

THE PALA

CIVIL TIMES

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P2. NATIONAL



Artificial lake, monument park, riverfront: Jammu is reinventing itself before Amarnath Yatra - Recent infrastructure and tourism initiatives undertaken to strengthen Jammu's role as the principal gateway for the Amarnath Yatra and promote regional economic development.

P4. NATIONAL



Govt. issues notice to Meta on 'child sexual abuse' ads - India's legal, institutional and technological framework for preventing online child sexual exploitation has come under the spotlight, highlighting the need to strengthen intermediary accountability and cyber governance.

P7. ECONOMY



New EPF Scheme, 2026: What changes for provident fund subscribers - India's updated provident fund framework under the Code on Social Security, 2020 simplifies withdrawals, ensure greater flexibility in contributions and stronger employer accountability.

P8. ECOLOGY



India needs a second home for Asiatic lions - India's successful recovery of the Asiatic lion population sheds light on the urgent need for a geographically separate second habitat to ensure long-term ecological resilience.

Editor's Note

Another week brings another collection of important and thought-provoking topics in this edition of The Pala Civil Times. We begin with examining how the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is strengthening online child safety by directing action against social media platforms hosting Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) content, while also exploring India's broader cyber governance framework. On the economics front, we analyse the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, 2026, understanding the key changes introduced under the new framework. Our national affairs section covers the commencement of the 2026 Amarnath Yatra, along with the recent infrastructure initiatives transforming Jammu into a major pilgrimage and tourism hub. We also mark the fifth anniversary of the Ministry of Cooperation, exploring its role in strengthening India's cooperative movement and advancing initiatives such as White Revolution 2.0. In the decoded editorials, we examine the expanding India-Japan strategic partnership, analysing how both countries are deepening cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. We also turn our attention to the growing importance of safe and affordable childcare following the Bengaluru daycare incident, using it as an opportunity to understand childcare as critical social infrastructure. Finally, in the ecology section, we explore India's remarkable success in conserving the Asiatic lion while examining why conservation experts continue to advocate establishing a geographically separate second population to safeguard the species against large-scale ecological threats. Each topic has been carefully structured to move beyond the headlines and develop a deeper conceptual understanding, connecting current affairs with the static concepts. Happy reading, and happy learning!

Editorials Decoded

 **The Indian EXPRESS**

Bengaluru creche ordeal points to a crisis of care



Safe, affordable and regulated childcare is essential social infrastructure for child welfare, women's economic participation and inclusive growth.

THE HINDU

Two together



Expanding India-Japan partnership focus on promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) through cooperation in maritime security, energy resilience, regional connectivity and strategic stability.

Artificial lake, monument park, riverfront: Jammu is reinventing itself before Amarnath Yatra

During the ongoing 2026 Amarnath Yatra, the Union Territory administration has unveiled major infrastructure and tourism projects to strengthen Jammu's role as a key transit and tourism hub. The initiatives are intended to encourage pilgrims to spend more time in the city, boost local tourism and economic activity, and address concerns that Jammu's economy had been adversely affected following the inauguration of the Katra–Srinagar railway line, which reduced overnight halts by travellers.

Latest Tourism and Infrastructure Developments

As part of the makeover, Jammu has developed a Monument Park spread over 40 kanals (about 5 acres) near the Bhagwati Nagar Amarnath Yatri Niwas. Built at a cost of ₹11 crore, it features 14 replicas of iconic monuments crafted from scrap and recycled materials, including the *Eiffel Tower*, *Todaiji Temple*, the *Taj Mahal*, *Indus Valley sculptures from Mohenjo-daro*, and the *Chenab Rail Bridge*. In addition, an 8-km Tawi Riverfront, inspired by the Sabarmati Riverfront, is under development with facilities such as jet skiing and evening river cruises, while new road infrastructure, including a ring road bypass, seeks to improve connectivity and reduce congestion.



Why is the Amarnath Yatra Special?

The Amarnath Cave Shrine, situated at an altitude of 3,888 metres in the Himalayas of Jammu and Kashmir, is among the holiest pilgrimage sites dedicated to Lord Shiva. The cave houses a naturally formed ice Shivling (**Baba Barfani**), created by the freezing of water droplets falling from the cave roof. The shrine remains inaccessible for most of the year due to heavy snowfall, making the pilgrimage possible only during a limited annual window. Devotees believe the ice formation waxes and wanes with the lunar cycle, adding to its religious significance. Owing to the region's security challenges, the pilgrimage is conducted under extensive security arrangements each year.

RELEVANCE

GS I : Indian Culture

Historical Evidence of the Shrine

The antiquity of the Amarnath shrine is supported by references in **Kalhana's Rajatarangini (12th century CE)**, one of the earliest historical chronicles of Kashmir. The text mentions **Amareśvara (Amarnath)** in connection with **Queen Suryamati, wife of King Ananta (1028–1063 CE)**, who is recorded to have made religious endowments at the shrine. Another passage refers to pilgrims visiting Amaranatha through the Sheshnag Lake, indicating that the pilgrimage tradition was already well established during the medieval period. The shrine's religious importance is also described in the ancient text **Amreshwar Mahatamya**, which highlights its spiritual significance for devotees, particularly Kashmiri Pandits.

Significance

The Amarnath Yatra represents a unique confluence of faith, history, culture and regional development. While the shrine's centuries-old tradition reflects Kashmir's enduring religious heritage, recent investments in tourism infrastructure seek to strengthen Jammu's role as the principal gateway for pilgrims and tourists.

PYQ Compass

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



Q Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples? (2017)

1. Arasavalli
2. Amarkantak
3. Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Shah to launch several projects as Cooperation Ministry completes 5 years

The Ministry of Cooperation completed five years since its establishment (6 July 2021), marking the occasion by launching several initiatives aimed at modernising the cooperative sector. These include **Sahakar CBS, a centralized Core Banking Solution for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)**, and **Sahakar Sahyogi, an AI-powered conversational platform to improve banking services**. The occasion also highlighted progress under White Revolution 2.0 and various institutional reforms to strengthen cooperatives in finance, agriculture and dairy.

Ministry of Cooperation: Background and Role

Established on 6 July 2021, the Ministry of Cooperation was created to realise the vision of "**Sahakar se Samridhi**" (**Prosperity through Cooperation**) by strengthening India's cooperative movement. Rooted in the philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**, cooperatives promote shared ownership, democratic governance and inclusive development across sectors such as agriculture, dairy, fisheries, housing, rural credit and marketing. The Ministry seeks to modernise cooperative institutions, improve governance and digitalisation, enhance access to finance and markets, and promote greater cooperation between the Union and State Governments.



White Revolution 2.0

Launched on 19 September 2024 by the Ministry of Cooperation and the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, **White Revolution 2.0 aims to expand dairy cooperatives into uncovered Panchayats, improve market access, generate employment and strengthen women's participation in the dairy sector. The programme targets a 50% increase in milk procurement by dairy cooperatives over the next five years.** Supporting this objective, over 25,000 new Dairy Cooperative Societies have already been registered across 31 States and Union Territories. The initiative builds upon **India's position as the world's largest milk producer since 1998**, with the country contributing about one-fourth of global milk production.

RELEVANCE

GS II : SHGs; GS III : Indian Economy

Major Cooperative Sector Reforms

Recent reforms focus on strengthening both financial and agricultural cooperatives. Urban Cooperative Banks have been empowered to open additional branches without prior RBI approval, provide doorstep banking services, extend higher-value housing loans, and benefit from the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) framework. The launch of Sahakar CBS enables a common digital banking platform, while Sahakar Sahyogi leverages Artificial Intelligence to improve customer services and banking operations. Simultaneously, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) are being transformed into multipurpose rural institutions with diversified business activities and improved service delivery.

Significance

The recent initiatives represent a comprehensive effort to modernise India's cooperative ecosystem through digitalisation, institutional reforms and expanded cooperative coverage. In the dairy sector, new multi-State cooperatives, including the **Sardar Patel Cooperative Dairy Federation Limited (SPCDF)**, seek to integrate over **20 lakh dairy farmers into organised cooperative networks** while promoting sustainability through improved dairy input supply and manure management.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to urban cooperative banks in India consider the following statements: (2021)

1. They are supervised and regulated by local boards set up by the state governments
2. They can issue equity shares and preference shares.
3. They were brought under the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 through an Amendment in 1966.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Govt. issues notice to Meta on 'child sexual abuse' ads

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) directed Meta to disable advertisements and content on Instagram that allegedly promoted or facilitated access to **Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM)**, following a media investigation. The Ministry has also sought an explanation from the company regarding the measures taken to prevent such content. The incident has renewed attention on online child safety, intermediary accountability and the effectiveness of India's cyber governance framework.

What is CSEAM?

Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) refers to any visual, digital or electronic material depicting the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child. It includes images, videos or other content involving children in sexually explicit acts and constitutes a serious violation of children's rights. The circulation of CSEAM is recognised globally as a grave cybercrime, requiring coordinated legal, technological and institutional measures to prevent its creation, dissemination and access.



India's Legal and Institutional Framework

India addresses online child sexual exploitation through the **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000** and the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**. **Section 67B of the IT Act** prescribes stringent punishment for publishing or transmitting material depicting children in sexually explicit acts in electronic form. The 2021 Rules require intermediaries to exercise due diligence, remove unlawful content within the prescribed timeframe and risk losing safe-harbour protection if they fail to comply. Complaints are handled through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, while the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) serves as the nodal agency for coordinating investigations and strengthening India's response to cybercrimes against children.

RELEVANCE

GS III : Science and Technology

Challenges in Tackling Online CSEAM

The rapid growth of digital platforms has made the detection and removal of CSEAM increasingly complex. Encrypted communication channels, anonymous accounts, cross-border criminal networks and the speed at which content can be shared make enforcement difficult. Technology companies face continuous attempts by offenders to evade automated detection systems, while ensuring effective moderation without compromising legitimate digital rights remains a significant governance challenge. These factors underscore the need for stronger platform accountability and closer cooperation between governments, technology companies and law enforcement agencies.

Way Forward and Significance

Combating CSEAM requires a comprehensive approach combining strong legal enforcement, advanced technological solutions and effective institutional coordination. This includes strengthening artificial intelligence-based detection systems, ensuring prompt removal of illegal content, enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies, improving international cooperation against transnational cybercrime and promoting digital awareness for child protection.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. What are the different elements of cyber security? Keeping in view the challenges in cyber security, examine the extent to which India has successfully developed a comprehensive National Cyber Security Strategy. (GS III – Internal Security – 2022)

Bengaluru creche ordeal points to a crisis of care (Indian Express : 06-07-2026)

The alleged abuse of toddlers at a daycare centre in Bengaluru has raised serious concerns about the safety, regulation and quality of childcare services in India. The incident has highlighted the growing need for robust oversight of a sector that has expanded in response to changing family structures, rapid urbanisation and increasing participation of women in the workforce, where access to safe and reliable childcare has become an essential social and economic necessity.

Why Institutional Childcare Matters

Reliable childcare is a critical enabler of women's participation in the labour market by reducing unpaid care responsibilities and allowing parents, particularly mothers, to pursue employment without compromising child welfare. It also supports early childhood development and contributes to greater gender equality, workforce productivity and inclusive economic growth. As nuclear families become more common and dual-income households increase, quality childcare has emerged as an essential component of urban social infrastructure.



Present Status in India

India's childcare ecosystem remains inadequate to meet growing demand. According to a **Dalberg-UNDP study**, the public childcare system currently meets only about **5% of urban demand**, while private daycare services remain unaffordable for many families. Although the **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 mandates crèche facilities in establishments employing 50 or more workers**, its coverage is limited and excludes most of the unorganised sector. Despite improvements in overall female labour force participation, urban women's participation remains comparatively low, with inadequate childcare continuing to be a significant barrier.

RELEVANCE

GS I : Salient features of Indian Society

Key Challenges

The daycare sector is regulated through a fragmented network of State rules, municipal by-laws and local licensing provisions, resulting in uneven standards and weak enforcement. Inadequate caregiver training, inconsistent background verification, absence of uniform child-to-caregiver norms, limited inspections and weak grievance-redressal mechanisms undermine child safety and parental confidence. Repeated incidents of abuse further discourage women from continuing employment, reinforcing traditional care burdens and limiting economic opportunities.

Way Forward and Significance

Strengthening childcare requires recognising it as essential social and economic infrastructure rather than merely an employment benefit. India needs a comprehensive national regulatory framework prescribing minimum standards for registration, caregiver qualifications, safety protocols, inspections and grievance redressal, supported by greater public investment to expand affordable and quality childcare services. Ensuring accessible, safe and reliable childcare will not only protect children's rights but also promote women's economic empowerment, improve labour force participation and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable development.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Globalization has increased urban migration by skilled, young, unmarried women from various classes. How has this trend impacted upon their personal freedom and relationship with family? (GS I – 2024)

Q. Child cuddling is now being replaced by mobile phones. Discuss its impact on the socialization of children. (GS I – 2023)

Two together (The Hindu : 06-07-2026)

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of Japan Ms. TAKAICHI Sanae paid an Official Visit to India from 1-3 July 2026 for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit, reaffirming the growing strategic partnership between the two countries amid an increasingly uncertain global order. The visit resulted in the **signing of 16 agreements** and joint documents, including cooperation in energy resilience, while both sides reiterated their commitment to an updated **Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision**, signalling their intent to strengthen bilateral cooperation irrespective of evolving multilateral dynamics.

Strategic Convergence

India and Japan are deepening their partnership in response to rapid geopolitical shifts, technological transformation and an increasingly complex security environment in the Indo-Pacific. Uncertainty over the future role of the Quad and changes in the United States' Indo-Pacific approach have reinforced the importance of bilateral cooperation. Both countries share a commitment to a **Free and Open Indo-Pacific**, support a rules-based international order, and seek to safeguard their strategic interests while maintaining regional stability.

Major Areas of Cooperation

Building upon the success of the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit, they concurred on advancing cooperation based on three priority areas: **defence and security cooperation; economic partnership including economic security, energy resilience, technology, and innovation; and people-to-people exchanges**. The visit expanded cooperation across strategic, economic and maritime domains. A key outcome was the joint commitment to strengthen **energy resilience** through cooperation along the maritime energy transport value chain, recognising the importance of secure energy supplies from the Gulf region. India and Japan also agreed to enhance maritime security by developing naval platforms and improving Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and surveillance capabilities. These initiatives complement broader cooperation in technology, economic development and regional security, strengthening the foundations of the bilateral strategic partnership.

Regional and Geopolitical Dimensions

The two countries expressed serious concern over developments in the South China Sea and East China Sea, while reiterating the importance of peacefully resolving issues concerning Taiwan. Japan also highlighted the **strategic importance of India's Northeast** by promoting greater connectivity with the **Bay of Bengal region through BIMSTEC** and projects such as **Bangladesh's Matarbari Port**. Integrating these initiatives into regional industrial value chains is expected to strengthen connectivity, economic integration and security across South Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific.



Way Forward

The visit reflects the evolution of India-Japan relations from a predominantly economic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership spanning defence, maritime security, energy security and regional connectivity. By strengthening bilateral cooperation while adapting to geopolitical uncertainties, both countries aim to promote a stable, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific. The partnership also demonstrates the importance of strategic autonomy, resilient supply chains and cooperative regional architecture in addressing emerging challenges while balancing relations with both China and the United States.

PYQ Compass

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



Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organisation like the SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organisation? (GS II – 2022)

RELEVANCE

GS II : International Relations

New EPF Scheme, 2026: What changes for provident fund subscribers

The Union Government has notified the **Employees' Provident Funds (EPF) Scheme, 2026**, replacing the **EPF Scheme, 1952**, as part of the implementation of the Code on Social Security, 2020. Effective from 29 June 2026, the new scheme incorporates recent reforms introduced by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), including simplified withdrawal rules, provisions relating to contract workers, and explicit recognition of voluntary contributions above the statutory wage ceiling, while retaining the core framework of the provident fund system.

Withdrawal Reforms

The Scheme simplifies partial withdrawals by reducing **thirteen categories to three broad heads—essential needs, housing needs, and special circumstances**. Members may withdraw funds for illness, education, marriage and specified housing purposes after completing twelve months of membership, subject to prescribed limits. A **minimum balance of 25% of total accumulated contributions** must ordinarily be retained, permitting withdrawal of up to 75% of the corpus in most cases, while the full balance may generally be withdrawn after one year of unemployment.

- **Social Security:** Protection provided by society or the State to ensure access to healthcare and income security during contingencies such as old age, unemployment, sickness, disability, maternity, work injury or loss of the breadwinner.
- **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO):** A statutory organisation under the Ministry of Labour and Employment responsible for administering provident fund and other social security schemes for organised sector employees.

Voluntary Contributions and Contribution Framework

The statutory contribution rate remains unchanged at 12% of wages each from the employer and employee, with 10% applicable to certain notified establishments, and mandatory contributions continue only up to the statutory wage ceiling. The Scheme explicitly permits employees to voluntarily contribute on wages exceeding the ceiling or at rates above 12%, with employers allowed to make matching contributions. Such additional voluntary contributions may subsequently be reduced or discontinued, providing greater flexibility without creating any new mandatory obligation.

Contract Workers and Principal Employer

For the first time, the Scheme expressly incorporates the concept of the **principal employer** for **contract labour**, aligning provident fund administration with the labour codes. Employers are required to deposit both employer and employee contributions, along with administrative charges, within 15 days of the close of every month. Where contributions are routed through a contractor, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring timely provident fund compliance rests with the principal employer, strengthening accountability and protecting the social security interests of contract workers.

Overall Significance

The Scheme retains mandatory EPF coverage for eligible international workers, with existing members continuing under the new framework and withdrawal provisions broadly remaining unchanged, subject to applicable social security agreements. Overall, the EPF Scheme, 2026 modernises the 1952 framework by aligning it with the Code on Social Security, 2020, simplifying withdrawal procedures, strengthening employer accountability, and explicitly codifying flexible contribution options, while preserving the existing contribution structure and the core objective of long-term retirement savings.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to casual workers employed in India, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. All casual workers are entitled for Employees Provident Fund coverage.
2. All casual workers are entitled for regular working hours and overtime payment.
3. The government can by a notification specify that an establishment or industry shall pay wages only through its bank account.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Polity; GS III : Indian Economy

India needs a second home for Asiatic lions

India's conservation of the Asiatic lion is recognised as one of the world's greatest wildlife recovery successes, with the population increasing **from only a few dozen in the early 20th century to approximately 891 individuals today**. However, conservation experts continue to highlight a critical concern: despite this remarkable recovery, the species remains confined to a single landscape in and around the Gir Forest, leaving it vulnerable to extinction from a single catastrophic event.

Conservation Success and the Need for a Second Population

The Asiatic lion survives exclusively in India, making its conservation a matter of global importance. While sustained protection has enabled a remarkable population recovery, scientific studies by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) since the 1980s have consistently warned that a single geographically concentrated population is inherently fragile. **Disease outbreaks, forest fires, droughts, prey decline or other natural disasters could threaten the entire species.** Consequently, conservation science advocates a **metapopulation approach**, whereby geographically separated populations reduce extinction risk and improve long-term ecological resilience.



Kuno National Park and the Policy Impasse

Recognising these scientific concerns, the **Supreme Court in 2013 directed the translocation of Asiatic lions from Gir National Park to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh**, holding that conservation decisions must be guided by ecological principles rather than regional interests. Although Kuno was prepared through habitat restoration and village relocation, the project has remained stalled due to Gujarat's opposition. More recently, **Project Lion (2020)** proposed expanding lion habitats, including at **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary**, but experts maintain that nearby sites cannot substitute for a geographically distant second free-ranging population.

RELEVANCE

GS III : Biodiversity and conservation

Emerging Risks and Challenges

The continued concentration of the entire global population within the Gir landscape has heightened concerns over ecological vulnerability. The **2018 Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) outbreak**, which killed and infected several lions, demonstrated how rapidly disease can spread in dense populations with limited genetic diversity. The issue also highlights broader governance challenges, reflecting tensions between scientific recommendations, judicial directives and State-level priorities. Although wildlife is a shared constitutional responsibility, delays in implementing a second habitat have raised concerns over balancing national conservation objectives with regional interests.

Significance

The Asiatic lion represents a paradox of modern conservation where a species has achieved remarkable population recovery but remains ecologically insecure. Long-term conservation requires not only increasing numbers but also ensuring resilience against biological and environmental threats through geographically dispersed populations. Establishing a second free-ranging population would strengthen species security, uphold the Supreme Court's conservation vision, and align India's wildlife management with globally accepted scientific principles.

PYQ Compass

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



Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
2. Double-humped camel is naturally found in India only.
3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
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 3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans : a

Statement 1 is Correct. The Asiatic lion, also known as the Persian lion, is found only in the Gir Forest National Park in Gujarat, India. It is considered to be naturally found only in India.

Statement 2 is Incorrect. The double-humped camel (Bactrian camel) is found in Central Asia, particularly in Mongolia and parts of China, and is not native to India. However, India has some populations of Bactrian camels in Ladakh, but they are not naturally found in India only. **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The one-horned rhinoceros (Indian rhinoceros) is primarily found in India, particularly in Assam, but it also inhabits parts of Nepal and Bhutan. Therefore, it is not confined to India only.

Q. With reference to casual workers employed in India, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. All casual workers are entitled for Employees Provident Fund coverage.
2. All casual workers are entitled for regular working hours and overtime payment.
3. The government can by a notification specify that an establishment or industry shall pay wages only through its bank account.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Ans : d

All three statements are correct under India's labour laws.

Statement 1 is correct because eligible casual, contractual and temporary workers employed in covered establishments are entitled to provident fund benefits under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. The Supreme Court has held that employers cannot deny statutory social security benefits solely on the basis of the nature of employment.

Statement 2 is correct as labour laws provide casual workers with protections relating to prescribed working hours, weekly rest and overtime wages.

Statement 3 is also correct because the Code on Wages, 2019 empowers the appropriate government to notify that wages in specified establishments or industries shall be paid only through bank accounts or electronic modes.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to urban cooperative banks in India consider the following statements: (2021)

1. They are supervised and regulated by local boards set up by the state governments
2. They can issue equity shares and preference shares.
3. They were brought under the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 through an Amendment in 1966.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans : b

The recent Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act 2020 enables the RBI to get all the powers, including those hitherto exclusively with the registrar of cooperative societies. However, powers of registrar continue to be with him but the powers of RBI override those of registrar. UCBs are permitted to raise equity share capital, preference shares and debt instruments. The applicability of banking laws to cooperatives societies since March 1, 1966 ushered in 'duality of control' over UCBs between the Registrar of Cooperative Societies/Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Reserve Bank of India.

Q. Q Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples? (2017)

1. Arasavalli
2. Amarkantak
3. Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : a

1) Arasavalli – This is correct. The Arasavalli Sun Temple, located in Andhra Pradesh, is one of the oldest and most famous Sun Temples in India. It is dedicated to the Sun God and dates back to the 7th century CE, during the Eastern Chalukyadynasty. This temple is well-known for its architectural beauty and the annual Rath Yatra (chariot procession) held in honor of the Sun God. 2.

2) Amarkantak – This statement is incorrect. Amarkantak, located in Madhya Pradesh, is primarily known for its Narmada Temples and as the source of the Narmada River. While there are temples in the region, it is not specifically famous for a Sun Temple.

3) Omkareshwar – This statement is incorrect. Omkareshwar, located in Madhya Pradesh, is famous for the Omkareshwar Temple, which is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. It is not known for a Sun Temple.

Practice Questions and answers

Q. The concept of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)", recently reaffirmed by India and Japan, primarily seeks to promote:

1. Freedom of navigation
2. Rules-based international order
3. Maritime security
4. Exclusive military alliances in the Indo-Pacific

Select the correct answer using the code below.

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

Answer: (d)

Statement 1 is correct: A core objective of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision is to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international law, particularly the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Statement 2 is correct: FOIP supports a rules-based international order founded on respect for international law, peaceful resolution of disputes, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It seeks to preserve stability and predictability in the Indo-Pacific through adherence to internationally accepted norms rather than unilateral actions.

Statement 3 is correct: Strengthening maritime security is a central pillar of FOIP. It promotes cooperation in areas such as maritime domain awareness, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), anti-piracy operations, capacity building and protection of critical sea lanes, thereby contributing to regional peace and security.

Statement 4 is incorrect: FOIP is not an exclusive military alliance directed against any particular country. Instead, it is an inclusive strategic vision that encourages cooperation among like-minded partners for maintaining a free, open, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific based on international law.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Asiatic lion conservation in India:

1. The entire wild population is concentrated within the Gir landscape.
2. The Supreme Court directed the translocation of lions to Kuno National Park.
3. Project Lion proposes expanding habitats for the species.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans : d

Statement 1 is correct: The Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*) survives exclusively in the wild within the Gir landscape of Gujarat, making India the sole natural habitat of the species.

Statement 2 is correct: In 2013, the Supreme Court of India directed the translocation of a population of Asiatic lions from Gir National Park to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. The Court held that conservation decisions must be guided by scientific and ecological considerations and recognised the need for a geographically separate second population to reduce extinction risk.

Statement 3 is correct: Launched in 2020, Project Lion seeks to strengthen the long-term conservation of Asiatic lions through habitat improvement, disease surveillance, advanced monitoring, conflict mitigation and the development of additional suitable habitats. While proposals such as Barda Wildlife Sanctuary aim to expand the species' range, conservation experts continue to emphasise that a geographically distant second free-ranging population remains essential for ensuring long-term ecological resilience.