



CA Revision Module - Test 13 (July 2023)

1. Consider the following statements with respect to Goods and Services Tax (GST)

1. GST is a destination-based tax, levied at each stage of the supply chain, from the manufacturer to the consumer.
2. Import of goods or services would be treated as inter-state supplies and would be subject to Integrated GST (IGST).
3. Every decision of the GST Council is taken at its meeting by a majority of not less than 2/3rd of the weighted votes of the Members present and voting.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer : b



Goods and services Tax

Touted as one of the biggest tax reforms, India's Goods & Services Tax (GST) turned six years this year.

- **Established by** - Constitution (101st Amendment) Act 2016, with effect from 1st July 2017.
- **Motto** - One nation, One market, One tax.
- **Objectives** - To bring unity and benefits for all stakeholders, governments, taxpayers, and administrators alike.
- **Features** - It completely transformed the indirect tax structure of India.
- It subsumed of 17 taxes and 13 cesses levied by the Central and State governments.
- **Slabs** - Apart from zero-rated goods, the new structure has just four tax slabs 5%, 12%, 18 and 28%.
- **Destination-based Tax** - GST is a destination-based tax, levied at each stage of the supply chain, from the manufacturer to the consumer.
- It is applied to the value addition at each stage, allowing for the seamless flow of credits and reducing the tax burden on the end consumer.
- **Dual Structure** - GST operates under a dual structure, comprising the Central GST (CGST) levied by the Central Government and the State GST (SGST) levied by the State Governments.
- In the case of Inter-state transactions, Integrated GST (IGST) is applicable, which is collected by the Central Government and apportioned to the respective State.
- *Import of goods or services would be treated as inter-state supplies* and would be **subject to IGST** in addition to the applicable customs duties.
- **GST Council** - It is a joint forum of the Centre and the States which makes recommendations to the Union and the States on GST as per Article 279A.
- Every **decision of the GST Council** is taken at its meeting by a **majority of not less than**

3/4th of the weighted votes of the Members present and voting.

- **Recent trends** – Over the last 5 years, the Value of Goods Transported Inter-State (Domestic Only) increased by 44%.
- The Cumulative Value of Imports and Domestic Goods increased by 34%.
- **The taxpayer base** has witnessed a remarkable increase, surging from 63.9 lakh in 2017 to **approximately 1.40 crore in 2023**.

2. Consider the following statements with respect to Heat Waves

1. A heat wave occurs when the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 50 degrees Celsius or more for plains and at least 40 degrees Celsius or more for hilly regions.
2. A marine heat wave occurs when the surface temperature of a particular region of the sea rises to 3 or 4 degrees Celsius above the average temperature for at least five days.
3. Wet bulb is a condition when high temperatures combine with high humidity.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer : c

Heat waves

June 2023 was the Earth's hottest June since the record-keeping of global temperatures began 174 years ago by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

- **Definition** – A period of abnormally high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs.
- **Caused by** – Either formation of heat domes or arrival of anticyclones in most cases.
- **Occurrence** – Heat wave is considered if maximum temperature of a station reaches **at least 40 degree C or more for plains** and **at least 30 degree C or more for hilly regions**.

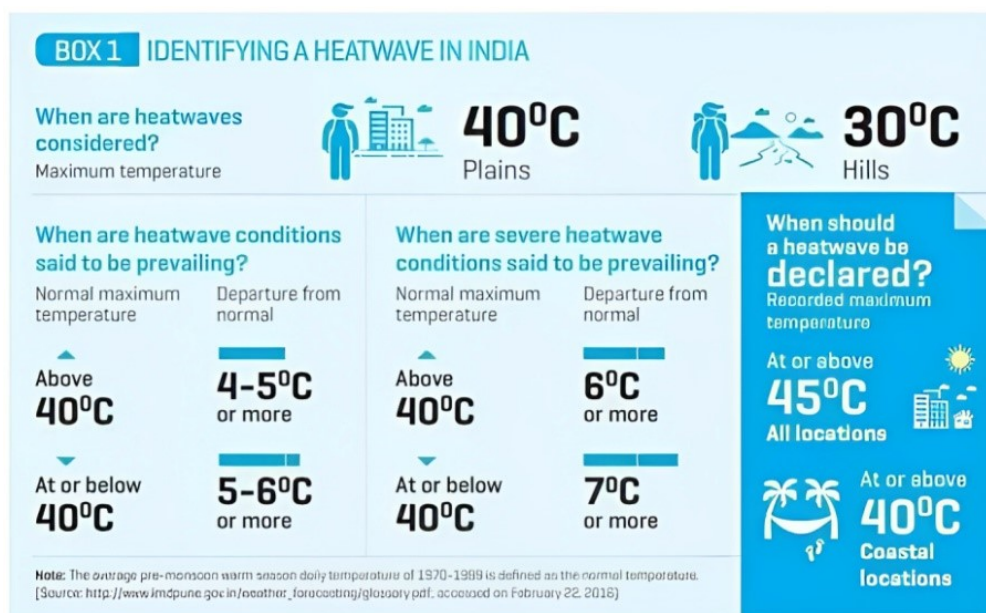


Fig:1. Identifying a Heat Wave in INDIA

- They typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases even extend till July in India.
- **Wet bulb** is a condition when high temperatures combine with high humidity.
- In such conditions, sweat from the human body isn't able to evaporate, failing to stabilise the

body temperature.

- This could ultimately cause heat stroke and even death.
- **Marine heat wave** - It occurs when the **surface temperature** of a particular region **of the sea rises to 3 or 4 degree Celsius above** the average temperature **for at least five days**.
- 87 % of MHWs are attributable to human-induced warming.

3. Consider the following pairs

Committee	Poverty line recommendations
1. Tendulkar	- Mixed Reference Period
2. Rangarajan	- Uniform poverty line basket
3. Alagh	- State specific poverty lines
4. Lakdawala	- Calorie based consumption expenditure

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Answer : b

Important Committees on Poverty Estimation

India must raise the per capita income, estimated in 2022-23 at 2,379 USD, by almost six times and grow at 7 % over the next 25 years to have a higher standard of living and eliminate poverty.



- **Poverty** - A condition wherein an individual lacks the financial resources & essential conditions for meeting the minimum standard of living.
- **Poverty line** - It is a minimum expenditure required to purchase a basket of goods and services necessary to satisfy basic human needs.
- In India, it is based on the consumption expenditure and not on the income levels.
- It is measured based on Consumption Expenditure Surveys (CES) of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) that are conducted every 5 years.

Poverty Committees

- **Alagh Committee (1979)** - It is a task force constituted by the Planning Commission which constructed a poverty line for rural and urban areas on the *basis of nutritional requirements*.
- It is based on a minimum daily requirement of 2400 and 2100 calories for an adult in Rural and Urban area respectively.
- **Lakdawala Committee (1993)** - It recommended that **consumption expenditure** should be calculated *based on calorie consumption* as earlier.
- **State specific poverty lines** should be constructed and should be updated using the Consumer Price Index of Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) in urban areas and CPI Agricultural Labour (CPI-AL) in rural areas
- **Tendulkar Committee (2009)** - It recommended to *shift away from calorie consumption-based poverty estimation* and to have a **uniform poverty line basket** for rural and urban India.
- It recommended **using Mixed Reference Period (MRP)** based estimates, as opposed to Uniform Reference Period (URP) based estimates that were used in earlier methods for estimating poverty.
- **Rangarajan committee (2012)** - It estimated a *monthly per capita expenditure* of Rs. 1407 in urban areas and Rs. 972 in rural areas.

4. Consider the following statements regarding National Multidimensional Poverty Index

1. It is published by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
2. For 2023 index, data inputs are taken from National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5).
3. India's national MPI has 4 equally weighted dimensions Health, Education, Income and Standard of living.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer : a

National Multidimensional Poverty Index

A new report titled "National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A Progress Review 2023" was released.

- **Published by - NITI Aayog**
- Coverage - Both States and Union Territories.
- **Source data - National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5).**
- **3 equally weighted dimensions - Health, Education, and Standard of living**, which are represented by 12 indicators.
- Sub-indices of National MPI
 - **Headcount ratio (H):** How many are poor?
 - **Intensity of poor (I):** How poor are the poor?
 - $MPI = H * I$
- If the deprivation score (sum of the weighted status of all the indicators) for an individual is more than 0.33, then an individual is considered multidimensionally poor.
- **Key findings - A steep decline in the poverty** between 2015-16 and 2019-21.
- It registered a decline in the number of "multidimensionally poor" individuals, from 24.85 % in 2015-16 to 14.96 % in 2019-2021.
- Around *13.5 crore Indians escaped poverty* between the 5-year time period due to improvements in indicators like access to cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water etc.,

Highlights: MPI Progress Report 2023

Steep decline in
**Poverty
Headcount
Ratio**



**135 million
(13.5 crore)**
people exited
multidimensional
poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21



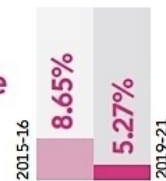
India on track to achieve
**SDG
Target 1.2**
(reducing multi-dimensional
poverty by at least half)
much ahead of 2030

All **12**
**indicators have
shown improvement**
suggesting that impact of Government
interventions is increasingly visible on ground

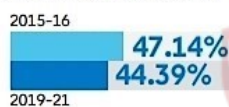
**Fastest decline in percentage
of multidimensional poor in
rural areas from**



**Reduction
in the incidence
of poverty**
in urban areas



The **Intensity of poverty**,
which measures the
average deprivation among
the people living in
multidimensional poverty
improved from about



**UP, Bihar, MP, Odisha
and Rajasthan
recorded steepest
decline in number of
MPI poor**

Improvement in **nutrition,
years of schooling,
sanitation, and cooking
fuel** played a significant role
in reducing the MPI value



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- 1 in 7 Indians multidimensionally poor due to marginal improvement in indicators like nutrition and access to education.

5. With reference to Adjournment Motion, consider the following statements:

1. It involves an element of censure against the government and Rajya Sabha is not permitted to use the motion.
2. In India, it was established through Government of India Act, 1935.
3. It needs the support of 10 members to be admitted in the house.

How many of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer : a

Adjournment Motion

Recently opposition parties moved an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha, citing the need for urgent discussions on the ethnic violence in Manipur.

- **Originated in** – House of Commons in the United Kingdom.
- It was established **through Government of India Act, 1919 in India** under the rules of the pre-independent bicameral legislature.
- **Aim** – To draw attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance
- It is introduced **only in Lok Sabha**.
- It involves an **element of censure against the government, so Rajya Sabha is not permitted** to use the motion.
- **Support** – It needs the **support of 50 members** to be admitted.
- The Speaker has to decide whether to allow the MP to move the motion.
- It results in the House dropping its scheduled list of business to discuss this urgent matter.
- **Time** – The discussion on the Adjournment motion must be at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (2hrs and 30 minutes).
- **Coverage**
 - It should not cover more than one topic.
 - It should be restricted to one issue which had a recent occurrence.
 - It should not be a topic that is already discussed or under discussion, in the same session.
 - It should not involve the matter of privileges.
 - It should not contain topics that are under adjudication by the court.
 - It should not be a matter that can be raised under a distinct motion.

6. Consider the following statements regarding Project Cheetah

1. The project involves the translocation of Asiatic cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
2. This is the first intercontinental reintroduction of a wild, large carnivore species.
3. National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is the apex body entrusted with the implementation of Project Cheetah.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

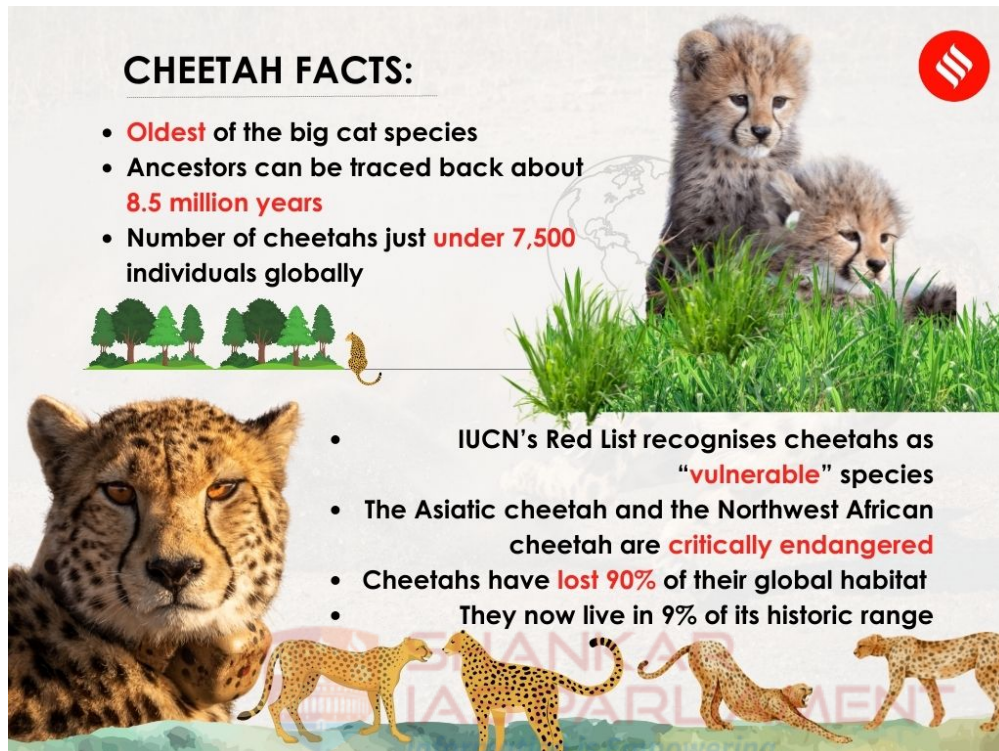
- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer : c

Cheetah Reintroduction Project

- **Project Cheetah** – It is India's cheetah relocation programme.
- This is the **1st intercontinental reintroduction of a wild, large carnivore** species.
- **Objective** – To restore the population of cheetahs, which were declared extinct in the country in 1952.
- It involves the **translocation of African cheetahs** from Namibia and South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Asiatic Cheetah** is the subspecies of Cheetah that is found in Iran and is listed as *critically endangered (CE)* by the IUCN.
- It brings in **5-10 animals every year**, over the next decade, until a self-sustaining population of cheetahs is established.
- **Other sites recommended are**
 - Shahgarh Bulge, Rajasthan
 - Mukundra Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan
 - Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh

- Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh
- **Asiatic Cheetahs** - They were once abundant in India but the last cheetah in the country died in 1952.
- **Scientific name** - *Acinonyx jubatus*
- **Conservation status**
 - IUCN - Vulnerable
 - CITES - Appendix I
- **Apex authority** - **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**.



- The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is also assisting the Indian government in reintroducing cheetahs in India.
- **NTCA** - It was established in 2005 as a statutory body **under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**.
- It has been constituted under Section 38 L (1) of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- The Union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change is its Chairperson.

7. Consider the following statements with respect to No confidence Motion

1. The Constitution of India does not mention about either a Confidence or a No Confidence Motion.
2. Article 75(3) of Indian Constitution specifies that the Council of Ministers are collectively responsible to the Parliament.
3. More than 50 no-confidence motions have been moved in the Lok Sabha since India's independence.

How many of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer : a

No Confidence Motion (NCM)

Recently, Lok Sabha Speaker accepted the Opposition's no confidence motion against the Government.

- **History** - Since India's independence, 27 NCMs have been moved in the Lok Sabha.
- The 1st NCM was moved during the 3rd Lok Sabha in 1963 by Acharya J B Kripalani against the government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru.
- The Constitution of India **does not mention** about either a Confidence or a No Confidence Motion.
- Constitution - **Article 75(3)** specifies that the **Council of Ministers are collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha (Not Parliament)**
- For testing this collective responsibility, the **rules of Lok Sabha** provide the **mechanism of a motion of no-confidence**.
- A no confidence motion can only be moved in the Lok Sabha.
- **Procedure for passing** an NCM - Any Lok Sabha MP who can garner the *support of 50 colleagues* can introduce a NCM against the Council of Ministers *in writing*.
- *Speaker will decide* whether to admit the motion for discussion
- The date for discussion should be *within 10 days* from the date the motion was accepted in the House.
- Government will respond to the motion, the opposition parties will then have the opportunity to speak on the motion.
- After the debate, they will vote and it will be passed if it is supported by the majority of the members of the House.
- **If passed** - The *council of ministers must resign* from office.
- **Highest number of instances** - During the tenure of former PM Indira Gandhi, who faced NCMs 15 times.
- **Governments fallen due to NCM** - V P Singh government in 1990, H D Deve Gowda government in 1997 and Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1999.

8. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: In India, the post of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha is vacant since 2019.

Statement-II: According to Indian Constitution, the leader of the largest opposition party which is having at least 1/10th seats in Lok Sabha is recognised as Leader of Opposition.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- d. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Answer : c

Leader of opposition

The 26 Opposition political parties from across India have formed the INDIA coalition (the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance) for the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

- **Leader of opposition** - It is the leader of largest opposition party which is *having at least 1/10th seats of the house*.
- It is **not mentioned in the Constitution** but **mentioned in Parliamentary statute**.
- The post is recognised by the speaker.
- **Statutory recognition** - Through Salaries and allowances of Leaders of opposition in Parliament Act of 1977 (both RS and LS)
- They receive salary and allowances equivalent to Cabinet Minister.

- **Present status (2023)** - The post of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha is ***vacant since 2014*** as none of the opposition party could fulfil 10% quorum.
- The 1st general elections to the Lok Sabha after independence were conducted in 1952 and the Congress won the elections.
- None of the opposition parties could win one-tenth of the number of seats.
- In the first general election, CPI won 16 seats and emerged as the largest opposition party.
- In December 1969, the Congress Party's (O) leader *Ram Subhag Singh was recognised as the opposition leader for the first time.*

9. Consider the following statements with respect to Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023

1. According to the act, silvicultural operations, safaris, and eco-tourism facilities can be allowed in forests without the prior approval of the Central government.
2. Forest lands situated within 100 km along the international borders used for construction of strategic linear project are exempted from the provisions of this Act.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : c

Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023

- **Forest Conservation Act 1980** - To contain regulations concerning forest conservation and matters related to it.
- No State Government or other authority shall convert forest land for non-forest purpose except with the prior approval of the Central Government.
- **Non-forest purposes** - It includes use of land for cultivating horticultural crops or for any purpose *other than reafforestation.*
- Hence, diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes *requires the prior approval of the central government* according to the 1980 Act.
- The activities allowed in forests without such prior approval are related to the conservation and management of forests and wildlife.
- For example, permitted activities include establishing check posts and fire lines.
- This Amendment Act add more activities to the list that will be ***excluded from non-forest purposes*** without approval such as
 - Zoos and safaris under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 in forest areas other than protected areas
 - ***Eco-tourism facilities***
 - ***Silvicultural operations***
 - Any other purpose specified by the central government; it may specify exclusion of any survey.
- **Covers 2 types of land** - Land declared/notified as a forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or any law
- Land not covered in the first category but notified as a forest on or after October 25, 1980 in a government record
- **Exempted land** - Forest land along a rail line or a public road maintained by the government up to a maximum size of 0.10 hectare
 - ***Land situated within 100 km along the international borders, Line of Control, or Line of Actual Control***
 - Land proposed to be used for constructing security infrastructure and defence related projects (not exceeding 5 hectares in a left wing extremism affected area)

- **Assigning Forest land** – Requires prior approval of the central government to direct the assigning of forest land to any organisation not owned by the government.
- **Delegation of power** - The Central government may issue directions for the implementation of the Act to any other authority.

10. Consider the following with respect to National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

1. It is published by the Union Ministry of Education.
2. It is released annually since its establishment in 2016.
3. It evaluates the quality of educational programs offered by higher education institutions in colleges and universities in India.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer : c

NIRF India Rankings 2023

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) recently released the 8th edition of India Rankings for 2023.

- **Publication** – **Annual**, since its **establishment in 2016**
- **Published by** – Union **Ministry of Education**
- It is also **known as the India Rankings**, evaluates the 'quality' of educational programs offered by higher education institutions in colleges and universities in India.
- **5 parameters**
 - Teaching, learning and resources
 - Graduation outcome
 - Research and professional practices
 - Outreach and inclusivity
 - Perception
- **Rankings** – NIRF ranks higher education institutions in 5 categories and 8 subject domains.
- Ranks are assigned based on the sum of marks secured by institutions on each of these parameters.
- **5 Categories** – Overall, universities, colleges, research institutions and innovations.
- **2023 Rankings** – Introduced a new subject namely Agriculture & Allied Sectors.
- Integration of the 'Innovation' ranking previously executed by the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) into the India Rankings.
- Expansion of scope of 'Architecture' to 'Architecture and Planning'.
- **Findings** – Only 12.3% of higher educational institutions participated in the ranking process.
- The 12.3% of institutions which have participated in the ranking contribute close to 90% of scholarly output in the country.

11. Consider the following statements with respect to Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

1. It was established by the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, concluded at The Hague in 1899.
2. The rulings of PCA are binding but the tribunal has no powers for enforcement.
3. India and USA are not members of this Arbitration Court.

How many of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer : b

Permanent Court of Arbitration

Pakistan approached the Permanent Court of Arbitration to resolve the contention associated with construction of hydel projects by India over the Indus River system.

- It is an intergovernmental organization.
- It is not a United Nations agency but has *observer status in the UN General Assembly*.
- **Established by** - The ***Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, concluded at The Hague in 1899*** during the 1st Hague Peace Conference.
- **Aim** - To facilitate arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution between member states, international organizations, or private parties arising out of international agreements.
- **Membership** - 122 Contracting Parties ***including India***, Pakistan, China, Russia, and ***the US***.
- **Services** - Resolution of disputes involving various combinations of states, state entities, intergovernmental organizations, and private parties.
- The cases involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international trade.
- **3-part organizational structure**
 - Administrative Council - Oversees its policies and budgets
 - Members of the Court - A panel of independent potential arbitrators
 - **Secretariat** - Also known as the ***International Bureau***.
- It has *no sitting judges*, instead, parties themselves select the arbitrators.
- The ***rulings of PCA are binding*** but the tribunal has no powers for enforcement.

12. NATO Plus is a security arrangement that brings together NATO and five aligned nations. Which of the following countries are part of it?

- 1. Australia
- 2. India
- 3. Japan
- 4. Israel
- 5. Sweden

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a. Only two
- b. Only three
- c. Only four
- d. All five

Answer : b

NATO Plus

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to US in June 2023, there have been talks to

include India in the fold of NATO.

- **NATO** – It is a transatlantic military alliance of 31 countries with the majority of members from Europe.
- **Set up in** – 1949, as a collective security against Soviet Union, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- In 2023, Finland become its 31st member.
- **NATO plus** – It refers to **a security arrangement of NATO and the 5 treaty allies of the U.S. – Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel, and South Korea** as members.
- **India is not a member yet; Sweden is the latest member (32) to NATO.**
- **Goal** – To enhance “global defence cooperation” and win the “strategic competition against China.
- It is **not officially recognised within NATO.**
- It has been used in discussions and debates regarding the potential expansion of the alliance.

13. Consider the following statements about Zero FIR

1. It is an FIR that can be registered by any police station, irrespective of jurisdiction, when it receives a complaint regarding a cognisable offence.
2. The provision of Zero FIR came up after the recommendation of the Justice Verma Committee, constituted after the 2012 Nirbhaya case.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering

Answer : c

Zero FIR

- When a police station receives a complaint of an offence that has been *committed in another jurisdiction*, it registers an FIR and then transfers it to the relevant police station for further investigation.
- This is called a Zero FIR. No regular FIR number is given.
- After receiving the Zero FIR, the relevant police station registers a fresh FIR and starts the investigation.
- A Zero FIR can be filed in **any police station** by the victim, irrespective of their residence or the place of occurrence of crime.
- **Purpose** – To provide speedy redressal to the victim so that timely action can be taken after the filing of the FIR.
- **Provision** – The provision of Zero FIR came up after the **recommendation of the Justice Verma Committee**, constituted after the 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape case to suggest Criminal Law amendments.
- Zero FIR is **applicable only to cognisable offence**
- **For non-cognisable offence**- The police cannot take immediate action without a warrant; the police *do not register an FIR*.
- Instead, they document the complaint in a “Non-Cognizable Report” (NCR) and recommend that the complainant seek legal recourse through the court.

First Information Report (FIR)

- The term First Information Report (FIR) is not defined in the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of

Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, or in any other law.

- However, in police regulations or rules, information recorded under Section 154 of CrPC is known as First Information Report (FIR).
- **Elements of FIR**-The information must relate to the commission of a cognizable offence.
 - It should be given in writing or orally to the head of the police station.
 - It must be written down and signed by the informant, and its key points should be recorded in a daily diary.
- The Apex court in *Lalita Kumari v. Government of U.P.* observed that it is mandatory to register a FIR under Section 154 if the complaint is related to a cognizable offence.

14. *Silver Cockscomb*, sometimes seen in the news, is related to?

- a. A short-lived weed renowned for its nutritional value.
- b. A recently discovered mineral possibly serving as a substitute for silver.
- c. One of the world's 100 most invasive alien species considered by IUCN.
- d. A newly identified species of Silverline butterfly discovered in the Western Ghats.

Answer : a

Silver Cockscomb

- Silver cockscomb is a **short-lived** beautiful but troublesome **weed** that is 50-60 cm-tall with simple, spirally arranged leaves around the stem.
- In *Karnataka's* Chamarajanagara district, the silver cockscomb is referred to as *anne soppu*.
- It is also known as *lagos spinach*, the weed belongs to the Amaranthaceae family, which includes economically important plants like spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*), beetroot and quinoa.
- **Benefits** - The **Soliga tribes** consume the silver cockscomb as a leafy vegetable as they are **high in nutrients such as beta-carotene and folic acids**, and have vitamin E, calcium and iron.
- Most farmers use the plant as fodder for livestock.
- It is frequently used in traditional Chinese and Indian medicine for treating eye diseases and ulcers.
- **Issues** - If left unchecked, it can spread quickly and suppress the growth of other crops, affecting their yield.
- It also attracts insects, caterpillars, worms and moths that can harm crops.
- Although it is of the same family as spinach, silver cockscomb leaves have lower levels of oxalic acid (0.2%) and phytic acid (0.12%).
- Spinach leaves on the other hand are high in calcium, oxalates, vitamin K and potassium, which can lead to formation of kidney stones.
- **Soligas** - Are an indigenous tribe of Karnataka.
- They are indigenous people of South India and are credited with being the first at many things:
 - They are considered the first settlers of India.
 - Their home, Biligiri Rangan (BR) Hills, was among the first areas to be declared a wildlife sanctuary in India, in 1974.
 - In 2011, when the region was declared a tiger reserve, the Soligas were the first community to win resident rights in a tiger reserve.

15. *Ambergris*, sometimes seen in the news, refers to?

- a. Nearest nebula to the Milky Way galaxy
- b. Waxy substance in the digestive system of sperm whales
- c. Ancient fossils of ammonites celebrated by Hindus and Buddhists
- d. Fossilized tree resin that is valued for its grey color and natural beauty

Answer : b

Ambergris

- Ambergris, which means grey amber, is a **waxy substance that originates from the digestive system of protected sperm whales**.
- Ambergris is a rare substance, which contributes to its high demand and high price in the international market.
- The freshly passed ambergris is a *light yellowish substance* and is fatty but as it ages it turns waxy and gets red-brownish.



- Traditionally, it is used to produce perfumes which have notes of musk.
- While there is a ban on the possession and trade of ambergris in countries like the USA, Australia and India.
- In India, sperm whales are a protected species under Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- The possession or trade of any of its by-products, including Ambergris and its by-products, is illegal under provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Shaligrams (Ammonites)

- For more than 2,000 years, Hinduism, Buddhism and the shamanic Himalayan religion of Bon have venerated Shaligrams.
- Shaligrams are ancient fossils of ammonites, a class of extinct sea creatures related to modern squids.
- Originating from a single remote region, **Kali Gandaki River Valley of Mustang** of northern Nepal.



- Shaligram stones are viewed primarily as manifestations of the Hindu god Vishnu.
- Climate change, faster glacial melting, and gravel mining in the Kali Gandaki are changing the course of the river, which means fewer Shaligrams are appearing each year.
- This is mainly because the Kali Gandaki is fed by meltwater from the Southern Tibetan Plateau.
- But with the glacier disappearing, the river is becoming smaller and shifting away from the fossil beds that contain the ammonites needed to become Shaligrams.

16. Consider the following statements with respect to Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act, 2001.

1. The Act aims to prioritise the farmers' rights over breeders' rights.
2. The farmers are entitled to sell branded seed of a variety protected under this Act.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : d

Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act, 2001

The Delhi High Court upheld an order by the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFR), revoking the registration of patent for a potato variety (FL-2027) to PepsiCo India Holdings Pvt. Ltd.

- The Act recognizes the contributions of **both commercial plant breeders and farmers** in plant breeding activity.
- **Breeders' Rights** - Breeders will have exclusive rights to produce, sell, market, distribute, import or export the protected variety.
- **Researchers' Rights** - Researcher can use any of the registered variety under the Act for conducting experiment or research. This includes the use of a variety as an initial source of variety for the purpose of developing another variety but repeated use needs prior permission of the registered breeder.
- **Farmers' Rights** - A farmer who has evolved or developed a new variety is entitled for registration and protection in like manner as a breeder of a variety.
- Farmers variety can also be registered as an extant variety.
- A farmer can save, use, sow, re-sow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed

of a variety protected under the PPV&FR Act, 2001 but he/she shall **not be entitled to sell branded seed of a variety** protected under this Act.

- **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA)** - It was established in 2005, functions under *Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare*.

17. With reference to Indo-US foundational defence agreements, consider the following pairs:

Foundational agreement	Purpose
GSOMIA	- Geo-spatial cooperation
LEMOA	- Logistics Exchange
COMCASA	- Communications interoperability
BECA	- Intelligence sharing

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Answer : b

Foundational Agreements

- Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-U.S. strategic partnership with the signing of 'New Framework for India-U.S. Defense Relations' in 2005.
- In 2016, US recognised India as "Major Defence Partner" which commits the U.S. to facilitate technology sharing with India.
- Both have signed **4 foundational agreements** that cover areas of military information, logistics exchange, compatibility, and security.

Agreement	About	Signed in	Purpose
GSOMIA	General Security of Military Information Agreement	2002	Intelligence sharing
LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Agreement	2016	Logistics Exchange
COMCASA	Communications Security Agreement	2018	Communications interoperability & Technology enabler
BECA	Basics Exchange Cooperation Agreement	2020	Geo-spatial cooperation

- Other agreements - 'Security of Supply' (SoS) arrangement and a 'Reciprocal Defence Procurement' (RDP) agreement aims to promote long-term supply chain stability and enhance security and defense cooperation.

18. Which of the following characterises the Indian Ocean Geoid Low (IOGL)?

1. Weaker Gravitational Pull
2. Lower Mass
3. Dip in sea level

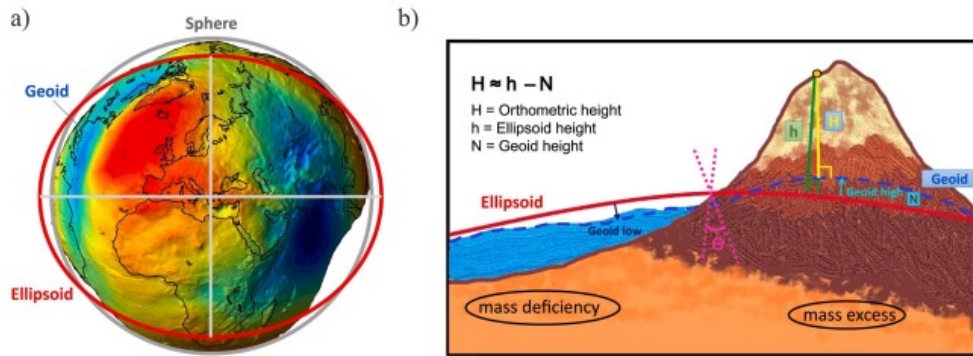
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- 1 and 2
- 1 and 3
- 2 and 3
- 1, 2 and 3

Answer : d

Indian Ocean Geoid Low (IOGL)

- The “gravity hole” in the Indian Ocean is officially called the Indian Ocean geoid low.
- It is a spot where **Earth's gravitational pull is weaker, its mass is lower than normal, and the sea level dips** by over 328 feet (100 meters).
- Here gravity is lower than average, thus making the sea level lower than the global average at the site, making it lowest geoid on Earth.
- IOGL is a consequence of a mass deficit inside the *Earth's mantle* beneath the Indian Ocean.



- The IOGL comprises slabs from the *Tethys Ocean* which separated the supercontinents of Gondwana and Laurasia.

19. Consider the following pairs

Terms

Regions

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| 1. Khazan lands | - | Goa |
| 2. Pakkasuran Mala | - | Tamil Nadu |
| 3. Kaas Plateau | - | Meghalaya |

How many of the pair(s) given above is/are correctly matched?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Answer : b

Khazans of Goa

- Generally, any low-lying land close to a mangrove-fringed estuary reclaimed by salinity control structures can be called as khazan land.
- Khazans are reclaimed lands from the river or the sea; Khazans in **Goa** are coastal wetlands.
- True Khazan lands are carefully designed as topo-hydro-engineered agro-aquacultural ecosystems.
- The most important aspect of the structure of these lands is based on the principle of *salinity regulation and knowledge of the tidal clock*.
- Khazan lands have 3 main features - sluice gate, poim and 2 types of bunds.

Pakkasuran Malai

- Pakkasuran Malai is a mountain which is also called as Hullikal Drug.
- It is situated in Coonoor, Nilgiri Mountains of **Tamil Nadu**.

- It is a *biodiversity hotspot* primarily composed of rocks and grasslands.
- Droog Fort is a historic fort on the peak of Pakkasuran Malai and it qualifies as a sacred grove.

Kaas Plateau

- Kaas Plateau is made of igneous rock, situated in the ***Western Ghats of Maharashtra***.
- Locally called as 'Kas Pathar' or '*Plateau of Flowers*'.
- Its name is derived from the Kaasa tree, botanically known as *Elaeocarpus glandulosus* (rudraksha family).
- The Kaas Plateau is designated as a biodiversity hotspot and is included in the *UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site* under the name "The Western Ghats" in 2012.
- Kas Lake is a perennial source of water supply for western part of Satara.
- It is popular for its stunning display of wildflowers (Flower Wonder) that come to life during monsoon in Maharashtra, this unique characteristic has earned it the endearing nickname of "Maharashtra's Valley of Flowers".
- Thoseghar Waterfalls and Sajjangad Fort is located in this plateau.

20. How many of the following countries are part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)?

1. USA
2. Russia
3. United Kingdom
4. India

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Only 3
- d. All 4



Answer : a

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

The United Kingdom recently signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership treaty (CPTPP)

- The CPTPP is a free-trade agreement (FTA) launched in 2018.
- **Members** – Pacific Rim of 11 countries, which includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, **Peru**, **Singapore** and Vietnam. (**UK** was recently added as a member).
- **The USA, Russia and India are not members of CPTPP.**
- The CPTPP requires countries to eliminate or significantly cut trade barriers (reduce tariffs) and make strong commitments to opening services and investment markets.
- It also has rules addressing competition, intellectual property rights and protections for foreign companies.
- CPTPP will cut tariffs for UK exports to Asia Pacific countries.
- With UK membership, the trading bloc will have a combined GDP of 12 trillion pounds and account for 15% of global trade.