

TOPICS:

- Constitutional Amendment
- Union Executive

PRELIMS MCQ's:

Q.1) In the Indian Constitution which of the following provisions can be amended by a Simple Majority?

1. Fifth Schedule- administration of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes
2. Delimitation of constituencies
3. Provisions related to Directive principles of State Policy
4. Citizenship- acquisition and termination

Choose correct codes from the above options:

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

Q.1) Solution (d)

Provisions require simple majority for their amendments include:

- Fifth Schedule- administration of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes
- Delimitation of constituencies
- Citizenship- acquisition and termination
- Sixth schedule- administration of tribal areas

Provisions require Special majority for their amendments include:

- Provisions related to Directive principles
- Provisions related to Fundamental Rights

Note: Read all other important provisions which can be amended by simple & special majority.

Source: Chapter-11 “Amendment of the Constitution” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.2) Basic structure as a new doctrine was laid down by which of the following?

- a) Golaknath case
- b) Minerva Mills case
- c) Kesavananda Bharati case
- d) Shankari prasad case

Q.2) Solution (c)

- The basic structure doctrine is an Indian judicial principle that the Constitution of India has certain basic features that cannot be altered or destroyed through amendments by the parliament
- Key among these "basic features", are the fundamental rights granted to individuals by the constitution.
- The basic structure doctrine applies only to constitutional amendments.
- The basic features of the Constitution have not been explicitly defined by the Judiciary, and the claim of any particular feature of the Constitution to be a "basic" feature is determined by the Court in each case that comes before it.
- Basic structure as a new doctrine was laid down by a land mark case , Kesavananda Bharati case

Source: Chapter-11 “Basic Structure of the Constitution” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.3) Consider the following:

1. Secular character of the Constitution
2. Welfare state
3. Harmony and balance between Fundamental rights and Directive Principles
4. Rule of law
5. Free and Fair elections

Which of the above is/are the feature[s] of Basic Structure of the Constitution?

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 5
- b) 2, 3 and 5 only
- c) 2, 3, 4 and 5
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Q.3) Solution (d)

Features of Basic Structure of the Constitution:

- Supremacy of the constitution
- Sovereign, democratic and republican nature of the Indian polity
- Secular character of the constitution
- Separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judiciary
- Federal character of the constitution
- Unity and integrity of the nation
- Welfare state(socio-economic justice)
- Judicial review
- Freedom and dignity of the individual
- Parliamentary system
- Rule of law
- Harmony and balance between FRs and DPs
- Principle of equality
- Free and fair elections
- Independence of judiciary
- Limited power of parliament to amend the constitution
- Effective access to justice
- Principle of reasonableness
- Powers of Supreme Court under Article 32, 136, 141 and 142.

Source: Chapter-11 “Basic Structure of the Constitution” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.4) Consider the following statements:

1. To promote equal justice and to provide free legal aid to the poor
2. To secure for all citizens a uniform civil code throughout the country
3. To protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wild life

Which of the following Directive Principles were added to the original list by 42nd Amendment Act of 1976?

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

Q.4) Solution (b)

42nd Amendment Act of 1976 added following Directive Principles to the original list:

- To secure opportunities for healthy development of children (Article 39)
- To protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wild life(Article 49A)
- To promote equal justice and to provide free legal aid to the poor (Article 39A)
- To promote participation of workers in the management of Industries (Article 43A)

Source: Chapter-8 “Directive principles of State Policy (DPSP)” &Chapter-10 “Amendment of the Constitution” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.5) With regard to President of India, which of the following statement is *incorrect*?

- a) Can be elected any number of terms
- b) Should be qualified for election as a member of the Lok Sabha
- c) Can resign by addressing the resignation letter to the Supreme court of India
- d) Has veto power with respect to State Legislation

Q.5) Solution (c)

The President holds office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office. However, he can resign from his office at any time by **addressing the resignation letter to the Vice President**. Further, he can also be removed from the office before completion of his term by the process of impeachment.

The President can hold office beyond his term of five years until his successor assumes charge. He is also eligible for re-election to that office. **He may be elected for any number of terms.** However, in USA, a person cannot be elected to the office of the President more than twice.

Qualifications for Election as President :

A person to be eligible for election as President should fulfil the following qualifications:

1. He should be a citizen of India.
2. He should have completed 35 years of age.
3. He should be qualified for election as a member of the Lok Sabha.
4. He should not hold any office of profit under the Union government or any state government or any local authority or any other public authority. A sitting President or Vice-President of the Union, the Governor of any state and a minister of the Union or any state is not deemed to hold any office of profit and hence qualified as a presidential candidate. Further, the nomination of a candidate for election to the office of President must be subscribed by at least 50 electors as proposers and 50 electors as seconders.

The President has veto power with respect to state legislation also. A bill passed by a state legislature can become an act only if it receives the assent of the governor or the President (in case the bill is reserved for the consideration of the President).

When a bill, passed by a state legislature, is presented to the governor for his assent, he has four alternatives (under Article 200 of the Constitution):

1. He may give his assent to the bill
2. He may withhold his assent to the bill
3. He may return the bill (if it is not a money bill) for reconsideration of the state legislature
4. He may reserve the bill for the consideration of the President.

Source: Chapter-17 “President” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.6) In case of vacancy (caused by the expiration of the term of the sitting President) in the President's office, which of the following statements is correct?

1. An election to fill the vacancy must be held before the expiration of the term.

2. In case of any delay in conducting the election of new President, the Vice-President discharges the functions of the President.

Choose the correct statement[s]

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.6) Solution (a)

- When the vacancy in the President's office is going to be caused by the **expiration of the term** of the sitting President, an election to fill the vacancy must be held before the expiration of the term.
- In case of any delay in conducting the election of new President by any reason, the outgoing **President continues to hold office** (beyond his term of five years) until his successor assumes charge. This is provided by the Constitution in order to prevent an 'interregnum'. In this situation, the Vice-President does not get the opportunity to act as President or to discharge the functions of the President.
- If the office falls **vacant by resignation, removal, death or otherwise**, then election to fill the vacancy should be held within six months from the date of the occurrence of such a vacancy. The newly elected President remains in office for a full term of five years from the date he assumes charge of his office.
- When a vacancy occurs in the office of the President due to **his resignation, removal, death** or otherwise, the **Vice-President acts as the President** until a new President is elected. Further, when the sitting President is unable to discharge his functions due to **absence, illness** or any other cause, the **Vice-President discharges his functions** until the President resumes his office.
- In case the office of **Vice-President is vacant**, the **Chief Justice of India** (or if his office is also vacant, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court available) acts as the President or discharges the functions of the President.

Source: Chapter-17 "President" - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.7) With regard to procedure for amendment of the Constitution as per Article 368, consider the following statements

1. An amendment bill can be introduced by both minister and private member.

2. An amendment bill is introduced only in Lok Sabha and must be passed with Special majority.
3. President can neither withhold his assent to the amendment bill nor send it back for reconsideration of the Parliament

Choose correct code

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

Q.7) Solution (a)

- Amendment bill can be introduced **not only by minister but also by private member and that too without the prior permission of the president.**
- Amendment bill is introduced in either houses of the parliament and must be passed **with Special majority** in each house separately.
- Once Amendment bill duly passed by both the houses of the parliament then the bill is presented to president for the assent. **President must give assent to the bill.** President can neither withhold his assent to the amendment bill nor send it back for reconsideration.

Basic Structure of the Constitution:

- The basic structure doctrine is an Indian judicial principle that the Constitution of India has certain basic features that cannot be altered or destroyed through amendments by the parliament.
- By 1973, the basic structure doctrine triumphed in the landmark decision of Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala. Previously, the Supreme Court had held that the power of Parliament to amend the Constitution was unfettered. However, in this landmark ruling, the Court adjudicated that while Parliament has "wide" powers, it did not have the power to destroy or emasculate the basic elements or fundamental features of the constitution.
- Key among these "basic features", are the fundamental rights granted to individuals by the constitution.

- The doctrine thus forms the basis of a limited power of the Supreme Court to review and strike down constitutional amendments enacted by the Parliament which conflict with or seek to alter this "basic structure" of the Constitution.
- The basic features of the Constitution have not been explicitly defined by the Judiciary, and the claim of any particular feature of the Constitution to be a "basic" feature is determined by the Court in each case that comes before it.
- The basic structure doctrine applies only to constitutional amendments.
- The basic structure doctrine does not apply to ordinary Acts of Parliament, which must itself be in conformity with the Constitution.

Source: Chapter-10 "Amendment of the Constitution" - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.8) Match the following:

1. The amendment provides for the formation of a National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC).	a. 99th amendment
2. Amendment related to the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between India and Bangladesh.	b. 100th amendment
3. Amendment provided special provisions for the Hyderabad-Karnataka region of the state of Karnataka	c. 98th amendment

Match the codes:

- a) 1-a, 2-c, 3-b
- b) 1-c, 2-b, 3-a
- c) 1-b, 2-c, 3-a
- d) 1-a, 2-b, 3-c

Q.8) Solution (d)

98th amendment:

To empower the Governor of Karnataka to take steps to develop the **Hyderabad-Karnataka Region.**

The special provisions aim to establish an institutional mechanism for equitable allocation of funds to meet the development needs over the region, as well as to enhance human resources and promote employment from the region by providing for local cadres in service and reservation in educational and vocational training institutions (Article 371-j)

What is Article 371-J?

It'll grant special status to six backward districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka region to

Establish a separate Development Board.

This board will see that sufficient funds are allocated for Development of the region.

Local reservation in education and Government-jobs

99th amendment: NJAC

There is a need for a broad based National Judicial Appointment Commission (NJAC), for making recommendations for selection of judges.

The Bill seeks to enable equal participation of Judiciary and Executive, ensure that the appointments to the higher judiciary are more participatory, transparent and objective.

Creation of the NJAC:

- Article 124 (2) of the Constitution provides that the President will make appointments of Supreme Court (SC) and High Court(HC) judges after consultation with the Chief Justice of India and other SC and HC judges as he considers necessary.
- The Bill amends Article 124 (2) of the Constitution to provide for a Commission, to be known as the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC). The NJAC would then make recommendations to the President for appointments of SC and HC judges.

Composition of the NJAC:

A new Article, Article 124A provides for the composition of the NJAC. The NJAC would consist of:

- Chief Justice of India (Chairperson)
- Two senior most Supreme Court Judges
- The Union Minister of Law and Justice
- Two eminent persons (to be nominated by a committee consisting of the Chief Justice of India, Prime Minister of India and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha). Of the two eminent persons, one person would be from the SC/ST/OBC/minority communities or

be a woman. The eminent persons shall be nominated for a period of three years and shall not be eligible for re-nomination.

Functions of the NJAC:

- A new Article, Article 124B, provides for the functions of the NJAC which include:
- Recommending persons for appointment as Chief Justice of India, Judges of the Supreme Court, Chief Justices of High Courts and other Judges of High Courts;
- Recommending transfer of Chief Justices and other Judges of High Courts from one High Court to any other High Court; and
- Ensuring that the persons recommended are of ability and integrity.

Overall, NJAC will have two functions:

- Will replace the collegiums system of appointing SC/HC judges
- Recommend transfer of judges from one high court to another.

The Constitution (100th Amendment) Act, 2015:

It is intended to operationalizing the May 1974 **LBA** that pertains to exchange of certain enclaves of land between both the countries.

Background

- The exchange will see Bangladesh take over 111 enclaves (17160 acres) from India's possession and India, in turn, receive 51 enclaves (7110 acres) from Bangladesh.
- In Assam, India will get 470 acres of land from Bangladesh, while 268 acres will go to Bangladesh. Enclaves are tiny landlocked territories that each country has within the borders of the other nation.
- The enclaves in Assam, West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya come under the bill's ambit.

Source: Chapter-10 "Amendment of the Constitution" - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth & Current Affairs

Q.9) Consider the following statements:

1. Council of ministers cannot exist without the Prime Minister
2. Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Parliament

3. Council of Ministers shall not exceed 15 percent of the total number of members of the House of People.

Choose correct statements:

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

Q.9) Solution (a)

- Council of Ministers are collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha and Ministers are Individually responsible to President of India.
- **Council of ministers cannot exist without the Prime Minister.** (*Each minister need not resign separately; the resignation of the prime minister amounts to the resignation of the entire council of ministers.*)
- Council of Ministers shall not exceed 15 percent of the total number of members of the House of People.

Article 74—Council of Ministers to aid and advice President

1. There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice. However, the President may require the Council of Ministers to reconsider such advice and the President shall act in accordance with the advice tendered after such reconsideration.
2. The advice tendered by Ministers to the President shall not be inquired into in any court.

Article 75—Other Provisions as to Ministers

1. The Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.
2. **The total number of ministers, including the Prime Minister, in the Council of Ministers shall not exceed 15% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha. The provision was added by the 91st Amendment Act of 2003.**

3. A member of either house of Parliament belonging to any political party who is disqualified on the ground of defection shall also be disqualified to be appointed as a minister. This provision was also added by the 91st Amendment Act of 2003.

4. The ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.

5. **The council of ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.**

6. The President shall administer the oaths of office and secrecy to a minister.

7. A minister who is not a member of the Parliament (either house) for any period of six consecutive months shall cease to be a minister.

8. The salaries and allowances of ministers shall be determined by the Parliament.

Source: NCERT Class IX 'Indian Constitution at Work' – Chapter 4: 'Executive' & Chapter-20 "Council of Ministers" - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.10) Consider the following statements:

1. Cabinet Committees are non-constitutional bodies
2. Cabinet Committees are set up by the Prime Minister

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.10) Solution (c)

FEATURES OF CABINET COMMITTEES

1. They are extra-constitutional in emergence. In other words, they are not mentioned in the Constitution. However, the Rules of Business provide for their establishment.

2. They are of two types—standing and ad hoc. The former are of a permanent nature while the latter are of a temporary nature. The ad hoc committees are constituted from time to time to deal with special problems. They are disbanded after their task is completed.

3. They are set up by the Prime Minister according to the exigencies of the time and requirements of the situation. Hence, their number, nomenclature, and composition varies from time to time.
4. Their membership varies from three to eight. They usually include only Cabinet Ministers. However, the non-cabinet Ministers are not debarred from their membership.
5. They not only include the Ministers in charge of subjects covered by them but also include other senior Ministers.
6. They are mostly headed by the Prime Minister. Sometimes other Cabinet Ministers, particularly the Home Minister or the Finance Minister, also acts as their Chairman. But, in case the Prime Minister is a member of a committee, he invariably presides over it.
7. They not only sort out issues and formulate proposals for the consideration of the Cabinet, but also take decisions. However, the Cabinet can review their decisions.
8. They are an organisational device to reduce the enormous workload of the Cabinet. They also facilitate in-depth examination of policy issues and effective coordination. They are based on the principles of division of labour and effective delegation.

Source: Chapter-21 “Cabinet Committees” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.11) Consider the following statements

1. A resolution to impeach the President must be passed by a majority of not less than two-third of those present in the house
2. Members of Legislative Councils of the States participate in the election of the President of India
3. When the offices of both the President and the Vice-President are vacant, Chief Justice of India performs the function of the office.

Choose the correct codes:

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

Q.11) Solution (c)

- A resolution to impeach the President must be passed by a majority of not less **than two-third of total membership of the house (and NOT than two-third of those present in the house)**
- Members of Legislative Councils of the States **do not participate** in the election of the President of India
- When the offices of both the President and the Vice-President are vacant, **Chief Justice of India performs the function of the office.**

Source: Chapter-17 “President” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.12) The Constitution of India can be amended by

1. Simple majority of the Parliament
2. Special majority of the Parliament
3. Special majority of the Parliament and the ratification of half of the state legislatures

Choose the correct code

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

Q.12) Solution (d)

TYPES OF AMENDMENTS:

Article 368 provides for two types of amendments, that is, by a special majority of Parliament and also through the ratification of half of the states by a simple majority. But, some other articles provide for the amendment of certain provisions of the Constitution by a simple majority of Parliament, that is, a majority of the members of each House present and voting (similar to the ordinary legislative process). Notably, these amendments are not deemed to be amendments of the Constitution for the purposes of Article 368.

Therefore, the Constitution can be amended in three ways:

- (a) Amendment by simple majority of the Parliament
- (b) Amendment by special majority of the Parliament

(c) Amendment by special majority of the Parliament and the ratification of half of the state legislatures.

Source: Chapter-10 “Amendment of the Constitution” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.13) Which of the statements is *not true* with regard to office of the Vice-President of India?

- a) A person seeking election to this office must be at least 35 years of age
- b) The Electoral College for election to this office consists of the elected members of both the Houses of Parliament and holds office for a term of six years
- c) In the event of death of the President, he/she can hold that office for a period not exceeding six months
- d) The incumbent of this office is the ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha

Q.13) Solution (b)

Eligibility to become Vice-President of India

As per article 66, the candidate contesting for election of Vice-President of India should fulfill the below conditions:

- He must be a citizen of India
- He must have completed age of **35 years**
- He cannot hold an office for profit.
- He must be qualified to become a member of Rajya Sabha.
- The Electoral College for election to this office consists of the elected members of both the Houses of Parliament and the person so elected holds office for a **term of Five years (not 6 Years)**

The Vice-President, like the president, is elected not directly by the people but by the method of indirect election. He is elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of **the members of both Houses of Parliament**. Thus, this electoral college is different from the electoral college for the election of the President in the following two respects:

1. It consists of **both elected and nominated members of the Parliament** (in the case of president, only elected members).

2. It does not include the members of the state legislative assemblies (in the case of President, the elected members of the state legislative assemblies are included)

The **functions** of Vice-President are two-fold:

1. He acts as the **ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha**. In this capacity, his powers and functions are similar to those of the Speaker of Lok Sabha. In this respect, he resembles the American vice-president who also acts as the Chairman of the Senate—the Upper House of the American legislature.

2. He **acts as President when a vacancy** occurs in the office of the President due to his resignation, removal, death or otherwise. He can act as President only for a maximum period of **six months** within which a new President has to be elected. Further, when the sitting President is unable to discharge his functions due to absence, illness or any other cause, the Vice-President discharges his functions until the President resumes his office. While acting as President or discharging the functions of President, the Vice-President does not perform the duties of the office of the chairman of Rajya Sabha. During this period, those duties are performed by the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

Source: Chapter-18 “Vice- President” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.14) In comparison to the offices of President and Vice-President, consider the following statements

1. While office of President is designed on British model, office of Vice-President of India is designed on lines of American Vice-President.
2. While Presidential candidate should be qualified to be a Rajya Sabha MP, Vice-Presidential candidate should be qualified to be a Lok Sabha MP.
3. While the President holds the office for a term of five years, the Vice President holds the office for a term of six years

Choose correct codes

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

Q.14) Solution (a)

- While office of President is designed on British model, office of Vice-President of India is designed on lines of American Vice-President.
- While presidential candidate should be qualified to be a Lok Sabha MP, Vice-Presidential candidate should be qualified to be a Rajya Sabha MP.
- While the president takes the oath of office to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, Vice President takes oath of true faith and allegiance to the Constitution.

Source: Chapter-18 “Vice- President” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.15) In Indian context, which of the following statements is *not true* with regard to the Prime Minister

- a) The Constitution does not contain any procedure for the selection and appointment of the Prime Minister
- b) As per the constitutional provisions, the President has to appoint the leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha as the Prime Minister
- c) A person who is not a member of either House of Parliament can be appointed as Prime Minister for six months
- d) Constitutionally, the Prime Minister may be a member of any of the two Houses of parliament

Q.15) Solution (b)

The Constitution does not contain any specific procedure for the selection and appointment of the Prime Minister. Article 75 says only that the Prime Minister shall be appointed by the president. However, this does not imply that the president is free to appoint any one as the Prime Minister. **In accordance with the conventions of the parliamentary system of government, the President has to appoint the leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha as the Prime Minister.** But, when no party has a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, then the President may exercise his personal discretion in the selection and appointment of the Prime Minister. In such a situation, the President usually appoints the leader of the largest party or coalition in the Lok Sabha as the Prime Minister and asks him to seek a vote of confidence in the House within a month.

In 1997, the Supreme Court held that a person who is not a member of either House of Parliament can be **appointed as Prime Minister for six months**, within which, he should become a member of either House of Parliament; otherwise, he ceases to be the Prime Minister. **Constitutionally, the Prime Minister may be a member of any of the two Houses of parliament.** For example, three Prime Ministers, Indira Gandhi (1966), Deve Gowda (1996) and Manmohan Singh (2004), were members of the Rajya Sabha. In Britain, on the other hand, the Prime Minister should definitely be a member of the Lower House (House of Commons).

Source: Chapter-19 “Prime Minister” - Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth

Q.16) In India, the Prime Minister is the chairman of which of the following institution/organizations?

1. National Integration Council
2. Inter-State Council
3. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
4. National Board for Wild Life
5. Department of Atomic Energy

Select the correct code

- a) 1, 2 and 5 only
- b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- c) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Q.16) Solution (d)

The departments/organizations/bodies headed by the Prime minister of India include the following -

1. NITI Aayog
2. National Integration Council
3. National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)
4. National Development Council (NDC)

5. National Commission for Population Control
6. Department of Space (DoS)
7. Department of Atomic Energy
8. Nuclear Command Authority
9. Indian Board of Wild Life
10. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
11. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
12. PM's Council on Climate Change
13. National water Resource Council
14. Inter-State Council

Source: Chapter-19 “Prime Minister” Indian Polity by M. Laxmikanth & Current Affairs

Q.17) 'Project C.A.T is

- a) A trap-neuter-return initiative for community cats in Mumbai
- b) A project aimed at conserving the wild tiger population, by Discovery Communications and NGO World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- c) A concept for a unmanned single-stage reusable spaceplane capable of horizontal takeoff and landing by HAL
- d) None of the above

Q.17) Solution (b)

In order to protect and increase wild tiger population, nearly one million acres of protected habitat in India and Bhutan will be covered under a new private conservation efforts.

The 'Project C.A.T - Conserving acres for Tigers' by Discovery Communications and NGO World Wildlife Fund (WWF) aims to conserve the wild tiger population, which has dropped by 96 per cent in the last century alone to only 4,000 left in the wild due to habitat loss and pervasive poaching.

This transboundary partnership will allow rangers to more closely monitor tiger health and other key scientific data, take additional anti-poaching safeguards, and maintain land and corridors to improve movement of all wild animals.

Discovery will also leverage its formidable creative capabilities and global multiplatform distribution of channels to 3 billion cumulative worldwide viewers to support WWF's Tx2 effort, which began in 2010, to double the population of wild tigers across the world by 2022.

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Project-to-increase-wild-tiger-population-in-India-Bhutan/articleshow/54960351.cms>

Q.18) Consider the following statements about 'Helmeted Hornbill'

1. It is found in the Western Ghats
2. It is listed as 'Critically Endangered' under the IUCN Red List
3. The helmeted hornbill is revered by ancient forest-dwelling Dayak communities of the Borneo Island

Select the correct statements

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.18) Solution (b)

This species is confined to the Sundaic lowlands, where it is known from south Tenasserim, Myanmar, peninsular Thailand, Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Kalimantan and Sumatra, Indonesia and Brunei (BirdLife International 2001). It is generally scarce and occurs at low densities even in optimal habitat.

Native:

- Brunei Darussalam; Indonesia; Malaysia; Myanmar; Thailand

Regionally extinct:

- Singapore

Poachers aren't interested in their brilliant plumage or large bills, but a helmet-like block of reddish-gold keratin at the front of the skulls known as a casque. It's this soft, ivory-like substance that's carved by craftsmen in China into luxury ornaments, statues and jewellery - trendy top-shelf trinkets that have soared in value as so-called "red ivory" has grown more prestigious.

In addition to hunting the species for its casque, it is also targeted for its feathers. Although this trade is small, it exerts an additional pressure which is also likely to contribute to population declines.

Helmeted hornbills had been traditionally hunted in the past by Borneo's indigenous tribes, but never at levels that posed any conservation risk.

In West Kalimantan, the extinction of this iconic bird would also have far-reaching cultural ramifications. The helmeted hornbill is revered by ancient forest-dwelling Dayak communities, and its image adorns flags and sigils across the province.

By the close of 2015, the species had progressed from vulnerable to critically endangered - leapfrogging two threat levels to the highest possible risk category on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's "red list".

The commercial trade of helmeted hornbills is prohibited by law in China and across its habitat zones in Southeast Asia: Thailand and Myanmar, as well as Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia - the three countries that share Borneo island.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/The-helmeted-hornbill-is-being-hunted-to-extinction/article16073967.ece>

Q.19) Borneo Island is politically divided among which of the following countries?

1. Philippines
2. Malaysia
3. Brunei
4. Indonesia

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2 and 4
- b) 2 and 4
- c) 2, 3 and 4

- d) All of the above

Q.19) Solution (c)

It is the third-largest island in the world and the largest island in Asia. At the geographic centre of Maritime Southeast Asia, in relation to major Indonesian islands, it is located north of Java, west of Sulawesi, and east of Sumatra.

The island is politically divided among three countries: Malaysia and Brunei in the north, and Indonesia to the south. Approximately 73% of the island is Indonesian territory. In the north, the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak make up about 26% of the island. Additionally, the Malaysian federal territory of Labuan is situated on a small island just off the coast of Borneo. The sovereign state of Brunei, located on the north coast, comprises about 1% of Borneo's land area. Antipodal to an area of Amazon rainforest, Borneo is itself home to one of the oldest rainforests in the world, and to Bornean orangutans.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/The-helmeted-hornbill-is-being-hunted-to-extinction/article16073967.ece>

Q.20) Global Hunger Index is released by

- a) World Economic Forum
b) Food and Agriculture Organization
c) World Bank
d) None of the above

Q.20) Solution (d)

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a multidimensional statistical tool used to describe the state of countries' hunger situation. The GHI measures progress and failures in the global fight against hunger. The GHI is updated once a year.

GHI is based on a country's performance on indicators such as the proportion of the undernourished in the population, prevalence of wasting in children under five years, prevalence of stunting in children under five years and the under-five mortality rate.

India ranked 97th out of 118 countries on the **International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI)** Global Hunger Index (GHI) in 2016.

India was placed behind Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, among others, but ahead of Pakistan and three other Asian countries.

India has improved its score on various parameters over the past few years, two out of five children below five years of age are stunted in India. Stunting measures chronic malnutrition and affected children's height would be considerably below the average for their age.

India was still rated with 'serious' hunger levels in the 2016 Index.

India had the lowest rank among BRICS nations, with Brazil in the top 16, Russia at 24, China at 29 and South Africa at 51.

Globally, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Zambia were estimated to have the highest levels of hunger. For the developing world, the GHI score is estimated to be 21.3 which, according to the report, is at the lower end of the 'serious' category.

Source: http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/stomach-this-india-ranks-dismal-97-in-global-hunger-index-116101100619_1.html

Q.21) Consider the following statements about Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

1. It promotes institutional delivery among the poor pregnant women
2. It is a 100 % centrally sponsored scheme and it integrates cash assistance with delivery and post-delivery care
3. It has identified ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) as well as AWC (Anganwadi Workers), as an effective link between the Government and the poor pregnant women

Select the correct statements

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.21) Solution (d)

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) being implemented with the objective of reducing maternal and neo-natal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among the poor pregnant women. The Yojana, launched on 12th April 2005, by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, is being implemented in all states and UTs with special focus on low performing states. JSY is a 100 % centrally sponsored scheme and it integrates cash assistance with delivery and post-delivery care.

The Yojana has identified ASHA, the accredited social health activist as an effective link between the Government and the poor pregnant women in 10 low performing states, namely the 8 EAG states and Assam and J&K and the remaining NE States. In other eligible states and UTs, wherever, AWW (Anganwadi workers) and TBAs or ASHA like activist has been engaged in this purpose, she can be associated with this Yojana for providing the services.

Important Features of JSY:

- The scheme focuses on the poor pregnant woman with special dispensation for states having low institutional delivery rates namely the states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Rajasthan, Orissa and Jammu and Kashmir. While these states have been named as Low Performing States (LPS), the remaining states have been named as High performing States (HPS).
- Tracking Each Pregnancy: Each beneficiary registered under this Yojana should have a JSY card along with a MCH card. ASHA/AWW/ any other identified link worker under the overall supervision of the ANM and the MO, PHC should mandatorily prepare a micro-birth plan. This will effectively help in monitoring Antenatal Check-up, and the post-delivery care.
- Eligibility for Cash Assistance: BPL Certification – This is required in all HPS states. However, where BPL cards have not yet been issued or have not been updated, States/UTs would formulate a simple criterion for certification of poor and needy status of the expectant mother's family by empowering the gram pradhan or ward member.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/data/Janani-Suraksha-Yojana-pays-dividends-Study/article15477844.ece>

Q.22) Which of the following Ministries deals with the management of Haj Pilgrimage and including administration of the Haj Committee Act, 1959?

- a) Ministry of Minority Affairs
- b) Ministry of External Affairs

- c) Ministry of Home Affairs
- d) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Q.22) Solution (a)

Following President Pranab Mukherjee's assent to amendments to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, the Centre made public the gazette notification on the transfer of management of Haj Pilgrimage, including administration of the Haj Committee Act, 1959, to the Minorities Affairs Ministry.

MEA continues to be in charge of coordinating pilgrimages to shrines in Pakistan, Nepal and China and vice versa, travel for traders and pilgrims from India to the Tibet region of China.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/minority-affairs-ministry-takes-charge-of-haj-pilgrimage/article9176608.ece>

Q.23) Recently the New Delhi Declaration on Education was adopted by

- a) Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- b) SAARC
- c) BRICS
- d) None of the above

Q.23) Solution (c)

The BRICS nations have adopted the 'New Delhi Declaration on Education' to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.

Source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/brics-new-delhi-declaration-on-education/1/778855.html>