



Citizenship decisions must be 'fair, reasoned', says SC -
The Supreme Court has reinforced that citizenship determination must balance national security with constitutional fairness and due process.

P4. ENERGY



Can biogas aid India's energy security?

India's push for compressed biogas seeks to transform agricultural waste into a strategic pillar of energy security while balancing food, climate and rural development goals..

P7. ECONOMICS



Retail inflation climbs past RBI target to 4.4% : Rising retail inflation highlights the continuing influence of global disruptions and domestic supply constraints on India's price stability.

P8. SCIENCE



In a sweet discovery, astronomers find sugar lurking in the space between stars - The discovery of a complex sugar in interstellar space strengthens evidence that the chemical building blocks of life can naturally form across the universe.

Editor's Note

In today's edition of the Pala Civil Times, we explore the multiple dimensions of several interconnected issues shaping India's governance, economy, science and strategic outlook. On the national front, the Supreme Court has underscored the need for a fair and legally sustainable approach to sensitive issues such as citizenship determination, while one of the principal architects of India's Aadhaar ecosystem has argued for leveraging the country's digital identity infrastructure in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, adding a new dimension to the broader debate on citizenship and electoral governance.

In the economy section, we examine the rise in retail and food inflation alongside increasing transportation costs driven by supply chain disruptions in West Asia, a region critical to India's energy imports. Complementing this discussion, our energy page explores how compressed biogas can strengthen India's long-term energy security. On the other end of the spectrum, the science section highlights the exciting discovery of a complex sugar molecule in the interstellar medium, offering fresh insights into the chemical origins of life. Our Decoded Editorials section analyses the strategic implications of India's evolving "Act East Policy" and its expanding maritime partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. We hope this edition provides valuable insights, strengthens your conceptual understanding and inspires you to keep moving closer to your goals. Happy reading!

Editorials Decoded



On SIR, listen to digital governance and Aadhaar pioneer



The SIR debate underscores the challenge of balancing electoral integrity with inclusive governance in a digitally evolving democracy.



Beyond commerce



India is strengthening strategic partnerships across the Indo-Pacific to secure maritime interests and uphold a free, open and rules-based regional order.

Citizenship decisions must be 'fair, reasoned', says SC

The Supreme Court set aside 27 Gauhati High Court judgments declaring several individuals as foreigners and remanded the cases to the concerned Foreigners Tribunals for fresh adjudication, holding that citizenship determination must follow a fair, lawful and reasoned process.

Key Highlights

- The Court held that although the State has a legitimate interest in preventing ineligible persons from obtaining Indian citizenship through false claims, the determination of citizenship or foreigner status must strictly comply with constitutional principles of fairness.
- Declaring a person a foreigner carries grave civil consequences and therefore cannot result from mechanical or one-sided proceedings. Foreigners Tribunals must ensure that individuals receive a fair opportunity to present their case, that the grounds of reference are properly disclosed, and that conclusions are based on a reasoned appreciation of evidence.
- The Court clarified that remanding the cases does not affirm the appellants' claim to Indian citizenship. Instead, it ensures that any declaration of foreigner status is made only after a legally sustainable adjudication consistent with the Foreigners Act, 1946, the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964, and constitutional principles of fairness.

Constitutional & Legal Framework

- Citizenship in India is governed by Part II (Articles 5–11) of the Constitution, .
- Parliament exercises its power under Article 11 through the Citizenship Act, 1955, which regulates the acquisition and termination of citizenship.
- The Foreigners Act, 1946 empowers the Central Government under Section 3 to regulate the entry, presence and departure of foreigners and to establish mechanisms for determining whether a person is a foreigner.
- In exercise of this power, the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964 was issued to provide for the constitution of Foreigners Tribunals for determining the citizenship status of individuals. The Order applies throughout India and has undergone major amendments in 2013 and 2019.

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Polity

West Bengal forms committee to review draft UCC Bill

The West Bengal Government has constituted a high-level committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to examine the draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC), West Bengal, 2026, signalling the growing momentum behind State-level UCC initiatives. The proposed legislation seeks to establish a common legal framework for all residents of the State, irrespective of religion, faith or community, in matters relating to marriage, divorce, intestate and testamentary succession. The committee has been tasked with examining the draft Bill in view of the wide-ranging legal and social implications of the proposed legislation before submitting its recommendations to the State Government.

A Uniform Civil Code (UCC) refers to a common set of civil laws governing matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, maintenance, inheritance, succession and guardianship, applicable equally to all citizens irrespective of religion, while leaving religious beliefs, worship and rituals outside its scope. The constitutional basis for the UCC lies in Article 44 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which directs the State to endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code throughout India. Advocates argue that it promotes equality before law, gender justice, legal uniformity and the modernisation of personal laws in line with constitutional ideals. With Uttarakhand (2025), Gujarat (2026) and Assam (2026) having already enacted UCC legislation, the proposed law in West Bengal reflects the increasing prominence of the UCC as an evolving constitutional and governance issue.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. There is only one citizenship and one domicile. 2. A citizen by birth only can become the Head of State.

3. A foreigner once granted citizenship cannot be deprived of it under any circumstances. Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

All Ladakh districts to get autonomous hill councils

The Ladakh Administration has announced the creation of **17 new tehsils** and proposed extending the **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)** Act to all **seven districts of the Union Territory**. Simultaneously, the Centre is considering a customised constitutional framework under Article 371, aimed at providing greater autonomy and constitutional safeguards without extending Sixth Schedule status.

Key Highlights

- Until 2019, Ladakh formed part of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir and enjoyed the constitutional protections available under Articles 370 and 35A.
- Following the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, the State was bifurcated into the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, leading to the repeal of Articles 370 and 35A.
- While the reorganisation fulfilled Ladakh's long-standing demand for Union Territory status, it also resulted in the loss of constitutional safeguards relating to land, employment and local identity that had previously existed under the special status provisions.
- Since then, civil society organisations such as the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) have consistently demanded constitutional safeguards, statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Constitutional & Legal Framework

- In April 2026, Ladakh was expanded from two districts (Leh and Kargil) to seven districts with the creation of Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar and Drass.
- To strengthen decentralised administration, the Union Territory has now created 17 additional tehsils, increasing the total number from 15 to 32.
- The Administration has further announced that the **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Act, 1997 will be extended to all seven districts** through suitable legal amendments, enabling each district to have its own Autonomous Hill Development Council.
- The Centre has also proposed a Union Territory-level coordinating institution under a **customised constitutional arrangement inspired by Article 371**, which is expected to exercise legislative, executive, financial and administrative powers while addressing Ladakh's unique socio-cultural and developmental requirements.

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Polity State reorganisation



Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs)

- The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act, 1997 provides for the establishment of Autonomous Hill Development Councils in Ladakh to promote local self-governance.
- The first councils were constituted in Leh (1995) and Kargil (2003), and their powers were further expanded through amendments in 2018.
- Following the creation of five new districts, the government now proposes to establish LAHDCs in every district, making decentralised governance the cornerstone of Ladakh's administrative framework.

Sixth Schedule and the Proposed Article 371 Framework

- Ladakh's civil society groups have long demanded inclusion under the Sixth Schedule to secure constitutional protection for land, employment and tribal rights.
- Instead of extending the Sixth Schedule, the Centre is exploring a customised Article 371 framework, which would provide Ladakh with a unique constitutional arrangement tailored to its specific administrative and developmental needs while remaining a Union Territory.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. The Government enacted the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in 1996. Which one of the following is not identified as its objective? (2013) (a) To provide self-governance (b) To recognize traditional rights (c) To create autonomous regions in tribal areas (d) To free tribal people from exploitation

ENERGY

Can biogas aid India's energy security?

Renewed geopolitical tensions in West Asia have highlighted India's vulnerability to imported fuels. While India has diversified its crude oil imports, nearly 90% of its LPG imports still pass through the Strait of Hormuz, underscoring the need to accelerate indigenous and renewable alternatives such as Compressed Biogas (CBG).

Understanding Compressed Biogas (CBG)

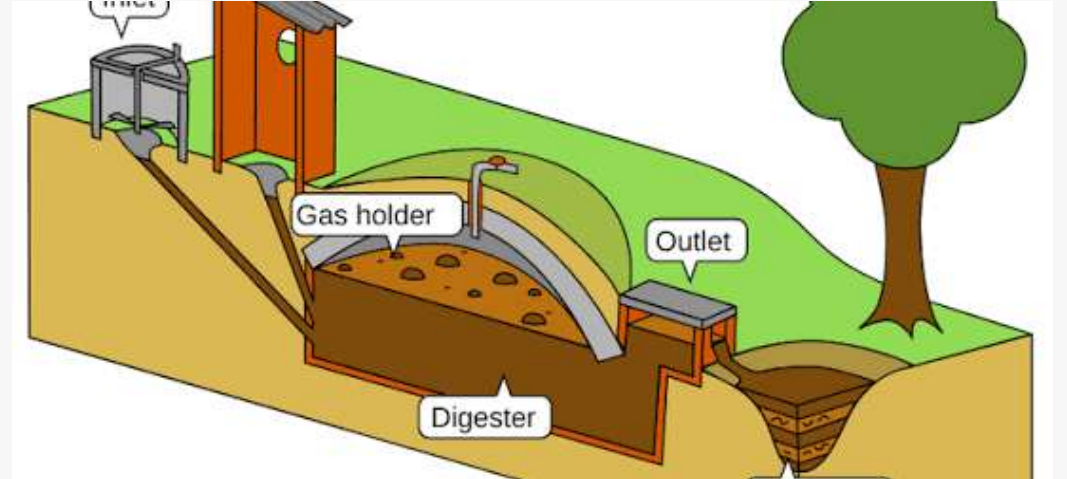
- Biogas is produced through the anaerobic decomposition of organic waste such as agricultural residues, animal manure and municipal waste. After purification and compression, it becomes Compressed Biogas (CBG), a carbon-neutral fuel chemically similar to CNG.
- CBG can be used for transport, domestic cooking, electricity generation and industrial applications.
- India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil, making energy security vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions and price volatility.
- Expanding domestic CBG production can reduce import dependence, utilise agricultural and municipal waste, curb stubble burning and methane emissions, and generate additional rural income.

Government Initiatives

- The SATAT Initiative (2018) seeks to establish a nationwide CBG ecosystem through large-scale plant development.
- The GOBARdhan Scheme supports waste-to-wealth initiatives by promoting community biogas plants, biomass collection and gas-grid connectivity.
- The National Biofuels Coordination Committee (2023) mandated phased CBG blending in CNG and PNG, increasing from 1% in FY26 to 5% by FY29.

Challenges

- Inadequate biomass collection systems, limited gas-grid connectivity, high capital costs, financing constraints and uncertain commercial viability of CBG indicate that production targets alone are insufficient without sustained policy support.
- Scaling up CBG will require greater private-sector participation, improved access to institutional finance and assured long-term demand through blending mandates and procurement mechanisms.



Policy Lessons

- Since CBG is primarily intended to utilise agricultural residues, livestock manure and other organic waste, its expansion should avoid creating incentives for cultivating dedicated energy crops.
- International experience highlights this risk. Germany's rapid biogas expansion encouraged excessive maize cultivation, while India's ethanol programme has similarly made maize cultivation more attractive, raising concerns over declining crop diversity and increasing dependence on imported pulses and edible oils.
- Denmark offers a more sustainable approach by producing biomethane predominantly from livestock manure and agricultural residues, demonstrating that renewable energy expansion can be achieved without compromising food security.

Can India Replicate its Ethanol Success?

- India's ethanol blending programme increased from 1.5% in 2014 to 20% by December 2025, demonstrating that consistent policy support, pricing incentives and blending mandates can successfully scale up a biofuel ecosystem.
- India should replicate this implementation model for CBG by strengthening feedstock aggregation, infrastructure, financing and market certainty, while avoiding excessive reliance on food crops as feedstock.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Explain the changes in cropping pattern in India in the context of changes in consumption pattern and marketing conditions. (GS III – 2023)

RELEVANCE

GS III : Indian Economy - Energy; Environmental conservation

On SIR, listen to digital governance and Aadhaar pioneer (Indian Express : 14-07-2026)

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has generated debate over the documentary requirements for voter verification. While the Election Commission seeks to update electoral rolls by removing ineligible entries and ensuring eligible citizens are enrolled, concerns have been raised regarding the documentary burden placed on citizens and the use of existing digital identity infrastructure.

Key Issues Highlighted

- The SIR process requires individuals to establish eligibility through documents relating to date of birth, residence and citizenship, raising concerns for citizens who may not possess complete documentary records.
- **Historical gaps in birth registration :** Although the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 mandates registration of births within 21 days, birth registration remained incomplete for several decades, particularly among older generations born at home. Consequently, many adults today either lack birth certificates or possess only approximate records of their date of birth.
- India does not issue a single, universal document certifying citizenship. While documents such as Aadhaar, PAN and Voter ID establish aspects of identity, they are not statutory proof of citizenship. Similarly, passports are travel documents and not conclusive proof of citizenship.
- Citizens may possess documents that establish identity or address in practice, yet these may not be accepted as sufficient for all purposes during the SIR process, resulting in a document-intensive verification exercise.

Digital Governance Perspective

- India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), particularly Aadhaar, was designed to simplify interactions between citizens and the State by reducing documentary requirements rather than increasing them.
- Experience of Aadhaar enrolment shows that many individuals, especially in rural areas, did not possess precise documentary records of their date of birth. Accordingly, Aadhaar incorporated mechanisms for recording either verified or declared dates of birth, recognising practical realities rather than insisting on documentary perfection.
- Aadhaar's nationwide digital identity infrastructure could be utilised more effectively for identity and address verification instead of relying predominantly on traditional document-based verification methods.



Way Forward

- When several historical shortcomings in public record-keeping exist, placing the primary burden of documentary proof on citizens may create difficulties for individuals who were never issued complete records despite complying with electoral processes over many years.
- Adopting a more pragmatic use of India's existing digital identity infrastructure while recognising the practical limitations of historical documentation is necessary.
- Aadhaar be utilised for establishing identity and supporting age and residence verification wherever feasible, while exceptional or doubtful cases may be identified through data analytics and subjected to appropriate scrutiny by the competent authorities, thereby reducing the need for a document-heavy verification process.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Consider the following statements: (2020)

1. Aadhaar metadata cannot be stored for more than three months.
 2. The state cannot enter into any contract with private corporations for sharing of Aadhar data.
 3. Aadhaar is mandatory for obtaining insurance products.
 4. Aadhar is mandatory for getting benefits funded out of the Consolidated fund of India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 4 only
 (b) 2 and 4 only
 (c) 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3 only

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Polity

Beyond commerce (TH BusinessLine : 14-07-2026)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visits to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand signify the continued evolution of India's Act East Policy into a broader Indo-Pacific strategy centred on maritime security, defence cooperation and strategic partnerships. The engagements reflect India's efforts to strengthen its presence across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific while promoting a free, open and rules-based maritime order.

Strengthening India's Maritime Footprint in Southeast Asia

India's partnership with Indonesia has acquired greater strategic significance through Jakarta's support for India's participation in the integrated development of Sabang Port, located near the Strait of Malacca and close to India's proposed Great Nicobar trans-shipment port. Given the Strait's importance as one of the world's busiest maritime chokepoints, enhanced cooperation at Sabang strengthens India's ability to safeguard critical sea lanes and reinforces its strategic presence near one of the principal gateways connecting the Indian Ocean with the Pacific.



Expanding Defence Partnerships across the Indo-Pacific

The visit also marked a significant deepening of defence cooperation, with Indonesia agreeing to procure BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and Astra beyond-visual-range air-to-air missiles from India. Together with India's growing defence engagements with countries such as Vietnam, Japan, Australia and Seychelles, these developments illustrate New Delhi's strategy of building a network of trusted maritime partners extending into regions that have traditionally witnessed expanding Chinese influence. Simultaneously, India and its partners reiterated their commitment to UNCLOS, freedom of navigation and a rules-based Indo-Pacific, reinforcing the principles governing international maritime conduct.

Australia and the Indo-Pacific Strategic Architecture

Australia represents another important pillar of India's Indo-Pacific strategy. The strengthening of bilateral defence and security cooperation, together with the commencement of commercial uranium supplies to support India's expanding civil nuclear programme, reflects the broadening strategic partnership between the two countries. Enhanced coordination through the Quad further demonstrates India's approach of viewing the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean as a single strategic maritime theatre, requiring closer cooperation among like-minded democracies.

Conclusion

Collectively, these engagements demonstrate India's transition from a policy of regional engagement to one of strategic maritime outreach across the Indo-Pacific. While India continues to avoid formal military alliances and does not explicitly frame its diplomacy as a policy of containing China, its expanding network of bilateral partnerships, defence cooperation and maritime initiatives represents a calibrated effort to strengthen regional stability, secure critical sea lanes and uphold a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific amidst evolving geopolitical competition.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario. (GS II – International Relations – 2016)

RELEVANCE

GS II : International Relations

June goods exports up 15.5% led by electronics



India's merchandise exports grew **15.5%** year-on-year to \$40.41 billion in June 2026, driven by **strong performance in sectors such as electronics, engineering goods, rice, iron ore, handicrafts, marine products, and meat and dairy products**. During the first quarter of FY27 (April–June), exports reached a record \$129.32 billion, reflecting **robust growth supported by free trade agreements (FTAs), diversification of export markets and products, and the increasing global competitiveness of 'Brand India'**. Exports to West Asia also recovered from earlier disruptions caused by regional conflict, while **shipments to countries such as South Africa, Singapore, China, Oman and Malaysia recorded strong growth**.

Despite the strong export performance, India's trade deficit widened to a five-month high of \$30.43 billion in June as imports surged 31% to \$70.84 billion, primarily due to **higher imports of crude oil, electronic goods, gold, fertilisers, chemicals and non-ferrous metals**. Crude oil imports alone increased by 40%, reflecting the impact of higher energy requirements and global market conditions. Consequently, the merchandise trade deficit for the first quarter of FY27 expanded to \$86.86 billion, highlighting that while exports remain on a positive trajectory, rising import demand, particularly for energy and high-value manufactured goods, continues to exert pressure on India's external trade balance.

RELEVANCE

GS III : Indian Economy - trade deficit

GS III : Indian Economy - Inflation

Retail inflation climbs past RBI target to 4.4%



Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 4.4% in June 2026, marking an 18-month high and the first instance of inflation exceeding the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) medium-term target of 4%** since December 2024. The increase was driven primarily by **rising food and fuel prices, reflecting the combined impact of geopolitical tensions in West Asia, supply chain disruptions, higher domestic fuel prices and a weaker-than-normal monsoon**. Food inflation crossed the 5% mark, reaching its highest level under the new CPI series, while inflation in the transport segment also accelerated sharply following fuel price hikes by oil marketing companies.

The latest inflation trend indicates persistent price pressures on the Indian economy, with experts expecting food inflation to remain elevated in the near term due to continued increases in retail food prices and uneven monsoon conditions. Rising fuel costs are also expected to have a broader pass-through effect on the prices of other goods and services. In addition, the personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods and services category recorded exceptionally high inflation, largely driven by higher prices of gold and silver, which were further amplified by increased import duties. The sustained rise in retail inflation poses challenges for price stability and monetary policy, making inflation management a key macroeconomic concern.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. What are the causes of persistent high food inflation in India? Comment on the effectiveness of the monetary policy of the RBI to control this type of inflation. (GS III– Indian Economy – 2024)

SCIENCE

In a sweet discovery, astronomers find sugar lurking in the space between stars

Astronomers have detected **erythrulose**, a naturally occurring **four-carbon sugar**, in a molecular cloud near the centre of the Milky Way, marking the first discovery of this sugar in the interstellar medium. The findings were published in Nature Astronomy.

Key Highlights

- Astronomers identified erythrulose in its gaseous form by comparing radio signals detected from an interstellar molecular cloud with laboratory-generated spectral signatures using **Spain's Yebes 40-metre and IRAM 30-metre radio telescopes**.
- The discovery was made in the **interstellar medium (ISM)**—the vast region of gas and dust that exists between stars and serves as the birthplace of new stars and planetary systems.
- **Erythrulose is a naturally occurring four-carbon monosaccharide (simple sugar)**. On Earth, it occurs in small quantities in certain fruits such as **raspberries** and is also used as an ingredient in cosmetic **self-tanning products**.



Why is this Discovery Significant?

- Sugars are among the fundamental organic molecules required for life, as they provide energy to living organisms and form essential structural components of biological molecules such as DNA and RNA.
- The discovery strengthens the growing evidence that complex organic molecules can form naturally in interstellar space without the direct involvement of living organisms, supporting the idea that the chemical ingredients of life are widespread across the universe.
- It also suggests that molecular clouds possess sufficiently rich chemical environments to synthesise increasingly complex carbon-based compounds before planets are even formed.

RELEVANCE

GS III : Science and Technology - Space

Scientific Context

- Earlier studies had identified glycolaldehyde in interstellar space in 2000. Although it behaves similarly to a sugar, it is not considered a true sugar because it contains only two carbon atoms.
- Chemically, true sugars require a backbone of at least three carbon atoms, making erythrulose one of the more structurally complex sugars detected in the interstellar medium.
- Previous space-based discoveries have also identified ribose, a five-carbon sugar that forms part of RNA, in ancient meteorites. These findings support the hypothesis that meteorites and comets may have delivered important prebiotic molecules to the early Earth.
- Over the years, astronomers have also detected several other life-related organic compounds in space, including amino acid precursors, nucleobase precursors and other complex carbon-containing molecules.

What lies ahead

- Astronomers will continue searching for larger and more complex sugars, particularly those directly involved in biological systems, to better understand how prebiotic chemistry evolves in interstellar environments.
- Future observations using more sensitive radio telescopes and next-generation observatories will seek to map the abundance and distribution of such molecules across different molecular clouds and star-forming regions.

PYQ Compass

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



PYQ
COMPASS

Q. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched? (2014)

Spacecraft	Purpose
1. Cassini-Huygens	: Orbiting Venus and transmitting data to the Earth
2. Messenger	: Mapping and investigating
3. Voyager 1 and 2	: Exploring the outer solar system

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

PYQ Compass

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



Q. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. There is only one citizenship and one domicile.
 2. A citizen by birth only can become the Head of State.
 3. A foreigner once granted citizenship cannot be deprived of it under any circumstances.
- Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Ans : a

Statement 1 is correct: India has a system of single citizenship, meaning all Indians are citizens of India, irrespective of the state or union territory they reside in. There is also a single domicile under Indian law.

Statement 2 is incorrect: There is no such restriction in India that only a citizen by birth can become the Head of State (President). A naturalized citizen is also eligible.

Statement 3 is incorrect: A foreigner granted Indian citizenship can be deprived of it under certain circumstances, such as if the citizenship was obtained fraudulently or if the person acts against the sovereignty and integrity of India (as per the Citizenship Act, 1955).

Q. The Government enacted the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in 1996. Which one of the following is not identified as its objective? (2013)

- (a) To provide self-governance
- (b) To recognize traditional rights
- (c) To create autonomous regions in tribal areas
- (d) To free tribal people from exploitation

Ans : C

The Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) was enacted to empower Gram Sabhas and Panchayats in Scheduled Areas by extending the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution to these regions, with modifications.

EXPLAINED	
India's Constitutional Shields for Tribal Areas	
How the Fifth and Sixth Schedules differ – and what lies beyond	
FIFTH SCHEDULE Art. 244(1) Covers Scheduled Areas & Tribes in all states <i>except</i> Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura & Mizoram Sets up Tribal Advisory Councils – advisory bodies only Limited autonomy	SIXTH SCHEDULE Art. 244(2) Applies to tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura & Mizoram Creates Autonomous District Councils – self-governing bodies Extensive powers
WHAT ADCS CAN DO UNDER THE SIXTH SCHEDULE	
Manage land & non-reserved forests	Set up village courts & councils
Run primary schools & dispensaries	Levy taxes on land & buildings
Grant mineral extraction licences	Control money-lending by non-tribals

The Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) was enacted to empower Gram Sabhas and Panchayats in Scheduled Areas by extending the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution to these regions, with modifications.

The objectives of PESA include:

1. To provide self-governance: Empowering tribal communities to self-govern through Gram Sabhas and Panchayats.
2. To recognize traditional rights: Protecting and safeguarding the customary and community rights of tribal people.
3. To free tribal people from exploitation: Preventing exploitation of tribal populations by ensuring control over local resources and decision-making.

However, creating autonomous regions in tribal areas is not an objective of PESA. Autonomous regions are governed under the provisions of Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, which applies to certain areas in the northeastern states, not under PESA.

Thus, the correct answer is (c) To create autonomous regions in tribal areas.

PYQ Compass

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



Q. Consider the following statements: (2020)

- 1. Aadhaar metadata cannot be stored for more than three months.
- 2. The state cannot enter into any contract with private corporations for sharing of Aadhar data.
- 3. Aadhaar is mandatory for obtaining insurance products.
- 4. Aadhar is mandatory for getting benefits funded out of the Consolidated fund of India. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans : a

Statement 1 is not correct: A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court ruled that the Aadhaar metadata cannot be stored beyond six months.

Statement 2 is correct: Part of Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act, enabling body corporate and individuals to seek authentication, has been held unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Statement 3 is not correct: In the 2018 judgement, the Supreme Court held that Aadhar is not mandatory to purchase the insurance products, however, it can be voluntarily used for KYC of the insurance products. Even IRDA has made similar rules.

Statement 4 is correct: The Supreme Court ruled that any welfare scheme, driving funds out of the Consolidated Fund of India, would require Aadhar to deliver the benefits to the intended beneficiaries.

Q. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched? (2014)

Spacecraft Purpose

- 1. Cassini–Huygens : Orbiting Venus and transmitting data to the Earth
- 2. Messenger : Mapping and investigating
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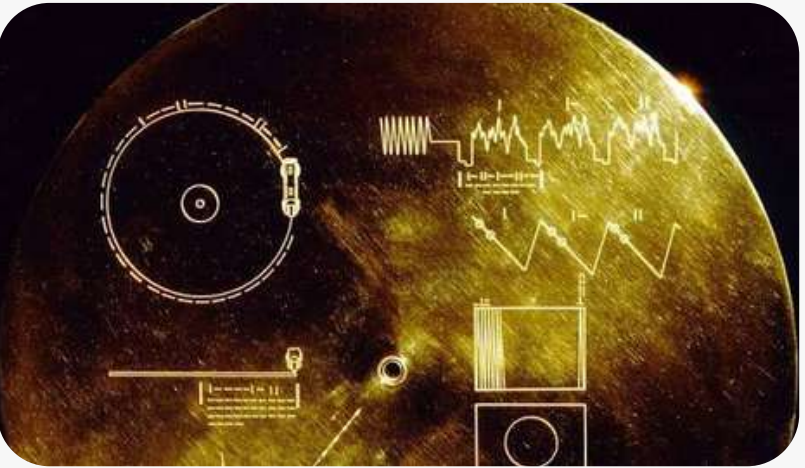
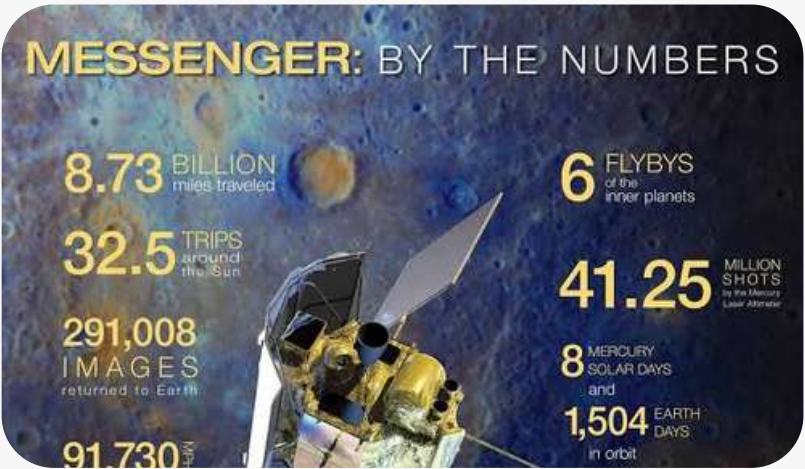
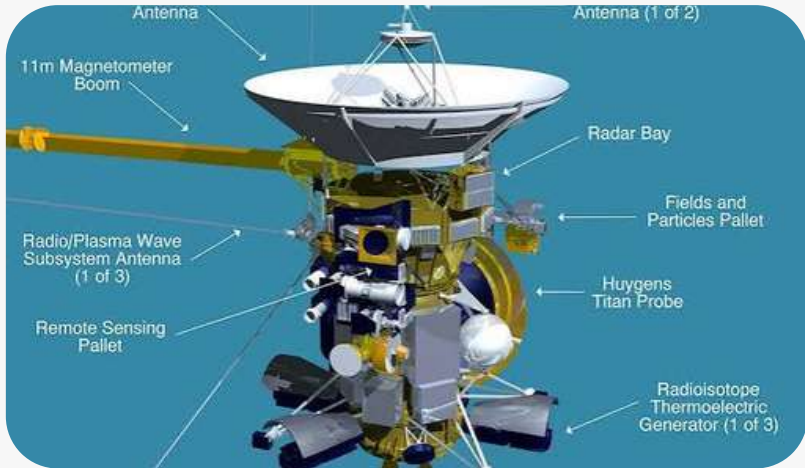
a) 1 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : b

1. **Cassini–Huygens: This is Incorrect.** The Cassini–Huygens mission was a collaboration between NASA, ESA, and ASI to explore Saturn, not Venus. It studied Saturn, its rings, and its moons. The Huygens probe landed on Titan, Saturn's largest moon.

2. **Messenger: This is Correct.** Messenger was a NASA mission to Mercury. It orbited Mercury and mapped its surface, investigated its magnetic field, and studied its composition.

3. **Voyager 1 and 2: This is Correct.** The Voyager spacecraft were launched to explore the outer solar system,



Practice Questions and answers

Q. Which of the following best explains the significance of the recent discovery of erythrulose in interstellar space?

- A. It confirms the existence of extraterrestrial life.
- B. It strengthens evidence that complex organic molecules necessary for life can naturally form in space.
- C. It proves that DNA originated in interstellar clouds.
- D. It establishes that all sugars detected in space are biologically produced.

Answer: B

A is Incorrect. The detection of erythrulose, a four-carbon sugar, does not confirm the existence of life beyond Earth. Instead, it demonstrates that complex organic molecules can form naturally in interstellar environments. The presence of such molecules only indicates that some of the chemical building blocks of life may be widespread in the universe.

B. is Correct. The discovery of erythrulose in an interstellar molecular cloud provides strong evidence that true sugars with at least three carbon atoms can form under natural space conditions. This supports the hypothesis that the basic chemical ingredients required for life may originate in space and could have been delivered to planets through comets, asteroids or meteorites.

C is Incorrect. Although sugars are essential components of DNA and RNA, the discovery does not establish the origin of DNA. It only suggests that some precursor molecules required for life can form in space; the evolution of genetic material remains a separate scientific question.

D is incorrect. The detected sugar formed through abiotic (non-biological) chemical processes in the interstellar medium. In fact, the discovery demonstrates that complex organic molecules can be synthesised without the presence of living organisms.

Which one of the following best describes the strategic importance of Compressed Biogas (CBG) for India?

- A. It is intended primarily to replace coal in thermal power generation.
- B. It is chemically different from CNG but functionally identical.
- C. It converts organic waste into renewable fuel while contributing to energy security and waste management.
- D. It is produced exclusively from dedicated energy crops.

Answer: C

A is Incorrect. CBG is mainly promoted as a renewable substitute for CNG and LPG in transportation, domestic cooking and industrial applications. While it can generate electricity, replacing coal in thermal power plants is not its primary objective.

B. is Incorrect. After purification and compression, CBG is chemically similar to CNG, with methane as its principal component. This similarity allows it to be used in existing natural gas infrastructure with minimal modifications.

C. is Correct. CBG is produced through the anaerobic digestion of agricultural residues, animal manure, municipal solid waste and other organic biomass. It reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels, promotes a waste-to-wealth approach, lowers greenhouse gas emissions and provides additional income opportunities for farmers, making it strategically important for India's energy security.

D is Incorrect. India's policy emphasis is on producing CBG primarily from agricultural residues, livestock manure and organic waste rather than cultivating dedicated energy crops. International experience, particularly from Germany, has shown that excessive reliance on energy crops such as maize can adversely affect crop diversity and food security.