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Amid US tariff hit, Cabinet clears 6-year Rs 25,000 crore export mission



Amid pressure on goods exports to the US due to high 50 per cent tariffs, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday extended additional credit facilities up to Rs 20,000 crore to exporters, and also approved a six-year Export Promotion Mission with an outlay of Rs 25,060 crore announced in the Budget this year. The decision comes at a time when the impact of tariffs has begun to show with shipments to the US in September declining by 12 per cent.

Engineering goods exports, which make up nearly a quarter of India's total goods outbound shipments, dropped 9.4 per cent to the US, official data showed. Steep 50 per cent US tariffs came into effect on August 27. After the China-US trade deal, tariffs on India are the highest globally. Under EPM, priority support will be extended to sectors impacted by recent global tariff escalations, such as textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, and marine products. The interventions will help sustain export orders, protect jobs, and support diversification into new geographies, a statement released by the Cabinet said. "The scheme is focused on the availability of credit and reducing the cost of credit, and focuses on MMSE exporters so that they can expand to newer export markets," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said during the press briefing after the Cabinet meeting. The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE) approved by the Cabinet will provide 100 per cent coverage by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited to member lending institutions for extending additional credit facilities up to Rs 20,000 crore to eligible exporters, including MSMEs. The US is the single largest market for India's textile and apparel exports, contributing almost 28 per cent to the total revenue of India's textile and apparel exporters.



The Indian Armed Forces conducted the 'Maru Jwala' phase of Operation Trishul on 11th November, 2025, in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, as part of the country's largest tri-services exercise. It demonstrated real-time coordination between land and air forces, validating the integrated theatre command approach.



The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its verdict on the crucial issue of defining the Aravali Hills and range for ensuring environmental conservation, land use regulation, and mining activities in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. Over the years the range has faced extensive degradation due to illegal mining, urban encroachment and deforestation.

High levels of chromium, mercury in residents; NGT directs U.P. govt. to map affected people

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has instructed the Uttar Pradesh government to map out all people affected by heavy metal contamination, especially chromium and mercury, in Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur, Fatehpur, and surrounding regions.
- This directive came after the NGT Principal Bench, led by Chairperson Prakash Srivastava and member Afroz Ahmad, examined cases linked to industrial factories dumping chromium in areas including Rania, Kanpur Dehat, Rakhi Mandi, and Kanpur Nagar, resulting in severe groundwater contamination.
- The contaminated groundwater has deprived local populations of safe drinking water, which poses significant public health risks.

Extent and Data on Contamination

- Test results revealed extremely high rates of chromium contamination in human blood samples:
 - 95.7% of 514 people tested in Kanpur Nagar had chromium levels above standard limits.
 - 71.9% of 214 people tested in Kanpur Dehat had elevated levels.
 - 85.96% of 171 people tested in Fatehpur were found affected.
- Mercury above safe levels was also detected in some samples, demonstrating a multi-metal exposure scenario.

Directives and Timeline

- The NGT mandated the state authorities, particularly the Chief Secretary and Health Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, to submit a timeline within two weeks for mapping and addressing the health impacts in affected regions.
- Authorities must detail the number of affected residents, available medical infrastructure at all administrative levels (district, urban local body, village), including health centres, doctors, paramedics, facilities for blood and sample analysis, and proximity to labs.

Broader Scope of Mapping

- The mapping process is to encompass:
 - Food chain contamination,
 - Surface water and groundwater contamination,
 - Air contamination analysis.
- The mapping outcome will feed into a full implementation plan covering 22 recommendations previously listed by the NGT, with a full timeline extended up to July 1, 2025.

Public Health and Policy Implications

- It underscores the need for urgent, systemic government intervention, improved monitoring, public health mobilization, and industrial accountability.

At 72.16%, Kerala stands fourth in employability rate

Kerala's Employability Performance

- Kerala recorded an employability rate of 72.16% in the India Skills Report 2026, securing the fourth spot nationally.
- Only Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka have higher employability rates than Kerala.
- This underscores Kerala's sustained strength in the national employability scenario, reflecting effective education and skill development policies.

Gender Inclusivity and Women's Empowerment

- Kerala ranks among the top 10 most preferred states for women professionals, highlighting the state's gender-inclusive labor ecosystem.
- The report underscores Kerala's prominence in fostering a favorable environment for female workforce participation.

National Employability Trends

- At the national level, employability has improved to 56.35%, up from 54.81% previously, with over half of Indian graduates now scoring above 60% in the Global Employability Test (GET).
- Kerala is noted for its significant state and city-level rankings, showcasing steady improvement in job readiness and specialized skill alignment.

Urban Talent Hubs and Kochi's Role

- Kochi is listed as the fourth best-performing city for employability, ahead of major metros like Delhi and Hyderabad, with an average employability score of 76.56%.
- The report identifies tier-2 cities such as Kochi and Lucknow as emerging talent hubs, which narrows the urban-rural skill gap.

Women's Employability and Sectoral Trends

- Nationally, women's employability has increased to 54%, surpassing the 51.5% mark for the first time, with Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana leading this trend.
- Kerala's gains are attributed to strong female participation in banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI), healthcare, and education sectors.

Report Methodology and Partners

- The India Skills Report is compiled by global education and talent organization ETS, in collaboration with the All India Council for Technical Education, Confederation of Indian Industry, and the Association of Indian Universities.
- The findings reflect both job readiness and sector-specific skill alignment based on the GET.



PRELIMS CORNER :

1. Financial Sector Assessment (FSA) report 2025 is released by?

- (a) World Bank**
- (b) International Monetary Fund**
- (c) Asian Development Bank**
- (d) New Development Bank**

2. Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in April during Baisakhi in which of the following states?

- (a) Bihar**
- (b) Uttar Pradesh**
- (c) Uttarakhand**
- (d) Assam**

3. Mount Chimborazo is located at?

- (a) Mexico**
- (b) USA**
- (c) Ecuador**
- (d) Canada**

4. Shah Bano case 1985 associated with which of the following?

- (a) Protection of minority educational institutions under Article 30**
- (b) Maintenance and rights of divorced muslim women under Section 125 of the CrPC**
- (c) Reservation in promotions for SCs and STs**
- (d) Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19**

DETAILED ANSWER KEY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE CHRONICLE PAGE

Chhattisgarh sanctuary limits to be altered to tackle Maoist threat

- Months after Operation Black Forest targeting Maoist activities in the Karregutta Hills along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border, the Environment Ministry's wildlife board has approved the setting up of a jungle warfare college and a battalion camp in Pamed sanctuary.
- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) had requested 700 acres of land near the Telangana border for this project to be set up within the sanctuary area.
- The government proposed altering the boundaries of Pamed Wildlife Sanctuary to accommodate these needs and improve security operations in the Maoist-affected area.

Sanctuary Boundary Changes

- The National Board for Wildlife's standing committee cleared the proposal to alter the sanctuary boundaries.
- 3,485 hectares will be transferred from the sanctuary to the Bijapur forest division, and 3,535 hectares from Bijapur will be added back to the sanctuary in return.
- Authorities argued that the sanctuary is geographically and logically inaccessible due to Maoist threats, limiting conservation activities and increasing risk.
- Rationalizing boundaries is expected to support biodiversity conservation and safety for local communities and forest staff.

Conservation and Security Measures

- The proposal claimed that the presence of security forces in Maoist-affected areas would help create safer environments for both local populations and the forest department.
- The boundary alteration and the jungle warfare college aim to balance conservation, local security, and forest management needs.

Regulatory and Biodiversity Conditions

- The SC-NBWL set several conditions for permitting the changes:
 - Joint monitoring by forest department and security forces to facilitate wildlife conservation.
 - Wildlife conservation must remain paramount, and non-operational troop movement should be minimized within sanctuary limits.
 - A module on biodiversity conservation will be included in security personnel training courses.
 - Wildlife programs for relocation, long-term conservation dialogue, and focused wild buffalo protection projects.

Ecological and Strategic Implications

- The sanctuary, established in 1983 with a focus on wild buffalo conservation, contains mixed forests, sal and teak trees, as well as significant fauna such as gaur, leopards, and sloth bears.
- The proposed institutional and physical interventions are significant in light of Home Minister Amit Shah's focus on rooting out Maoists by March 2026.

All HCs should upload details of time taken by judges to deliver pending decisions: SC

- The Supreme Court has instructed all High Courts in India to publicly disclose how long judges take to pronounce verdicts in pending cases, aiming to increase judicial accountability and transparency.

Background and Context

- The directive was issued during a hearing by a Bench consisting of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi. It followed complaints from life convicts from Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes regarding delays by the Jharkhand High Court in handing down judgments after reserving cases for up to three years.
- There are no specific deadlines within which judges in India must deliver their reserved judgments, leading to significant delays due to workload and case complexity.

Current Situation and Challenges

- While the standard expectation is verdicts within two to six months of reservation, in practice, delays often exceed one year in both Supreme Court and High Courts.
- The lack of formal timelines and complex cases contribute to the backlog and extended reservation periods for judgments.

Public Accountability and Transparency

- The Supreme Court emphasized the need for a dashboard on every High Court website, exclusively tracking dates of reservation and pronouncement of judgments.
- This mechanism aims to enhance transparency, not only for litigants but for the broader public, reflecting the legitimate expectations of transparency from the judiciary.

Specific Information Requested

- The Bench asked High Courts to:
 - Upload details of judgments reserved after January 31, 2025
 - Upload pronouncement dates of judgments until October 31, 2025
 - Include these details on their official websites.
- High Courts must disclose the duration between reservation and pronouncement and be open about any apprehensions regarding this level of transparency.

Expected Outcomes and Further Steps

- The Supreme Court order encourages frankness from High Courts on issues with publicizing such data and seeks feedback on creating a uniform mechanism across the judiciary.
- If implemented fully, these steps may address judicial delays, support trust in the judiciary, and strengthen access to justice for the public.

Tuberculosis incidence falling in India by 21% a year: WHO report

Decline in TB Incidence

- India's TB incidence is reportedly falling by 21% annually, with new cases reducing from 237 per lakh in 2015 to 187 per lakh in 2024.
- The pace of decline in India is nearly double the global average, which stands at 12%, positioning India as a global leader in TB reduction.
- This rapid decline is attributed to innovative approaches such as technology adoption, decentralized services, and comprehensive community mobilization across the country.

Treatment and Detection Progress

- Treatment coverage surged from 53% (2015) to more than 92% (2024), translating to 26.18 lakh TB patients diagnosed out of an estimated 27 lakh cases.
- The number of "missing cases" (people who had TB but were not reported to the program) dropped from 15 lakh in 2015 to less than 1 lakh in 2024.
- This improvement is credited to the proactive strategies under the national TB program.

TB Mortality and Multidrug Resistance

- TB mortality has declined as well, from 28 deaths per lakh in 2015 to 21 per lakh in 2024.
- There has been no significant increase in multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB incidence, while treatment success rates for MDR cases under the TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan are high at 90%, exceeding the global average of 88%.

National Mission Impact

- The TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, launched in December 2024, has screened over 19 crore individuals in vulnerable groups, resulting in the detection of more than 24.5 lakh TB patients, including 8.61 lakh asymptomatic cases.
- The initiative reflects India's systematic approach to TB elimination through large-scale and targeted outreach.

Global Standing and Outlook

- India's policies and interventions have positioned it at the forefront of the global anti-TB fight, with WHO recognizing its progress as among the most notable worldwide.
- The report concludes that India's doubled pace of TB decline sets a benchmark for high-burden countries and highlights the role of health innovations, expanded diagnosis, and treatment in combating infectious diseases.
- This demonstrates both India's achievements in reducing TB incidence and mortality and the broader implications for global health strategies, emphasizing data-driven, people-focused health interventions.

GI tag fee cut to Rs.1,000; Minister promises backing for tribal goods

Policy Change: Reduced GI Tag Fee

- Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced a reduction in the application fee for GI tags, from ₹5,000 to ₹1,000.
- The fee reduction aims to make it easier and more affordable for tribal artisans and producers to register and protect their traditional products and crafts through GI certification.

Focus on Tribal Enterprises

- The announcement was made at the inaugural Tribal Business Conclave, which brought a focus on supporting and strengthening tribal enterprises and traditional crafts.
- The Minister assured that his Ministry would actively support tribal entrepreneurs in areas like export, e-commerce, and international warehousing to expand market access for tribal goods.

Strategic Partnerships and Skill Development

- The event, organized with Tribal Affairs and Culture Ministries and the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), included discussions and masterclasses about financing tribal businesses, partnerships, industry linkages, and skilling.
- Minister Goyal called for collaboration among schools, universities, industries, and government to help tribal artisans scale their products to domestic and global markets.

Distribution of GI Tags

- GI tag certificates were distributed to several products such as:
 - Kannadippaya bamboo mat (Kerala)
 - Apatani textile (Arunachal Pradesh)
 - Marthandam honey (Tamil Nadu)
 - Lepcha Tungbuk (Sikkim)
 - Bodo Aronai (Assam)
 - Ambaji white marble (Gujarat)
 - Bedu and Badri cow ghee (Uttarakhand)

Broader Initiatives and Recognition

- The conclave marked the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda, with Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the GI tag initiative.
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry also announced a Tribal Affairs Grand Challenge, encouraging enterprises to design solutions for tribal communities.

Implications and Policy Significance

- These measures signal a push to empower tribal artisans, protect traditional knowledge, and enhance income-generation opportunities via better market access and certification.
- The GI tag support is positioned as part of a larger effort to recognize and celebrate tribal heritage, foster entrepreneurship, and create sustainable economic linkages for marginalized producers.

India-Botswana announce cheetah translocation pact

Announcement of Translocation Pact

- Botswana formally announced the translocation of eight cheetahs to India during President Droupadi Murmu's state visit, highlighting India-Africa partnership.
- The announcement involved a symbolic handover ceremony in Gaborone, with President Murmu expressing gratitude to President Duma Gideon Boko and the people of Botswana for agreeing to the transfer.

Details of Cheetah Movement

- Five of the eight cheetahs will be moved to a quarantine facility at the Mukolodi Nature Reserve before being released in India; the remaining cheetahs to follow after quarantine procedures.
- The cheetahs are part of India's Project Cheetah, aimed at species revival in Indian ecosystems.

Diplomatic and Bilateral Engagements

- President Murmu's six-day visit to Africa included stops in Angola and Botswana, marking the first visit of an Indian head of state to both countries and underscoring the importance of bilateral ties.
- The visit comes ahead of the 60th anniversary (2026) of diplomatic relations between India and Botswana, making it a milestone in the bilateral relationship.

Expanding Cooperation

- During delegation-level talks, leaders from both countries agreed to boost cooperation across sectors such as trade, investment, agriculture, renewable energy, health, education, skill development, defence, and digital technology.
- A pact was also signed giving Botswana access to affordable Indian medicines.

Development and Partnership

- President Murmu assured Botswana of India's commitment to deepen bilateral ties, expand the India-Africa partnership, and share developmental experience for mutual benefit.
- President Boko praised India's consistent support for Botswana's development, calling India the "Mother of Democracy".
- The partnership is based on India's ideals of inclusive development and mutual trust, as reflected in the 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayaas' mantra.

Economic Cooperation Highlights

- President Murmu noted growing Indian investment in Botswana, particularly in the diamond sector, emphasizing the expanding economic ties between the two countries.



Retail inflation hits a historic low of 0.25% in October

Record Low Retail Inflation

- Retail inflation fell to a historic low of 0.25% in October, which is the lowest rate since the current Consumer Price Index (CPI) series began in January 2022.
- This sharp decline is credited to the first full month's impact of GST rate cuts, a favorable base effect, and a significant drop in prices of several important food items such as vegetables and fruits.

Food and Beverages Category

- The food and beverages category saw prices contract by 3.7% in October 2025, following a 1.4% contraction in September.
- The decline in food and beverages prices is mainly attributed to the cumulative effects of GST reductions, a favorable statistical base, and lower prices for items like edible oils, vegetables, fruits, eggs, cereals, footwear, and communication.

Statistical Base Effect

- A key driver behind this record low inflation is the "statistical base effect": inflation last October was high (9.7%), so the year-on-year change now appears sharply lower, even with only moderate actual price reductions.
- Economists stress that this drop does not reflect a dramatic fall in actual prices, but rather a mathematical effect of comparing against last year's spike.

Variations by Category

- Housing inflation accelerated to 3% in October 2025 from 2.8% in October 2024.
- Clothing and footwear inflation also picked up: from 2.7% in October last year to 2.9% in October this year, likely due to GST changes for these categories.
- Miscellaneous inflation (covering pan, tobacco, and related products) also rose to 5.7% from 4.3% in October 2024.

Policy and Economic Implications

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation attributed this drop to government tax policy changes as well as favorable market conditions.
- While such a low inflation rate is positive for consumers, policymakers and economists are aware that much of this is due to statistical quirks rather than fundamental shifts, so caution is warranted in reading these numbers as a sign of ongoing deflation or deep price corrections.

Record low

The chart shows retail price inflation (in %), measured by the Consumer Price Index, from January 2012 to October 2025



SEBI panel proposes 'wider' conflict of interest regulations

Key Recommendations

- A SEBI high-level committee has proposed expanding the definition of "family," strengthening disclosure requirements, and creating new compliance frameworks to manage conflicts of interest among board members and senior officials.
- The panel suggests forming an Office of Ethics and Compliance (OEC), led by an executive director-level officer, to oversee the process and implementation of conflict management policies.

Broader Definition of "Family" and Relationships

- The committee recommends that "family" in investment restrictions and conflict disclosures include parents, spouses, children, spouses of children, and siblings, moving beyond earlier definitions which were limited to spouses and children.
- These wider relationships must be disclosed and covered when identifying conflicts of interest for board members and employees.

Multiple Levels of Disclosure and Compliance

- The recommendations call for conflict checks at several levels: on annual, event-based, and exit dates for senior management and board members.
- Disclosures of assets, liabilities, and other relationships will be required, extending to family members and employees associated with SEBI-regulated entities.

Restrictions and Transparency

- Chairpersons and whole-time members (WTMs) will need to disclose actual, perceived, and potential conflicts, especially those that could influence decision-making or relate to their investment portfolios.
- However, WTMs and chairpersons will be allowed to invest in mutual funds and similar products as long as these do not overlap with their professional roles or influence their organizations.

Governance and Oversight Structures

- Alongside the OEC, an Oversight Committee on Ethics and Compliance (OCEC) will monitor the implementation, disclosures, and recurusal processes for conflicts in annual reports.

Context and Rationale

- The recommendations follow recent controversies involving alleged conflict of interest in SEBI. The article references the exoneration of former chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch as a backdrop to these reforms.
- The main goal is to create a "robust framework" that anticipates and prevents conflicts and to enhance market integrity and investor trust.

Women riding motorbikes in Tehran is the latest sign of Iran's societal change

Breaking Societal Norms

- Women are increasingly riding motorbikes in Tehran, challenging deep-rooted social expectations and conservative cultural norms.
- Women on motorbikes often face disapproving looks, verbal abuse, and the threat of being stopped by police, as riding motorbikes had traditionally been frowned upon for women in Iran.

Legal and Practical Barriers

- Police regulations, based on the Farsi language's gender-specific vocabulary, only officially permit "mardan" (men) to get motorcycle licenses, but not women.
- Despite this, women have managed to circumvent practical barriers, such as holding jobs that require transport and owning cars with licenses, thereby pushing boundaries without clearly violating the law, according to Tehran's traffic police chief.

Cultural and Religious Constraints

- Iran's Islamic law imposes a strict code of conduct, including mandatory hijab (headscarf) rules for women and social codes against tabarruj (excessive flaunting of beauty).
- Conservative religious leaders consider women riding motorbikes immodest and contrary to Islamic expectations.

Societal Change and Risks Taken

- The aftermath of the 2022 demonstrations over Mahsa Amini's death, as well as broader gender debates, have seen more women taking risks such as driving and riding motorbikes in public, reflecting a shift in attitudes about independence and gender roles.
- Many women, even after shedding the hijab, have begun riding motorbikes to avoid increasing urban transport costs and traffic stresses—which now affect over four million motorcyclists on Tehran's roads.

Wider Social Debate

- The issue is not just about practical commuting. It symbolizes a quest for visibility, independence, and agency for women, against the backdrop of Iran's ongoing conservative-reformist societal tug-of-war.
- The debate over women riding motorbikes also encapsulates public battles between reformists, who see it as a right, and hardliners, who view it as a violation of traditional rules and law.

Political and Policy Implications

- The phenomenon is now seen by some not only as an issue of personal mobility, but also as a symbol of women's broader fight for independence and social presence in Iran.

"Tokyo tutorial: countering China's rare earths choke"

- Japan is highlighted as a model for resilient supply chain strategy; its experience after China's rare earths blockade in 2010 became a template for self-reliance in critical minerals.

The 2010 Chinese Blockade

- The trigger was a maritime incident in September 2010, after which China stopped rare earth exports to Japan, threatening industries (notably automobile manufacturing) heavily reliant on these materials.
- This crisis revealed Japan's vulnerability—over 90% of its rare earths were sourced from China at the time.

Japan's Multi-Pronged Response

- Japan diversified sources, invested in alternative technologies/materials, and stockpiled rare earths to reduce dependence on China.
- Tokyo promoted recycling, encouraged technological innovation to reduce rare earth demand, and invested in overseas rare earth projects (Vietnam, Australia, and Chile are noted partners).
- By 2023, China's share of Japan's rare earth imports fell to 65% from over 90% in 2010, partly due to these policies.

Strategic Measures and Resilience Building

- The Japanese government focused on five thrust areas: developing alternative technologies, promoting recycling, supporting investments abroad, enforcing mine and trade policies, and stockpiling critical minerals.
- The emphasis was on lowering costs so Japanese producers could compete globally without relying on a single supply source.

Indian Context and Exposure

- The article notes that India's exposure to Chinese rare earth restrictions is much lower due to smaller domestic consumption and recent investments in alternative sources.
- India imported 2,270 tonnes of rare earth elements (REEs) in 2023, of which 1,489 tonnes (about 65%) came from China.
- Indian companies and government have begun investing in domestic critical minerals capabilities as well as recycling, aiming to lessen future vulnerability.

Broader Lessons and Global Implications

- Japan's holistic policy—diversified sourcing, recycling, technology upgrades, and strategic stockpiling—offers a template for other countries seeking mineral security in the face of geopolitical risk.
- The article warns that most nations depend on a handful of mineral suppliers for critical industries (EV batteries, semiconductors, fertilizers), thus requiring collaboration and forward planning.
- India and others are encouraged to emulate Japan's approach, especially as rare earths will power future industrial and clean energy transitions.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

Q1. Ans a

The World Bank released the Financial Sector Assessment (FSA) Report 2025. The report stated that India must boost financial sector reforms and private capital mobilisation to become a USD 30-trillion economy by 2047. It praised India's world-class digital public infrastructure and government programmes for improving access to financial services for both men and women. The FSA noted that India's financial system has become more resilient, diversified, and inclusive since the 2017 FSAP. It welcomed India's regulatory expansion on cooperative banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) through scale-based regulation.



Q2. Ans c

Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in April during Baisakhi at the twin villages of Saloor-Dungra in Uttarakhand's Chamoli. It is a unique blend of ritual, theatre, music, and dance, deeply rooted in the local traditions of the Garhwal Himalayas. Community - It is dedicated to the custodial god, Bhumiyal Devta, a local divinity whose temple houses most of the festivities. The festival involves theatrical performances of the Ramayana and local legends, in which people sing songs and wear masks while dancing. There are 18 different types of masks made of Bhojpatra, Himalayan birch, that performers wear during the event, represent different deities and mythological figures.



Q3. Ans c

When measuring mountains by their distance from the centre of the Earth, rather than their height above sea level, the mountain closest to space is Mount Chimborazo in Ecuador. Although Mount Everest is the highest mountain above sea level, Chimborazo's summit is actually the farthest point from the Earth's centre and thus the closest point on Earth to outer space. Mount Chimborazo is located in central Ecuador, in the Chimborazo Province, within the Andes mountains. It is an extinct volcano and the highest peak in Ecuador.



Q4. Ans b

Case Background: In 1978, Shah Bano Begum, a 62-year-old Muslim woman, sought maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC (now Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023) after being divorced by her husband. This section ensures maintenance for dependents irrespective of religion. **Supreme Court Verdict (1985):** A 5 judge SC constitution bench unanimously ruled in Shah Bano's favour, declaring Section 125 CrPC a secular law applicable to all, including Muslim women. It restored legal clarity, strengthened access to justice, ensured constitutional parity for Muslim women, and reinforced the secular character of Indian maintenance law. The case continues to influence India's constitutional journey, highlighting tensions between faith vs. equality, law vs. politics, and religion vs. reform. An upcoming Bollywood film inspired by the Shah Bano case, 1985, has renewed public attention on one of India's most debated legal judgments.

Case Study:



Protesters clash with security personnel at Brazil's COP30 venue

Dozens of Indigenous protesters forced their way into the COP30 climate summit venue on Tuesday and clashed with security guards at the entrance to demand climate action and forest protection. Shouting angrily, protesters demanded access to the UN compound where thousands of delegates from countries around the world are attending this year's UN climate summit in the Amazon city of Belem, Brazil. Some waved flags with slogans calling for land rights or carried signs saying, "Our land is not for sale." They had been in a group of hundreds who marched to the venue. Delegates from almost 200 countries are attending COP30 talks, which officially runs from Monday 10 November to Friday 21 November. This year's gathering takes place ten years after the Paris climate agreement, in which countries pledged to try to restrict the rise in global temperatures to 1.5C. It is the first time the conference is being held in Brazil, with the talks taking place in Belém on the edge of the Amazon rainforest. The location has proved a controversial decision for a number of reasons, in part due to the Amazon's residents, many of whom are vocal critics of the environmental damage caused to their home by climate change and deforestation.

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