

THE PALA

CIVIL TIMES

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P2. NATIONAL



SC stays High Court proceedings on new transgender law - .debate over self-identification versus state certification of gender identity is going strong

P3. HEALTH



Heatwaves, ozone raise cardiac death risk: study- heatwaves significantly increase ground-level ozone pollution in India, worsening respiratory and cardiovascular health risks.

P4. INTERNATIONAL



U.S. and Iran reach agreement to end war, re-open Hormuz Strait- a preliminary peace agreement focused on paving the way for negotiations.

P8. ECONOMICS



Making sense of the biggest IPO in history - SpaceX's historic IPO, which pushed its valuation above \$2 trillion and made Elon Musk the world's first trillionaire.

Editor's Note

The world is getting hotter, security threats are on the rise, historical narratives are evolving, and global wealth is reaching unprecedented levels. In today's edition of the Pala Civil Times, we examine some of the most significant developments shaping our times.

On the national front, we discuss the Supreme Court's stance on the Transgender Persons law and its wider constitutional implications. Turning to the international arena, the Iran-US peace agreement takes centre stage as a conflict spanning more than 100 days finally appears to be drawing to a close. Yet, global security concerns remain far from resolved. Recent conflicts have effectively opened a Pandora's box with the widespread use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), fundamentally altering the nature of modern warfare. Our article on the UAV revolution explores how these technologies are reshaping battlefields across the world.

In our Decoded section, we analyse the latest NCERT curriculum controversy and the challenges of balancing historical interpretation with academic objectivity. We also examine the need for judicial balance and discretion in dealing with preventive detention cases.

From the world of economics, Elon Musk's record-breaking IPO sale serves as a reminder of the extraordinary levels of wealth creation being witnessed in the contemporary global economy.

We encourage you to read with diligence and develop a clear understanding of these important issues.

Editorials Decoded

 **The IndianEXPRESS**

Dancing Girl, meet modest imagination



This controversy has reignited debates on educational censorship, historical representation, and the interpretation of India's cultural heritage.

THE HINDU

Peace with peace



A latest court ruling renewed focus on constitutional safeguards against the misuse of preventive detention powers and reinforced the primacy of personal liberty.

SC stays High Court proceedings on new transgender law

The Supreme Court has stayed proceedings in the Rajasthan, Delhi, Karnataka, and Kerala High Courts that were hearing challenges to the constitutional validity of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026. Acting on a transfer petition filed by the Union Government, a Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice V. Mohana held that multiple courts deciding the same constitutional issue could result in conflicting judgments. The Court issued notice on the transfer petition and indicated that it may either hear all cases itself or consolidate them before a single High Court.

Core Dispute: Self-Identification vs State Certification

The central challenge to the 2026 Amendment concerns the right of transgender persons to determine their own gender identity. Petitioners argue that the amendment departs from the principles established in the landmark National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India judgment by removing recognition of self-perceived gender identity from the statutory framework. The amendment reportedly requires a transgender identity certificate to be issued only after consideration by a designated medical board and a district magistrate, thereby shifting legal recognition from individual self-identification to an administrative certification process.

Wider Significance of the Case

The Supreme Court's eventual ruling will have far-reaching implications for transgender rights and constitutional governance in India. The case will determine whether gender identity remains primarily a matter of personal autonomy or becomes subject to state-mediated certification. It will also clarify the continuing authority of the NALSA precedent, influence the implementation of the Transgender Persons Act, and shape India's compliance with international human rights commitments under frameworks such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

NALSA Judgment and Judicial Expansion of Transgender Rights

In the 2014 NALSA judgment, the Supreme Court recognised transgender persons as a distinct "third gender" and held that the right to self-identify one's gender is protected under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. Subsequent judgments by various High Courts and the Supreme Court expanded this principle into education, employment, identity documents, marriage, political participation, and personal relationships. Courts consistently held that gender identity is an aspect of personal autonomy and freedom of expression and therefore should not depend on medical examinations or external approval.

Centre's Position and Constitutional Questions

The Union Government has defended the amendment by stating that it does not prohibit voluntary gender-affirming procedures and is intended only to regulate coercive or forced interventions. However, requiring certification by medical authorities effectively weakens the constitutional principle of self-identification. As a result, it raises questions regarding the scope of Articles 14, 19, and 21, the extent of state regulation over personal identity, and whether Parliament can enact provisions that appear to depart from constitutional principles laid down by the Supreme Court.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. In India, Legal Services Authorities provide free legal services to which of the following types of citizens? (2020)

1. Person with an annual income of less than Rs. 1,00,000
2. Transgender with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,00,000
3. Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,00,000
4. All Senior Citizens

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

RELEVANCE

GS I : Indian Society; GS II : Social Justice

SC stays High Court proceedings on new transgender law

Surface ozone, a harmful air pollutant that affects the heart and lungs, already exceeds safe limits across much of India during the hot pre-monsoon season. A recent study published in npj Clean Air finds that heatwaves further intensify ozone concentrations, pushing levels to 85–110 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in northern India and beyond the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline of 70 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in all regions of the country. Although ozone levels generally decline within a few days after a heatwave ends, the temporary spikes create significant additional health risks.

How Heatwaves Accelerate Ozone Formation

The study highlights the close relationship between heatwaves and air pollution. Surface ozone is not emitted directly; instead, it forms through sunlight-driven chemical reactions involving pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and formaldehyde (HCHO). Higher temperatures accelerate these reactions, making heatwaves particularly conducive to ozone formation. As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme heat events, concerns over ozone pollution are expected to grow.

Health Impacts and Mortality Burden of Ozone Pollution

Researchers estimate that ozone exposure during the 2024 heatwave period contributed to around 26,500 deaths associated with ischaemic heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). More importantly, the heatwave-induced increase in ozone levels was linked to approximately 830 additional deaths, including about 490 from heart disease and 342 from COPD. These findings underline the compounding impact of extreme heat and air pollution on public health.

Methodology and Limitations of the Study

The mortality estimates were derived through statistical modelling rather than direct observation. Since continuous ground-level ozone measurements were unavailable for many affected locations, researchers combined estimated ozone exposure with established relationships between pollution and disease risk. While this approach introduces uncertainties, it remains a widely accepted method for assessing large-scale environmental health impacts, especially when direct monitoring data are limited.

Key Findings and Long-Term Significance for India

The study is significant as it represents the first comprehensive, long-term, nationwide assessment of surface ozone during heatwaves in India. Researchers identified 188 heatwave events over the past two decades, with particularly severe years such as 2010, 2016, 2019, and 2024 occurring after strong El Niño episodes. The Western Himalayas recorded the sharpest long-term rise in ozone levels, highlighting the expanding geographical reach of this environmental challenge and the need for integrated climate, air quality, and public health policies.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Photochemical smog is a resultant of the reaction among (2013)
(a) NO_2 , O_3 and peroxyacetyl nitrate in the presence of sunlight
(b) CO , O_2 and peroxyacetyl nitrate in the presence of sunlight
(c) CO , CO_2 and NO_2 at low temperature
(d) High concentration of NO_2 , O_3 and CO in the evening

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. With reference to Surface Ozone (Ground-Level Ozone), consider the following statements:

1. Surface ozone is directly emitted into the atmosphere from industrial and vehicular sources.
2. Heatwaves can accelerate the chemical reactions that lead to the formation of surface ozone.
3. Surface ozone is associated with adverse health effects, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.
4. According to the WHO guideline, the safe limit for surface ozone is 70 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

RELEVANCE

GS I : Geographical phenomena; Healthcare; GS III : Environment

U.S. and Iran reach agreement to end war, re-open Hormuz Strait

The United States and Iran have announced a preliminary agreement aimed at ending the conflict that has continued for over three months and disrupted regional stability, maritime trade, and global energy markets. The agreement provides for an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations, the lifting of the U.S. naval blockade against Iran, and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil transit route that carries nearly 20% of the world's petroleum trade. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed digitally on June 15, with a formal signing ceremony scheduled in Geneva on June 19.

Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz

A major outcome of the agreement is the restoration of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy chokepoints through which nearly one-fifth of global oil supplies pass. Iran clarified that it would not impose transit tolls on ships, though charges for navigation services, environmental protection, insurance, and related facilities would continue. The reopening of the Strait is expected to ease disruptions in global oil markets and improve international shipping.

Pathway for Nuclear and Sanctions Negotiations

The agreement also lays the groundwork for future negotiations on the core issues underlying the conflict. Discussions on Iran's nuclear programme, Western sanctions, the release of Iranian frozen assets, and possible war reparations are expected to begin after both sides implement their initial commitments under the MoU. U.S. officials have indicated that the ceasefire period will provide a window for substantive diplomatic engagement on these sensitive issues.

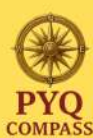
International Reactions and India's Position

The development has received broad international support. India welcomed the agreement, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing hope that it would restore peace and stability in West Asia. France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy also welcomed the understanding, highlighting the urgent importance of reopening the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring freedom of navigation. Mediators such as Qatar and Pakistan were acknowledged for facilitating dialogue, while Western powers reiterated that Iran must not acquire nuclear weapons and expressed readiness to assist in securing maritime routes and clearing naval mines.



PYQ Compass

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



Q. In what ways would the ongoing U.S–Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to this situation?
 (GS II – International Relations – 2018)

RELEVANCE

GS II : International Relations

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. With reference to the recent preliminary agreement between the United States and Iran, consider the following statements:

1. The agreement provides for an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations and the lifting of the U.S. naval blockade against Iran.
2. The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is significant because nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supplies pass through it.
3. Iran has agreed to impose transit tolls on all ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz as part of the agreement.
4. Future negotiations between the two countries are expected to address issues related to Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions, frozen assets, and war reparations.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Drone revolution and modern warfare

Modern conflicts in Ukraine, Lebanon, and West Asia have demonstrated the growing importance of drones in warfare. Originally used for surveillance and reconnaissance, drones now perform precision strikes, logistics support, electronic warfare, and intelligence gathering. Their low cost, adaptability, and mass deployment have challenged traditional assumptions about military power and transformed the nature of modern battlefields.

Lessons from Contemporary Conflicts

The Ukraine conflict has emerged as the most significant example of drone-intensive warfare, with First-Person View (FPV) drones, loitering munitions, bomber drones, and fibre-optic drones becoming integral to military operations. Similar trends are visible in West Asia, where state and non-state actors employ drones for deterrence, reconnaissance, and strike missions, while militaries increasingly invest in layered counter-drone systems.

Drone Revolution in Modern Warfare: Systems and Features

FPV, Kamikaze and Combat Adapted Drones (Ukraine) - low-cost FPV kamikaze drones, including Pegasus FPV systems and heavy-lift Vampire hexacopters ("Baba Yaga"), used as precision strike platforms carrying explosive payloads against high-value targets. Commercial drones such as DJI Mavic 3 and DJI Matrice 300 RTK have been modified into **bomber drones**.

Loitering Munitions and ISR Platforms (Ukraine) - precision and long-range systems such as **RAM II loitering munitions**, **UJ-31 Zozulya "parasite drone"** launched from UJ-22 UAVs for deep penetration missions, and long-range one-way attack drones targeting logistics hubs and infrastructure. ISR and targeting support is provided by systems like Shark and PD-2 drones, enabling reconnaissance, strike coordination, and battle damage assessment.

Electronic Warfare-Resistant Systems : fibre-optic FPV drones replace radio links with cable-based control systems. These drones are highly resistant to electronic jamming, enabling reliable operations in heavily contested electromagnetic environments.

Regional Drone Networks (West Asia) : Iranian-supplied systems such as Ababil, Mohajer-4, Shahed-129 (ISR drones) and the Shahed-136 loitering munition (one-way strike drone). Iran's IRGC model uses Shahed-series drones as a low-cost asymmetric tool for deterrence and regional power projection across Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen.

Counter-Drone Systems (Israel Model) : Israel employs a layered counter-UAS architecture combining electronic warfare (jamming systems), radar-based detection networks, and long-endurance Heron UAVs for surveillance.

Emerging Security Concerns for India

Recent global conflicts have demonstrated the ability of hostile drones to target military installations, industrial facilities, and transport networks. Recognising these risks, the Union government has warned of potential rogue drone attacks on vital assets and installations located near India's land and maritime borders. To address these challenges, India is strengthening its counter-drone capabilities through technology evaluation, surveillance systems, and anti-drone infrastructure. The Ministry of Home Affairs has established mechanisms to assess and certify counter-drone technologies.

CISF's Role in Drone Security

The CISF has emerged as a key institution in India's response to drone threats. In collaboration with the Indian Air Force, it has trained thousands of personnel in drone and counter-drone operations, including surveillance, mapping, piloting, and neutralisation techniques. The force is also establishing specialised drone training schools and enhancing security audits of strategic installations.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), consider the following statements (2025):

- I. All types of UAVs can do vertical landing.
 - II. All types of UAVs can do automated hovering.
 - III. All types of UAVs can use battery only as a source of power supply.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All the three
 - (d) None

RELEVANCE

GS III : Internal Security

Dancing Girl, meet modest imagination (Indian Express : 16-06-2026)

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) recently faced criticism after a modified image of the Dancing Girl of Mohenjodaro appeared in a Class IX Arts Education textbook, with the figurine's bare torso covered by a sheath. Critics argued that the alteration amounted to unnecessary censorship of a well-known archaeological artefact that has appeared in school textbooks for decades. Following public criticism, NCERT decided to restore the original image, bringing the issue into focus as a debate over educational content and cultural representation.

Historical Significance of the Dancing Girl

The Dancing Girl is one of the most famous artefacts of the Indus Valley Civilization and a symbol of Harappan artistic excellence. Discovered at Mohenjodaro during excavations in 1926-27, the 10.8 cm bronze figurine reflects the high level of artistic sophistication and metallurgical knowledge achieved by the Harappans. Along with other important artefacts such as the Priest-King sculpture, it provides valuable insights into the social, cultural, and aesthetic life of one of the world's earliest urban civilizations and remains an enduring symbol of India's ancient heritage.

Artistic and Technological Features

The figurine depicts a slender female standing with one hand on her hip and the other resting on her thigh, with her head tilted backward in a confident posture. She is adorned with a necklace and numerous bangles, while her hair is tied in a loose bun. The statue was created using the advanced lost-wax casting technique, in which a wax model is covered with clay, the wax is melted out, and molten bronze is poured into the mould. This technique demonstrates the sophisticated metalworking skills of the Harappan civilization and continues to be used in parts of India even today.

Debate on Educational Philosophy

The controversy has sparked wider discussions on the approach to school education and textbook revision. Critics contend that modifying historical artefacts to conform to contemporary notions of modesty limits students' ability to engage with history in its original context. The issue has been linked to broader concerns regarding syllabus rationalisation and the removal or alteration of certain historical topics, raising questions about whether education should shield students from complexity or encourage critical thinking and contextual understanding.

Questions of Representation and Agency

The debate has also acquired a social dimension, particularly regarding the representation of women in history and public life. Many observers argue that the Dancing Girl is celebrated not for conforming to modern standards of modesty but for symbolising confidence, individuality, and artistic expression. They view the modification as potentially undermining the agency and cultural significance embodied by one of the most iconic female representations from ancient South Asia.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. With reference to the Dancing Girl of Mohenjodaro, consider the following statements:

1. It is a bronze figurine discovered during the 1926-27 excavations at Mohenjodaro.
2. The sculpture was created using the lost-wax casting technique, indicating advanced metallurgical knowledge in the Harappan Civilization.
3. The figurine depicts a female adorned with ornaments, including numerous bangles, and is regarded as an important example of Harappan artistic excellence.
4. Archaeological evidence conclusively establishes that the figurine represented a professional dancer in Harappan society.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

PYQ Compass

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



Q. The famous female figurine known as 'Dancing Girl', found at Mohenjodaro, is made of (2025):

- (a) carnelian
- (b) clay
- (c) bronze
- (d) gold

RELEVANCE

GS I : Indian History; Indian Society

Peace with peace (The Hindu : 16-06-2026)

The recent Chander Pal Singh case before the Allahabad High Court highlighted the misuse of preventive proceedings under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The petitioner, a specially-abled advocate, was taken into custody following a neighbourhood dispute and was not produced before a magistrate within the mandatory 24-hour period. Although preventive proceedings were initiated and bail bonds were furnished, he was still sent to jail and remained in custody until judicial intervention secured his release. The Court held that this detention violated the constitutional guarantee of personal liberty under Article 21.

Evolution of Preventive Detention in India

Preventive detention refers to the detention of a person on the basis of anticipated threats rather than a completed offence. The practice originated during British rule and was extensively used to control crime, political activity, and dissent. During the Second World War, the Defence of India Act and Defence of India Rules empowered authorities to detain individuals considered threats to public order, national security, or essential services without a regular criminal trial.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

After Independence, preventive detention was incorporated into the Constitution through Article 22. Clauses (3) to (7) permit preventive detention while providing procedural safeguards. A person cannot ordinarily be detained for more than three months without the approval of an Advisory Board consisting of persons qualified to be High Court judges. The Constitution also requires that the detainee be informed of the grounds of detention and be given an opportunity to challenge the detention order. Parliament and State Legislatures are empowered to enact preventive detention laws under the Seventh Schedule. The Preventive Detention Act, 1950 became the first major post-independence law governing such detentions.

High Court Guidelines and Safeguards

The High Court observed that preventive powers were increasingly being used for routine disputes rather than genuine threats to public order. To prevent misuse, it directed that in preventive proceedings under the BNSS, only a personal bond of up to ₹20,000 without surety should ordinarily be required. If a person refuses to execute the bond, the refusal must be recorded in writing and through audio-visual means before custody is ordered. The Court also directed **compensation for unlawful detention beyond 24 hours** and held that disciplinary action and financial liability could be imposed on responsible police and magistracy officials.

Importance of Policy Compliance and Judicial Oversight

The judgment reinforced the importance of implementing Uttar Pradesh's 2021 policy aimed at preventing misuse of preventive powers. The Court noted that thousands of preventive detention proceedings had been initiated despite the existence of safeguards. Effective implementation of state policies, strict judicial scrutiny, proper documentation of detention decisions, and accountability of officials can reduce arbitrary incarceration and ensure that preventive powers are used only in genuinely exceptional situations.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Consider the following statements: (2023)

1. According to the Constitution of India, the Central Government has a duty to protect States from internal disturbances. 2. The Constitution of India exempts the States from providing legal counsel to person being held for preventive detention.

3. According to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002, confession of the accused before the police cannot be used as evidence.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Polity - Social Justice

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Q. With reference to Preventive Detention (PD) in India, consider the following statements:

- Article 22 of the Constitution permits preventive detention while providing certain procedural safeguards.
- Both Parliament and State Legislatures can enact preventive detention laws relating to public order.
- In the Chander Pal Singh case, the Allahabad High Court held that a person detained under preventive proceedings can be sent to jail solely for failure to furnish sureties, without recording reasons.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

ECONOMICS

Making sense of the biggest IPO in history

A major development in global business and finance occurred when SpaceX, the private aerospace company founded by Elon Musk, made its stock market debut on June 12, 2026. The company's shares opened strongly and quickly pushed its market valuation above \$2 trillion, making it one of the most valuable companies in the world. The IPO became the largest in history, reflecting strong investor confidence in the future of commercial space technology, satellite communications, artificial intelligence, and related high-growth sectors.

How Elon Musk Became the World's First Trillionaire

Musk's wealth is primarily linked to his ownership stakes in SpaceX, Tesla, and other ventures. The sharp rise in SpaceX's share price following the IPO significantly increased the value of his holdings, pushing his estimated net worth above \$1 trillion and making him the world's first trillionaire. Importantly, this wealth exists largely on paper in the form of shares and assets rather than cash. The development highlights how modern wealth creation is increasingly driven by ownership of technology platforms and intellectual property rather than traditional industrial assets.

What Makes SpaceX Valuable

SpaceX's valuation reflects investor expectations about future growth rather than current profits. The company combines several ambitious businesses, including reusable rocket systems, satellite-based internet services through Starlink, and artificial intelligence ventures integrated through Musk's broader corporate ecosystem. Investors view these businesses as potential drivers of future technological transformation in sectors such as communications, data infrastructure, defence, and space exploration. The IPO also demonstrates how financial markets increasingly reward companies with strong long-term growth narratives, even when current profitability remains limited.

CHART 1: SpaceX's market capitalisation is greater than the GDP of 157 of the 168 countries analysed based on available World Bank data

Legend:
 < 0.25 the size of SpaceX (Dark Red)
 0.25 to 0.75x (Red)
 0.75 to 0.9x (Light Red)
 1 to 2x (Blue)
 > 2x (Dark Blue)
 No data (Grey)

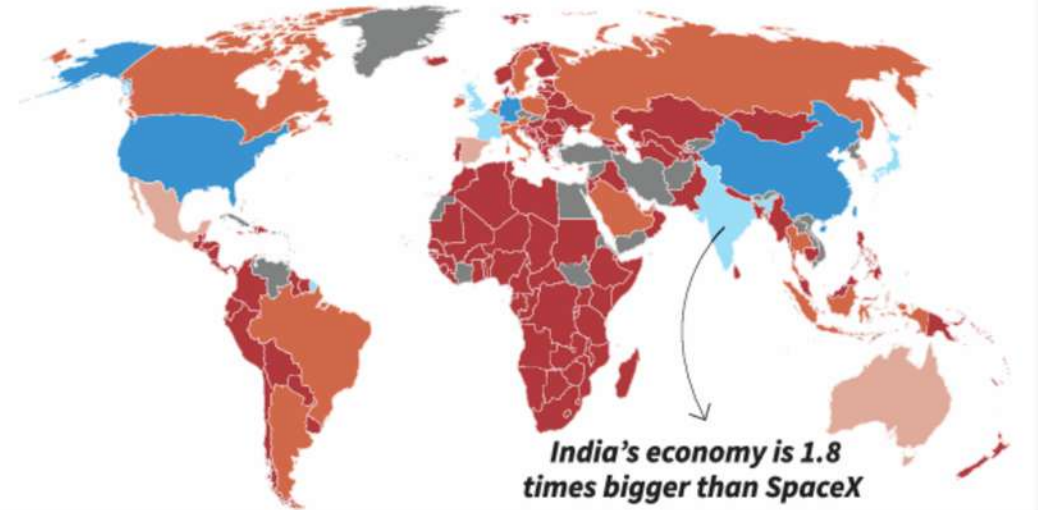


CHART 2: The chart shows the net worth (in \$ billion) of five of the most

Broader Economic and Financial Implications

The scale of SpaceX's valuation has reignited debates about wealth concentration, market speculation, and corporate valuation. With a market capitalisation exceeding the GDP of most countries, SpaceX illustrates the growing economic influence of large technology firms. Critics argue that such valuations may be disconnected from current earnings and reflect excessive market optimism. Supporters, however, view them as a reflection of the enormous economic potential of emerging technologies. The event also highlights how global capital markets can channel vast amounts of investment into innovation-led sectors within a short period.

Significance for the Global Economy

From a macroeconomic perspective, the rise of SpaceX represents a shift toward a technology-driven economy where innovation, data networks, artificial intelligence, and space infrastructure are becoming major sources of wealth creation. The IPO demonstrates the growing importance of private-sector investment in frontier technologies that were once dominated by governments. At the same time, it raises important policy questions regarding market concentration, inequality, taxation, and financial regulation. The emergence of the world's first trillionaire therefore reflects not only an individual achievement but also the increasing role of technology companies in shaping global economic power and investment trends.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to investments, consider the following:

- I. Bonds
- II. Hedge Funds
- III. Stocks
- IV. Venture Capital

How many of the above are treated as Alternative Investment Funds?

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

RELEVANCE

GS III : Economic Development

Practice Questions and answers

- Q. With reference to the Dancing Girl of Mohenjodaro, consider the following statements:
1. It is a bronze figurine discovered during the 1926–27 excavations at Mohenjodaro.
 2. The sculpture was created using the lost-wax casting technique, indicating advanced metallurgical knowledge in the Harappan Civilization.
 3. The figurine depicts a female adorned with ornaments, including numerous bangles, and is regarded as an important example of Harappan artistic excellence.
 4. Archaeological evidence conclusively establishes that the figurine represented a professional dancer in Harappan society.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 3 only

Statement 1: Correct. The bronze figurine was discovered during the 1926–27 excavations at Mohenjodaro.

Statement 2: Correct. It was produced using the lost-wax casting technique, demonstrating the advanced metalworking skills of the Harappans.

Statement 3: Correct. The figurine is adorned with a necklace and numerous bangles and is considered one of the finest examples of Harappan craftsmanship and artistic sophistication.

Statement 4: Incorrect. Although it is popularly known as the "Dancing Girl", experts note that there is no conclusive evidence that the figure actually represented a professional dancer. The name was given by John Marshall based on his interpretation of its posture.

- Q. With reference to Preventive Detention (PD) in India, consider the following statements:
1. Article 22 of the Constitution permits preventive detention while providing certain procedural safeguards.
 2. Both Parliament and State Legislatures can enact preventive detention laws relating to public order.
 3. In the Chander Pal Singh case, the Allahabad High Court held that a person detained under preventive proceedings can be sent to jail solely for failure to furnish sureties, without recording reasons.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Statement 1 is correct. Article 22(3)–(7) of the Constitution expressly permits preventive detention while prescribing safeguards such as communication of grounds of detention and review by an Advisory Board in specified cases.

Statement 2 is correct. Under Entry 3 of the Concurrent List (List III), both Parliament and State Legislatures can enact preventive detention laws for matters relating to the **security of a State, maintenance of public order, and essential supplies and services**.

Statement 3 is incorrect. In the Chander Pal Singh case, the Allahabad High Court ruled the opposite. It held that before a person can be sent to custody in preventive proceedings, any refusal to execute the required bond must be properly recorded in writing and through audio-visual means. The Court emphasized that personal liberty under Article 21 cannot be curtailed through routine or mechanical use of preventive powers.

Practice Questions and answers

Q. With reference to the recent preliminary agreement between the United States and Iran, consider the following statements:

- 1.The agreement provides for an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations and the lifting of the U.S. naval blockade against Iran.
- 2.The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is significant because nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supplies pass through it.
- 3.Iran has agreed to impose transit tolls on all ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz as part of the agreement.
- 4.Future negotiations between the two countries are expected to address issues related to Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions, frozen assets, and war reparations.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Statement 1: Correct. The agreement includes a ceasefire and removal of the U.S. naval blockade.

Statement 2: Correct. The Strait of Hormuz is a critical energy chokepoint through which around 20% of global oil supplies are transported.

Statement 3: Incorrect. Iran clarified that it would not impose transit tolls, though fees for navigation services, environmental protection, insurance, and related services may be charged.

Statement 4: Correct. The agreement lays the foundation for future talks on Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions, frozen assets, and possible war reparations.

Q. With reference to Surface Ozone (Ground-Level Ozone), consider the following statements:

- 1.Surface ozone is directly emitted into the atmosphere from industrial and vehicular sources.
- 2.Heatwaves can accelerate the chemical reactions that lead to the formation of surface ozone.
- 3.Surface ozone is associated with adverse health effects, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.
- 4.According to the WHO guideline, the safe limit for surface ozone is 70 µg/m³.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 2, 3 and 4 only

Statement 1: Incorrect. Surface ozone is a secondary pollutant; it is not emitted directly. It forms through sunlight-driven reactions involving pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and volatile organic compounds.

Statement 2: Correct. Higher temperatures during heatwaves accelerate ozone-forming chemical reactions.

Statement 3: Correct. Exposure to surface ozone is linked to ischaemic heart disease, COPD, and other respiratory illnesses.

Statement 4: Correct. The WHO guideline value for surface ozone is 70 µg/m³.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), consider the following statements:

- I. All types of UAVs can do vertical landing.
 - II. All types of UAVs can do automated hovering.
 - III. All types of UAVs can use battery only as a source of power supply.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans : d

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones are used for a wide variety of purposes including surveillance, delivery, and even military operations.

Statement I is incorrect : Fixed-wing drone is an aerial vehicle that utilizes rigid wings, a fuselage, tails, a propeller, and a motor to cover long distances at high speeds. They cannot hover or land at specific points, requiring a runway or a net for landing. So all drones cannot do vertical landing.

Statement II is incorrect : unlike other drones, traditional fixed wing drones cannot hover or land at specific points, requiring a runway or a net for landing.

Statement III is incorrect : UAVs come in many configurations, including: Multirotors (e.g., quadcopters) Fixed-wing UAVs Hybrid VTOLs High-endurance military UAVs (e.g., Predator drones) Many of these cannot rely solely on batteries due to power and endurance limitations. For long range UAVs, especially fixed-wing or military UAVs, batteries cannot provide sufficient power or duration.

Q. Consider the following statements: (2023)

1. According to the Constitution of India, the Central Government has a duty to protect States from internal disturbances.
2. The Constitution of India exempts the States from providing legal counsel to person being held for preventive detention
3. According to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002, confession of the accused before the police cannot be used as evidence.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Ans : a

Statement 1 is correct: As per Article 355 of the Constitution, the Central Government has a duty to protect States from external aggression and internal disturbances.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The Constitution does not exempt states from providing legal counsel to persons held under preventive detention. Article 22 ensures certain protections, including legal aid, for such persons.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), 2002, a confession made before a police officer of a certain rank could be used as evidence in court. This provision was controversial and led to the repeal of POTA in 2004.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. The famous female figurine known as 'Dancing Girl', found at Mohenjo-daro, is made of (2025) :

- (a) carnelian
- (b) clay
- (c) bronze
- (d) gold

Ans : c

The Dancing Girl is one of the most famous artefacts of the Indus Valley Civilization and a symbol of Harappan artistic excellence. **The bronze figurine** was discovered during the 1926–27 excavations at Mohenjodaro in present-day Pakistan. The figurine is approximately 10.8 cm high and represents one of the finest examples of Harappan craftsmanship. The name "Dancing Girl" was given by John Marshall based on his interpretation of the figure's posture. Experts highlight that there is no conclusive evidence that the figure actually represents a professional dancer. The figurine depicts a slender female standing with her right hand on her hip and her left hand resting on her thigh. Her head is tilted backwards, giving the sculpture a confident and self-assured appearance. She is depicted without clothing and is adorned with a necklace and numerous bangles. The left arm contains around 24–25 bangles, while the right arm has only four.

Q. Consider the following statements: (2023)

1. According to the Constitution of India, the Central Government has a duty to protect States from internal disturbances.
2. The Constitution of India exempts the States from providing legal counsel to person being held for preventive detention
3. According to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002, confession of the accused before the police cannot be used as evidence.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Ans : a

Statement 1 is correct: As per Article 355 of the Constitution, the Central Government has a duty to protect States from external aggression and internal disturbances.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The Constitution does not exempt states from providing legal counsel to persons held under preventive detention. Article 22 ensures certain protections, including legal aid, for such persons.

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PYQ Compass

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



Q. In India, Legal Services Authorities provide free legal services to which of the following types of citizens? (2020)

1. Person with an annual income of less than Rs. 1,00,000
2. Transgender with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,00,000
3. Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,00,000
4. All Senior Citizens

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : a

Under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, free legal services are provided to certain categories of citizens, including those based on annual income thresholds as specified by the respective Legal Services Authorities.

- **Person with an annual income of less than Rs. 1,00,000: This is Correct.** Free legal aid is available to individuals whose annual income is below the limit specified by the Legal Services Authority. The threshold is determined by state-specific notifications, and Rs. 1,00,000 is a common threshold in many states.
- **Transgender with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,00,000: This is Correct.** As per the amended guidelines, transgender individuals with an annual income below Rs. 2,00,000 are entitled to free legal services.
- **Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,00,000: This is Incorrect.** Membership in the OBC category alone does not qualify an individual for free legal aid unless they fall under the income threshold or other specified criteria (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, or women in distress).
- **All Senior Citizens: This is incorrect.** Free legal aid is not available to all senior citizens. It is available only to those meeting specific income criteria or falling under vulnerable categories as defined by the Legal Services Authorities.

Q. Photochemical smog is a resultant of the reaction among (2013)

- (a) NO₂, O₃ and peroxyacetyl nitrate in the presence of sunlight
- (b) CO, O₂ and peroxyacetyl nitrate in the presence of sunlight
- (c) CO, CO₂ and NO₂ at low temperature
- (d) High concentration of NO₂, O₃ and CO in the evening

Ans : a

Photochemical smog forms when pollutants like nitrogen oxides (NO₂) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) react with sunlight. The reactions produce secondary pollutants such as ozone (O₃) and peroxyacetyl nitrate (PAN), which are harmful to human health, vegetation, and materials. This smog is typical in urban areas with high vehicular emissions and intense sunlight.

Q. With reference to investments, consider the following:

- I. Bonds
- II. Hedge Funds
- III. Stocks
- IV. Venture Capital

How many of the above are treated as Alternative Investment Funds?

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

Ans : b

Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) are SEBI-regulated pooled investment vehicles that invest in non-traditional and often high-risk assets beyond conventional stocks and bonds. Examples include Venture Capital Funds (Category I), Private Equity Funds (Category II), and Hedge Funds (Category III). Thus, among the options, only Hedge Funds and Venture Capital qualify as AIFs.