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Daily Quiz — August 25, 2026

25 August 2026



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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Daily Quiz — August 25, 2026

25 August 2026 · 15 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1

of 15

[Source →](#)

The Special Representatives mechanism between India and China operates under the 2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles. Which of the following correctly describes the settlement process envisaged by that Agreement?

- ☐ A A two-stage process of demarcation on the ground followed by ratification by both Parliaments
- ☒ B A three-stage process of agreeing political parameters, then a framework for settlement, then delineation and demarcation ✓
- ☐ C A four-stage process beginning with third-party arbitration under the United Nations
- ☐ D A single-stage process of mutual recognition of the Line of Actual Control as the international boundary

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The 2005 Agreement envisages a three-stage process, namely agreement on political parameters and guiding principles, then a framework for settlement, then delineation and demarcation. Only the first stage stands completed.

ANALYSIS: Aspirants often assume the boundary talks are about drawing lines on a map. They are not yet at that stage; the negotiation remains stalled at the framework stage, which is why twenty-five rounds have produced no territorial outcome.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

The Special Representatives mechanism was created in 2003 during Prime Minister Vajpayee's Beijing visit, with Brajesh Mishra and Dai Bingguo as the first Special Representatives. India is represented by the National Security Adviser and China by its Foreign Minister.

Article VII of the 2005 Agreement safeguards settled populations in border areas, a provision India reads as protecting inhabited areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The wider confidence-building architecture comprises the 1993 Peace and Tranquillity Agreement, the 1996 Military CBMs Agreement, the 2005 Protocol on Modalities, the 2012 Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination and the 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement.

The Line of Actual Control, as cited by India, runs approximately 3,488 km across three sectors: Western, Middle and Eastern.

Q1 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 India and its neighbourhood, bilateral agreements; GS3 border security management.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	boundary question, confidence-building measures, disengagement versus de-escalation, crisis-insulated channel.
 COMMON MISTAKE	treating disengagement, completed at Depsang and Demchok in October 2024, as equivalent to de-escalation; disengagement separates troops at friction points, de-escalation reduces force levels in the theatre.
 EXAM TIP	Remember that the SR mechanism dates to 2003 and the governing agreement to 2005.
 INTERVIEW	Should India keep trade and connectivity normalisation coupled to verifiable border stabilisation, or allow the two tracks to run separately?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 2

of 15

[Source →](#)

Which statute provides the Reserve Bank of India with its statutory authority to regulate and supervise payment systems such as the Unified Payments Interface?

- ☐ A The Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934
- ☐ B The Banking Regulation Act, 1949
- ☒ C **The Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 ✓**
- ☐ D The Information Technology Act, 2000

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 is the statutory basis for RBI's authority over payment systems in India, including UPI. The RBI Act, 1934 governs the central bank's constitution and monetary functions, while the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 governs banking companies. **ANALYSIS:** The distinction matters because UPI is operated by NPCI, which is not a bank; RBI's jurisdiction over it flows from payment-system regulation rather than from banking regulation.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The National Payments Corporation of India was incorporated in 2008 as a not-for-profit company, originally under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 and now Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. It is headquartered in Mumbai and was promoted by the Reserve Bank of India and the Indian Banks' Association as an umbrella organisation for retail payments. UPI was piloted on 11 April 2016 by then Governor Dr Raghuram Rajan and rolled out publicly on 25 August 2016. It uses a Virtual Payment Address so that account numbers are never exposed, settles on the 24x7 IMPS backbone, and forms the payments layer of India Stack alongside Aadhaar e-KYC, eSign and DigiLocker. Volume rose from 1.78 crore transactions in FY 2016-17 to over 24,162 crore in FY 2025-26.

Q2
 **CONCEPT KIT**

CROSS-PAPER

GS3 Indian economy, mobilisation of resources, digital infrastructure; GS2 statutory and regulatory bodies.


MAINS KEYWORDS

digital public infrastructure, financial inclusion, zero MDR, systemic concentration risk.


COMMON MISTAKE

confusing NPCI with a regulator; NPCI operates the system, the RBI regulates it.


EXAM TIP

UPI has two dates, the 11 April 2016 pilot and the 25 August 2016 public rollout; the decade being marked is of the public rollout.


INTERVIEW

Should India impose a calibrated merchant discount rate on large-merchant UPI transactions, or does zero MDR remain essential to adoption?

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Question 3

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[Source](#)

Under the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020, which acquisition category is accorded the highest priority?

A Buy (Indian-IDDMM), meaning Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured ✓

B Buy and Make (Indian), involving licensed production by an Indian vendor

C Buy (Global), involving outright purchase from a foreign vendor

D Buy (Global-Manufacture in India), involving foreign design with domestic assembly

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Buy (Indian-IDDMM) is the highest-priority category under DAP 2020, requiring the equipment to be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured with a stipulated minimum indigenous content. **ANALYSIS:** The category hierarchy is the operative instrument of defence indigenisation policy, since it determines which vendors are even eligible to bid before price is considered.

Design ownership, not assembly location, is what the top category rewards.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The Defence Research and Development Organisation was established in 1958, is headquartered in New Delhi and functions under the Department of Defence Research and Development, Ministry of Defence, with the motto "Balasya Mulam Vigyanam". India's missile capability traces to the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme launched in 1983 under Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, covering Prithvi, Agni, Trishul, Akash and Nag, and formally closed in 2008. BrahMos sits outside the IGMDP as an India-Russia joint venture established in 1998. DRDO transfers technology through a Licensing Agreement for Transfer of Technology, and has moved toward zero-cost transfer and multiple production partners.

The wider self-reliance architecture includes Positive Indigenisation Lists, Defence Industrial Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, iDEX, the SRIJAN portal, and an FDI cap of 74 per cent through the automatic route.

Q3 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 indigenisation of technology, defence; GS2 government policies and interventions.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Aatmanirbhar Bharat, transfer of technology, series production, supply-chain depth.
 COMMON MISTAKE	equating "Make in India" assembly with indigenisation; DAP 2020's top category turns on indigenous design, not on where final assembly occurs.
 EXAM TIP	Remember IGMDP's five systems and that Agni-class strategic systems are operated under the Strategic Forces Command, outside conventional industry transfer.
 INTERVIEW	Does transfer of technology build genuine capability, or only licensed assembly, if recipient firms are excluded from the design stage?

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Question 4

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[Source](#) →

PRAGATI is frequently described as a rare working instance of cooperative federalism in project monitoring. Which feature of its design most directly supports that description?

- ☐ A It uses satellite imagery to verify physical progress claimed by implementing agencies
- ☐ B It reviews projects only after they have exceeded their sanctioned cost
- ☐ C It transfers the power to sanction central projects to State governments
- ☒ D It places the Prime Minister's Office, Union Secretaries and State Chief Secretaries on a single video-conference ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: PRAGATI is a tri-tier platform connecting the PMO, Union Government Secretaries and State Chief Secretaries in one session, which collapses the usual inter-ministerial and Centre-State escalation ladder into a single forum. **ANALYSIS:** The geo-spatial verification in option A is a genuine PRAGATI feature but it is a monitoring technique, not a federal one.

The federal character comes from who is placed in the room together, which is why the platform is a process innovation rather than a technological one.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

PRAGATI, or Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, was launched on 25 March 2015. It integrates three technologies: digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology, the last allowing claimed progress to be checked against satellite imagery.

The 53rd meeting on 25 August 2026 at Seva Teerth, New Delhi reviewed six railway, road and power projects across nine States worth over Rs 30,000 crore, along with the AgriStack rollout and cyber-fraud prevention. AgriStack is the farmer-centric digital public infrastructure of the Digital Agriculture Mission, anchored on a Farmer ID and built on three registries: the Farmers' Registry, Geo-referenced Village Maps and the Crop Sown Registry.

Related platforms include the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan and the National Infrastructure Pipeline.

Q4
 **CONCEPT KIT**

CROSS-PAPER

GS2 e-governance, transparency and accountability, federal structure; GS3 infrastructure.


MAINS KEYWORDS

cooperative federalism, coordination failure, project monitoring, escalation ladder.


COMMON MISTAKE

treating apex monitoring as a substitute for structural reform; PRAGATI identifies bottlenecks such as land acquisition and forest clearance but does not widen them.


EXAM TIP

Learn AgriStack's three registries, a high-probability Prelims item.


INTERVIEW

Should project-level PRAGATI outcome data be published publicly, and what would change if it were?


[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 5

of 15

[Source](#) →

With reference to the formation of a new State under Article 3 of the Constitution, which of the following statements is correct?

- ☐ A The Bill requires ratification by not less than one-half of the State legislatures
- ☐ B The Bill must be passed by a special majority in both Houses of Parliament
- ☒ C **The President must refer the Bill to the legislature of the affected State, whose views are not binding on Parliament ✓**
- ☐ D The consent of the affected State legislature is a condition precedent to the Bill's introduction

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Under Article 3, a Bill can be introduced only on the recommendation of the President, who must refer it to the legislature of the affected State for its views within a specified period; those views are not binding on Parliament. The Bill is passed by simple majority, and under Article 4 it is deemed not to be a constitutional amendment under Article 368.

ANALYSIS: This is why sustained State opposition delays rather than prevents reorganisation, a point directly relevant to West Bengal's position on the Gorkha demand.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

The Gorkha demand dates to a 1907 memorandum by the Hillmen's Association of Darjeeling, revived by the All India Gorkha League in 1943 and driven by the Gorkha National Liberation Front agitation under Subhash Ghisingh between 1986 and 1988. The tripartite accord of 22 August 1988 created the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, and a 2011 tripartite agreement created the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration.

Crucially, the GTA is a body created by an Act of the West Bengal legislature and is not a Sixth Schedule Autonomous District Council; Sixth Schedule councils flow from Article 244(2) and apply to Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. A parallel demand seeks Scheduled Tribe status under Article 342 for eleven Gorkha sub-communities, which would require an Act of Parliament.

Q5 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 federal structure, devolution of powers; GS1 regionalism and diversity.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	sub-regional identity, autonomy versus statehood, incomplete devolution, constitutional entrenchment.
 COMMON MISTAKE	describing the GTA as a Sixth Schedule body; it is a State legislative creation and can be altered by State law.
 EXAM TIP	Article 3 needs the President's recommendation and a simple majority; Article 4 excludes it from Article 368.
 INTERVIEW	Should the Centre adopt criteria-based principles for State reorganisation rather than deciding each demand politically?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 6

of 15

[Source](#) →

Which of the following correctly describes the institutional position of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)?

- A** Its President is the Prime Minister and its Vice-President is the Union Minister of Science and Technology ✓
- B** It is a statutory body created under an Act of Parliament in 1958 and headed by the Principal Scientific Adviser
- C** It functions as an attached office of the Ministry of Defence and is chaired by the Defence Minister
- D** It is a constitutional body whose chairperson is appointed by the President under Article 324

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: CSIR was founded in 1942, is headquartered in New Delhi, and has the Prime Minister as its President and the Union Minister of Science and Technology as its Vice-President. It is an autonomous society, not a statutory or constitutional body.

ANALYSIS: Option B conflates CSIR with DRDO, which was established in 1958 under the Ministry of Defence; keeping the two organisations and their founding years distinct is a frequent Prelims requirement.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories was established in 1959, moved to Bengaluru in 1960, and is India's only civilian aerospace research laboratory, known for the HANSA-3 and HANSA-NG trainers, the SARAS light transport aircraft and the CNM-5. On 25 August 2026 it unveiled three indigenous gas turbine engines, the NJ-05 at 5 kgf, the NJ-50 at 50 kgf and the NJ-100 at 100 kgf, for UAVs, drone interceptors and compact missile systems.

Propulsion has been the hardest node in Indian aerospace self-reliance because of high-temperature materials, single-crystal blade casting, thermal barrier coatings and scarce altitude test infrastructure. DRDO's Gas Turbine Research Establishment at Bengaluru developed the Kaveri engine, whose derivative is now aimed at the Ghatak unmanned combat aerial vehicle.

The Integrated Defence Staff, headed by the CISC, was created in 2001 following the Kargil Review Committee and the Group of Ministers report.

Q6
 **CONCEPT KIT**

CROSS-PAPER

GS3 science and technology, indigenisation, defence technology.


MAINS KEYWORDS

propulsion gap, attritable systems, series production, materials supply chain.


COMMON MISTAKE

confusing CSIR (1942, civilian research) with DRDO (1958, defence research) and CSIR-NAL (1959, headquartered at Bengaluru) with GTRE (DRDO, Bengaluru).


EXAM TIP

Thrust here is measured in kgf, kilogram-force; the 5 to 100 kgf band is where drone and loitering-munition propulsion sits.


INTERVIEW

Is an engine designed in India but dependent on imported hot-section materials genuinely indigenous?


[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 7

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[Source →](#)

Which constitutional provision specifically directs the State to provide facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education?

- ☐ A Article 29
- ☒ B Article 350A ✓
- ☐ C Article 350B
- ☐ D Article 347

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Article 350A directs every State and local authority to endeavour to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage to children belonging to linguistic minority groups. Article 350B provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities, while Article 29 protects the right of any section of citizens to conserve a distinct language, script or culture.

ANALYSIS: These three provisions are routinely confused; 29 is a right, 350A is a directive to provide instruction, and 350B creates an officer.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

The National Conclave on Tribal Languages and Museums was held at Mysuru from 24 to 26 August 2026 with over 150 participants, organised by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs with the Central Institute of Indian Languages and the Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute, and inaugurated by Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey. A Mysuru Declaration on tribal languages was scheduled for adoption on 25 August.

CIIIL is located at Mysuru, was established in 1969 under the Ministry of Education, and runs the Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages. Adi Vaani, the Ministry's AI-based tribal language platform, initially covered Santali, Bhili, Mundari and Gondi and received an iOS app and five new languages in the August 2026 upgrade.

India has 705 notified Scheduled Tribes and an ST population of 10.43 crore, or 8.6 per cent, per Census 2011. The People's Linguistic Survey of India (2010) identified around 780 languages, while UNESCO lists 197 Indian languages as endangered, the highest for any country.

The Eighth Schedule lists 22 languages.

Q7
 **CONCEPT KIT**

CROSS-PAPER

GS1 Indian society and diversity; GS2 welfare of Scheduled Tribes, protective mechanisms.


MAINS KEYWORDS

intergenerational transmission, multilingual education, learning poverty, community curation.


COMMON MISTAKE

assuming the Eighth Schedule confers a right to mother-tongue instruction; the schedule concerns official recognition, while Article 350A is the instruction provision.


EXAM TIP

Article 275(1) grants-in-aid fund Eklavya Model Residential Schools; Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is 15 November, Birsa Munda's birth anniversary, instituted 2021.


INTERVIEW

Can a language with a complete digital corpus but no child speakers be said to have been preserved?


[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 8

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[Source](#)

The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022 restructured the schedules of the parent Act. What was the principal change?

- A** It increased the schedules from four to six and created a separate schedule for marine species
- B** It abolished the schedule system and replaced it with the IUCN Red List categories
- C** It retained six schedules but transferred vermin species to a new Schedule VII
- D** It reduced the schedules from six to four and inserted a new schedule for CITES-listed specimens ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The 2022 amendment reduced the schedules from six to four: Schedule I for species with the highest protection, Schedule II for lesser protection, Schedule III for protected plants, and a new Schedule IV listing CITES-scheduled specimens to give domestic effect to India's CITES obligations. **ANALYSIS:** The new CITES schedule is the substantive innovation, since it aligned domestic law with an international trade convention rather than merely reorganising existing lists.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The Indian Star Tortoise, *Geochelone elegans*, inhabits dry scrub, thorn forest and grassland across peninsular India, Sri Lanka and parts of Pakistan. It is Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, is listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and was uplisted from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I at CoP18 in Geneva in 2019 on a proposal co-sponsored by India.

Appendix I prohibits commercial international trade, while Appendix II permits regulated trade with a permit. On 23 August 2026, 216 tortoises seized in Mumbai and Thane were released into Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, the State's oldest national park, notified as such in 1955 and as a tiger reserve in 1993-94.

Project Tiger was launched on 1 April 1973, the NTCA became statutory in 2006, and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau was established in 2007.

Q8
 **CONCEPT KIT**

CROSS-PAPER

GS3 conservation, biodiversity, environmental legislation.


MAINS KEYWORDS

post-seizure disposal, provenance determination, genetic pollution, demand-side prosecution.


COMMON MISTAKE

assuming release of confiscated animals is automatically good conservation; IUCN best practice requires provenance determination, quarantine and release within the source population's range.


EXAM TIP

Distinguish CITES Appendix I (commercial trade prohibited) from Appendix II (regulated trade permitted).


INTERVIEW

Should wildlife enforcement success be measured by seizures made or by animals successfully returned to the wild?


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Question 9

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The triple test laid down in *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa* (1978) determined whether an establishment is an "industry". Which feature of that test most expanded its reach?

- A** It held that the presence of a profit motive is irrelevant to the determination ✓
- B** It held that only establishments employing more than one hundred workers qualify
- C** It held that government departments are categorically excluded from the definition
- D** It held that the determination depends solely on registration under the Factories Act

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: BWSSB held that an establishment carrying on systematic activity, organised through cooperation between employer and employee, for the production or distribution of goods or services to satisfy human wants, is an industry even where there is no profit motive. **ANALYSIS:** Removing the profit motive is precisely what brought hospitals, universities, research institutions, charitable bodies and government departments within industrial dispute machinery, and it is why the precedent has always been understood as worker-protective.

CONCEPT NOTE

The correctness of the triple test was referred to a larger bench in *State of Uttar Pradesh v. Jai Bir Singh*, where it remained pending for over two decades. On 20 August 2026 a nine-judge Constitution Bench decided the reference, reported as 2026 INSC 897, with a plurality opinion by Chief Justice Surya Kant for himself and Justices Satish Chandra Sharma, Alok Aradhe and Vipul M. Pancholi, and separate opinions from Justices Nagarathna, Narasimha, Datta and Bagchi.

The Court divided 6:3 overall but was unanimous that the triple test governs pending 1947 Act disputes. The Court preserved the triple test for all disputes pending under the repealed Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, expressly leaving undisturbed judgments and settlements no longer open to challenge, while holding that "industry" under Section 2(p) of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 must be construed entirely on its own text and scheme.

The four labour codes are the Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.

Q9 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 judiciary and landmark judgments, welfare legislation; GS3 labour reforms.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	prospective operation, statutory interpretation, coverage of labour law, legislative clarity.
 COMMON MISTAKE	writing that the 2026 bench "overruled" or "struck down" BWSSB; it preserved the test for the repealed Act and detached the new Code from it.
 EXAM TIP	Section 2(j) belongs to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; Section 2(p) belongs to the Industrial Relations Code, 2020.
 INTERVIEW	When a court frees a new statute from old precedent, is that interpretive discipline or a policy choice expressed as interpretation?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 10

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[Source →](#)

Which of the following is **NOT** a feature of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023?

- ☐ A It establishes the Data Protection Board of India as the adjudicatory body for breaches
- ☐ B It provides for Consent Managers through whom a data principal may manage consent
- ☒ C It applies to personal data processed by an individual for a purely personal or domestic purpose ✓
- ☐ D It provides for a category of Significant Data Fiduciaries carrying additional obligations

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The Act expressly does NOT apply to personal data processed by an individual for a purely personal or domestic purpose. Options A, B and D are all genuine features of the statute.

ANALYSIS: This exemption is precisely why ambient wearable capture, such as by AI smart glasses, sits outside the Act's reach: the wearer may be personally motivated and therefore exempt, while the bystander recorded has no consent relationship with anyone.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The Act follows Justice K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017), in which a nine-judge bench held the right to privacy to be a fundamental right under Article 21 and laid down a four-part proportionality test of legitimate aim, rational nexus, necessity and balancing. The legislative path ran through the Justice B. N. Srikrishna Committee, constituted in 2017 and reporting in 2018, and the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, which was withdrawn in August 2022.

The 2023 Act was enacted in August 2023 with Rules notified in 2025. It builds on the roles of Data Principal and Data Fiduciary, provides penalties up to Rs 250 crore, and applies to digital personal data, covering non-digital data only once digitised.

It contains wide exemptions for State instrumentalities and does not cover anonymised data.

Q10 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 fundamental rights, Article 21, statutory bodies; GS3 emerging technology and IT.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	notice and consent, bystander privacy, biometric identification, proportionality.
 COMMON MISTAKE	describing the DPDP Act as a comprehensive privacy law; it governs digital personal data only, with significant State exemptions.
 EXAM TIP	Puttaswamy was a nine-judge bench and the proportionality test has four limbs.
 INTERVIEW	Should regulation of ambient recording attach to the device, or to the biometric processing of what it captures?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 11

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[Source](#)

Under which statutory provision are Eco-Sensitive Zones around protected areas notified in India?

- A** Section 18 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972
- B** **Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 ✓**
- C** Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
- D** Section 24 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Eco-Sensitive Zones are notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, which confers wide powers on the Central Government to take measures to protect and improve environmental quality. **ANALYSIS:** Section 18 of the WLPA concerns declaration of sanctuaries and Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act concerns diversion of forest land, so neither is the ESZ source; ESZ regulation is an environmental rather than a wildlife-declaratory power.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

Activities within an eco-sensitive zone fall into three categories: prohibited, such as commercial mining and polluting industry; regulated, such as construction, tree felling and commercial establishments; and permitted, such as ongoing agriculture. The Supreme Court directed a minimum one-kilometre ESZ around every protected area in June 2022, then modified that position in April 2023 to permit flexibility where a rigid uniform buffer would harm settled villages. At Kaziranga the buffer performs a specific corridor function: the park lies on the Brahmaputra floodplain, is inundated annually, and its large mammals move south across National Highway 715, formerly NH-37, through designated animal corridors to the higher ground of the Karbi Anglong hills. Kaziranga was a reserve forest in 1905, a national park in 1974, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985 and a Tiger Reserve in 2006, and holds roughly two-thirds of the world's greater one-horned rhinoceros population.

Q11 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 conservation, environmental legislation, linear infrastructure through protected areas.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	ecological islanding, animal corridor, flood-pulse ecology, buffer rationalisation.
 COMMON MISTAKE	treating Kaziranga's annual flooding as purely a disaster; the flood pulse sustains its grassland ecology and drives the migration the corridors serve.
 EXAM TIP	Kaziranga is a World Heritage Site, not a Ramsar site; Assam's Ramsar site is Deepor Beel.
 INTERVIEW	Conservation costs fall locally while benefits are national. What would a fair distribution of that burden look like?

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 12

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[Source](#) →

The National Security Guard draws its personnel from two distinct streams. Which of the following correctly describes them?

- ☐ **A** Both the Special Action Group and Special Ranger Groups are recruited directly by the NSG
- ☐ **B** The Special Action Group comes from the Central Armed Police Forces and the Special Ranger Groups from the Navy
- ☐ **C** The NSG recruits only from the Indian Police Service on permanent absorption
- ☒ **D** The Special Action Group is drawn from the Army and the Special Ranger Groups from the Central Armed Police Forces ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The NSG's Special Action Group, its offensive or strike element, is drawn on deputation from the Army, while the Special Ranger Groups, handling support and VIP protection, are drawn from the Central Armed Police Forces.

ANALYSIS: The NSG is a deputation-based force rather than a directly recruiting one, which is why personnel return to parent organisations and why the new Mahila Commando Conversion Course functions as a capability-diffusion model rather than a recruitment channel.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

The National Security Guard was raised in 1984 following Operation Blue Star and given statutory form by the National Security Guard Act, 1986. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs, is headquartered in New Delhi, and carries the motto "Sarvatra Sarvottam Suraksha"; its personnel are known as Black Cats.

Regional hubs at Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Gandhinagar were created after the 26/11 attacks. On 24 August 2026 the NSG Training Academy at Manesar, Haryana began India's first Mahila Commando Conversion Course, a 12-week programme for a first batch of 25 women constables from the 5th Battalion of the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary, under the tagline "She Who Dares, Leads".

India has seven Central Armed Police Forces: CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, NSG and Assam Rifles.

Q12 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 security forces and their mandate; GS1 role of women in institutions.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	capability diffusion, first-responder gap, deputation model, gender mainstreaming in security.
 COMMON MISTAKE	listing the NSG outside the CAPFs; it is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces.
 EXAM TIP	Permanent commission for women Army officers came through Secretary, Ministry of Defence v. Babita Puniya (2020); women entered the NDA from 2021.
 INTERVIEW	Does training women for elite counter-terror roles without corresponding operational deployment amount to tokenism?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 13

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[Source →](#)

Which body is the regulatory authority for the environmental release of genetically modified organisms in India, and under which legal instrument does it operate?

- A** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, under the FSS Act, 2006
- B** The National Biodiversity Authority, under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- C** **The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee, under the 1989 Rules framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 ✓**
- D** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research, under the Seeds Act, 1966

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee, functioning under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, regulates the environmental release of GM organisms under the 1989 Rules framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. **ANALYSIS:** Aspirants often assume an agricultural body regulates GM crops. It does not: because environmental release is the trigger, jurisdiction sits with the environment ministry rather than with agriculture.

📌 CONCEPT NOTE

India permits only Bt cotton as a commercially cultivated genetically modified crop. GM mustard, DMH-11, received GEAC approval for environmental release in October 2022 but remains sub judice following a Supreme Court split verdict in July 2024.

Against this policy deadlock, the launch on 24 August 2026 of India's first non-GMO high-expansion popcorn maize hybrids, Krishna459 and Godari234, by Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan at Musunuru in Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh, demonstrates that conventional hybrid breeding retains substantial headroom. The hybrids came out of a long-running private breeding programme at the Gourmet Popcornica facility, screening American and Indian lines through trials in 2023-24, in partnership with Indian maize research institutions.

Popcorn maize is *Zea mays* var. *evarta*, and its commercial quality metric is the expansion ratio, the ratio of popped to unpopped kernel volume. Maize is India's third most important cereal after rice and wheat.

Q13 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 agriculture, biotechnology, e-technology in the aid of farmers; GS2 regulatory bodies.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	seed sovereignty, import substitution, benefit-sharing, crop diversification.
 COMMON MISTAKE	attributing GM regulation to ICAR or the agriculture ministry; the trigger is environmental release, so GEAC under MoEFCC holds jurisdiction.
 EXAM TIP	Bt cotton is the only GM crop commercially cultivated in India; GM mustard approval is sub judice.
 INTERVIEW	In a public-private seed development model, how should benefits be shared so smallholders capture the premium rather than only supplying raw kernels?

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Question 14

of 15

[Source →](#)

The Multi Agency Centre (MAC), central to India's intelligence-sharing architecture, is operated by which organisation, and what was the principal impetus for its creation?

- A The Intelligence Bureau, following the Kargil Review Committee and the Group of Ministers report ✓**
- B The National Investigation Agency, following the enactment of the NIA Act, 2008
- C The Research and Analysis Wing, following the reorganisation of external intelligence in 1968
- D The National Security Council Secretariat, following the 26/11 Mumbai attacks

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: The Multi Agency Centre is run by the Intelligence Bureau and traces to the Kargil Review Committee of 1999 and the Group of Ministers report of 2001, which identified the absence of intelligence fusion as a systemic failure.

ANALYSIS: The NIA (2008) and NATGRID were later, distinct responses to 26/11; conflating the post-Kargil and post-26/11 reform waves is a common error in both Prelims and Mains.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The Intelligence Bureau was founded in 1887 and is India's oldest intelligence organisation, functioning under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It organised the 9th National Security Strategies Conference-2026, inaugurated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on 24 August 2026 in hybrid format with over 850 participants; the NSS series began in 2018. Directions issued included intensifying anti-infiltration measures and applying AI-based analysis to MAC data. Two structural gaps deserve mention: MAC still lacks a statutory data-sharing mandate and operates on executive convention, and India has no dedicated surveillance-oversight statute, leaving the Puttaswamy (2017) proportionality standard alongside DPDP Act exemptions for State agencies.

Police and public order are State subjects under List II, Entries 2 and 1 respectively, so Centre-led standard operating procedures depend on State buy-in.

Q14 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 internal security, security agencies and their mandate; GS2 federal structure and Centre-State relations.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	intelligence fusion, statutory mandate, surveillance oversight, cooperative security federalism.
 COMMON MISTAKE	attributing MAC to the post-26/11 reforms; MAC is post-Kargil, while NIA and NATGRID are post-26/11.
 EXAM TIP	Police (Entry 2) and public order (Entry 1) are State List subjects, which limits central directive authority in internal security.
 INTERVIEW	Should India's intelligence agencies be subject to parliamentary oversight, and what form could that take without compromising operations?

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Question 15

of 15

[Source](#)

Which provision of the Census Act, 1948 is central to the argument that caste enumeration in the Census creates no incentive for strategic misreporting?

- ☐ A Section 8, which empowers census officers to ask prescribed questions
- ☒ B **Section 15, under which individual census records are confidential and inadmissible in evidence ✓**
- ☐ C Section 11, which prescribes penalties for giving false information
- ☐ D Section 3, which vests responsibility for taking the census in the Central Government

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
✓ EXPLANATION

FACT: Section 15 of the Census Act, 1948 provides that records of individual census returns are not open to inspection and are not admissible in evidence, which means a census entry cannot be produced to claim any entitlement. **ANALYSIS:** Section 11 penalties, in option C, deter false statements but do not answer the incentive argument; Section 15 does, because it removes the reward rather than merely punishing the act.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

Reservation benefits are accessed through caste certificates issued by revenue authorities under State-specific procedures involving documentary and community verification, a process entirely separate from the Census. Empirically, National Sample Survey rounds from 1999-2000 to 2017-18 recorded the OBC population share within a broadly stable band of roughly 41 to 44 per cent despite reservation benefits being available throughout.

The last full caste enumeration in the decennial Census was in 1931; the Socio Economic and Caste Census of 2011 was an executive exercise outside the Census Act, and its caste data were never fully released in usable form. The Mandal Commission was constituted in 1979 and reported in 1980, with 27 per cent OBC reservation implemented in 1990 and upheld in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992), which also capped total reservation at 50 per cent and mandated exclusion of the creamy layer.

The Rohini Commission of 2017 examined sub-categorisation of OBCs.

Q15 **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS1 caste and social stratification; GS2 mechanisms for the protection of vulnerable sections, welfare schemes.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	classification versus candour, creamy layer, sub-categorisation, evidence-based policy.
 COMMON MISTAKE	treating the Census and the SECC as interchangeable; the Census operates under the Census Act, 1948 with statutory confidentiality, while SECC 2011 was an executive exercise outside it.
 EXAM TIP	Article 338B gave the NCBC constitutional status through the 102nd Amendment, 2018; the 105th Amendment, 2021 restored States' power to identify SEBCs.
 INTERVIEW	Is there ever a defensible case for declining to measure a social characteristic because the results may be politically destabilising?

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