups.

India Thomas Cup: Won it for the FIRST time in 2022 (historic achievement under Lakshya Sen, Kidambi Srikanth, H.S. Prannoy). India Uber Cup: has never won.

Indian badminton stars: PV Sindhu (Women's singles, Olympics gold 2016, silver 2020), Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty (Doubles, World No. 1).

Q14  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 15 of 31

The Laureus World Sports Awards 2026 were held in Madrid. Who won the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year 2026?

- A Jannik Sinner (tennis, Italy)
- B Carlos Alcaraz (tennis, Spain) ✓
- C Novak Djokovic (tennis, Serbia)
- D Erling Haaland (football, Norway)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Carlos Alcaraz (Spain, tennis) won the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year 2026. Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus, tennis) won the Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year 2026.

The ceremony was held in Madrid, Spain — fitting given both winners are tennis players and Madrid hosts the ATP/WTA Madrid Open. Laureus Awards established in 2000; winners chosen by the Laureus World Sports Academy (50+ legendary sportspeople).

Alcaraz, born 2003, has been one of the dominant forces in tennis since 2022 — won multiple Grand Slams including Wimbledon 2023 and 2024, Roland Garros 2024. Sabalenka has won consecutive Australian Open titles.

Jannik Sinner (who won his 5th consecutive Masters 1000 in May 2026) was likely a strong contender but the Laureus covers calendar year 2025 achievements primarily. BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025: Smriti Mandhana (who led India to a historic Women's ODI World Cup win).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Laureus World Sports Awards categories: World Sportsman, World Sportswoman, World Team, World Breakthrough, World Comeback, World Sportsperson with Disability, World Action Sportsperson, Sport for Good Award. Since 2000.

India connections: Sachin Tendulkar (Laureus Academy member); various Indian athletes have received Laureus awards including PV Sindhu. Alcaraz's nationality: Spanish; headquarters: Monte Carlo (Laureus Sport for Good Foundation).

The Laureus ceremony location varies each year — Madrid 2026.

Q15  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 16

of 31

India won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, defeating New Zealand by 96 runs. Which of the following records did India SET with this victory?

- A** First team to win the T20 World Cup three times AND first team to defend the title AND first team to win as host nation ✓
- B** First team to win the T20 World Cup three times, but NOT the first to defend (Australia defended in 2021-22)
- C** First team to defend the T20 World Cup but NOT the first to win three times (West Indies won three times)
- D** First team to win as host nation, but the overall record for most titles is held by West Indies (3 titles)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 victory at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad (96 runs win over New Zealand) set three simultaneous historic records: (1) FIRST team to win 3 T20 World Cup titles (India: 2007, 2024, 2026); (2) FIRST team to successfully defend the T20 World Cup title (India won 2024 and 2026 consecutively); (3) FIRST team to win a T20 World Cup as host nation (India hosted 2026). Previously, no team had done any of these three things.

West Indies won twice (2012 and 2016) — not three times. Australia defended their 50-over ODI World Cup in 1999/2003 but no one had defended the T20 WC. India's T20 WC history: 2007 (first, inaugural, under MS Dhoni), 2024 (under Rohit Sharma, West Indies + USA), 2026 (under Rohit Sharma, host India).

Narendra Modi Stadium: Ahmedabad, Gujarat — capacity ~132,000 (world's largest cricket stadium).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

ICC T20 World Cup — all editions: 2007 India won; 2009 Pakistan; 2010 England; 2012 West Indies; 2014 Sri Lanka; 2016 West Indies; 2021 Australia; 2022 England; 2024 India; 2026 India. West Indies: 2 titles (2012, 2016).

Australia: 2 titles (2021 + one more). England: 2 titles (2010, 2022).

India retained ICC Men's T20I Rankings top spot with 275 rating points. Women's T20 WC 2026: India squad announced with Harmanpreet Kaur as captain; Nandini Sharma (uncapped pacer) included after impressive WPL 2026 season.

Q16  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 17 of 31

The NCRB's ADSI 2024 report recorded India's suicide statistics. Which statement about the 2024 data is CORRECT?

- A India recorded 1,70,746 suicides in 2024 — an increase from 1,71,418 in 2023
- B India recorded 1,70,746 suicides in 2024 — a decrease from 1,71,418 in 2023 ✓
- C India recorded 1,85,000 suicides in 2024 — crossing 1.8 lakh for the first time
- D India recorded 1,70,746 suicides in 2024 — identical to 2023, suggesting the rate has plateaued

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India recorded 1,70,746 suicides in 2024 — a SLIGHT DECREASE from 1,71,418 in 2023, per NCRB's Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) 2024 report. While the decrease is marginal and not cause for celebration, it is a reversal of the increasing trend seen in previous years.

NCRB = National Crime Records Bureau (under Ministry of Home Affairs); publishes ADSI annually. Key additional data from the same report: missing children cases increased 7.8% from 91,296 to 98,375 (girls: 75,603; boys: 22,768; transgender: 4).

Context for UPSC: India's suicide rate remains a public health concern; major reasons include financial distress, mental health issues, family problems, illness. Farmers' suicides remain a tracked category.

States with highest total suicides: Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, MP, West Bengal, Telangana. Suicide as a public health issue: India accounts for ~17% of global suicides despite having ~18% of world population — rates roughly proportional.

National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and Vandrevalla Foundation helpline (iCall, Vandrevalla) are government/civil society responses.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

NCRB publications: Crime in India (annual), ADSI (annual), Prison Statistics India (annual). ADSI tracks: suicides (by age, gender, profession, cause, state) + accidental deaths (road, railway, drowning, fire etc).

Farmer/agricultural labourers' suicides: tracked separately; Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana historically report highest numbers. India signed WHO's LIVE LIFE action plan for suicide prevention (2021).

Section 115 of Mental Healthcare Act 2017: attempting suicide is no longer a criminal offence in India (decriminalised).

Q17  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 18 of 31

Magnus Carlsen won the inaugural FIDE Freestyle World Championship 2026. What distinguishes the "Freestyle" or "Chess960" format from classical chess?

- A Each player gets 960 seconds (16 minutes) per game instead of the standard 90 minutes — making it a rapid format
- B The starting position of pieces on the back rank is randomised among 960 possible positions, eliminating opening preparation advantage ✓
- C Players can freely move pieces to any square at any time, removing the standard movement rules for each piece type
- D 960 players compete in a round-robin format, with the winner taking the world championship title

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Chess960 (also called Fischer Random Chess, invented by Bobby Fischer and formalised in 1996) randomises the starting position of pieces on the first rank (back rank) among 960 mathematically possible legal positions. The only constraint: bishops must be on opposite colours, and the king must be between the two rooks (to preserve castling rights in some form).

This eliminates the advantage of extensive opening preparation — in classical chess, players memorise openings like the Sicilian, Ruy Lopez, and Queen's Gambit for hundreds of moves; in Chess960/Freestyle, preparation is nullified. FIDE adopted this format and held the inaugural Freestyle World Championship in 2026.

Magnus Carlsen (Norway) won, defeating Fabiano Caruana (USA) in Weissenhaus, Germany. Carlsen is the reigning classical World Chess Champion (held since 2013); he chose not to defend his classical title against Ian Nepomniachtchi (2023) but remained active in rapid, blitz, and now Freestyle formats.

FIDE = Fédération Internationale des Échecs (World Chess Federation); founded 1924; HQ: Lausanne, Switzerland.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Bobby Fischer invented Chess960 to combat excessive memorisation in chess. "960" refers to the number of possible starting positions. Classical chess: 90 minutes + 30 seconds/move increment (for major tournaments).

Rapid chess: 15–60 minutes per player. Blitz: 3–5 minutes.

Bullet: <3 minutes. World Chess Championship (classical): Ding Liren (China) won in 2023; Carlsen declined to play.

FIDE World Chess Championship 2024: contested by other players. India's chess: Viswanathan Anand (5x World Classical Champion: 2000, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012); R Praggnanandhaa, D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi — top Indian players in 2024-26.

Q18  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 19 of 31

The NITI Aayog launched the CPO Portal in May 2026. "CPO" stands for Central Prabhari Officer. What is the PRIMARY function of CPOs under the Aspirational Districts Programme?

- A They are district-level officials who manage the budget allocation and spending for aspirational districts
- B They are senior central government officers assigned to aspirational districts to provide guidance, monitor progress, and facilitate coordination between central and state governments ✓
- C They are elected representatives who serve as political advisors to the district collector in aspirational areas
- D They are NGO representatives embedded in aspirational districts to monitor service delivery independently of government

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Central Prabhari Officers (CPOs) are senior central government officers (typically at the level of Joint Secretary or above from various ministries) who are assigned to specific Aspirational Districts or Aspirational Blocks to: (1) Conduct field visits; (2) Identify bottlenecks in service delivery; (3) Facilitate coordination between central schemes and state/district implementation; (4) Provide guidance and problem-solving support to district collectors; (5) Report observations directly to NITI Aayog. The CPO Portal (launched by NITI Aayog CEO Nidhi Chhibber) allows CPOs to upload field observations via mobile devices in real-time for immediate administrative action.

Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP): launched 2018 by PM Modi; covers 112 districts (poorest in India across states); measured on 49 key performance indicators (KPIs) across 5 sectors (health, education, financial inclusion, agriculture, basic infrastructure). Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP): covers 500 blocks in 329 districts (launched later, similar model).

Champion of Change award given to best-performing aspirational districts.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

ADP 112 aspirational districts: highest concentration in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, MP, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra (tribal areas), NE states. ADP sectors: Health & Nutrition (30 KPIs), Education (9 KPIs), Agriculture & Water Resources (5 KPIs), Financial Inclusion & Skill Development (5 KPIs), Basic Infrastructure (5 KPIs).

Delta Rankings: NITI Aayog publishes monthly performance rankings of aspirational districts on improvements in KPIs (not absolute levels). Prabhari = "in charge" in Hindi.

Ministry of Statistics publishes SDG India Index; ADP tracks its own metrics.

Q19  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 20 of 31

The Rohit Jain was appointed RBI Deputy Governor in May 2026, succeeding T. Rabi Sankar. How many Deputy Governors does the RBI have in total?

- A 2 Deputy Governors
- B 3 Deputy Governors
- C 4 Deputy Governors ✓
- D 5 Deputy Governors

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Reserve Bank of India has a maximum of 4 Deputy Governors as per the RBI Act, 1934. The four Deputy Governors typically oversee different functional areas: (1) Monetary Policy (traditionally a career RBI official; also serves on MPC); (2) Banking Regulation and Supervision (typically a career RBI official); (3) Currency Management, RBI Internal Administration, Financial Inclusion (varies); (4) One post is typically held by a specialist (economist, finance expert) — often government/external nominee.

Rohit Jain was appointed as DG from May 3, 2026, succeeding T. Rabi Sankar (who oversaw fintech regulation and digital payments). As a former Executive Director at RBI, Jain was an internal appointment.

The RBI Governor has been Sanjay Malhotra (appointed December 2023, succeeding Shaktikanta Das). MPC external members (3 government nominees) are NOT Deputy Governors — they are separate appointments. Section 8 of RBI Act governs the Central Board of Directors; Deputy Governors are appointed by the Central Government (not the RBI Central Board).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

RBI Governor: Sanjay Malhotra (December 2023 onwards). Previous: Shaktikanta Das (2018-2023); Urjit Patel (2016-2018); Raghuram Rajan (2013-2016).

RBI established: April 1, 1935 (nationalised: January 1, 1949). RBI HQ: Mumbai (Mint Road / Fort).

RBI Central Board: Governor + 4 DGs + 14 government-nominated directors + 4 RBI directors. DG Poonam Gupta: raised inflation target review question (deputy for monetary policy/economics).

T. Rabi Sankar: oversaw fintech, payments, digital currency (e₹ pilot).

Q20  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 21 of 31

Vaishnavi Adkar became the first Indian woman since Sania Mirza (2009) to reach a major ITF Women's singles final. The tournament was a "W100" event. What does W100 indicate?

- A The tournament has 100 players in the main draw
- B The tournament is in the prize money category of USD 100,000 — indicating a high-level ITF circuit event ✓
- C The tournament is held in the 100th week of the ITF calendar (late February every year)
- D The tournament has a 100-point ranking award for the winner — the minimum for WTA ranking qualification

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

In the ITF (International Tennis Federation) World Tennis Tour, tournaments are classified by prize money: W15 (USD 15,000), W25 (USD 25,000), W35 (USD 35,000), W50 (USD 50,000), W75 (USD 75,000), W100 (USD 100,000). A W100 is one of the highest-level ITF Women's circuit events — just below the WTA 125 (Challenger level) and WTA Tour events.

The Bengaluru W100 where Vaishnavi Adkar reached the final is among the most prestigious ITF events in India/South Asia. Sania Mirza (born 1986, Hyderabad) was India's most successful women's tennis player — career highlights: WTA Top 27 in singles (2007); 6 Grand Slam doubles titles; former World No. 1 in doubles (2015).

Her last major singles final on the ITF circuit was in 2009. Vaishnavi Adkar's achievement as runner-up (not winner) at Bengaluru W100 marks a significant step for Indian women's tennis.

ITF governs the lower rungs of professional tennis; WTA governs the main women's tour.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

ITF Men's equivalent: M15, M25, M25+H (with hospitality), M35... up to M25+H. Men's higher level: Challenger Tour (ATP). Women's higher level: WTA 125 (Challenger), then WTA 250, 500, 1000, Grand Slams.

India's current women's tennis: apart from Adkar, Ankita Raina is the senior player (WTA ~450); Vaishnavi Adkar has been rising through ITF ranks. India has produced one male Grand Slam champion: none (closest: Leander Paes in doubles, won 8 Grand Slam doubles/mixed titles).

Sania Mirza retired from tennis in early 2023.

Q21  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 22 of 31

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act 1971 was amended to protect Vande Mataram. Vande Mataram was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and published in which novel?

A Durgesh Nandini

B Anandamath ✓

C Rajsimha

D Krishnakanter Will

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Vande Mataram was composed by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee** (also spelled Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay) in 1882 and published as part of the Bengali novel **Anandamath** (1882). The novel is set against the backdrop of the Sannyasi Rebellion (1770s) against British rule and depicts Hindu ascetic warriors (Sannyasis) fighting the British East India Company.

Vande Mataram appears as a patriotic song in the novel and became deeply associated with the Indian independence movement. First sung at a national platform: 1896 Indian National Congress session in Calcutta (by Rabindranath Tagore's troupe).

Adopted as National Song: January 24, 1950 (same day as National Anthem). Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838–1894) is considered the father of the Bengali novel and a major figure of the Bengal Renaissance.

Other major works: Durgesh Nandini (1865, first major Bengali novel), Rajsimha, Krishnakanter Will, Kapalkundala. Durgesh Nandini, Rajsimha, and Krishnakanter Will are all Bankim Chandra works — but Vande Mataram is from Anandamath specifically.

CONCEPT NOTE

Vande Mataram lyrics: Sanskrit-Bengali mixture. Full song is longer; only the first two stanzas (in Sanskrit) were adopted as National Song.

The song's deity imagery (Mother as Durga) caused controversy in the 1930s-40s — INC resolved that only first two stanzas would be used officially. Bengal Renaissance figures: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (literature), Rammohan Roy (social reform), Rabindranath Tagore (Nobel laureate 1913), Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (education).

Anandamath also inspired the concept of "Vande Mataram" as a slogan of the nationalist movement — Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh used it prominently.

Q22  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 23

of 31

India's National Quantum Mission was approved by the Cabinet to provide context for India-Japan quantum agreements signed in May 2026. What is the approved outlay for India's National Quantum Mission?

A ₹3,660 crore

B ₹6,003 crore ✓

C ₹10,372 crore

D ₹18,100 crore

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

India's **National Quantum Mission (NQM)** was approved by the Cabinet in April 2023 with an outlay of **₹6,003 crore** (approximately USD 750 million) for 8 years (2023–2031). Note that ₹10,372 crore is the IndiaAI Mission (not Quantum), and ₹18,100 crore is the ECLGS 5.0 corpus (not Quantum).

The National Quantum Mission aims to: (1) Develop intermediate-scale quantum computers (50–100 qubits in 3 years; 50–1,000 qubits in 8 years); (2) Satellite-based quantum communication over 2,000 km within India and 7,000 km globally; (3) Quantum sensing and metrology; (4) Quantum materials and devices. Nodal ministry: Department of Science and Technology (DST).

Mission Secretariat: Bengaluru. India-Japan MoC signed in May 2026: AMED (Japan Agency for Medical Research) + ICMR + DST (India) on medical devices; Letter of Intent: Japan Cabinet Office ↔ India DST on Quantum Science and Technology.

The Japan Lol specifically links to NQM as India's framework for international quantum collaboration.

CONCEPT NOTE

Quantum vs Classical computing: Classical bits = 0 or 1; Qubits (quantum bits) = superposition (0 and 1 simultaneously); entanglement links qubits; allows exponentially faster computation for specific problems (cryptography, optimization, drug discovery). Quantum communication: uses quantum key distribution (QKD) — theoretically unhackable.

National Quantum Mission hubs: 4 thematic hubs at leading institutions (IISc Bengaluru, IIT Bombay/Delhi/Madras etc).

₹3,660 crore is NSIL (NewSpace India Limited) — different programme. ₹10,372 crore = IndiaAI Mission. Do not confuse these flagship mission budgets.

Q23  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 24

of 31

The 16th-century Telugu inscription discovered at Tadipatri is from the Vijayanagara period. Which of the following correctly identifies the location of Tadipatri and the script used in the inscription?

- A Tadipatri is in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh; inscription is in Sanskrit
- B Tadipatri is in Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh; inscription is in Telugu ✓
- C Tadipatri is in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh; inscription is in Kannada
- D Tadipatri is in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh; inscription is in Telugu-Sanskrit mixed

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

The newly discovered inscription is from Sri Bugga Ramalingeswara Swamy Temple in **Tadipatri, Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh**, written in **Telugu script**. The inscription is dated to approximately 1574 CE or 1634 CE (the cyclic year "Bhava" appears in both these years — without an absolute year stated, both are possible). It records an act of devotion by Basavappa, son of Satram Cheruvupalli Kalayya, on the occasion of Chaitra Bahula Dwadashi. Tadipatri is known for its outstanding examples of Vijayanagara-era temple architecture — particularly the Chintala Venkataramana Swamy Temple and Bugga Ramalingeswara Temple — representing the mature Vijayanagara architectural style (fusion of Dravida and northern elements).

The Vijayanagara Empire (1336–1646 CE) was one of the greatest Hindu kingdoms of South India, with its capital at Hampi (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Karnataka). Telugu was the court language of Vijayanagara alongside Kannada; inscriptions from this period are often in Telugu or Kannada or Sanskrit, sometimes mixed.

CONCEPT NOTE

Vijayanagara Empire key rulers: Harihara I (founder 1336), Deva Raya II, Krishnadevaraya (1509-1529 — considered greatest ruler; patron of Telugu literature; authored Amuktamalyada). Battle of Talikota (1565): Vijayanagara defeated by Deccan Sultanates coalition; capital Hampi sacked.

Hampi: UNESCO World Heritage Site (1986). Anantapur district: famous for Lepakshi temple (another Vijayanagara-period site; known for "hanging pillar" and Veerabhadra temple).

Telugu inscriptions: major source for medieval South Indian history; ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) maintains the Epigraphia Indica series.

Q24  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 25

of 31

EAM Jaishankar's visit to Jamaica in May 2026 was the first-ever bilateral visit by an Indian External Affairs Minister to any Caribbean nation. Jamaica is a member of CARICOM. What does CARICOM stand for?

- A Caribbean Association of Regional Integration and Commercial Organisations of Member-states
- B **Caribbean Community and Common Market** ✓
- C Caribbean Community of Regional Interests and Commercial Organisations of Member-states
- D Commonwealth of Atlantic and Regional Integrated Caribbean Organisations and Municipalities

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

CARICOM stands for **Caribbean Community and Common Market**, established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas on July 4, 1973 in Trinidad and Tobago. CARICOM currently has 15 full member states and 5 associate members. Jamaica is one of the founding members. CARICOM's goals: single market and economy (CSME — CARICOM Single Market and Economy), foreign policy coordination, functional cooperation in health, education, disaster management.

India's engagement with CARICOM: limited historically but expanding — India has a significant Indian-origin diaspora in the Caribbean (especially Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname — descendants of indentured labourers brought under the colonial "coolie" system 1838–1917). EAM Jaishankar's Jamaica visit (May 2–4, 2026) was historic as the first bilateral visit — a signal of India's expanding diplomatic footprint under the "Neighbourhood First" and "Global South" strategies.

Jamaica independence: August 6, 1962 (from British colonial rule). India-Jamaica diplomatic relations established 1962.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

CARICOM full members (15): Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago. Associate members: 5 British Overseas Territories.

CARICOM HQ: Georgetown, Guyana. India-Caribbean diaspora: ~2 million people of Indian origin; largest concentrations in Guyana (~40% of population), Trinidad and Tobago (~35%).

India-CARICOM relations: S. Jaishankar has been expanding India's reach to Pacific and Caribbean nations as part of Global South diplomacy.

Q25  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 26

of 31

The Aspirational Districts Programme covers 112 districts. What is the PRIMARY rationale for selecting these 112 districts?

- A Districts with the highest population density — to maximise the number of people reached by government schemes
- B Districts with the most severe socio-economic underdevelopment, selected on composite indicators of health, education, financial inclusion, and infrastructure ✓**
- C Districts that were formerly Naxal-affected — to improve governance in conflict zones
- D Districts with the lowest geographic area — to enable intensive programme management in small units

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The 112 Aspirational Districts were selected based on **composite indicators of socio-economic underdevelopment** — they are India's poorest-performing districts on 49 key performance indicators across 5 sectors: Health & Nutrition (30 KPIs), Education (9 KPIs), Agriculture & Water Resources (5 KPIs), Financial Inclusion & Skill Development (5 KPIs), and Basic Infrastructure (5 KPIs). Selection methodology: Districts were ranked by combining data from multiple indices (Composite Index of Health, Education, Agriculture etc) and the bottom-performing districts were selected, with attention to: states with high tribal populations, states with low HDI, states with NE/hilly geography, and states with historically low development.

Many aspirational districts are also (but not exclusively) former Naxal-affected areas — but that is NOT the primary selection criterion. High population density is also not the criterion.

The programme (launched 2018) uses "competitive federalism" and "peer learning" as design principles — districts are ranked monthly on improvements (delta rankings), creating competition. NITI Aayog Secretary: Nidhi Chhibber oversees the programme.

CPO Portal (launched May 2026): enables Central Prabhari Officers to upload real-time field observations for immediate administrative action.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

ADP 112 districts: concentrated in Bihar (13), UP (8), Jharkhand (10), MP (8), Odisha (11), Chhattisgarh (7), Telangana (7), Andhra Pradesh (7), Rajasthan (5), and NE states. The programme has shown: improvement in health indicators (institutional deliveries, vaccination), financial inclusion (bank accounts), and school enrolment. "Delta Ranking" = rank by IMPROVEMENT not by absolute level — this motivates even the worst-off districts.

NITI Aayog publishes Aspirational Districts Rankings monthly. Comparison: Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP): 500 blocks in 329 districts — deeper sub-district targeting.

Q26  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 27 of 31

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 protects which three national symbols? (After the 2026 amendment)

- A National Flag, National Anthem, and Constitution of India
- B National Flag, National Anthem, and National Song (Vande Mataram) ✓
- C National Flag, National Anthem, National Song, and National Emblem
- D National Flag, National Anthem, and National Animal (Tiger)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 (after the May 2026 amendment) protects three national symbols: (1) **National Flag (Tricolour)** — insult = up to 3 years; (2) **National Anthem ("Jana Gana Mana")** — insult/obstruction = up to 3 years; (3) **National Song ("Vande Mataram")** — insult/obstruction = up to 3 years (newly added). The Act does NOT cover the National Emblem or National Animal.

The National Emblem (Lion Capital of Ashoka) is protected by the State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Act, 2005. The National Animal (Tiger), National Bird (Peacock), National Flower (Lotus), National Tree (Banyan), National River (Ganga), National Fruit (Mango), National Heritage Animal (Elephant) — none are protected by the Prevention of Insults Act.

The Constitution of India is also NOT protected by this Act (the Constitution's dignity is upheld through Contempt of Constitution provisions). Note: Insult to the National Flag also separately covered by Flag Code of India, 2002 (which governs display and use) alongside the Prevention of Insults Act.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

National symbols of India: Flag (Tricolour — saffron, white, green + Ashoka Chakra), Anthem (Jana Gana Mana — Tagore), Song (Vande Mataram — Bankim), Emblem (Lion Capital — Sarnath), Animal (Tiger — replaced Lion in 1973 with Project Tiger), Bird (Indian Peacock), Flower (Lotus), Tree (Banyan), Fruit (Mango), River (Ganga), Heritage Animal (Elephant — added 2010), Fish (River Dolphin — added 2023). Article 51A: Fundamental Duties include respect for national symbols.

Q27  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 28 of 31

Thomas Cup is the men's badminton team championship. In 2022, India won the Thomas Cup for the first time. Which country won the Thomas Cup at the 2026 edition held in Horsens, Denmark?

- A India — successfully defending their 2022 Thomas Cup title
- B Indonesia — reclaiming their traditional dominance
- C China — winning their 12th Thomas Cup title ✓
- D Denmark — winning as host nation

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

China won the Thomas Cup 2026 (men's badminton team championship) by defeating France 3–1 in the final. This was China's **12th Thomas Cup title** — making them one of the most successful nations in the event's history.

India won the Thomas Cup for the **FIRST** time in 2022 (defeating Indonesia 3–0 in the final — a historic achievement). India did **NOT** defend the title in 2024 or 2026.

In 2026, India reached the bronze medal stage (shared with Denmark). France reaching the Thomas Cup final in 2026 is notable — France has been developing its badminton programme, partly through naturalised players and investment in the sport.

Indonesia has won the most Thomas Cups historically but was not in the 2026 final. Uber Cup (women): South Korea defeated China 3–1 to win their 3rd Uber Cup (2010, 2022, 2026).

India has never won the Uber Cup. Thomas Cup: held every 2 years; named after Sir George Thomas (English badminton legend who donated the trophy in 1939).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

Thomas Cup history: First held 1948–49; every 3 years until 1984, then every 2 years. Most titles: China (12), Indonesia (14 historical), Malaysia (5+).

India Thomas Cup 2022 squad: Lakshya Sen, H.S. Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy + Chirag Shetty (doubles). BWF (Badminton World Federation) HQ: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Uber Cup named after: Betty Uber (British badminton player). Sudirman Cup: mixed team event; held same years as Thomas/Uber Cup.

Q28  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 29 of 31

The ECLGS was first launched in May 2020 as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. Who administers the ECLGS on behalf of the government — providing guarantees to lenders?

- A State Bank of India (SBI) — as lead bank of the banking consortium
- B SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) — as the apex development finance institution for MSMEs
- C **NCGTC (National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company) — as the nodal guarantee agency ✓**
- D NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) — as the agricultural credit guarantee institution

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

The **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC)** administers the ECLGS. NCGTC was set up in 2014 by the Government of India (under Ministry of Finance) as a company to operate credit guarantee schemes. It is NOT a bank — it provides guarantees TO banks and NBFCs who then lend to MSMEs.

Mechanism: Government deposits corpus to NCGTC → NCGTC issues guarantees to banks → banks lend to MSMEs without additional collateral → if MSME defaults, NCGTC pays the bank under the guarantee. NCGTC also administers: CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises — the main MSME credit guarantee scheme), CGFMU (Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units — for Mudra loans), NCGTC for education loans, etc.

SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) is the apex institution for MSME financing but does NOT administer ECLGS directly. SBI is a lender, not the guarantor.

NABARD provides agricultural credit guarantees (CGFSSL, NCDC schemes) — not ECLGS. Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (May 2020): announced ₹20 lakh crore package; ECLGS was the headline credit scheme component.

CONCEPT NOTE

NCGTC incorporated: 2014 under Companies Act. Ministry of Finance: Department of Financial Services oversees NCGTC. Guarantee schemes under NCGTC: ECLGS (all versions), CGTMSE, CGFMU, NCGTC for Credit Guarantee Fund for Skill Development, etc.

CGTMSE (oldest MSME guarantee scheme, 1990s vintage): covers loans up to ₹5 crore for micro + small enterprises without collateral. ECLGS is a newer, crisis-response variant.

SIDBI: provides refinance, direct lending, and development support to MSMEs; promotional role. NABARD: rural credit, microfinance, agriculture — separate domain.

Q29  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 30

of 31

India's T20 World Cup 2026 final was held at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad. Which of the following is CORRECT about this stadium?

- A It is the second-largest cricket stadium in the world; the largest is Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in Australia
- B It is the world's largest cricket stadium by seating capacity, with a capacity of approximately 132,000 ✓
- C It was formerly called Sardar Patel Stadium and renamed in 2020; it is India's oldest international cricket ground
- D It is jointly named after Narendra Modi and Sardar Patel to honour both Gujarat leaders

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Gujarat is the **world's largest cricket stadium by seating capacity at approximately 132,000 (1.32 lakh)**. It was formerly known as Sardar Patel Stadium (and before that as Gujarat Stadium / Gujarat Cricket Association Stadium).

It was renamed Narendra Modi Stadium in February 2020 when PM Modi's administration renovated and expanded it — NOT Gujarat's oldest international ground (Wankhede/Eden Gardens are older). Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in Australia has a capacity of ~100,000 — making it the second-largest.

The stadium is located at Motera in Ahmedabad. It hosted India's T20 WC 2026 final where India defeated New Zealand by 96 runs.

The stadium also hosted the India-Australia Test match in February 2023 (PM Modi Cup/Border-Gavaskar Trophy) and India-Pakistan ICC WC 2023 match. It does NOT carry both names — it is simply "Narendra Modi Stadium" (not jointly named).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

World's largest cricket stadiums by capacity: (1) Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad (~132,000); (2) Melbourne Cricket Ground, Australia (~100,000); (3) Eden Gardens, Kolkata (~66,349); (4) Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Hyderabad; others. Narendra Modi Stadium: managed by Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA); renovated with retractable cover, new floodlights, dressing rooms.

India's oldest Test venues: Eden Gardens (1934), Chepauk (Chennai, 1934), Wankhede/Brabourne/Old Brabourne (Mumbai). The 2023 ODI World Cup final between India and Australia was also held at Narendra Modi Stadium (Australia won).

Q30  **CONCEPT KIT**

Question 31

of 31

Magnus Carlsen is the current FIDE Freestyle World Champion. He is also the reigning Classical World Chess Champion. In which year did Carlsen FIRST win the Classical World Chess Championship?

A 2010

B 2013 ✓

C 2016

D 2018

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

Magnus Carlsen (Norway, born November 30, 1990) won his FIRST Classical World Chess Championship title in **2013**, defeating Viswanathan Anand (India) in Chennai, India in November 2013. Carlsen then defended successfully: 2014 (vs Anand again, in Sochi); 2016 (vs Sergey Karjakin, in New York — dramatic tiebreak); 2018 (vs Fabiano Caruana, in London — 12 draws, then rapid tiebreak 3-0 to Carlsen); 2021 (vs Jan-Krzysztof Duda — Carlsen won).

Carlsen **DECLINED** to defend his classical title in 2023 (against Ian Nepomniachtchi) — citing lack of motivation. The 2023 World Championship was held between Ding Liren (China) and Nepomniachtchi; Ding Liren won — becoming World Champion in Carlsen's absence.

Carlsen remains active in rapid, blitz, and now Freestyle tournaments. Anand held the World Championship from 2007 to 2013 (won 5 times: 2000, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012).

India's chess dominance: R Praggnanandhaa, D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi among world top-10 in 2024–26.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

World Chess Championship history: Garry Kasparov (1985-2000), Vladimir Kramnik (2000-2007), Viswanathan Anand (2007-2013), Magnus Carlsen (2013-2023), Ding Liren (2023-present). India's chess: Anand won 5 World Championships; mentored current generation.

Carlsen's peak classical rating: 2882 (highest in history, set 2014). FIDE: Fédération Internationale des Échecs; HQ Lausanne, Switzerland; founded 1924.

D. Gukesh (born 2006) — became India's youngest World Chess Championship challenger in 2024.

Q31  **CONCEPT KIT**



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