

# UPSC

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

MARCH 2026 : WEEK-2

**Registered / Corporate Office:**

**CL Educate Limited, A – 45, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate, New Delhi – 110044**

**Contact No. 011-41280800 / 1100**

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# 1. India Defend T20 World Cup Crown



- India retained the Men's T20 World Cup title with a commanding 96-run victory over New Zealand in the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium, becoming the first team to defend the trophy and the first to win the tournament three times.
- Riding on Sanju Samson's explosive 89 off 46 balls and Jasprit Bumrah's devastating spell of 4/15, India outclassed New Zealand in front of a crowd of 86,824. India piled up 255/5 — the highest total ever in a T20 World Cup final — before bundling out New Zealand for 159 in 19 overs, with Tim Seifert's fighting 52 the lone bright spot for the visitors.
- India's innings was built on an explosive start as Samson and Abhishek Sharma added 98 for the opening wicket.
- Abhishek blazed to 52 off 21 balls while Ishan Kishan kept the momentum going with a rapid 54 off 25 deliveries.
- Seifert counter-attacked with a 23-ball fifty, but wickets kept falling at the other end.
- Axar returned figures of 3/27, while Bumrah wrapped up the innings with three late wickets as New Zealand were bowled out for 159.
- The victory also ended two long-standing jinxes for India — their first win over New Zealand in a T20 World Cup and their first ICC white-ball triumph in Ahmedabad after defeats in the 2023 ODI World Cup final and earlier in the tournament.
- Captain Suryakumar Yadav thus became the fourth Indian skipper to lead the country to a men's World Cup title, continuing India's dominance in the shortest format under head coach Gautam Gambhir.

## BCCI Announces Massive Rs. 131 Crore Cash Reward for T20 World Cup-Winning Team India

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- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has declared a cash reward of Rs. 131 crore for the Indian team after their victorious run in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.
- The Men in Blue, who defended their T20 World Cup title at home to become the first team to do so, received Rs. 125 crore in 2024 following their victory in the tournament. The BCCI's cash reward has increased by six crore rupees from 2024, when Rohit Sharma led the side to their first title since the inaugural edition.
- "The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced a cash reward of INR 131 crore for Team India following their triumphant campaign in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.
- By successfully defending the title, India became the first team in the history of the tournament to retain the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. With this victory, India also became the first team to win the ICC Men's T20 World Cup three times and the first team to win it on home soil.
- Led by Suryakumar Yadav, the Indian side also received a financial reward from the International Cricket Council (ICC) after their title triumph. After registering a 96-run victory over New Zealand in the final, India claimed the winner's purse of USD 2.34 million (approximately Rs. 21.5 crore) awarded by the ICC. The runners-up, New Zealand, received USD 1.17 million (around Rs. 10.75 crore).

## ICC Men's T20 World Cup

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### 1. Basic Overview

- **Official Name:** ICC Men's T20 World Cup
- **Sport:** Cricket (Twenty20 format)
- **Organizer:** International Cricket Council (ICC)
- **First Tournament:** 2007
- **Format:** Twenty20 International (T20I)
- **Match Duration:** Around 3 hours per match
- **Teams:** Usually 16–20 international teams

### 2. What is T20 Cricket

- Each team gets 20 overs (120 balls).
- Fast-paced format compared to:
- Cricket World Cup (50 overs)
- ICC World Test Championship (Test cricket)
- Designed for quick entertainment and high scoring.

### 3. History

- **Idea introduced:** Early 2000s.
- **First T20 World Cup:**
  - **Year:** 2007
  - **Host:** South Africa
  - **Winner:** India national cricket team
- Became one of the most watched cricket tournaments in the world.

#### 4. Tournament Frequency

- Usually held every 2 years.
- Some editions were postponed (*e.g.*, during the COVID-19 pandemic).

#### 5. Tournament Structure

- **Typical format includes:**

##### 1. Qualifiers

- Associate nations compete to qualify.

##### 2. First Round / Group Stage

- Teams divided into groups.
- Each team plays others in the group.

##### 3. Super Stage

- Earlier tournaments had Super 8 or Super 12.

##### 4. Knockout Stage

- Semi-finals
- Final

#### 6. T20 World Cup Winners

Year	Winner	Runner-Up
2007	India national cricket team	Pakistan national cricket team
2009	Pakistan national cricket team	Sri Lanka national cricket team
2010	England cricket team	Australia national cricket team
2012	West Indies cricket team	Sri Lanka national cricket team
2014	Sri Lanka national cricket team	India national cricket team
2016	West Indies cricket team	England cricket team
2021	Australia national cricket team	New Zealand national cricket team
2022	England cricket team	Pakistan national cricket team
2024	India national cricket team	South Africa national cricket team

#### 7. Most Successful Teams

- **3 Titles**
  - India national cricket team
- **2 Titles**
  - West Indies cricket team
  - England cricket team

### QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements regarding the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026**:

1. The tournament was jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.
2. A total of 20 teams participated in the tournament.
3. All matches of the tournament were played only in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

2. With reference to the qualification pathway for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, consider the following statements:

1. The host nations automatically qualified for the tournament.
2. The top seven teams from the previous T20 World Cup automatically qualified.
3. Additional teams qualified through ICC regional qualification tournaments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 1, 2 and 3   |
| B. 1 and 3 only | D. 2 and 3 only |

3. Consider the following statements about teams qualifying for the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup:

1. Namibia and Zimbabwe qualified from the Africa region.
2. Nepal, Oman and UAE qualified from the combined Asia–EAP qualifier.
3. Italy qualified for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup for the first time.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

4. With reference to the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup**, consider the following statements:

1. The tournament is organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
2. The first ICC Men's T20 World Cup was held in South Africa in 2007.
3. The tournament is held every four years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 only       | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

5. Consider the following statements regarding the **2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup**:

1. India defeated New Zealand in the final.
2. Jasprit Bumrah was named Player of the Tournament.
3. Sanju Samson was named Player of the Tournament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 1, 2 and 3   |
| B. 1 and 3 only | D. 2 and 3 only |

6. Consider the following statements regarding **India's performance in ICC tournaments**:

1. India won the **ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025** by defeating New Zealand in the final.
2. The **Indian women's team won the ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025**, defeating South Africa in the final.

3. India won the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026** by defeating New Zealand in the final.
4. India won the **first-ever ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2007**, defeating Pakistan in the final under the captaincy of MS Dhoni.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only  
B. 1, 2 and 4 only  
C. 1, 2, 3 and 4  
D. 2 and 4 only

7. Consider the following statements regarding the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026**:

1. Rohit Sharma was appointed as an ambassador for the tournament in November 2025.
2. The official theme song of the tournament titled "**Feel the Thrill**" was produced and performed by Anirudh Ravichander.
3. Bangladesh withdrew from the tournament before it began and was replaced by Scotland.
4. Scotland qualified through the Africa regional qualifiers after Bangladesh withdrew.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 1, 2 and 3 only  
C. 2, 3 and 4 only  
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

## 2. 'Hanuman' project launched to tackle human-wildlife conflict in Andhra Pradesh



- In a major initiative aimed at reducing human–wildlife conflict and strengthening wildlife conservation, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Forest & Environment Pawan Kalyan launched the ‘Hanuman’ Project in Mangalagiri near Vijayawada.
- The project — Healing and Nurturing Units for Monitoring, Aid and Nursing of Wildlife (HANUMAN) — has been designed as a comprehensive scientific and technological intervention to protect both wildlife and people living in forest fringe villages.
- Maintaining ecological balance and protecting wildlife are essential for human survival, he noted.
- As part of the launch, over 100 specially designed rapid response and rescue vehicles were flagged off.
- Of these, 93 are Rapid Response and Rescue Vehicles, while seven are fully equipped ambulances to provide medical aid to injured wild animals.
- The system also includes four Wildlife Rescue and Treatment Centres at Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Tirupati, and Byrluti, along with 19 rapid response teams stationed across the State.
- Each vehicle will be staffed with a Forest Range Officer, veterinary personnel, tribal helpers, and para-veterinarians to ensure swift and professional handling of wildlife emergencies.
- At the village level, ‘Vajra’ teams — trained wildlife protectors — are being formed and equipped with rescue kits to handle incidents involving snakes and other animals locally.
- The ex gratia amount for deaths due to wild animal attacks has been increased from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh, while compensation for injuries has been raised to Rs. 2 lakh. In 2025–26 alone, 2,107 cases of human–wildlife conflict were recorded across the State, with nearly Rs. 4 crore paid as compensation. Livestock losses are being compensated based on market value.
- The Minister also pointed out that in districts like Chittoor, Srikakulam, and Parvathipuram Manyam, elephant-related incidents have been significant.
- With support from the Karnataka government, four ‘Kumki’ elephants were brought in, and eight operations have been successfully conducted to drive away wild elephants and protect crops and lives.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based monitoring systems are being piloted to track wildlife movement and provide early warnings in forest-border villages.
- A dedicated Hanuman digital app and GPS tracking system have also been launched to ensure real-time coordination.
- During the event, the Deputy Chief Minister distributed appreciation certificates to outstanding Forest personnel and NGOs contributing to wildlife conservation.
- He also inspected special galleries showcasing rescue equipment, wildlife conservation measures, medicinal plants, and information on species such as the King Cobra found in the Eastern Ghats.

## Other Important Projects/Initiatives in India

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### 1. Elephant Corridor & Conflict Mitigation Projects – Kerala

- Example: Wayanad Conflict Mitigation Project in the Nilgiri landscape.
- Works with forest departments and communities to reduce conflict with elephants and big cats.
- Establishes Primary Response Teams to respond quickly to conflict incidents.
- Provides predator-proof livestock corrals and community awareness programs.

### 2. AI Elephant Detection System – West Bengal

- Uses AI camera systems (TrailGuard AI) to detect elephants.
- Sends real-time alerts to forest officials and villagers.
- Reduced response time from hours to about 18 minutes, helping prevent attacks.

### 3. Bandhavgarh Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation Project – Madhya Pradesh

- Implemented with the Wildlife Trust of India.
- Identifies elephant corridors and conflict hotspots.
- Trains forest staff and local communities to manage elephant movement.
- Focuses on over 100 affected villages around Bandhavgarh landscape.

### 4. Wildlife Overpasses and Barriers – Karnataka

- Construction of wildlife overpasses and barricades on highways and railways.
- Allows elephants and other animals to cross safely without entering villages or roads.
- Example: Elephant overpass near Bannerghatta National Park.

### 5. Rapid Response Teams / Leopard Task Forces – Karnataka

- Special teams created to manage leopard–human conflicts.
- Use tools like drones and traps to safely rescue and relocate animals.
- Thousands of conflict complaints have been handled in districts like Mysuru and Mandya.

## GPS tracking system

- A GPS tracking system is a technology that uses the Global Positioning System (GPS) to determine and monitor the real-time location of a person, vehicle, or asset. It works by receiving signals from satellites and sending the location data to a phone, computer, or monitoring center.

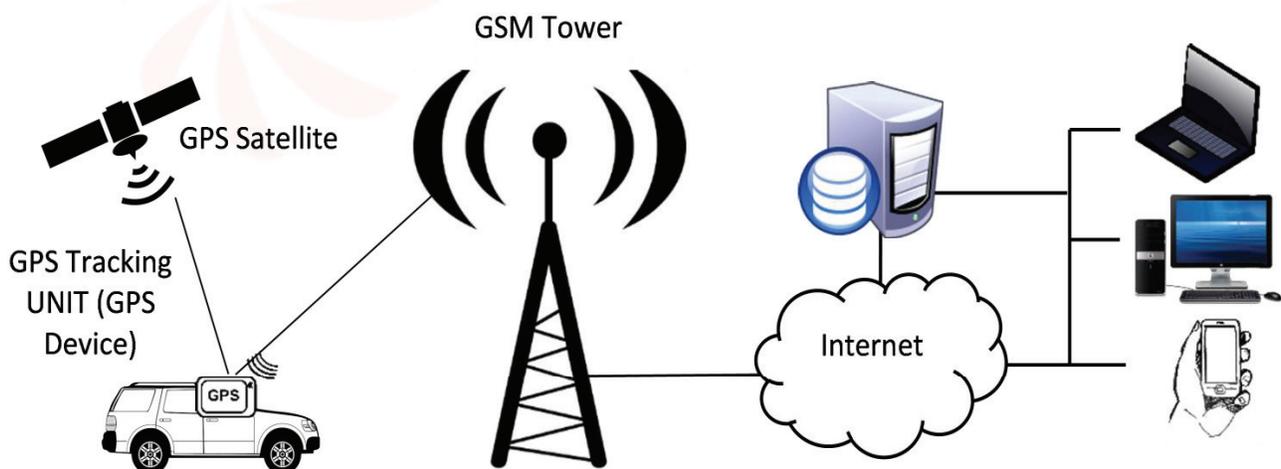
## How a GPS Tracking System Works

- GPS Satellites send signals to the tracking device.
- GPS Tracker receives signals and calculates its location (latitude & longitude).
- Communication Network (mobile data/SMS/internet) sends the location data to a server.
- Software/App shows the location on a digital map for the user.

## Main Components

- **GPS Tracker Device** – Installed in a vehicle, phone, or asset.
- **SIM / Network Module** – Sends data via cellular network.
- **Tracking Software or Mobile App** – Displays location, route history, alerts, etc.
- **Server / Cloud System** – Stores and processes tracking data.

## Common Types of GPS Trackers







14. Consider the following statements regarding **Project HANUMAN**:

1. Project HANUMAN was launched by the Government of Andhra Pradesh on **World Wildlife Day 2026**.
2. The acronym **HANUMAN** stands for *Healing and Nurturing Units for Monitoring, Aid and Nursing of Wildlife*.
3. The project aims to reduce human–wildlife conflict through wildlife rescue, treatment, rehabilitation, and monitoring.
4. It is a **centrally sponsored scheme implemented across all Indian states** to protect wildlife corridors.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 1, 2 and 3 only  
C. 2, 3 and 4 only  
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

### 3. The first-ever Khelo India Tribal Games will be held in three Chhattisgarh cities – Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja

- The inaugural edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games will be held between March 25 and April 6 in three cities in Chhattisgarh – Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja.
- This was announced by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya.
- The Games will feature seven medal sports – athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling.
- There will be two demonstration sports – mallakhamb and kabaddi.
- KITG will see representation from most states and Union Territories of India.
- “The Khelo India Tribal Games are part of our expanding footprint that offers an opportunity and scope to every young person wanting to play a sport.
- It is part of PM Narendra Modi’s vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2024 and a sport has a massive role to play in that journey,” said Dr Mandaviya.
- The logo, theme song and mascot of the first-ever Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) were formally unveiled at the Late B. R. Yadav Sports Stadium in Bilaspur.
- The launch ceremony was graced by Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Shri Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Shri Arun Sao.



- “Tapping talent from tribal regions is key and continuously expanding our athlete-base is the requirement of the hour.
- We are ensuring that talented youngsters from tribal communities are identified early, supported systematically, and integrated into the national sports framework,” Dr Mandaviya added.
- The KITG 2026 will be jointly managed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association, National Sports Federations and the Chhattisgarh state organising committee, with technical standards benchmarked against international competitions.
- The official mascot ‘Morveer’, is a name deeply rooted in Chhattisgarh’s cultural ethos. Derived from two powerful words — ‘Mor’, meaning mine or our own in Chhattisgarhi, and ‘Veer’, symbolising courage and valour — Morveer represents the spirit, pride and identity of India’s tribal communities.
- Chhattisgarh becoming the first state to host this landmark national event, dedicated exclusively to tribal athletes, marks a significant milestone in India’s sporting journey aimed at tribal empowerment and grassroots inclusion.
- The Khelo India Tribal Games are part of the Khelo India Scheme, a flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, aimed at promoting mass participation and sporting excellence. Khelo India Games have been declared an ‘Event of National Importance’ in 2020 under the Sports Broadcasting Signals Act, 2007.

## Khelo India Scheme

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- The Khelo India Scheme is a major sports development program launched by the Government of India to improve the sports culture and infrastructure in the country and identify young sporting talent.

### Overview

- **Launched:** 2018
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- **Objective:** Promote sports at the grassroots level and build a strong sports ecosystem in India.

### Main Objectives

- **Grassroots talent identification** – Find talented young athletes from schools and colleges.
- **Sports infrastructure development** – Build and upgrade stadiums, training centers, and facilities.
- **Encourage sports participation** – Promote sports culture among youth.
- **Financial support to athletes** – Provide scholarships and training support.

### Scholarship Support

- **Selected athletes receive:**
  - Rs. 5 lakh per year for 8 years
  - Support for training, equipment, diet, and travel.

## Key Components

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### Talent Identification and Development

- **Khelo India Youth Games** – National-level competition for school and college athletes.
  - Sports Infrastructure Creation
  - Coaching and athlete support
  - Fitness and physical education promotion in schools

## Major Events under the Scheme

- Khelo India Youth Games
- Khelo India University Games
- Khelo India Winter Games

## Target Group

- School students
- College athletes
- Young sportspersons aged roughly 8–25 years

## QUESTIONS

15. Consider the following statements regarding the **Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026**:

1. The inaugural edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games will be hosted by the state of Chhattisgarh.
2. The Games will be held in the cities of Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja.
3. The Games will feature athletics, football, hockey, archery, swimming, weightlifting and wrestling as medal sports.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1, 2 and 3  
D. 1 and 3 only

16. Consider the following statements regarding the **Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG)**:

1. Mallakhamb and Kabaddi will be included as demonstration sports.
2. The mascot of the Games is named **Morveer**.
3. The Games will be organised exclusively by the Chhattisgarh State Government.

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

17. With reference to the **Khelo India Scheme**, consider the following statements:

1. The scheme was launched in 2018 to promote sports culture and identify young sporting talent in India.
2. Selected athletes under the scheme receive financial support of ₹5 lakh per year for eight years.
3. The Khelo India Games were declared an **Event of National Importance** under the Sports Broadcasting Signals Act, 2007.

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

## 4. Chile becomes the first country in the Americas to be verified by WHO for the elimination of leprosy



- The World Health Organization (WHO), together with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), congratulates Chile for becoming the first country in the Americas – and the second globally – to be officially verified as having eliminated leprosy disease.
- Leprosy (Hansen disease) was historically recorded in Chile at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on Rapa Nui (Easter Island).
- The disease was limited in mainland Chile, with sporadic introductions, contained through isolation and treatment measures in the Island, where the last secondary cases were managed by the late 1990s.
- Since then, Chile has not reported any locally acquired case of leprosy for more than 30 years, with the last locally acquired case detected in 1993.
- However, the disease was never removed from the country’s public health agenda; it has remained a notifiable condition, monitored through mandatory reporting, integrated surveillance, and continuous clinical readiness across the health system.
- The verification recognizes more than three decades of sustained public health action, robust surveillance, long-term political commitment, and a health system that has remained vigilant even in the absence of local transmission.
- “Chile’s achievement demonstrates that eliminating leprosy is achievable and requires building strong systems that can detect, respond to, and provide comprehensive care for people affected by the disease, including those living with chronic disabilities.”

- “Being the first country in the Americas to be confirmed as eliminating leprosy sends a powerful message to the Region – that diseases strongly linked to groups living in vulnerable conditions can be eliminated, contributing to interrupt the vicious circle between disease and poverty.”
- At the request of Chile’s Ministry of Health, PAHO and WHO convened an independent expert panel in 2025 to assess whether elimination had been achieved and could be sustained over time.
- The panel conducted a thorough assessment, reviewing epidemiological data, surveillance mechanisms, case management protocols, and sustainability plans.
- Its findings confirmed the absence of local transmission and validated Chile’s capacity to detect and respond to future cases occurring among the non-autochthonous population.
- Chile has received verification of the elimination of leprosy disease, becoming the first country in the Americas and the second globally to achieve this recognition.”
- “This milestone reflects decades of sustained public health efforts, including prevention strategies, early diagnosis, effective treatment, continuous follow-up, and the commitment of health teams across the country. It also reaffirms our responsibility to maintain active surveillance and ensure respectful, stigma-free care for all.”
- Sustained training, surveillance and holistic care in a low-incidence setting
- Between 2012 and 2023, Chile reported 47 cases nationwide, none of which were locally acquired.
- Chile’s integrated model ensures early detection and comprehensive care: primary care centers serve as the entry point for suspected cases, with timely referrals to specialized dermatology services for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.
- Clinicians receive training aligned with WHO’s Towards zero leprosy strategy.
- The system prioritizes early intervention, disability prevention, and holistic care, including physiotherapy and rehabilitation services, ensuring that anyone affected by leprosy receives continuous support for both acute and long-term health needs to promote full recovery and social inclusion.

### **A milestone for the Region of the Americas**

- Chile’s accomplishment paves the way for other nations, illustrating the impact of political will, cross-sector collaboration, and adaptive planning in low-incidence settings.
- Since 1995, PAHO, in coordination with WHO, has ensured uninterrupted access to multidrug therapy (MDT) for countries in the Americas, including Chile.
- This continuous supply has been made possible with the support of
- The Nippon Foundation (1995–2000) and Novartis (since 2000), which have provided MDT free of charge through direct agreements with WHO.
- This reliable access, combined with national supply systems, has been essential for curing patients, preventing disability, and interrupting transmission.
- PAHO has also supported Chile in aligning surveillance with international standards, strengthening laboratory capacity, and maintaining clinical expertise in a low-incidence context, where many health professionals may never encounter a case during their careers.

### **Ensuring access and coverage for everyone**

- Chile’s elimination of leprosy has been achieved within a broader legal and social framework that protects human rights, promotes inclusion, and prevents discrimination.
- National legislation guarantees equal access to health care, social protection, and disability services, ensuring that people affected by leprosy receive care without stigma or exclusion.
- Chile’s mixed public–private health system, with strong regulatory oversight, further strengthens equitable access, including for migrants and other vulnerable populations.

## Sustaining elimination

- Aligned with WHO's Towards zero leprosy strategy and PAHO's Disease Elimination Initiative, Chile's experience demonstrates that elimination is not defined solely by the absence of disease, but by a sustained health system capable of detecting, responding to, and providing holistic care whenever a case appears.
- Moving into the post-elimination phase, Chile is encouraged to continue reporting to WHO, maintain sensitive surveillance, and ensure that clinical expertise is retained for future sporadic cases as well as any cases acquired outside the country.
- The verification panel also recommended formally designating a referral centre and leveraging WHO Academy's online training for health workers and staff, strengthening long-term capacity and preparedness.

## Leprosy

- Leprosy, also known as Hansen disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*.
- It primarily affects the skin, peripheral nerves, upper respiratory tract mucosa, and eyes.
- If untreated, it can lead to permanent nerve damage, disabilities, and social stigma.
- However, leprosy is fully curable with multidrug therapy, and early detection prevents complications.
- As a neglected tropical disease, leprosy persists in over 120 countries, with more than 200 000 new cases annually worldwide.
- PAHO's Disease Elimination Initiative aims to eliminate leprosy, other communicable diseases and related conditions in the Americas by 2030, through strengthened surveillance, access to treatment, and community engagement.

## Neglected tropical diseases

- Neglected tropical diseases are a diverse group of 21 conditions associated with devastating health, social and economic consequences.
- They affect one billion people globally and their burden is mainly prevalent among impoverished communities in tropical areas.
- Public health targets for the control, elimination and eradication of these conditions have been set in the road map for neglected tropical diseases 2021–2030.
- In 2025 alone, 9 countries were validated, verified or certified by WHO for achieving these targets.
- Following the successful verification of elimination of leprosy disease, Chile becomes the sixty-first country globally and the sixth in the Americas to have eliminated at least one neglected tropical disease, together with Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico.
- Chile is the second country in the world after the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to have achieved elimination of leprosy.

## QUESTIONS

18. Consider the following statements regarding **leprosy (Hansen's disease)**:

1. Leprosy is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*.
2. It primarily affects the skin, peripheral nerves, upper respiratory tract mucosa, and eyes.
3. The disease spreads rapidly through casual contact and is considered highly infectious.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

19. Consider the following statements about **leprosy and its global control**:

1. The World Health Organization provides free multi-drug therapy (MDT) for the treatment of leprosy worldwide.
2. MDT usually includes rifampicin, dapsone, and clofazimine.
3. The incubation period of leprosy is typically less than one year.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

20. Consider the following statements regarding **Chile**:

1. Chile lies between the Andes Mountains to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west.
2. Chile shares land borders with Peru, Bolivia and Argentina.
3. The Atacama Desert located in northern Chile is considered the driest non-polar place on Earth.
4. Chile is the first South American country to become a member of the OECD.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1, 2 and 3 only
- C. 1, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

21. Consider the following diseases:

1. Diphtheria
2. Chickenpox
3. Smallpox

Which of the above diseases has/have been **eradicated in India**?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 3 only
- C. 1, 2 and 3
- D. None

22. Which one of the following antimicrobial drugs is suitable for the treatment of **both tuberculosis and leprosy**?

- A. Isoniazid
- B. p-Aminosalicylic acid
- C. Streptomycin
- D. Rifampicin

## 5. Karnataka wants to ban children from social media

### KARNATAKA PROPOSES SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16



- Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah suggested banning social media access for children under 16, sparking debates on feasibility, enforcement, and legality.

#### Implementation Unclear

- No details were provided on how platforms would identify underage users.
- Questions remain on whether enforcement lies with the state government or social media platforms.
- Legal challenges may arise over state vs. Union government powers.

#### Australian Model as Reference

- The Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act, 2025 delays under-16 access without penalizing minors.
- Platforms face civil penalties if they fail to take reasonable steps to prevent underage accounts.
- Age verification methods include device-level checks, government IDs, bank IDs, and facial age estimation.
- Platforms affected are addictive or AI-driven social media apps, excluding messaging-focused apps like WhatsApp or Discord.

#### State-Level Enforcement Possibilities

- States may legislate to protect public health, as upheld in Tamil Nadu's online gaming case.
- Enforcement could use geo-fencing, IP-based restrictions, and self-declaration checkboxes.
- Success depends heavily on law framing and technical feasibility.

## Challenges in Enforcement

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- Age verification can be easily bypassed via false birthdates, shared devices, VPNs.
- Advanced tools like facial recognition or behavioral checks are not fully reliable.
- Frameworks focus on requiring companies to take reasonable steps, not absolute prevention.

## Responsibility and Liability

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- Platforms could face financial penalties if safeguards fail.
- Courts globally, including in the U.S., are examining whether social media companies can be held liable for mental health harms due to platform design.
- Features like endless scrolling, recommendation algorithms, notifications, and social metrics are cited as deliberately engaging young users.

## Parental vs. Government Controls

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- Parental controls are individualized, whereas state-imposed restrictions treat social media access as a public health issue.
- Debate exists between parental autonomy and baseline child protection, especially for vulnerable or marginalized groups.

## Open Questions:

- Legislative competence between state and central government remains unresolved.
- Blanket bans may exclude marginalized youth, who use social media for community support.
- Compliance would require engineering and technological investment by platforms, potentially at high cost.

## Social Media ban for youth

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### 1. Rationale behind a Ban

- **Mental Health Concerns:** Studies show excessive social media use can contribute to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and sleep disruption among teenagers.
- **Cyberbullying & Harassment:** Youth are particularly vulnerable to online harassment, trolling, and exploitation.
- **Addiction & Productivity:** Social media can be addictive, potentially affecting school performance and personal development.
- **Misinformation:** Teenagers may be more susceptible to false information and online scams.

### 2. Challenges of Global Implementation

- **Enforcement:** Monitoring online activity worldwide is nearly impossible without extreme surveillance.
- **Digital Divide:** Some youths rely on social media for education, communication, and social connection. A ban could disproportionately affect marginalized groups.
- **Cultural Resistance:** Social media is deeply embedded in global youth culture. A ban may face strong opposition.
- **Legal Issues:** Different countries have different laws on freedom of speech and internet access, complicating any global standard.

### 3. Potential Consequences

- **Positive Effects:**
  - Reduced cyberbullying and online harassment.
  - Better mental health and improved sleep patterns.
  - Increased face-to-face social interaction.

- **Negative Effects:**
  - Loss of educational tools, peer networks, and career opportunities.
  - Potential for youth to use illegal or hidden apps (dark web, VPNs) to bypass restrictions.
  - Alienation from global culture and trends.

#### 4. Alternative Approaches

- **Instead of an outright ban, experts often suggest:**
  - **Age restrictions and verified accounts:** Stricter enforcement of minimum age limits.
  - **Time limits:** Platforms can restrict daily usage for younger users.
  - **Digital literacy education:** Teaching youth to navigate social media safely and critically.
  - **Parental controls:** Tools for parents to monitor and guide usage without full prohibition.
  - **Content moderation improvements:** Reducing exposure to harmful or misleading content.

### QUESTIONS

23. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the global social media bans in 2026?
1. Australia enacted a ban on social media access for children under 16, covering platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.
  2. France followed Australia's lead by implementing a ban for children under 15, requiring parental consent for access.
  3. India has banned TikTok and other apps for national security reasons, with a focus on app-specific bans.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only     |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. All of the above |

24. Which of the following are key provisions under the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021?
1. Platforms must remove obscene or harmful content within 24 hours of receiving a complaint.
  2. Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs) with over 50 lakh registered users must ensure traceability of content.
  3. The rules mandate platforms to publish annual compliance reports to the government.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1, 2, and 3 |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1 only      |

25. According to the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, which of the following offences are addressed under the law?
1. Obscene acts and sale of obscene materials, including display of content in electronic form.
  2. The law addresses cyber-enabled crimes and online harms, including misinformation.

3. The law mandates content moderation within 72 hours for minor issues and allows appeals after 48 hours.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1, 2, and 3  
D. 1 only

26. Which of the following statements about the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, and its provisions are correct?

1. Section 69A empowers the government to block content threatening national security or public order.
2. The IT Act provides immunity to intermediaries for content posted by users, provided they follow due diligence.
3. The IT Act grants the police the authority to search and arrest suspected individuals without a court order.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1, 2, and 3  
D. 1 only

## 6. In a First, SC Allows Passive Euthanasia for Man in Coma for Over 12 Years

- In its first-ever order allowing passive euthanasia, Supreme Court has permitted the withdrawal of artificial life support of a 32-year-old man who has been in a comatose condition for more than 12 years.
- Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life support or the treatment necessary to keep him alive.
- Ghaziabad native Harish Rana, who was a student of Panjab University, suffered head injuries after falling from the fourth floor of his paying guest accommodation in 2013 and has been in a coma for over a decade.
- A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and K V Viswanathan directed AIIMS-Delhi to grant admission in palliative care to Rana so that the medical treatment can be withdrawn.
- It must be ensured that it is withdrawn with a tailored plan so that dignity is maintained.
- The order allowing passive euthanasia is in terms of its 2018 Common Cause judgement, which was modified in 2023, recognising the fundamental right to die with dignity.



**In a First, Supreme Court Allows Passive Euthanasia**

A 32-year-old man in coma for 12 years will be allowed to withdraw life support after the Supreme Court's approval.

- In the 2018 judgement, a constitution bench had recognised passive euthanasia and the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21.
- The court had held that passive euthanasia could be carried out using “Advance Medical Directives”.
- On January 24, 2023, a five-judge Constitution Bench modified the 2018 Euthanasia Guidelines to ease the process of granting passive euthanasia to terminally ill patients.
- Hearing the writ petition of Rana’s family, the top court had earlier expressed its desire to meet the parents of the 32-year-old man.
- The primary medical board, upon examining the patient’s condition, had stressed the negligible chance of his recovery.
- The top court, on December 11, noted that according to the report of the primary medical board, the man is in a “pathetic condition”.
- According to the guidelines issued by the apex court in 2023, a primary and a secondary medical board will have to be formed for an expert opinion on the withdrawal of artificial life support for a patient in a vegetative state.

## Passive euthanasia

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- Passive euthanasia refers to the practice of allowing a patient to die by withholding or withdrawing medical treatments that would prolong life, rather than actively causing death.
- Unlike active euthanasia, where a doctor might directly administer a lethal substance, passive euthanasia involves letting nature take its course after stopping interventions such as ventilators, feeding tubes, or life-support medications.
  - **Definition:** Deliberately allowing death by not performing life-sustaining actions.
  - **Legal Status:** Varies widely by country. In some countries, it is considered legal under strict conditions (e.g., with patient consent), whereas in others it may still face legal or ethical challenges.
- **Ethical Considerations:**
  - **Autonomy:** Respects the patient’s right to refuse treatment.
  - **Beneficence and Non-maleficence:** Avoids prolonging suffering unnecessarily.
  - **Intention Matters:** The goal is to relieve suffering, not to actively cause death.
- **Examples:**
  - Withdrawing a ventilator from a patient in irreversible coma.
  - Stopping chemotherapy for a terminal cancer patient who no longer wishes treatment.
- **Contrast with active euthanasia:**
  - In active euthanasia, a deliberate act (like injection of a lethal drug) directly causes death.
  - Passive euthanasia is considered less morally controversial in many ethical frameworks because it involves omission rather than commission.

## Fundamental Right to Die with Dignity

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- The fundamental right to die with dignity is increasingly recognized as part of the broader framework of personal liberty and autonomy under human rights law, though its recognition varies by country.
- It is generally linked to the principles of self-determination, bodily autonomy, and freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment.

### 1. Legal and Constitutional Basis

- In countries like India, the Supreme Court has recognized the right to die with dignity as part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

- **Landmark case: Common Cause vs Union of India.**
  - The Court ruled that a mentally competent person can refuse life-sustaining medical treatment, effectively allowing passive euthanasia.
  - It also recognized living wills (advance directives), where a person can declare their wish to refuse treatment in terminal conditions.

## 2. Scope of the Right

- **Passive Euthanasia:** Withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment that only prolongs the dying process.
- **Advance Directives:** Legally recognized instructions about end-of-life care.
- **Active Euthanasia:** Direct action to end life (*e.g.*, administering lethal drugs) remains illegal in most countries, including India.

## 3. Ethical and Human Rights Perspectives

- **Dignity:** Ensures that death is not prolonged artificially when suffering is unbearable.
- **Autonomy:** Recognizes the individual's right to make decisions about their own body and life.
- **International Perspective:** Human rights bodies increasingly interpret freedom from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment as including some aspects of the right to die with dignity.

## 4. Challenges

- **Safeguards:** Ensuring the person is competent and not coerced.
- **Medical Ethics:** Balancing the physician's duty to preserve life with respecting patient autonomy.
- **Legal Clarity:** Differentiating between permissible passive euthanasia and illegal active euthanasia.

## Fundamental Right under Article 21

- Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Its text is simple but profound:
- “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.”
  - **Right to Life** – Not just mere animal existence; it includes living with dignity, access to food, water, shelter, health, and education.
  - **Right to Personal Liberty** – Protection against arbitrary detention or restrictions, subject to legal procedures.
  - **Not Absolute** – Can be restricted only by a law following due procedure.
  - **Judicial Interpretation** – Over time, the Supreme Court of India has expanded Article 21 to include “fundamental rights emanating from the right to life”, such as:
    - Right to health and medical care
    - Right to clean environment
    - Right to livelihood
    - Right to privacy
    - Right to legal aid
- So, Article 21 is considered the most expansive and dynamic fundamental right because it protects life in a holistic sense, not just physical survival.

## QUESTIONS

27. Consider the following statements regarding **passive euthanasia in India**:

1. Passive euthanasia refers to withdrawing or withholding life-sustaining medical treatment.
2. The Supreme Court recognised passive euthanasia and the right to die with dignity as part of Article 21 in the **Common Cause vs Union of India (2018)** judgement.
3. Active euthanasia is legally permitted in India under strict medical supervision.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

28. Consider the following statements regarding **Advance Medical Directives (Living Wills)** in India:

1. They allow a person to declare in advance that life-support treatment should be withdrawn in case of terminal illness.
2. They were legally recognised by the Supreme Court in the **Common Cause judgement (2018)**.
3. They allow doctors to administer lethal drugs if the patient requests it.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 2 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

29. Consider the following statements regarding **Article 21 of the Constitution of India**:

1. Article 21 guarantees protection of life and personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
2. The Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 to include the right to privacy and the right to die with dignity.
3. Article 21 applies only to citizens of India.

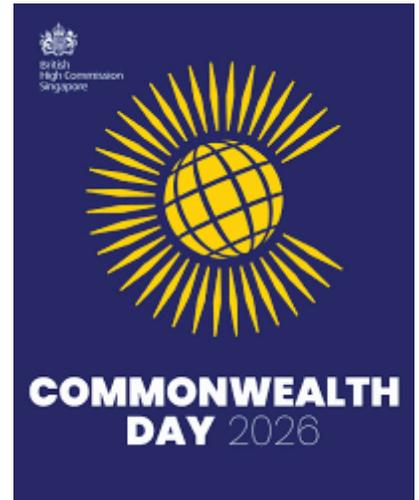
Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

## 7. Commonwealth Day

- Commonwealth Day is an annual celebration observed by people all over the Commonwealth in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, the Pacific and Europe.
- This year's theme 'Unlocking opportunities together for a prosperous Commonwealth,' highlights how the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth can rally together to face today's challenges and unlock opportunities that can deliver shared and lasting prosperity for all who live in the Commonwealth — from the smallest, most remote communities to the biggest cities.

- The theme for Commonwealth Day 2026 aligns with the 2026 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) theme, ‘Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth.’ CHOGM 2026 will take place in Antigua and Barbuda from 1-4 November.



## Commonwealth of Nations

- The Commonwealth of Nations, commonly known as the Commonwealth, is a political association of 56 member states, most of which are former territories of the British Empire.
- **Formation:**
  - The Commonwealth was established in its current form in 1949 with the London Declaration.
  - **Membership:** Comprises countries from Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific. Notable members include Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.
  - **Goals:** Promotes democracy, human rights, economic development, and cultural exchange among member states.

## Specialties of Selected Commonwealth Nations

### United Kingdom

- **Specialties:** Rich history, cultural influence, financial services, education (home to renowned universities like Oxford and Cambridge), and tourism.
- **Events:** Hosts the annual Commonwealth Day and the Commonwealth Games.

### India

- **Specialties:** Diverse culture, history, IT and software services, agriculture, and textiles. Known for its film industry (Bollywood) and cuisine.
- **Contributions:** Major Player in peacekeeping missions and international diplomacy.

### Canada

- **Specialties:** Natural resources, multicultural society, healthcare, and education. Known for its picturesque landscapes and national parks.
- **Economy:** Strong emphasis on trade, especially with the United States.

### Australia

- **Specialties:** Unique biodiversity, mining, education, and tourism. Famous for its Great Barrier Reef and vibrant cities like Sydney and Melbourne.
- **Culture:** Rich indigenous heritage and a thriving arts scene.

### South Africa

- **Specialties:** Natural resources (gold and diamonds), diverse ecosystems, and cultural heritage (including its famous music and art).
- **History:** Known for its struggle against apartheid and the legacy of Nelson Mandela.

### New Zealand

- **Specialties:** Agriculture, film industry (home to the “Lord of the Rings” films), and adventure tourism. Known for its stunning landscapes and Māori culture.
- **Contributions:** Leader in environmental conservation and sustainability.

## Singapore

- **Specialties:** Global financial hub, trade, and high-quality education. Known for its efficient public services and multicultural society.
- **Economy:** Strong emphasis on innovation and technology.

## Nigeria

- **Specialties:** Oil production, music (home of Afrobeat), and a diverse cultural heritage with over 250 ethnic groups.
- **Economy:** Largest economy in Africa, with significant agricultural and telecommunication sectors.

## Jamaica

- **Specialties:** Music (reggae and dancehall), agriculture (notably coffee and sugar), and tourism. Known for its vibrant culture and sports, particularly track and field.
- **Contributions:** Strong influence on global music and culture.

## Kenya

- **Specialties:** Wildlife conservation, tourism (safari experiences), and agriculture (tea and coffee production).
- **Economy:** Growing tech industry, often referred to as “Silicon Savannah.”

## Key Features of the Commonwealth

- **Commonwealth Games:** A major sporting event held every four years, bringing together athletes from member nations.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Promotes educational and cultural exchange programs among member states.
- **Development Programs:** Provides support for economic development, governance, and human rights initiatives through organizations like the Commonwealth Development Corporation.
  - The Commonwealth nations share a commitment to democracy, peace, and development while celebrating their unique cultural identities and contributions to the global community.
  - Each member state offers distinct specialties that enrich the Commonwealth as a whole.

## Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional political and economic union comprised of 15 West African countries.
- Established on May 28, 1975, in Lagos, Nigeria, its primary goal is to promote economic integration and cooperation among its member states.

## Member States

- |                 |                 |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • Benin         | • Ghana         | • Nigeria      |
| • Burkina Faso  | • Guinea        | • Senegal      |
| • Cape Verde    | • Guinea-Bissau | • Sierra Leone |
| • Côte d’Ivoire | • Liberia       | • Togo         |
| • Gambia        | • Niger         | • Mali         |

## The main objectives of ECOWAS include:

- Promoting economic integration and cooperation among member states.
- Establishing a common market and a monetary union.
- Enhancing trade and investment in the region.
- Facilitating the free movement of people, goods, and services across borders.



## ECOWAS has several key functions

- **Economic Integration:** ECOWAS aims to create a single market by reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers, promoting intra-regional trade, and enhancing cooperation in various economic sectors.
- **Peace and Security:** The organization plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and security in West Africa. It intervenes in conflicts and mediates disputes between member states through its ECOWAS Standby Force and the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security.
- **Political Cooperation:** ECOWAS promotes political stability and good governance among its member states. It supports democratic processes, including elections and constitutional governance.
- **Development Projects:** The organization initiates and implements regional development projects in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, and education, aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of member states.
- **Trade Policies:** ECOWAS has established a common external tariff to facilitate trade among member states and enhance competitiveness in the global market.
- **Regulatory Frameworks:** The community develops and implements policies and regulations that harmonize practices across member states, including trade regulations, customs procedures, and standards for goods and services.

## Institutions

- **ECOWAS operates through various institutions, including:**
  - **ECOWAS Commission:** The main administrative body responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of policies.

- **ECOWAS Community Court of Justice:** Ensures adherence to ECOWAS treaties and resolves disputes between member states and individuals.
- **ECOWAS Parliament:** A regional parliamentary body that serves as a platform for discussion and legislation on regional issues.

## Challenges

- Despite its objectives and functions, ECOWAS faces several challenges, including:
  - Political instability and conflicts in member states.
  - Economic disparities among member countries.
  - Infrastructure deficits and lack of funding for development projects.
  - External influences and regional security threats, such as terrorism and organized crime.
  - Overall, ECOWAS plays a vital role in fostering cooperation and integration in West Africa, addressing both economic and political challenges to enhance regional stability and development.

## QUESTIONS

**30.** Consider the following statements regarding the **Commonwealth of Nations**:

1. The Commonwealth is a political association of countries, most of which were formerly part of the British Empire.
2. The Commonwealth was established in its present form by the **London Declaration of 1949**.
3. All member countries of the Commonwealth recognize the British monarch as their head of state.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

**31.** Consider the following statements regarding **Commonwealth Day**:

1. Commonwealth Day is celebrated annually across member countries of the Commonwealth.
2. The theme for Commonwealth Day 2026 is “**Unlocking opportunities together for a prosperous Commonwealth.**”
3. The theme for Commonwealth Day always aligns with the theme of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

**32.** Consider the following statements regarding the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**:

1. ECOWAS was established in **1975 in Lagos, Nigeria** to promote economic cooperation and regional integration.
2. Cabo Verde joined ECOWAS later and was not a founding member of the organisation.

3. In 2025, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali withdrew from ECOWAS after being suspended following military coups in these countries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

## 8. Samudrayaan Mission: Deep Ocean Mission

- According to the Ministry of Earth Science, the Samudrayaan Mission is expected to be realised by year 2026.

### What is Samudrayaan Mission?

- The mission is aimed at sending three personnel to 6000-metre depth in a vehicle called 'MATSYA 6000' for the exploration of deep-sea resources like minerals.
- 'MATSYA 6000' vehicle is being designed and developed by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai under Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It has an endurance of 12 hours under normal operation and 96 hours in case of emergency for human safety.
- It is India's first unique manned ocean mission and is a part of the Rs. 6,000-crores Deep Ocean Mission.

### Significance:

- The manned submersible will allow scientific personnel to observe and understand unexplored deep-sea areas by direct intervention.
- It will also boost the Central government's vision of 'New India' that highlights the Blue Economy as one of the ten core dimensions of growth.
- India has a unique maritime position, a 7517 km long coastline, which is home to nine coastal states and 1,382 islands.
- For India, with its three sides surrounded by the oceans and around 30% of the nation's population living in coastal areas and coastal regions play a major economic factor.
- It supports fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, livelihoods, and blue trade.

### What is the Deep Ocean Mission?

- It was approved in June 2021 by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
Government of India

G20 India 2023  
Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

## MATSYA 6000

India's 1st Manned Deep Ocean Mission

- Sending **3 humans** to **6-km ocean depth** in a **self-propelled submersible**
- Exploring **deep sea resources & biodiversity assessment**
- Endurance of **12 hours** under normal operation and **96 hours** in case of **emergency**

- It aims to explore the deep ocean for resources, develop deep-sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources, and support the Blue Economy Initiatives of the Indian Government.
- The cost of the Mission has been estimated at Rs. 4,077 crores over a five-year period and will be implemented in phases.

### What are the Other Related Initiatives?

- **India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development:** It was inaugurated jointly by both the countries in 2020 to develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries.
- **Sagarmala Project:** The Sagarmala project is the strategic initiative for port-led development through the extensive use of IT enabled services for modernization of ports.
- **O-SMART:** India has an umbrella scheme by the name of O-SMART which aims at regulated use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.
- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management:** It focuses on conservation of coastal and marine resources, and improving livelihood opportunities for coastal communities etc.
- **National Fisheries Policy:** India has a National Fisheries policy for promoting 'Blue Growth Initiative' which focuses on sustainable utilization of fisheries wealth from marine and other aquatic resources.



### India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development

- The purpose of the task force is to develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries.
- It also intends to mobilise relevant stakeholders from both Norway and India at the highest level, and ensure continued commitment and progress across ministries and agencies.
- Norway is an expert on the subject of the Ocean Economy as 70% of Norway's export is from Norway's maritime industry.
- Starting the bilateral ocean dialogue has added a new dimension in India-Norway relations and will help India to understand the know-how of the maritime industry.
- India and Norway have been enjoying a cordial and friendly relationship since the establishment of relations in 1947.
- The two countries respect each other for their commonly shared values such as democracy, human rights and rule of law. In recent years, both countries have been increasing their engagements in the field of trade and technology.
- Norway has supported India's membership to export control regimes the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and the Australia Group (AG).
- India has signed a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Norway in 1986 which was revised in February 2011.

- Total bilateral trade between India and Norway stands around \$1.1 billion in 2015- 16.
- Three Arctic Missions from India have so far visited Norway, in 2007, 2008 and 2009. India’s Polar Research Station “Himadri” is located at Ny Alesund, Spitsbergen Island, Norway.

## Blue Economy

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- The concept was introduced by Gunter Pauli in his 2010 book- “The Blue Economy: 10 years, 100 innovations, 100 million jobs”.
- It is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.
- It comprises renewable energy, fisheries, maritime transport, tourism, climate change, waste management.
- It is also reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 14), which calls to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Blue Economy can help to generate livelihoods, to achieve energy security, to build ecological resilience and to improve living standards of coastal communities.
- India has a long coastline of 7,517 km covering nine states and two union territories – with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 2.02 mn. sq.km.

## Sagarmala Project

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- The Sagarmala Programme is an initiative by the Government of India to enhance the performance of the country’s logistics sector.
- The programme envisages unlocking the potential of waterways and the coastline to minimize infrastructural investments required to meet these targets.
- It entails investing Rs. 8.5 trillion (equivalent to Rs. 11 trillion, US\$140 billion or €140 billion in 2023) (2018) to set up new mega ports, modernizing India’s existing ports, developing of 14 Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) and Coastal Economic Units, enhancing port connectivity via road, rail, multi-modal logistics parks, pipelines & waterways and promoting coastal community development, with the aim of boosting merchandise exports by US\$110 billion and generating around 10 million direct and indirect jobs.
- The Sagarmala Programme is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways to promote port-led development in the country by exploiting India’s 7,517 km long coastline, 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways and its strategic location on key international maritime trade routes.
- Sagarmala aims to modernize India’s Ports, so that port-led development can be augmented and coastlines can be developed to contribute to India’s growth.
- It also aims at “transforming the existing Ports into modern world-class Ports and integrate the development of the Ports, the Industrial clusters and hinterland and efficient evacuation systems through road, rail, inland and coastal waterways resulting in Ports becoming the drivers of economic activity in coastal areas.”

## O-SMART

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- The scheme encompasses a total of 16 sub-projects addressing ocean development activities such as Services, Technology, Resources, Observations and Science.
- The services rendered under the O-SMART will provide economic benefits to a number of user communities in the coastal and ocean sectors, namely, fisheries, offshore industry, coastal states, Defence, Shipping, Ports etc.

- The objectives of O-SMART (Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources and Technology) scheme of Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Govt. of India are
- To generate and regularly update information on Marine Living Resources and their relationship with the physical environment in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ),
- To periodically monitor levels of sea water pollutants for health assessment of coastal waters of India, to develop shoreline change maps for assessment of coastal erosion due to natural and anthropogenic activities,
- To develop a wide range of state-of-the art ocean observation systems for acquisition of real-time data from the seas around India,
- To generate and disseminate a suite of user-oriented ocean information, advisories, warnings, data and data products for the benefit of society,
- To develop high resolution models for ocean forecast and reanalysis system,
- To develop algorithms for validation of satellite data for coastal research and to monitor changes in the coastal research,
- Acquisition of 2 Coastal Research Vessels (CRVs) as replacement of 2 old CRVs for coastal pollution monitoring, testing of various underwater components and technology demonstration,
- To develop technologies to tap the marine bio resources,
- To develop technologies generating freshwater and energy from ocean,
- To develop underwater vehicles and technologies,
- Establishment of Ballast water treatment facility,
- To support operation and maintenance of 5 Research vessels for ocean survey/monitoring/technology demonstration programmes,
- Establishment of state of the art sea front facility to cater to the testing and sea trial activities of ocean technology,
- To carryout exploration of Polymetallic Nodules (MPN) from water depth of 5500 m in site of 75000 sq.km allotted to India by United Nations in Central Indian Ocean Basin, to carryout investigations of gas hydrates,
- Exploration of polymetallic sulphides near Rodrigues Triple junction in 10000 sq. km of area allotted to India in International waters by International Seabed Authority/UN and, Submission of India's claim over continental shelf extending beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone supported by scientific data, and Topographic survey of EEZ of India.

### **Integrated coastal zone management**

- Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), integrated coastal management (ICM), or integrated coastal planning is a coastal management process for the management of the coast using an integrated approach, regarding all aspects of the coastal zone, including geographical and political boundaries, in an attempt to achieve sustainability.
- This concept was born in 1992 during the Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro.
- The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is a key element for the sustainable development of coastal zones.
- However this recent notion may not be adapted to all cases.
- The natural disasters Sumatra earthquake and the Indian Ocean tsunami have made a lot of impact on the coastal environment and also the stakeholder's perception on mitigation and management of coastal hazards.

- The dynamic processes that occur within the coastal zones produce diverse and productive ecosystems which have been of great importance historically for human populations.
- Coastal margins equate to only 8% of the world's surface area but provide 25% of global productivity.
- Stress on this environment comes with approximately 70% of the world's population being within a day's walk of the coast.
- Two-thirds of the world's cities occur on the coast.
- Valuable resources such as fish and minerals are considered to be common property and are in high demand for coastal dwellers for subsistence use, recreation and economic development.
- Through the perception of common property, these resources have been subjected to intensive and specific exploitation.
- For example; 90% of the world's fish harvest comes from within national exclusive economic zones, most of which are within the sight of shore.
- This type of practice has led to a problem that has cumulative effects.
- The addition of other activities adds to the strain placed on this environment.
- As a whole, human activity in the coastal zone generally degrades the systems by taking unsustainable quantities of resources.
- The effects are further exacerbated with the input of pollutant wastes. This provides the need for management.
- Due to the complex nature of human activity in this zone a holistic approach is required to obtain a sustainable outcome.

## QUESTIONS

**33.** Consider the following statements regarding the **Samudrayaan Mission**:

1. Samudrayaan is India's first manned ocean mission aimed at exploring deep-sea resources.
2. The mission proposes to send three personnel to a depth of about 6000 metres in a submersible vehicle called **MATSYA 6000**.
3. The vehicle **MATSYA 6000** is being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

**34.** Consider the following statements regarding the **Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)**:

1. The mission was approved by the Government of India in 2021.
2. It aims to explore deep-sea resources and develop technologies for sustainable ocean resource utilization.
3. The mission is implemented by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

35. Consider the following statements regarding the **Blue Economy**:

1. The concept of Blue Economy was introduced by **Gunter Pauli**.
2. Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth and improved livelihoods.
3. The Blue Economy concept is linked with **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14**.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

36. Consider the following statements regarding **Sagarmala Programme**:

1. Sagarmala aims to promote port-led development in India.
2. The programme focuses on modernisation of ports and improving port connectivity.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 2 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

37. Consider the following statements regarding the Samudrayaan Mission and related ocean initiatives of India:

1. The Samudrayaan Mission is a part of the **Deep Ocean Mission** approved by the Government of India.
2. The submersible vehicle **MATSYA 6000** can operate for about **12 hours under normal conditions and up to 96 hours in emergency situations**.
3. The primary objective of Samudrayaan is to explore **polymetallic nodules and other deep-sea mineral resources**.
4. The mission is implemented by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| A. 1, 2 and 3 only | C. 2, 3 and 4 only |
| B. 1 and 2 only    | D. 1, 2, 3 and 4   |

## 9. What is the South China Sea dispute?

- The South China Sea is situated just south of the Chinese mainland and is bordered by the countries of Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.
- The countries have bickered over territorial control in the sea for centuries, but in recent years tensions have soared to new heights.
- The South China Sea is one of the most strategically critical maritime areas (more on this later) and China eyes its control to assert more power over the region.

- In 1947, the country, under the rule of the nationalist Kuomintang party, issued a map with the so-called “nine-dash line” (for a detailed explanation, scroll down). The line essentially encircles Beijing’s claimed waters and islands of the South China Sea — as much as 90% of the sea has been claimed by China. The line continued to appear in the official maps even after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) came to power.
- In the past few years, the country has also tried to stop other nations from conducting any military or economic operation without its consent, saying the sea falls under its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- China’s sweeping claims, however, have been widely contested by other countries. In response, China has physically increased the size of islands or created new islands altogether in the sea, according to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).
- To challenge China’s assertive territorial claims and protect its own political and economic interests, the US has intervened in the matters. It has not only increased its military activity and naval presence in South Asia but also provided weapons and aid to China’s opponents.



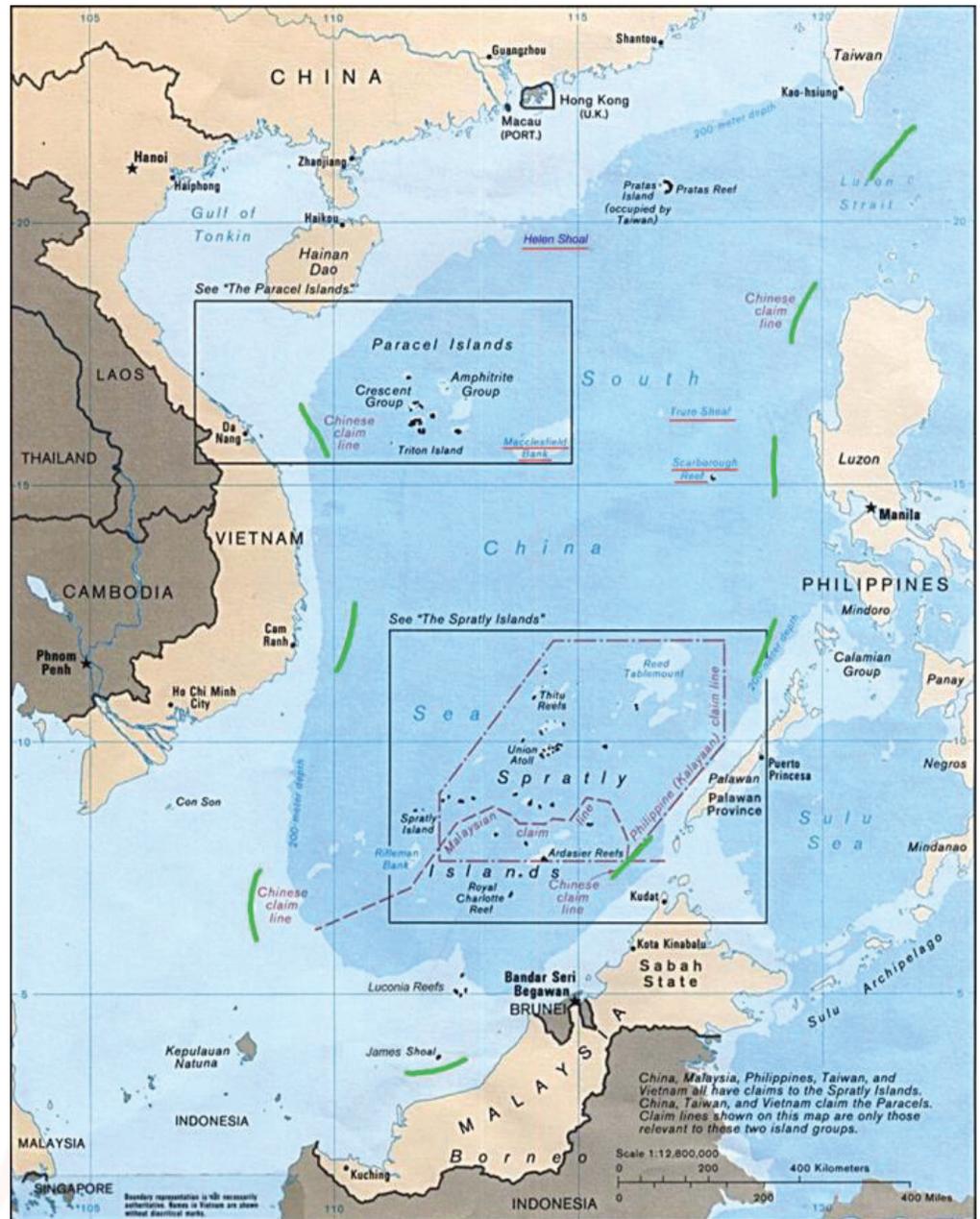
### What’s the importance of the South China Sea?

- There are 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in deposits under the South China Sea, according to the estimates of the United States Energy Information Agency.
- Moreover, the sea is home to rich fishing grounds — a major source of income for millions of people across the region. The BBC reported that more than half of the world’s fishing vessels operate in this area.
- Most significantly, the sea is a crucial trade route.
- “The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimates that over 21% of global trade, amounting to \$3.37 trillion, transited through these waters in 2016,” the news outlet added.

### What is the ‘nine-dash line’?

- The nine-dash line demarcates China’s territorial claims in the sea on Chinese maps.
- It was initially the “eleven-dash line” but in 1953, the CCP-led government removed “the portion encompassing the Gulf of Tonkin, simplifying the border to nine dashes,”.
- The line runs as far as 2,000 km from the Chinese mainland to within a few hundred kilometres of the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam.
- But on what parameters the line has been drawn? China’s claim on the waters and islands within the boundary is based on its “historical maritime rights”. However, the country has never clearly stated the line coordinates and the line runs many miles beyond what is allowed under the United Nations treaty on maritime territorial issues, which China has signed.
- While it comes under the Philippines’ EEZ, Beijing claims that the records show “China’s sailors discovered Huangyan Island 2,000 years ago and cite extensive records of visits, mapping expeditions and habitation of the shoal from the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) right through to the modern period,”.

- Similarly, China says it has centuries-old ties with the Paracel and Spratly island chains as they were once an integral part of the Chinese nation. But Vietnam disputes the claim, saying it has actively ruled over both the Paracels and the Spratlys since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century — and has the documents to prove it.
- In 2016, after the Philippines took China to an international tribunal pertaining to the dispute over the Scarborough Shoal, the tribunal in its ruling largely rejected the nine-dash line.
- Although the tribunal’s judgement was binding, there was no enforcement mechanism. China boycotted the proceedings, claiming the tribunal had no jurisdiction and that it would ignore any decision.



## How can the dispute be resolved?

- A quick solution to the dispute seems quite impossible, especially after China refused to abide by the international tribunal’s ruling.
- Some believed that ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) — a 10-member regional grouping that comprises Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia — might find a way to tackle the issue. Due to internal conflicts, the group has largely failed to do so.
- Therefore, there is a palpable fear that the South China Sea dispute can soon become the next global conflict, with grave consequences.
- “The failure of Chinese and Southeast Asian leaders to resolve the disputes by diplomatic means could also undermine international laws governing maritime disputes and encourage destabilising arms buildups,”.

## ASEAN

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- ASEAN, an abbreviation for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is a political and economic union of 10 states in Southeast Asia.
- Together, its member states represent a population of over 600 million over a land area of 4.5 million km<sup>2</sup> (1.7 million sq mi).
- The bloc generated a purchasing power parity (PPP) gross domestic product (GDP) of around US\$10.2 trillion in 2022, constituting approximately 6.5% of global GDP (PPP).
- ASEAN member states include some of the fastest growing economies in the world.
- The primary objectives as stated by the association are “to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region”, and “to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.”
- The bloc has broadened its objectives beyond economic and social spheres, aiming to emulate the European Union by establishing a shared security regime.
- ASEAN engages with other supranational entities in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond: it is a major partner of the UN, SCO, PA, GCC, MERCOSUR, CELAC, and ECO, It hosts diplomatic missions throughout the world, maintaining a global network of relationships, and is considered by many to be a global powerhouse, and even the central forum for cooperation in the region. Its success has become the driving force of some of the largest trade blocs in history, including APEC and RCEP.
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- Its success has become the driving force of some of the largest trade blocs in history, including APEC and RCEP.

## Expansion

- On 7 January 1984, Brunei became ASEAN’s sixth member and on 28 July 1995, following the end of the Cold War, Vietnam joined as the seventh member.
- Laos and Myanmar (formerly Burma) joined two years later on 23 July 1997.

- Cambodia was to join at the same time as Laos and Myanmar, but a coup in 1997 and other internal instability delayed its entry.
- It then joined on 30 April 1999 following the stabilization of its government.
- In 2006, ASEAN was given observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.
- In response, the organization awarded the status of “dialogue partner” to the UN.

### Scarborough Shoal

- Scarborough Shoal, also known as Bajo de Masinloc Panatag Shoal Huangyan Island in an atoll administered by China in the South China Sea.
- It is located between Macclesfield Bank to the west and Luzon, its nearest landmass [220 kilometres (119 nmi) away], to the east.
- The atoll is a disputed territory claimed by the Republic of the Philippines through the 1734 Velarde map, while the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) claim it through the disputed nine-dash line (originally an eleven-dash line that included waters in the Gulf of Tonkin).
- The atoll’s status is often discussed in conjunction with other territorial disputes in the South China Sea such as those involving the Spratly Islands, and the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff.
- It was administered by the Philippines as part of its Zambales province until 2012, when a standoff was initiated by China through the use of warships against fishing boats, resulting in effective capture by the Chinese maritime forces.
- In 2013, the Philippines solely filed an international case against China in the arbitration court in The Hague, Netherlands.
- In 2016, the court declared that China’s so-called nine-dash line claim in the entire South China Sea was invalid, while upholding the sovereign rights of the Philippines in the area.
- China rejected the court’s decision, sending more warships in Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands, while a multitude of nations backed the Tribunal’s ruling including the claimants to the area such as Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.
- The atoll was named by Captain Philip D’Auvergne, whose East India Company East Indiaman Scarborough grounded on one of the rocks on 12 September 1784, before sailing on to China, although it already had a Spanish name recorded in the 1734 Velarde map of Spanish Philippines.

### QUESTIONS

38. Consider the following statements regarding the **South China Sea dispute**:

1. The South China Sea is bordered by countries including China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.
2. China claims nearly 90% of the South China Sea through the so-called **nine-dash line**.
3. The dispute mainly revolves around control of fishing grounds, energy resources, and strategic maritime routes.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

39. Consider the following statements regarding the **nine-dash line**:

1. The nine-dash line represents China's maritime claim over large parts of the South China Sea.
2. It was originally known as the **eleven-dash line**, which was later reduced to nine dashes in 1953.
3. The 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague upheld China's historical claims within the nine-dash line.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

40. The **South China Sea dispute** involves which of the following countries?

1. China
2. Vietnam
3. Malaysia
4. Indonesia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| A. 1 and 4      | C. 1, 2 and 3 |
| B. 1 and 2 only | D. 2, 3 and 4 |

41. Consider the following countries:

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1. China       | 4. Malaysia |
| 2. Vietnam     | 5. Brunei   |
| 3. Philippines | 6. Taiwan   |

The **South China Sea disputes**, involving claims over features such as the **Spratly Islands, Parcel Islands, and Scarborough Shoal**, include which of the above countries?

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| A. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only    | C. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 |
| B. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 only | D. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only  |

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

### 1. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup was **co-hosted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Sri Lanka Cricket**, making it a joint tournament between India and Sri Lanka.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The tournament featured **20 teams competing in 55 matches**, consistent with the expanded format introduced in recent editions.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Matches were held in **both India and Sri Lanka**. Specifically, the tournament used **five venues in India and three venues in Sri Lanka**, so it was not restricted to India alone.

### 2. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Both **host nations (India and Sri Lanka)** automatically qualified for the tournament.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect.**

Only six of the top seven teams from the previous edition qualified automatically, not all seven.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

Several teams qualified through **regional qualifiers organised by the ICC**, such as Africa and the combined Asia–EAP qualification pathways.

### 3. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

**Namibia and Zimbabwe qualified through the African regional qualification pathway** in October 2025.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

From the **combined Asia–East Asia Pacific (EAP) qualification tournament**, **Nepal, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates** secured their places.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Italy made its debut appearance in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup**, marking its first qualification for the tournament.

### 4. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** is the governing body responsible for organising global cricket tournaments, including the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup**.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The first T20 World Cup was held in 2007 in South Africa, where India won the inaugural title.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

The tournament is **not held every four years**. It is a **biennial tournament**, meaning it is scheduled roughly every two years.

### 5. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

India defeated **New Zealand by 96 runs in the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on 8 March 2026**, securing their third title.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect.**

**Jasprit Bumrah was named Man of the Match in the final** for his outstanding bowling performance of 4/15, but he was not Player of the Tournament.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Sanju Samson was awarded Player of the Tournament** for his overall performance throughout the competition.

### 6. C 1, 2, 3 and 4

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

India won the **ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025**, defeating **New Zealand in the final**, marking another major ICC title for the men's team.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The **Indian women's cricket team won the ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025**, defeating **South Africa in the final**, which was considered a historic achievement for Indian women's cricket.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

India won the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026**, defeating **New Zealand in the final**, securing their **third T20 World Cup title**.

- **Statement 4 is correct.**

India won the **inaugural ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2007** in **Johannesburg, South Africa**, defeating **Pakistan by 5 runs** in the final. The team was led by **MS Dhoni**, who became the first captain to win the T20 World Cup.

### 7. B 1, 2 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

In **November 2025**, former Indian captain **Rohit Sharma** was named an ambassador for the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026**.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The official theme song "**Feel the Thrill**" was **produced and performed by Anirudh Ravichander**, with lyrics written by **Heisenberg and Raqueeb Alam**, and it was released on **30 January 2026**.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

Before the tournament began, **Bangladesh withdrew**, and they were replaced by **Scotland**, which was the **next highest-ranked T20I team**.

- **Statement 4 is incorrect.**

**Scotland did not qualify through the Africa regional qualifiers**. Instead, they entered the tournament as a **replacement team due to Bangladesh's withdrawal based on ICC T20I rankings**.

### 8. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 provides a **comprehensive legal framework for protecting wild animals, plants, and their habitats.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The Act also **regulates and controls trade in wildlife and products derived from animals and plants** to prevent illegal exploitation.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Originally, **Jammu and Kashmir had its own wildlife law**, and the Wildlife (Protection) Act did not apply there. After the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019**, the central Act became applicable to the region.

### 9. C 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act (1976)** moved **forests and protection of wild animals and birds from the State List to the Concurrent List**, allowing both Centre and states to legislate on these matters.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

**Article 48A** (Directive Principles of State Policy) requires the State to **protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.**

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Article 51A(g)** states that it is the **fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment**, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.

### 10. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

**Schedule I species receive the highest protection**, and offences involving them attract the **strictest penalties.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

**Schedule V includes vermin species**, such as **common crows, fruit bats, rats, and mice**, which may be hunted under certain circumstances.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Schedule VI regulates the cultivation and trade of specific plants**, including **Beddome's cycad, Blue Vanda, Red Vanda, and Pitcher plant (Nepenthes khasiana).**

### 11. C 1, 2, 3 and 4

- All four institutions are connected with the Wildlife Protection framework.

- **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)**

It is the **apex advisory body for wildlife conservation** and reviews wildlife-related matters and projects near protected areas.

- **Central Zoo Authority (CZA)**

It regulates zoos in India, grants recognition to zoos, and sets guidelines for management and transfer of animals.

- **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**

Created following recommendations of the **Tiger Task Force in 2005**, it strengthens tiger conservation and oversees tiger reserves.

- **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)**

Established to **combat organized wildlife crime**, including poaching and illegal trade in wildlife products.

### 12. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **2022 amendment rationalized the schedules**, reducing them **from six to four**.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The amendment strengthened India's implementation of the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

The amendment introduced provisions allowing the government to **control or prohibit invasive alien species** that threaten ecosystems.

### 13. C 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, **State Governments have the authority to declare Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks** to protect ecologically significant habitats and wildlife species.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002** introduced two additional categories of protected areas — **Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves** — to involve local communities in conservation and protect corridors or buffer areas.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Tiger Reserves are notified by the Central Government based on the recommendations of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, which oversees tiger conservation and management of tiger reserves across India.

### 14. B 1, 2 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **Government of Andhra Pradesh launched Project HANUMAN on World Wildlife Day 2026**, highlighting the state's effort to tackle increasing human-wildlife conflicts.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The full form of **HANUMAN** is **Healing and Nurturing Units for Monitoring, Aid and Nursing of Wildlife**, reflecting its focus on wildlife rescue, treatment, and monitoring.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

The initiative focuses on **reducing human-wildlife conflict**, improving **rapid response and rescue operations**, and using **scientific monitoring of wildlife movement** to ensure coexistence between wildlife and communities near forest areas.

- **Statement 4 is incorrect.**

Project HANUMAN is not a centrally sponsored scheme. It is a state-level initiative launched by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, not a nationwide programme.

**15. C 1, 2 and 3**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Chhattisgarh is the **first state to host the inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games**, a national event dedicated exclusively to tribal athletes.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The Games will be organised in **three cities of Chhattisgarh — Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja.**

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

The event will feature **seven medal sports**: athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling.

**16. A 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The Games will include **two demonstration sports — Mallakhamb and Kabaddi**, alongside the medal sports.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The official mascot “**Morveer**” combines the words “**Mor**” (**mine/our in Chhattisgarhi**) and “**Veer**” (**courage**), symbolising the pride and spirit of tribal communities.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

The event is **not organised solely by the Chhattisgarh government**. It will be jointly managed by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association, National Sports Federations, and the Chhattisgarh organising committee.**

**17. D 1, 2 and 3**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **Khelo India Scheme was launched in 2018** by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** to promote sports at the grassroots level and develop a strong sports ecosystem.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Selected athletes receive **₹5 lakh annually for up to eight years**, covering training, equipment, diet and travel.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

In **2020**, the **Khelo India Games were declared an “Event of National Importance”** under the **Sports Broadcasting Signals (Mandatory Sharing with Prasar Bharati) Act, 2007.**

**18. A 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Leprosy, also known as **Hansen’s disease**, is caused by the **slow-growing bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae***.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The disease mainly affects the **skin, peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract, and eyes**, which can lead to nerve damage and disability if untreated.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Leprosy is **not highly infectious**. It spreads mainly through **prolonged close contact with untreated patients via respiratory droplets**, and casual contact rarely leads to transmission.

**19. A 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Since the **1980s**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has provided **free multi-drug therapy (MDT)** globally to treat leprosy.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

MDT generally includes **rifampicin, dapson, and clofazimine**, which together effectively cure the disease.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Leprosy has a **very long incubation period**, typically **around 5 years**, and symptoms can sometimes appear **as late as 20 years after infection**, not within one year.

**20. D 1, 2, 3 and 4**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Chile occupies a **long and narrow strip of land along the western coast of South America**, situated between the **Andes Mountains to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west**.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Chile shares **land borders with Peru in the north, Bolivia in the northeast, and Argentina in the east**, while the **Drake Passage lies to its south**.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

The **Atacama Desert**, located in **northern Chile**, is widely recognized as the **driest non-polar desert in the world**, with some areas receiving almost no recorded rainfall.

- **Statement 4 is correct.**

Chile became the **first South American country to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** in **2010**, reflecting its relatively advanced economic development in the region.

**21. B 3 only**

- **Smallpox (Statement 3) – Correct**

Smallpox is the only disease among the options that has been eradicated in India.

- India achieved **smallpox eradication in 1977**, with the **last reported case in the country in May 1975** in Bihar.
- Globally, the **World Health Organization declared smallpox eradicated in 1980**.
- This success resulted from an intensive **vaccination campaign under the WHO's global smallpox eradication programme**. Therefore, **statement 3 is correct**. Diphtheria **has not been eradicated in India**. herefore, **statement 1 is incorrect**. Chickenpox (caused by the **Varicella-zoster virus**) **has not been eradicated in India**. Therefore, **statement 2 is incorrect**.

**22. D Rifampicin**

- **Rifampicin** is a **broad-spectrum antibiotic** widely used in the treatment of several bacterial infections.

- It is a **first-line drug for tuberculosis** and forms a key component of the **standard anti-TB regimen** (along with isoniazid, pyrazinamide, and ethambutol).

- It is also one of the **main drugs used in the Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) recommended by WHO for the treatment of leprosy**, along with dapsone and clofazimine.
- Rifampicin works by **inhibiting bacterial RNA polymerase**, thereby preventing bacterial RNA synthesis and stopping bacterial growth.
- Therefore, **rifampicin is used to treat both tuberculosis and leprosy**, making **option (d) correct**.

### 23. D 1, 2, and 3

- **Statement 1** is correct: Australia has enacted a pioneering ban for children under 16, restricting access to major social media platforms.
- **Statement 2** is correct: France has followed with a similar ban for under-15s requiring parental consent.
- **Statement 3** is correct: India has imposed a ban on TikTok and other apps citing national security concerns.

### 24. C 1, 2, and 3

- **Statement 1:** Correct. The IT Rules, 2021 mandate that content violating privacy, impersonating individuals, or containing nudity must be removed within 24 hours.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. Social Media Intermediaries with a large user base (50 lakhs or above) are required to ensure traceability of serious content and comply with other provisions.
- **Statement 3:** Correct. Platforms must publish compliance reports and appoint local officers for coordination with law enforcement.

### 25. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. The BNS, 2023 addresses obscene acts and the sale or display of obscene materials, including on digital platforms.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. It strengthens the framework for dealing with cyber-enabled crimes and online harms, such as misinformation.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. The law does not specifically mention content moderation timelines or appeals in the way described.

### 26. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. Section 69A of the IT Act allows the government to block content that poses a threat to national security or public order.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. Section 79 of the IT Act provides immunity to intermediaries if they comply with due diligence requirements.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. The IT Act empowers the police to investigate cyber offences but requires adherence to the law and specific provisions for search and arrest (Section 78, Section 80). It does not allow police to act without a court order in this regard.

### 27. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**  
Passive euthanasia involves **withholding or withdrawing medical interventions such as ventilators or life-support systems**, allowing the patient to die naturally.
- **Statement 2 is correct.**  
In the **Common Cause vs Union of India (2018)** case, the **Supreme Court recognised passive euthanasia and the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21**.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Active euthanasia remains illegal in India. Only passive euthanasia is permitted under strict safeguards.**

**28. B 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

**An Advance Medical Directive (Living Will) allows individuals to state their wishes regarding refusal of life-sustaining treatment if they become terminally ill or incapable of making decisions.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

**The Supreme Court recognised living wills in the 2018 Common Cause judgement, making them legally valid in India.**

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Living wills do not permit doctors to administer lethal drugs, since active euthanasia is illegal in India.**

**29. A 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

**Article 21 states that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

**Through judicial interpretation, the Supreme Court has expanded Article 21 to include several derived rights such as right to privacy, right to health, right to clean environment, and right to die with dignity.**

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Article 21 applies to “persons”, not only citizens. Therefore foreigners also enjoy protection under Article 21.**

**30. A 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

**The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of 56 countries, most of which are former territories of the British Empire.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

**The London Declaration of 1949 allowed republics to remain members of the Commonwealth while recognizing the British monarch as the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth, thereby creating the modern Commonwealth structure.**

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Not all members recognize the British monarch as their head of state. Many countries, such as India and South Africa, are republics, although they remain members of the Commonwealth.**

**31. A 1 and 2 only**

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

**Commonwealth Day is celebrated annually by people across the 56 member states of the Commonwealth to promote unity, cooperation, and shared values.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The theme for Commonwealth Day 2026 is “Unlocking opportunities together for a prosperous Commonwealth.”

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

While the themes may sometimes align, they are not required to always be the same. For 2026, the Commonwealth Day theme aligns with the CHOGM 2026 theme, but this is not a mandatory rule every year.

### 32. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established on 28 May 1975 through the Lagos Treaty in Lagos, Nigeria. Its objective is to promote economic cooperation, regional integration, and improved living standards among West African countries.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) was not a founding member of ECOWAS. It joined the organisation later in 1977, two years after its establishment.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

Following military coups in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali, these countries were suspended from ECOWAS. In January 2025, they formally withdrew from the organisation and subsequently formed the Alliance of Sahel States, aiming for closer political and security cooperation.

### 33. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Samudrayaan is India’s first manned deep-ocean mission, intended to explore deep-sea resources such as minerals.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The mission aims to send three personnel to a depth of 6000 metres in a manned submersible vehicle called MATSYA 6000.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

The vehicle MATSYA 6000 is being developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, not ISRO.

### 34. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The Deep Ocean Mission was approved in June 2021 by the Government of India.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The mission focuses on deep-sea exploration, development of deep-sea technologies, and sustainable use of ocean resources.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

The mission is implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, not the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

### 35. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The concept of the **Blue Economy** was popularised by Gunter Pauli in his 2010 book “**The Blue Economy: 10 Years, 100 Innovations, 100 Million Jobs.**”

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Blue Economy refers to the **sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, employment generation, and improved livelihoods while maintaining ocean ecosystem health.**

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

The concept aligns with **SDG 14**, which focuses on **conserving and sustainably using oceans, seas, and marine resources.**

### 36. B 1 and 2 only

- Statement 1 is correct.

The **Sagarmala Programme** is a flagship initiative to **promote port-led development** and enhance India’s logistics sector.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

It includes **modernization of ports, development of coastal economic zones, and improvement of port connectivity through rail, road, pipelines, and waterways.**

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

The programme is implemented by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**, not the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

### 37. A 1, 2 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **Samudrayaan Mission** is one of the key components of the **Deep Ocean Mission**, which aims to explore deep-sea resources and develop technologies for deep-sea exploration.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

The **MATSYA 6000** manned submersible has an endurance of **12 hours in normal operations and up to 96 hours in emergency situations**, ensuring the safety of personnel onboard.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

One of the major objectives of the mission is **exploration of deep-sea resources**, including **polymetallic nodules and other mineral deposits**, which are important for strategic metals.

### 38. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **South China Sea** is bordered by **China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Taiwan**, making it a region with overlapping maritime claims.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

China claims about **90% of the South China Sea through the nine-dash line**, which appears on Chinese maps and represents China’s historical maritime claims.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

The dispute is driven by several factors including **rich fishing grounds, large reserves of oil and natural gas, and control over crucial global shipping lanes.**

### 39. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

The **nine-dash line** is a boundary shown on Chinese maps that marks **China's extensive claims over the South China Sea.**

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Originally, the boundary was drawn as the **eleven-dash line** by the Kuomintang government in 1947. In **1953**, the Communist government removed two dashes near the Gulf of Tonkin, leaving the **nine-dash line.**

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

In **2016**, the **Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled against China**, declaring that the nine-dash line has **no legal basis under international law (UNCLOS)**. China rejected the ruling.

### 40. C 1, 2 and 3

- **China, Vietnam, and Malaysia are all directly involved in territorial disputes in the South China Sea.**
  - **China** claims around **90% of the South China Sea through the nine-dash line** and has disputes with several neighboring countries.
  - **Vietnam** claims sovereignty over the **Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands** and strongly opposes China's claims.
  - **Malaysia** claims parts of the **Spratly Islands and surrounding waters within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**

Therefore, **statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct.**

- **Indonesia (Statement 4) – Incorrect**

Indonesia is **not considered a formal claimant to the South China Sea islands** such as the **Spratly or Paracel Islands.**

However, Indonesia has **disputes with China near the Natuna Islands** because China's nine-dash line overlaps with Indonesia's **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**. Despite this overlap, Indonesia does not claim the disputed island groups themselves.

### 41. C 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

- The **South China Sea dispute involves overlapping sovereignty claims over islands, reefs, and atolls** such as the **Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, and Scarborough Shoal.**
- The main claimants are:
  - **China** – claims nearly the entire sea through the **nine-dash line.**
  - **Vietnam** – claims both the **Paracel and Spratly Islands.**
  - **Philippines** – claims parts of the **Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal.**
  - **Malaysia** – claims several **Spratly Islands within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**
  - **Brunei** – claims maritime areas in the southern South China Sea.
  - **Taiwan** – maintains claims similar to those of China and controls **Itu Aba (Taiping Island)** in the Spratly group.
- Therefore, **all the listed countries are involved in the South China Sea disputes.**