

P2. NATIONAL



BSF, BGB discuss 'illegal, forced' border crossings -
The BSF-BGB focus on efforts to strengthen India-Bangladesh border management.

P3. NATIONAL



No new cases of Nipah reported in Kozhikode- Kerala continues to strengthen surveillance and containment measures against Nipah virus

P4. NATIONAL



Deep-seated' bias for male child persists in society: SC - Project Kusha is an indigenous long-range air defence system being developed to strengthen India's protection against a wide range of aerial threats.

P7. INTERNATIONAL



1,569 days: The war in Ukraine has now gone on longer than First World War - The Russia-Ukraine war has become longer than World War I, highlighting its growing geopolitical significance

Editor's Note

As another eventful week comes to a close, this weekend edition of Pala Civil Times brings together some of the most significant developments shaping policy, governance and international affairs. On the domestic front, India and Bangladesh continue efforts to strengthen border management, Kerala remains vigilant as it contains the latest Nipah case, and Maharashtra moves towards empowering women farmers through landmark legislation aimed at recognising a workforce that forms the backbone of rural agriculture. Beyond India's borders, the prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict crosses yet another historic milestone, while attention turns to the upcoming G7 Summit, where India's strategic engagements and growing global role will be closely watched. In our Decoded Editorials section, we unpack the challenges of managing retail inflation amid rising food and energy prices and examine how the newly introduced Coal Exchange Rules could transform transparency and efficiency in India's energy sector. As you read through today's edition, look beyond the headlines and reflect on how these developments may influence governance, economic policy, security and India's place in an evolving world order. Happy reading!

Editorials Decoded

 **The IndianEXPRESS**

Amid rising inflation, vigilance holds the key



Retail inflation in May 2026 rose moderately due to higher food and energy prices, highlighting persistent inflationary pressures that could influence future Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decisions.

THE HINDU

Long overdue



The Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 seek to create a transparent, market-based coal trading system that improves price discovery, competition, and efficiency in India's coal sector.

BSF, BGB discuss 'illegal, forced' border crossings

The 57th Director-General-level Border Coordination Conference between the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) focused on strengthening cooperation along the India-Bangladesh border. The two sides discussed illegal border crossings, human trafficking, smuggling of narcotics, arms, counterfeit currency, gold and other contraband, as well as border infrastructure and security coordination. Special attention was given to border deaths, confidence-building measures, and the implementation of the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) to address emerging security challenges.

Concerns over Illegal Crossings and Pushbacks

The talks took place amid recent tensions regarding the reported "pushback" of undocumented persons across the border. Bangladesh expressed concern over the alleged forcible entry of individuals, including Rohingya and Myanmar nationals, into its territory, while India maintained that many of those intercepted had entered India illegally. These incidents have led to confrontations between border forces at some locations.

Measures to Strengthen Border Security

India has adopted a multi-layered approach to secure the **4,096-km India-Bangladesh border**. Measures include **border fencing, floodlighting, observation posts, enhanced manpower, riverine patrols, floating Border Out Posts, and advanced surveillance technologies such as thermal imagers, night-vision devices, UAVs, CCTV cameras and the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS)**. Intelligence gathering, anti-human trafficking units, community outreach programmes and coordination with local police and Bangladesh authorities further strengthen border management efforts.

Persistent Challenges Along the Border

Despite extensive security measures, several challenges continue to hinder effective border management. Nearly one-fourth of the border is riverine and cannot be fully fenced, making surveillance difficult. Similar language, culture and physical appearance among people living on both sides often complicate identification of illegal migrants. Longstanding social and familial ties across the border, weather-related damage to fencing, and limitations in technological coverage create vulnerabilities that can be exploited by illegal migrants, traffickers and other trans-border criminal networks.



PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



- Q. With reference to India's projects on connectivity, consider the following statements:
1. East-West Corridor under Golden Quadrilateral Project connects Dibrugarh and Surat.
 2. The Trilateral Highway connects Moreh in Manipur and Chiang Mai in Thailand via Myanmar.
 3. Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor connects Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh with Kunming in China.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- a) Only one
 - b) Only two
 - c) All three
 - d) None
- Correct Answer: D

RELEVANCE

GS III : Internal Security

No new cases of Nipah reported in Kozhikode

No new Nipah virus cases have been reported in Kozhikode district, though three quarantined individuals have been hospitalised for observation and their samples sent for testing. The infected patient is receiving monoclonal antibody therapy as per ICMR guidelines, while 87 contacts remain under surveillance. Kerala continues to be India's major Nipah hotspot, with outbreaks recorded in 2018, 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2025. Since the first outbreak in Kozhikode in 2018, the State has reported 24 deaths, with investigations repeatedly linking infections to fruit bats carrying the Bangladeshi strain of the virus.

What is Nipah Virus and How is it Managed?

Nipah virus is a highly fatal zoonotic disease transmitted from fruit bats, infected animals, contaminated food, or through human-to-human contact. Symptoms range from fever, headache and respiratory distress to severe encephalitis and multi-organ complications. The World Health Organization classifies it as a priority disease due to its epidemic potential and the absence of approved vaccines or specific antiviral treatments. Diagnosis relies on laboratory tests such as RT-PCR and ELISA, while management focuses on supportive care, infection control, surveillance, contact tracing and rapid public health response to contain outbreaks.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Nipah virus infection:

1. Kerala's Nipah outbreaks have been linked to the Bangladeshi strain, which is associated with a higher potential for human-to-human transmission.
2. An approved vaccine and specific antiviral treatment are currently available for Nipah virus infection.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

RELEVANCE

GS II : Healthcare

GS I : Indian Society - Role of Women

Maharashtra to table women farmers' Bill in Monsoon Session



The Maharashtra government plans to introduce the Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Bill, 2026, which seeks to grant women farmers independent legal recognition and improve their access to loans, subsidies, crop insurance, markets and social security benefits. The proposed law aims to address the exclusion of many women from agricultural schemes due to land ownership requirements. It also envisages a digital platform to connect women farmers with government services and institutional support.

The initiative recognises the crucial role of women in agriculture, where they account for over 81% of participation in Maharashtra and nearly 80% of rural women in India depend on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihoods. Despite this, many lack formal recognition as farmers. The Bill complements national initiatives such as PM-KISAN, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme, Namo Drone Didi, the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission, and DAY-NRLM, which promote credit access, technology adoption, skill development and livelihood diversification. It also aligns with the International Year of the Woman Farmer (2026), which seeks to highlight and strengthen women's contributions to global food security and rural development.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. Discuss the various economic and socio-cultural forces that are driving increasing feminization of agriculture in India. (GS I – 2014)

Project Kusha, our indigenous air defence shield, will be a game changer, says Rajnath

Project Kusha has been described by the Defence Minister as a potential game-changer for India's security architecture. The indigenous long-range air defence system is being developed by DRDO to provide protection against a wide range of aerial threats. The Minister stated that India's air defence capabilities had demonstrated their effectiveness during Operation Sindoor and that Project Kusha would further strengthen national security.

Significance of KUSHA

The project forms part of India's broader push for defence self-reliance and complements indigenous systems such as Akash and BrahMos. It also aligns with Mission Sudarshan Chakra, which aims to create a multi-layered missile defence shield for protecting military assets, critical infrastructure and civilians. The initiative gains importance as modern warfare increasingly relies on technologies such as precision strikes, integrated air defence networks, hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence and electronic warfare.



PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Project Kusha is an indigenous programme being developed by DRDO to:

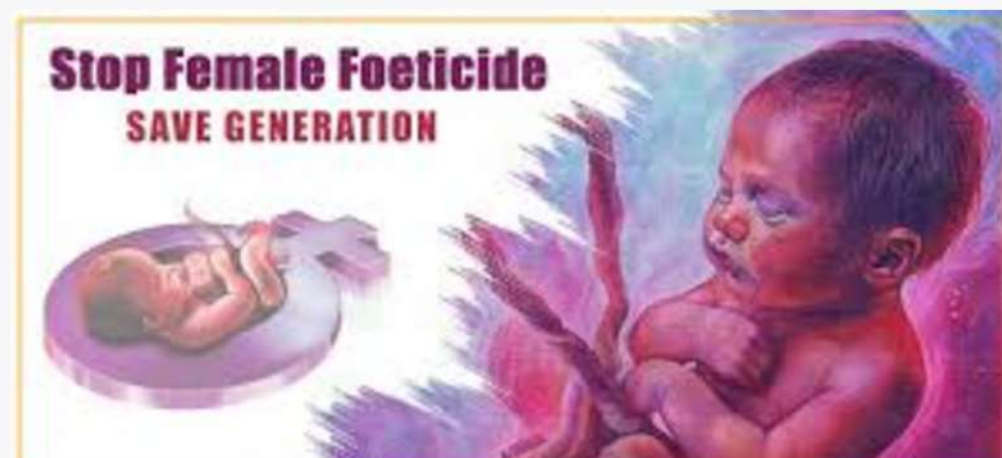
- Develop hypersonic cruise missiles for long-range precision strikes.
- Create a long-range air defence system capable of protecting against a wide range of aerial threats.
- Build a satellite-based surveillance network for monitoring India's borders.
- Develop autonomous combat drones for offensive military operations.

RELEVANCE

GS III : Internal Security

GS II : Indian Judiciary

Deep-seated' bias for male child persists in society: SC



The Supreme Court, while refusing to quash criminal proceedings against a Maharashtra doctor under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994, observed that although India has made progress in improving its sex ratio at birth, sex-selection practices continue to persist due to deep-rooted societal preference for male children. The Court noted that strict enforcement of the PCPNDT Act remains necessary, as allowing violations to go unpunished would undermine efforts to prevent female foeticide and protect the rights of the girl child.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare records highlight that India's Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) has improved significantly, rising from 819 females per 1,000 males during 2016-18 to 917 females per 1,000 males during 2021-23. This improvement reflects the impact of government initiatives and stronger implementation of the PCPNDT Act. However, several States continue to record sex ratios below the national average, indicating the persistence of gender bias. While ruling on the current case, the Supreme Court also pointed to India's lower ranking in the Global Gender Gap Report 2025, emphasizing that achieving genuine gender equality requires both legal enforcement and broader social change.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments.. (GS I – 2014)

Amid rising inflation, vigilance holds the key (Indian Express : 13-06-2026)

Retail inflation, measured through the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased slightly to 3.93% in May 2026 from 3.48% in April. Although inflation moved upward, it remained lower than market expectations and below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) projection for the first quarter. The RBI has revised its inflation forecast for the year to 5.1%, indicating that inflationary pressures may strengthen in the coming months.

Rising Food Inflation

Food inflation rose from 4.2% in April to 4.78% in May. Prices of vegetables such as tomatoes and ginger recorded significant increases. Concerns over delayed kharif sowing due to weak rainfall have created uncertainty regarding future food prices. Rising food costs remain one of the most important contributors to overall inflation in the economy. Higher food inflation affects poorer households more as food expenditure constitutes a larger share of their monthly consumption basket.

Impact of West Asia Conflict

Apart from food, energy-related costs are also putting pressure on prices. Increases in petrol, diesel, and LPG prices are raising transportation and restaurant costs. Supply-chain disruptions, global energy uncertainties, and rising household inflation expectations further add to inflation risks. These factors will be closely watched by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) before its next meeting, as they could influence future interest rate decisions.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Consumer Price Index (CPI) - CPI measures the average change in prices paid by consumers for goods and services over time.

- It is the primary indicator used to measure retail inflation in India.
- CPI data is compiled and released every month by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- The latest CPI series uses 2024 = 100 as the base year.
- The index covers all States and Union Territories and includes 358 items (goods and services).
- Food inflation is calculated from the Food Group component within the CPI basket.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) : It is the body responsible for deciding the RBI's monetary policy, including key interest rates.

It consists of six members - RBI Governor (Chairperson), RBI Deputy Governor in charge of Monetary Policy, One RBI nominee and Three members appointed by the Central Government

- Government-appointed members serve for four years.
- The MPC uses inflation and growth trends to decide whether interest rates should be increased, decreased, or kept unchanged.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. With reference to inflation in India, which of the following statements is correct? (2015)

- Controlling the inflation in India is the responsibility of the Government of India only
- The Reserve Bank of India has no role in controlling the inflation
- Decreased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation
- Increased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Consider the following statements:

- Retail inflation in India is measured using the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is compiled and released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- A rise in fuel and transportation costs can contribute to inflation even when food prices remain stable.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

RELEVANCE

GS III : Indian Economy

Long overdue (The Hindu : 13-06-2026)

India has introduced the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 at a time when domestic coal production is at a record high. The new framework aims to create regulated platforms where coal can be traded transparently between multiple buyers and sellers. This marks a shift from the existing system, which largely relies on long-term contracts and auctions. The reform is expected to **improve price discovery, reduce information gaps, and make coal markets more competitive and efficient.**

Key Provisions of the Coal Exchange Framework

The Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) has been designated as the regulator responsible for registering and overseeing coal exchanges. Only entities authorised by the CCO can establish and operate these exchanges. Applicants must maintain a minimum net worth of ₹50 crore, and registrations will remain valid for 25 years. The rules also mandate a demutualised governance structure, ensuring that exchange owners and managers cannot simultaneously hold trading rights, thereby reducing conflicts of interest. The framework establishes a regulated platform where multiple coal producers and buyers can trade coal transparently, replacing the dominance of bilateral contracts and auctions.

Expected Benefits for the Coal Market

Coal exchanges are expected to move India from a "one-to-many" sales model to a many-to-many market-based trading system. This will allow coal producers, including commercial and captive miners, to access a wider range of buyers. Transparent trading can improve price discovery, reduce dependence on opaque bilateral agreements, and create a level playing field for smaller consumers. The platform could also help balance regional surpluses and shortages by making inventories more visible across the country.

Lessons from Power Exchanges

The design of coal exchanges draws heavily from India's experience with power exchanges, where electricity is traded through transparent market platforms. Power exchanges have improved price discovery, provided market signals about shortages and surpluses, and increased transparency without replacing long-term supply contracts. Over time, electricity spot prices became important indicators of broader market conditions. Similarly, coal exchanges could become valuable reference points for understanding coal availability, demand patterns, and supply stresses.

Safeguards Needed for Success

Unlike electricity, coal is not a uniform commodity. Different grades of coal vary in calorific value, ash content and quality, making standardisation and quality certification crucial for smooth trading. For coal exchanges to succeed, robust grading systems, contract enforcement mechanisms, dispute-resolution processes, and efficient transportation logistics must be established. Measures to prevent excessive price volatility and encourage participation from both large and small market players will also be important. The active involvement of major producers, especially Coal India, will be critical in ensuring sufficient liquidity and credibility in the new market.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 and find the incorrect one :

- The rules aim to promote a transparent and market-based mechanism for coal trading through regulated exchanges.
- The Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) has been designated as the authority responsible for registering and regulating coal exchanges.
- Similar to electricity traded on power exchanges, all coal traded on coal exchanges is expected to be largely uniform in quality.
- The new framework seeks to move coal marketing from a "one-to-many" model towards a "many-to-many" trading platform.

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Polity - Constitutional Provisions

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. "Investment in infrastructure is essential for more rapid and inclusive economic growth." Discuss in the light of India's experience. (2021, 15 Marks)

1,569 days: The war in Ukraine has now gone on longer than First World War



The Russia-Ukraine war has crossed a significant historical milestone by lasting longer than World War I, extending beyond 1,569 days since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. What was initially expected by many, including Russia, to be a short campaign has evolved into a prolonged war of attrition marked by entrenched frontlines, intense infantry combat and heavy casualties. With peace negotiations stalled and public expectations in Ukraine increasingly pessimistic, the conflict shows little sign of ending soon. Many Ukrainians also view the war as having begun in 2014 with Russia's annexation of Crimea, suggesting an even longer timeline of confrontation and instability.

While historians caution against direct comparisons with the two World Wars because of their vastly different global scale and contexts, the Ukraine conflict is increasingly seen as one of the most consequential wars in modern European history. Like World War I, it has reshaped geopolitical alignments, strengthened military alliances and triggered a major defence buildup across Europe. The war has also transformed the nature of warfare through the extensive use of new technologies, particularly drones operating across land, sea and air domains, much as tanks and aircraft revolutionised combat during the early twentieth century. These technological advances have enhanced military capabilities while simultaneously increasing the intensity and human cost of the conflict, reinforcing comparisons with the brutal and transformative character of World War I.

RELEVANCE

GS II : International relations.

India likely to be invited to join Hormuz security initiative

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron are expected to discuss **defence cooperation, maritime security, military hardware and developments in West Asia** during their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G7 Summit. A key focus of the talks is France's proposal for a broader maritime security partnership with India, including **participation in a multinational initiative** aimed at safeguarding freedom of navigation in the strategically important Strait of Hormuz amid rising regional tensions.

The discussions are also expected to address evolving geopolitical developments in West Asia and potential cooperation with regional partners. According to French sources, leaders from India, the United States, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE may participate in a separate West Asia-focused meeting during the summit. Indian officials have indicated that new proposals and initiatives from partner countries will be reviewed, while defence-related announcements are also expected during the Prime Minister's visit to Slovakia, highlighting India's expanding strategic and security engagements with international partners.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. Ships from which of the following countries have to cross the Strait of Hormuz to reach out to the Indian Ocean?

1. Bahrain
2. Syria
3. Qatar
4. Egypt

Select the answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : b (1 and 2) – Ships from Bahrain and Qatar have to cross the Strait of Hormuz to reach out to the Indian Ocean.

Practice Questions and answers

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Retail inflation in India is measured using the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is compiled and released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
2. A rise in fuel and transportation costs can contribute to inflation even when food prices remain stable.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans : C Both 1 and 2

Statement 1 is correct. Retail inflation is measured through the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is compiled and released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Statement 2 is correct. Inflation can be driven not only by food prices but also by rising energy costs such as petrol, diesel, and LPG, which increase transportation and service costs across the economy.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 and find the incorrect one :

- a) The rules aim to promote a transparent and market-based mechanism for coal trading through regulated exchanges.
- b) The Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) has been designated as the authority responsible for registering and regulating coal exchanges.
- c) Similar to electricity traded on power exchanges, all coal traded on coal exchanges is expected to be largely uniform in quality.
- d) The new framework seeks to move coal marketing from a "one-to-many" model towards a "many-to-many" trading platform.

Ans : C

Statement 1 is correct. The primary objective of the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 is to create a transparent, competitive, and market-driven coal trading ecosystem.

Statement 2 is correct. The Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) has been designated as the regulator responsible for registration and oversight of coal exchanges.

Statement 3 is incorrect. Unlike electricity, coal is not a uniform commodity. Coal varies significantly in quality, calorific value, moisture content, and ash content. Therefore, quality assurance and standardisation are critical for the success of coal exchanges.

Statement 4 is correct. The framework aims to replace the traditional "one-to-many" sales model with a "many-to-many" trading platform, enabling broader participation by buyers and sellers.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Nipah virus infection:

1. Kerala's Nipah outbreaks have been linked to the Bangladeshi strain, which is associated with a higher potential for human-to-human transmission.
2. An approved vaccine and specific antiviral treatment are currently available for Nipah virus infection.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans : A (1 only)

Statement 1 is correct. Studies in Kerala have identified the Bangladeshi strain of Nipah virus, which is associated with a high fatality rate and greater human-to-human transmission potential.

Statement 2 is incorrect. There is currently no approved vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for Nipah virus infection. Treatment mainly consists of supportive medical care.

Practice Questions and answers

Q. Project Kusha is an indigenous programme being developed by DRDO to:

- A. Develop hypersonic cruise missiles for long-range precision strikes.
- B. Create a long-range air defence system capable of protecting against a wide range of aerial threats.
- C. Build a satellite-based surveillance network for monitoring India's borders.
- D. Develop autonomous combat drones for offensive military operations.

Answer: B. Create a long-range air defence system capable of protecting against a wide range of aerial threats.

Project Kusha is an indigenous long-range air defence missile system being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It is intended to provide a comprehensive protective shield against various aerial threats and forms an important component of India's evolving air and missile defence architecture.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. With reference to India's projects on connectivity, consider the following statements:

1. East-West Corridor under Golden Quadrilateral Project connects Dibrugarh and Surat
2. The Trilateral Highway connects Moreh in Manipur and Chiang Mai in Thailand via Myanmar.
3. Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor connects Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh with Kunming in China.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: D

The Golden Quadrilateral Project is a major highway development project in India that aims to connect the four major metropolitan cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata.

The East-West Corridor is a part of this project and connects Silchar in Assam to Porbandar in Gujarat. **So, Statement 1 is not correct.**

The IMT Trilateral Highway connects Moreh in the Indian state of Manipur with Mae Sot in Thailand, passing through Myanmar. It is an ambitious infrastructure project aimed at enhancing connectivity and trade between India, Myanmar, and Thailand. **So, Statement 2 is not correct.**

The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM) Corridor is a proposed connectivity project that aims to enhance economic cooperation and trade between Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar. The corridor is expected to run from Kunming in China, through Myanmar, and Bangladesh, and eventually reach Kolkata in India. **So, Statement 3 is not correct.**

Q. With reference to inflation in India, which of the following statements is correct? (2015)

- a) Controlling the inflation in India is the responsibility of the Government of India only
- b) The Reserve Bank of India has no role in controlling the inflation
- c) Decreased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation
- d) Increased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation

Ans : C

a) Controlling the inflation in India is the responsibility of the Government of India only. **This is Incorrect.** Both the RBI and the Government play roles in controlling inflation.

b) The Reserve Bank of India has no role in controlling the inflation. **This is incorrect.** The RBI is the primary authority for implementing monetary policies aimed at inflation control.

c) Decreased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation: **This is Correct.** Reducing money supply reduces demand and, consequently, inflation.

d) Increased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation: **This is Incorrect.** Increased money circulation typically leads to higher demand, exacerbating inflation.