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1) **With reference to the Delimitation Commission envisaged under the legislative framework of 2026, consider the following statements:**

1. The Commission is headed by the Chief Election Commissioner of India to ensure neutrality in its functioning.
2. The orders of the Commission, once notified in the Gazette, can be challenged before the Supreme Court.
3. Associate Members representing states are part of the Commission and have voting rights in matters of seat readjustment.
4. The Commission is mandated to readjust the allocation of seats and redraw constituency boundaries based on the latest population data.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

- The Delimitation Commission is a high-powered body whose role is central to the functioning of a democracy.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect** because the Commission is traditionally and specifically proposed to be **chaired by a serving or retired Judge of the Supreme Court**, not the Chief Election Commissioner. While the CEC and State Election Commissioners are ex-officio members, the judicial leadership ensures a non-partisan approach to redrawing boundaries.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect** due to the principle of **Judicial Immunity**. According to the framework, orders issued by the Commission and published in the Gazette have the force of law and **cannot be challenged in any court**. This is to prevent endless litigation that could stall the electoral process.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect** because while the Commission involves **10 associate members** (5 MPs and 5 MLAs) per state to provide local context and expertise, these members **lack voting rights**. Their role is purely advisory.
- **Statement 4 is correct** as it defines the core mandate of the Commission: to ensure that the **ratio between the population and the number of representatives** remains uniform across constituencies, reflecting modern demographic changes that have occurred since the 1971 census.

2) With reference to the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine, consider the following statements:

1. It is a live attenuated vaccine developed from a weakened strain of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.
2. It is mainly administered to infants to protect against severe forms of tuberculosis such as TB meningitis.
3. It is also used as an immunotherapeutic agent in the management of certain types of bladder cancer.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- The BCG vaccine is one of the oldest and most widely used vaccines in public health.
- Statement 1: Incorrect
- The vaccine is derived from *Mycobacterium bovis*, not *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bovine strain was attenuated by Albert Calmette and Camille Guérin.
- Statement 2: Correct
- It is primarily given to newborns and infants, especially in high TB-burden countries like India, to prevent severe childhood TB forms such as meningitis and miliary TB.
- Statement 3: Correct
- BCG is also used in immunotherapy for non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer, where it stimulates the immune system to attack cancer cells.

3) Which one of the following best describes the 'cross-protection' mechanism associated with the BCG vaccine?

- (a) The ability of the vaccine to prevent both adult pulmonary TB and childhood TB with equal efficacy.
- (b) The process by which the vaccine uses multiple strains of *Mycobacterium bovis* to target drug-resistant TB.
- (c) The capacity of the vaccine to remain stable at room temperature without the need for a cold chain.
- (d) The induction of an immune response that provides protection against other mycobacterial diseases like Leprosy.

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

- In immunology, cross-protection refers to the phenomenon where an immune response to one pathogen provides some level of protection against a different, but related, pathogen. The BCG vaccine is a classic example of this.

- Option (d) is correct because BCG provides significant protection against other mycobacterial diseases such as Leprosy and Buruli ulcer. This is because the Mycobacterium bovis strain used in the vaccine shares similar protein antigens with Mycobacterium leprae.
- This cross-protection is a major reason why BCG is still widely used in many developing nations where these diseases are endemic. It is important to note that while the vaccine is highly effective against severe childhood TB, its efficacy against adult pulmonary TB is variable, ranging from 0% to 80% depending on the geographic region and prior exposure to environmental mycobacteria.

4) With reference to the Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance (IRCC), consider the following statements:

- (a) It is a paper-based certificate issued by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- (b) It originated under the Montreal Protocol
- (c) It is applicable only to marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction
- (d) It provides legal assurance to users regarding access to genetic resources, often necessary for commercialization

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

- The IRCC is an important compliance mechanism under the Nagoya Protocol:
- Statement (d): Correct
- It acts as proof of legal access to genetic resources, ensuring compliance with national laws and facilitating patents and commercialization.
- Statement (a): Incorrect
- It is an electronic permit, generated via the ABS Clearing-House, not a paper document issued by UNEP.
- Statement (b): Incorrect
- It is linked to the Nagoya Protocol (2010), not the Montreal Protocol (1987).
- Statement (c): Incorrect
- It applies broadly to genetic resources within national jurisdiction, not only marine resources in international waters.

5) Match the following certification categories under the Cinematograph Act, 1952 (as amended in 2023) with their appropriate descriptions:

Category	Description
A. UA 13+	1. Restricted to specialized audiences such as professionals or experts
B. S	2. Unrestricted public exhibition with parental guidance for children above 13 years
C. A	3. Suitable for unrestricted public exhibition for all age groups
D. U	4. Restricted to persons aged 18 years and above

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) A-2, B-1, C-4, D-3
- (b) A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1
- (c) A-2, B-4, C-1, D-3
- (d) A-1, B-2, C-4, D-3

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

The amendments to the Cinematograph Act refined film certification to align with evolving societal standards and provide clearer parental guidance:

- **UA 13+ (A-2):**
Falls under the “Unrestricted with Advisory” category. Children below 13 may watch the film under parental guidance.
- **S (B-1):**
Meant for **specialized audiences** such as doctors, scientists, or other professionals. These films are not intended for the general public.
- **A (C-4):**
Restricted to **adults (18 years and above)** only. Such films cannot be viewed by minors.
- **U (D-3):**
Suitable for **unrestricted public exhibition**, meaning all age groups can watch without restriction.

6) With reference to the maritime geography of Iran, consider the following ports:

1. Bandar Bushehr
2. Amirabad
3. Khorramshahr
4. Noshahr

Which of the above are located along the coast of the Caspian Sea?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3 only

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Iran’s maritime setup is divided between its **northern (Caspian Sea)** and **southern (Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman)** coasts:

- **Amirabad (2) & Noshahr (4): Correct**
These are major ports on the **Caspian Sea coast**, facilitating trade with countries like Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan.
- **Bandar Bushehr (1): Incorrect**
Located on the **Persian Gulf**, important for southern maritime trade.
- **Khorramshahr (3): Incorrect**
Situated near the Shatt al-Arab waterway, also in southern Iran.

7) With reference to the Andaman Sea, consider the following statements:

1. It is a marginal sea of the Indian Ocean that provides a link between the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea.
2. Its seabed represents the tectonic boundary between the Burma Plate and the Sunda Plate.
3. It contains Barren Island, the only active volcano in the Indian subcontinent.

4. The depth of the sea is largely uniform due to heavy sediment deposition from the Irrawaddy River.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All four

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

The Andaman Sea is geologically and geographically dynamic:

- **Statement 1: Correct**
It acts as a **strategic maritime connector** via the Strait of Malacca.
- **Statement 2: Correct**
Located along an **active tectonic boundary**, making the region seismically sensitive (e.g., 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami).
- **Statement 3: Correct**
Barren Island is India's only active volcano, part of the Andaman volcanic arc.
- **Statement 4: Incorrect**
The seabed is **not uniform**:
 - Shallow in north/east due to sedimentation
 - Deep basins (>14,000 ft) in western parts

8) With reference to the Narmada River, consider the following statements:

1. It is the largest eastward-flowing river of the Indian peninsula, rising in the Maikala Range.
2. The river flows through a structural rift valley between the Vindhya Range and the Satpura Range.
3. The Tawa and Hiran are major left-bank and right-bank tributaries of the Narmada, respectively.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- The Narmada River is unique among Indian rivers.
- Statement 1 is incorrect because while it does rise in the Maikala Range at Amarkantak, it is the largest westward-flowing river of the peninsula, not eastward. Most large peninsular rivers like the Godavari and Krishna flow east into the Bay of Bengal.
- Statement 2 is correct. The Narmada is one of the few rivers in India that flows in a rift valley (a structural trough) created by tectonic activity. It is flanked by the Vindhya Range to the north and the Satpura Range to the south. This unique topography prevents it from forming a delta.
- Statement 3 is correct. The river has 41 tributaries. The Tawa is its most significant left-bank tributary, while the Hiran is a major right-bank tributary. Other notable tributaries include the Shakkar, Dudhi (left), and the Barna, Kolar (right). The river's flow through Madhya Pradesh,

Maharashtra, and Gujarat makes it the “Life Line” of these states, supporting massive irrigation and hydroelectric projects like the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

9) Which one of the following best describes ‘Malwan’, recently in the news?

- (a) An indigenous deep-sea submersible developed for the Samudrayaan mission
- (b) A research vessel used for marine biodiversity exploration in the Indian Ocean
- (c) A solar-powered patrol craft deployed by the Indian Coast Guard
- (d) A technologically advanced warship equipped with waterjet propulsion for anti-submarine operations

Answer: (d)

Explanation

- ‘Malwan’ is a modern naval platform designed to enhance India’s maritime defence:
- It is a high-tech warship built for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) in shallow coastal waters.
- The vessel belongs to the Shallow Water Craft (SWC) category and is constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited.
- It uses waterjet propulsion, enabling superior maneuverability in littoral (near-shore) zones.
- It is armed with torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets, making it suitable for underwater surveillance and combat.
- The project aligns with India’s Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, with high indigenous content.

10) Which of the following is the primary objective of the Artemis II mission?

- (a) To perform a soft landing on the Moon’s far side and deploy a rover
- (b) To test the Orion spacecraft’s life-support systems with astronauts onboard
- (c) To establish a permanent lunar orbital station known as the Gateway
- (d) To explore water ice deposits in the Moon’s south polar region

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- Artemis II is a crewed test mission under NASA’s Artemis program:
- Statement (b): Correct- The mission aims to validate the Space Launch System (SLS) and the Orion spacecraft’s life-support systems with astronauts onboard before future lunar landings.
- Statement (a) & (d): Incorrect- These relate to lunar surface exploration missions, not Artemis II.
- Statement (c): Incorrect- Refers to the Lunar Gateway, which is a separate component of the Artemis program.

11) With reference to the First BRICS Health Working Group (HWG) Meeting, 2026, consider the following statements:

1. The meeting was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs to integrate public health priorities with foreign policy objectives.
2. The ‘BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyles’ was introduced as a new focus area under India’s initiative.
3. The theme of the meeting, ‘Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability’, reflects a purely state-centric security perspective.

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three

(d) None

Answer: (b)

Explanation

- Statement 1 is Incorrect: The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which is the nodal authority for public health matters, not the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Statement 2 is Correct: India introduced the 'BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyles', focusing on tackling non-communicable diseases through lifestyle interventions. It also emphasized mental health and wellness.
- Statement 3 is Incorrect: The theme promotes a people-centric and inclusive approach, emphasizing resilience, cooperation, and sustainability rather than a narrow state-centric security outlook.

12) Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: The Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) aims to shift urban infrastructure financing from traditional grant-based models to market-linked instruments.

Statement-II: Central Assistance under the UCF is capped at 25% of the project cost to incentivize Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to mobilize private capital and municipal bonds.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

- Both statements are correct, and Statement-II provides the underlying logic for Statement-I. The **Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** represents a paradigm shift in urban governance. Traditionally, Indian cities relied heavily on grants from the Central and State governments, which often led to fiscal inefficiencies. By limiting **Central Assistance to 25%**, the UCF acts as a **catalytic instrument** rather than a sole provider. This force-multiplies investment by requiring cities to secure the remaining **50% of funding through municipal bonds, bank loans, or Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**.
- This mechanism ensures that projects are **bankable and reform-driven**. Cities must implement specific urban reforms to qualify, promoting **fiscal responsibility and better accounting practices** at the ULB level. The ultimate goal is to transform cities into **investment-ready growth hubs** aligned with the **Viksit Bharat @2047**. By de-risking projects with limited public funds, the government hopes to mobilize nearly **₹4 lakh crore** in total investments using a ₹1 lakh crore central outlay, representing a **4x leverage**.

13) **With reference to the National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC), consider the following statements:**

1. It is a statutory body established under an Act of Parliament to regulate credit for Other Backward Classes.
2. It operates as a not-for-profit company under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
3. The corporation exclusively provides financial assistance to individuals belonging to the OBC category.
4. It facilitates vocational training through the PM-DAKSH Yojana.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect; the NBCFDC is not a statutory body but was incorporated as a company under the Companies Act (now Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013).
- Statement 2 is correct, as it functions under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment as a Government of India Undertaking.
- Statement 3 is incorrect because the target group has been significantly expanded. Beyond OBCs, it now assists Economically Backward Classes (EBCs), De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Senior Citizens, Transgender persons, and Beggars.
- Statement 4 is correct; it is a key implementing agency for the PM-DAKSH (Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi) Yojana, which focuses on upskilling marginalized sections.
- The corporation plays a vital role in last-mile credit delivery through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) and Micro Finance through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). In FY 2025-26, it achieved a historic disbursement of ₹613 crore, demonstrating high fund utilization and wide geographical coverage. Schemes like the VISVAS Interest **Subvention Scheme** further reduce the financial burden on small entrepreneurs.

14) Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

Feature — Location/Context

1. Bajo de Masinloc — Scarborough Shoal
2. Nine-Dash Line — South China Sea
3. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) — UNCLOS framework

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

- Scarborough Shoal is known as Bajo de Masinloc in the Philippines and Huangyan Island in China. It is a triangular chain of reefs in the eastern South China Sea.
- The Nine-Dash Line is a historical claim used by China to assert sovereignty over approximately 90% of the South China Sea, including features like Scarborough Shoal, although this claim was invalidated by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in 2016.
- The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a concept under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), granting states rights over marine resources within 200 nautical miles of their coast.
- The shoal is located approximately 120 nautical miles from the Philippine island of Luzon, placing it well within the Philippines' EEZ.

- However, China has maintained de facto control since a 2012 standoff. Recent satellite imagery showing floating barriers and maritime militia activity underscores the strategic tension. The shoal is a potential flashpoint because any armed attack on Philippine vessels could trigger the S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty.

15) In the context of modern electronics, what is a “Memristor”?

- (a) A high-speed processor that uses light instead of electrons for computation.
- (b) A cooling device used to manage heat in quantum computers.
- (c) A biological implant designed to repair damaged human neurons.
- (d) A circuit element that remembers its resistance state after power is turned off.

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

- A memristor (memory-resistor) is the fourth fundamental circuit element, joining the resistor, capacitor, and inductor. Its defining characteristic is variable resistance: it regulates current flow while “remembering” the amount of charge that previously passed through it. Critically, it is non-volatile, meaning it retains its resistance state even when the power is disconnected. This mimics the behavior of biological synapses in the human brain, where memory and processing occur at the same physical location.
- Recent innovations by the University of Cambridge have shifted from unpredictable filament-based memristors to more stable p-n junction interfaces. Using Hafnium Oxide, these devices are highly scalable as the material is already standard in CMOS manufacturing. Memristors are central to Neuromorphic Computing, requiring a million times less current than traditional oxide memristors. They are expected to revolutionize Artificial Intelligence by running massive models at a fraction of the current energy cost and enabling Edge Computing on small devices without cloud reliance.