

R.C. Reddy IAS Study Circle
UPSC CSE PRELIMS 2026 TEST SERIES
SECTIONAL TEST - 03
INDIAN POLITY AND GOVERNANCE
KEY AND EXPLANATIONS

Q1. A

National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is **not a constitutional body**; it is a **statutory body** established under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**. Its primary objective is to provide free and competent legal services to weaker sections of society, ensuring that justice is accessible to all and that no citizen is denied legal remedies due to economic or social disadvantages.

The **Chief Justice of India** serves as the **Patron-in-Chief of NALSA**, reflecting the significance of legal aid within the Indian judicial framework. A judge of the Supreme Court of India functions as the Executive Chairman of the authority.

The **Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC) Scheme, launched in 2022**, is an important initiative of NALSA aimed at strengthening the criminal legal aid system. It seeks to provide dedicated legal representation to accused persons, particularly undertrial prisoners, across numerous districts, thereby improving access to justice at the grassroots level.

Q2. B

With reference to Article 176 of the Constitution of India, the Governor is required to address the State Legislature in two situations:

- (i) At the commencement of the first session after each general election to the Legislative Assembly, and
- (ii) At the first session of the Legislature every year. Therefore, the Governor is not bound to address the Legislature only after general elections, making that part of the statement incorrect.

In the case of a bicameral State Legislature, the Governor delivers the address to both Houses assembled together, outlining the policies and legislative agenda of the elected government.

However, the Governor cannot independently modify the contents of the address. The speech is prepared by the Council of Ministers, and the Governor delivers it based on their aid and advice, in accordance with the principles of the parliamentary system of government.

Q3. D

- Recent audits by the **Comptroller and Auditor General** of India exposed financial and procedural irregularities in projects such as the **Polavaram irrigation project**, including expenditure discrepancies and delays.

- Parliamentary Oversight refers to the mechanisms through which Parliament monitors, scrutinizes, and holds the executive accountable for its policies, decisions, and expenditure.
- In India, this oversight is exercised through instruments such as Question Hour, debates, motions, and parliamentary committees like the Public Accounts Committee and Estimates Committee, which examine government functioning and financial accountability.
- Parliamentary oversight in India is **not limited only to formal legislative procedures** inside the House. While debates, motions, and questions in the House are important tools, oversight is also exercised through parliamentary committees, audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, and follow-up discussions on committee reports.
- Committees allow members to conduct detailed scrutiny of government policies and expenditure outside the floor of the House, making oversight more effective.
Reports of parliamentary committees are not legally binding on the government.
- Committees such as the **Public Accounts Committee, the Estimates Committee, and the Committee on Public Undertakings** make recommendations after examining government functioning. However, **the government is not legally obligated to accept them, though it usually responds to the recommendations.**

Q4. B

Among the given bodies, only the **Lokpal** and the **Central Bureau of Investigation** are connected with the investigation of corruption cases involving public servants under the Union Government. The **Central Bureau of Investigation** is the principal investigative agency of the Government of India and it directly conducts investigations into offences related to corruption, especially under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The **Lokpal**, established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, is empowered to inquire into allegations of corruption against certain categories of public servants. While it may not itself carry out the detailed investigative process in most cases, it has the authority to order and supervise investigations through agencies such as the **Central Bureau of Investigation**.

On the other hand, the **Central Vigilance Commission** primarily performs a supervisory and advisory role in vigilance matters. It supervises vigilance administration in Central Government departments and exercises superintendence over the functioning of the **Central Bureau of Investigation** in corruption cases.

Q5 D

The **Central Excise Act, 1944** governs the levy and collection of central excise duties on goods manufactured or produced within India. The **Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025** seeks to amend this Act by revising the tariff rates for tobacco products listed under **Section IV of the Fourth Schedule** of the Act. The amendment proposes significant increases in excise duty on various tobacco categories such as unmanufactured tobacco, chewing tobacco, hookah or gudaku tobacco, and smoking mixtures used in pipes and cigarettes. For instance, the duty on unmanufactured tobacco is proposed to increase from **64% to 70%**, while chewing tobacco may increase from **25% to 100%**, and smoking mixtures from

60% to 325%. Excise duty on cigarettes is also proposed to increase substantially to about **₹2,700–₹11,000 per 1,000 cigarettes.**

After the introduction of the **Goods and Services Tax** in 2017, central excise duties were removed from most goods, but they continue to apply to a few items such as **tobacco and tobacco products**. At present, tobacco products are taxed through a **three-tier structure**, which includes GST, the GST compensation cess, and central excise duty.

The objective of the amendment is to ensure that the **overall tax burden on tobacco products does not decline** once the GST compensation cess is withdrawn. By increasing excise duty rates, the government intends to maintain a high tax incidence on tobacco so that these products do not become more affordable.

Additionally, the revenue collected from central excise duty forms part of the **divisible pool of taxes**, meaning that **States automatically receive a share of the revenue** as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission.

Q6 . C

Recently, the Supreme Court of India has increasingly taken on a managerial role in environmental regulation, stepping beyond its traditional function of reviewing the legality of administrative decisions to issuing proactive directives.

The Supreme Court of India has played a transformative role in environmental governance in India through judicial innovation. It has expanded the scope of environmental protection beyond explicit statutory provisions by interpreting constitutional rights broadly and by evolving new legal principles through its judgments.

While it is true that principles such as the **Precautionary Principle** and **Polluter Pays Principle** have been incorporated into Indian environmental jurisprudence, the Court has not treated them as part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)**. Instead, these principles have been enforced by reading them into the fundamental rights under **Article 21 (Right to Life)**, the DPSPs such as Articles 47 and 48A, and the fundamental duties under 51A(g). Although the rights under Articles 47, 48A and 51A(g) are **non-justiciable**, they have been made justiciable by enacting legislations such as the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution Act 1974, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981, and the Environment Protection Act of 1986. **(Statement II is Incorrect)**

Q7. B

The functioning of the Parliament of India in recent years reflects a pattern of **fluctuating productivity combined with a long-term structural decline in deliberative quality**.

Parliamentary productivity has **declined but not steadily across all sessions**. While there has been a noticeable fall in productivity in certain sessions—such as the **Winter Session 2024 (around 52% in Lok Sabha and 39% in Rajya Sabha)**—there have also been periods of exceptionally high performance. Notably, the **Budget Sessions of 2023 and 2024 recorded productivity levels exceeding 100% (111% in**

Lok Sabha and 112% in Rajya Sabha), indicating that the decline is not consistent but rather uneven and session-specific. (Statement II is correct)

However, such high productivity often coexists with concerns about the **quality of deliberation**, as several Bills have been passed with **minimal debate**. For instance, important legislations like the Regulation of **Online Gaming Bill and Merchant Shipping Bill** were passed with **very limited discussion time**, raising concerns about the depth of parliamentary scrutiny.

The proportion of Bills referred to the **Department-related Standing Committees** has declined sharply—from **over 60% in the 14th and 15th Lok Sabhas to around 20% in the 16th and 17th Lok Sabhas**. This weakening of committee scrutiny reduces detailed examination of legislation, undermining Parliament's role in **law-making and executive oversight**. (Statement III is correct)

Further, data on parliamentary functioning shows deeper concerns. Routine disruptions have significantly reduced effective working time—for example, during a recent monsoon session, the **Lok Sabha functioned for only 29% of its scheduled time and the Rajya Sabha for 34%**, with **Question Hour (a key accountability mechanism) severely affected**. Additionally, the **number of sittings has declined historically**, from about **121 days per year in the early decades after independence to around 55 days per year in the 17th Lok Sabha**.

Q8. C

Corporate political funding in India has increasingly raised concerns about **opacity, lack of transparency, and the possibility of undue corporate influence on public policy**, which makes Statement I correct.

The electoral bond scheme ensured anonymity **only to the general public and political competitors**, but not to all stakeholders. The issuing bank, **State Bank of India (SBI)**, maintained records of purchasers, and the government could potentially access this information. Therefore, the claim that the system was **completely anonymous to all stakeholders, including regulatory authorities**, is misleading and factually incorrect.

Amendments to the Companies Act removed the earlier requirement for companies to disclose the **name of the political party** to which donations were made in their financial statements. This reduced transparency in corporate political contributions and directly contributes to the concerns mentioned in Statement I.

Q9. B

India's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar will assume the Chair ship of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) on December 3, 2025, in Stockholm

The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)** is an **intergovernmental organisation** devoted exclusively to the promotion and strengthening of democratic institutions, processes and norms across the world. It was established in **1995** as a global platform for democracy support and is headquartered in **Stockholm, Sweden**. The organisation began with **14**

founding members, including **India, Norway, Spain, Australia and South Africa**, and has since expanded to **35 member countries**, while countries such as the **United States and Japan participate as observers**. It has also enjoyed **Observer Status in the United Nations General Assembly since 2003**.

The central aim of International IDEA is to **advance and safeguard sustainable democracy** by generating comparative knowledge, strengthening electoral and political institutions, supporting democratic reforms, and promoting values such as the **rule of law, participation, representation and inclusion**. In pursuing these objectives, it performs several important functions. It produces research and comparative knowledge on subjects such as **elections, constitutions, political parties, governance and democratic innovation**. It also undertakes **capacity-building activities** by training **Election Management Bodies (EMBs), political parties and other democratic institutions**. In addition, it plays an **advocacy role** by promoting democratic standards and electoral integrity at the global level, facilitates **dialogue and exchange** among policymakers, civil society actors and regional organisations, and provides **technical assistance** to countries on issues such as electoral reforms, institutional design and democratic resilience.

Q10. A

The Governor's role in granting, withholding, or reserving assent to a State Bill is part of the constitutional process under **Article 200**. Although the Governor functions as a constitutional head, this power is exercised within the broader framework of parliamentary democracy and cannot be viewed as entirely insulated from constitutional scrutiny. Judicial review may arise in limited situations where the exercise of this power is alleged to be arbitrary, mala fide, based on irrelevant considerations, or marked by undue delay that obstructs the legislative process.

The Constitution does not prescribe a fixed time limit for the Governor to act on a Bill. However, the absence of an express deadline does not imply unrestricted discretion. In constitutional practice, prolonged inaction, or the use of assent-related powers in a manner that disturbs the balance between the executive and the legislature can raise serious questions about constitutional propriety. Courts generally exercise restraint in such matters, but they may still examine whether constitutional authorities have acted within the bounds of the Constitution.

This issue has become significant in recent years because repeated delays in assent have brought attention to the larger question of how constitutional offices function in relation to elected legislatures. It therefore reflects not only a legal issue of assent, but also a broader concern regarding federalism, responsible government, and the constitutional relationship between the Governor and the State Legislature.

Q11. A

The designation of a lawyer as a Senior Advocate is not done by the Bar Council of India. This power rests with the Supreme Court or the High Courts, which may designate an advocate as a Senior Advocate on the basis of ability, standing at the Bar, or special knowledge and experience in law. Therefore, the first statement is not correct.

In the Supreme Court, only an Advocate-on-Record (AoR) is entitled to file a vakalatnama, institute proceedings, or submit documents on behalf of a party. This is a special category of advocates recognized under the Supreme Court Rules, and it is central to practice before the Court. (Statement II is correct)

The right to argue a matter in the Supreme Court is not confined only to Senior Advocates and Advocates-on-Record. Other advocates may also argue, subject to the rules and with proper authorization. Senior Advocates have certain restrictions in filing and drafting matters, while the AoR has the exclusive procedural privilege of filing.

Q12. C

The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is the competent authority that grants recognition to political parties in India. This recognition is based on the party's **electoral performance**, and accordingly parties may be classified as **State Parties** or **National Parties**. Such recognition is important because it gives parties certain benefits, including a **reserved election symbol**, free broadcast or telecast time during elections, and other procedural advantages.

One of the criteria for recognition as a **State Party** is that the party must secure at least **6% of the valid votes polled in the State Assembly election** and, in addition, win at least **2 seats in the Legislative Assembly** of that State. Since this is one of the performance-based conditions used by the ECI, it directly explains how recognition is granted under Statement I.

The criteria for recognition of political parties are **not mentioned in the Constitution of India**. Instead, they are provided under the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**, issued by the Election Commission. This is the tricky part of the question, because students may assume that such an important matter must be constitutionally provided. In reality, the Constitution establishes the ECI, but the detailed rules for party recognition come from the legal and regulatory framework framed by the Commission.

Q13. B

The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976** amendment brought about major changes in the Indian constitutional framework and is often described as the **"Mini-Constitution"** because of the wide range of provisions it altered.

One of its important changes related to **Centre–State legislative relations**. Through this amendment, several subjects that were originally in the **State List** were shifted to the **Concurrent List**. These included **education, forests, protection of wild animals and birds, administration of justice, and weights and measures**. As a result, both **Parliament and the State Legislatures** became competent to make laws on these subjects.

The significance of this change lies in the fact that matters which were earlier under the exclusive legislative domain of the States came under a framework of **shared legislative jurisdiction**. This reflected a stronger role for the Union in areas considered to have wider national importance.

Q14 . A

The **Central Pay Commission (CPC)** is an ad-hoc administrative body established by the Government of India to review and recommend changes to the salary structure, benefits, and service conditions of central government employees.

CPC is neither a **statutory** nor a **constitutional** body. It is an **executive body** constituted by a resolution of the Union Cabinet (specifically under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance).

(Statement I is incorrect)

While it has historically been appointed at roughly **ten-year intervals** (beginning with the first commission in 1946), there is no law or constitutional provision that mandates this frequency.

Once the Union Government accepts the recommendations of a Pay Commission, the benefits extend to **both serving employees and pensioners**. Revisions in pay scales typically trigger a corresponding revision in pension formulas to ensure parity and provide relief against inflation (often linked to Dearness Allowance/Relief). (Statement II is incorrect)

The recommendations of the CPC are **purely advisory** in nature. The Union Government is not legally bound to implement every suggestion. The Cabinet deliberates on the fiscal implications and may choose to accept, modify, or even reject certain recommendations before issuing an executive order for their implementation. (Statement III is correct)

Q15 . D

The **Model Youth Gram Sabha Initiative** is not primarily about the general governance capacity of local bodies; rather, its specific focus is on **institutionalising participatory forums for youth** in village-level democracy. It aims to create a platform where young people can engage with the Panchayati Raj system, essentially acting as a "mock" or "shadow" assembly to build future leadership.

MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat) is an autonomous body set up by the government to serve as an overarching "phygital" (physical + digital) platform for youth development. However, it does **not** replace existing schemes under a "constitutional framework." It acts as a technology-driven facilitator to provide equitable access to opportunities. Describing it as a "constitutional framework" is a technical error, as it is an executive-backed autonomous platform.

The **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)** is the scheme actually dedicated to **strengthening the governance capacity of rural local bodies** (Panchayati Raj Institutions). Its mandate includes the training and empowerment of elected representatives and officials to ensure they can effectively deliver on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the grassroots level.

Q16. B

The Quality Council of India (QCI) is **not a statutory body**. It was set up as a **registered society** under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. It was established in 1997 through a joint initiative of the Government of India and the Indian Industry (represented by ASSOCHAM, CII, and FICCI). (Statement I is incorrect)

The QCI is governed by a Council of 38 members. To ensure a balanced approach and maintain its Public-Private Partnership (PPP) character, it maintains **equal representation** from the Government, Industry, and Consumer groups. (Statement II is correct)

In a unique governance model, the **Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister of India**. This appointment is based on recommendations made by the industry to the Government, ensuring that the body remains industry-led while holding high-level executive backing. (Statement III is correct)

Q17 . C

A nominated member is allowed a "grace period." They only face disqualification if they join a political party **after** the expiry of six months from the date they take their seat. Joining **within** the first six months is legally permitted. (Statement I is correct)

While the Tenth Schedule originally stated that the Presiding Officer's decision is final, the Supreme Court in the **Kihoto Hollohan case (1992)** declared this provision unconstitutional. The Court ruled that the Speaker/Chairman acts as a **tribunal**, and their decisions are subject to **judicial review** on grounds of mala fides or perversity. (Statement II is incorrect)

Disqualification does **not** bar a member from contesting elections. A disqualified member can contest a **by-election** immediately to return to the House. However, under the 91st Amendment, they cannot be appointed as a **Minister** or hold a **remunerative political post** until they are re-elected or their original term expires. (Statement III is incorrect)

The **91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003**, deleted the provision that protected a "split" (where one-third of the members leave). Now, only a **merger** involving at least **two-thirds** of the members is protected from disqualification. (Statement IV is correct)

Q18 . C

The **Central Information Commission (CIC)** is a statutory body established under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005. Its role and structure underwent significant changes following the **RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019**, which shifted several key powers from the parent Act to the Central Government.

The 2019 Amendment removed the previously fixed 5-year tenure for the Chief Information Commissioner and other Information Commissioners. Currently, the **tenure is prescribed by the Central Government** (at present, set to 3 years via the RTI Rules, 2019). However, the statutory **ceiling age of 65 years** remains intact; an individual must vacate the office upon reaching this age, regardless of how much of their term is remaining. (Statement I is correct)

Under Section 19(3) of the RTI Act, a second appeal against the decision of the First Appellate Authority must usually be filed within **90 days**. However, the Act grants the CIC the discretionary power to admit an appeal after the expiry of this period if it is satisfied that the appellant was prevented by **"sufficient cause"** from filing the appeal in time. This effectively removes a rigid time bar in cases of genuine hardship. (Statement II is correct)

Q19. A

The fiscal relationship between the Union and the States in India is governed by specific constitutional provisions that balance state autonomy with national financial stability.

Under **Article 276** of the Constitution, State legislatures are empowered to levy taxes on professions, trades, callings, and employments. However, this power is not unlimited. The Constitution mandates a **maximum ceiling** that can be levied on any one person per annum, which is currently set at **₹2,500**. Any change to this upper limit requires an amendment by Parliament. (Statement I is correct)

This is a common "absolute right" trap. According to **Article 293**, a State **cannot borrow from international markets directly**; all external borrowings are contracted by the Government of India on behalf of the States. Furthermore, if a State has any **outstanding loan** or guarantees from the Union Government, it must obtain the **prior consent of the Centre** even for domestic market borrowings. Given that almost all Indian states have outstanding liabilities to the Union, the "absolute right" does not exist in practice or law. (Statement II is incorrect)

The **Consolidated Sinking Fund (CSF)** is a reserve fund set up by State governments and maintained by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. It acts as a buffer to ensure that the State has sufficient funds to repay its market borrowings (redemption of debt) when they mature. It is a tool for fiscal discipline and enhances the creditworthiness of State developmental loans. (Statement III is correct)

Q20. C

The **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018** brought a major shift in the constitutional framework relating to **Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs)** by giving the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** constitutional status and inserting new provisions in the Constitution.

Article 338B was introduced to establish the NCBC as a **constitutional body**, similar in structure to the commissions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It lays down its **functions, powers, and duties**, including the authority to **investigate and monitor safeguards**, inquire into complaints, and advise on socio-economic development of backward classes.

Article 342A is particularly significant and often confusing. It empowers the **President to notify the list of SEBCs** for each State and Union Territory. This provision closely resembles **Article 341 (SCs)** and **Article 342 (STs)**, which is why aspirants often mix them up. The key trap is that this article initially led to debates about whether States retained their power to identify backward classes, which was later clarified by the **105th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2021**.

Article 366 (26C) provides a **constitutional definition of SEBCs**, which is another subtle but important addition. UPSC often tests such definitional clauses because they are less prominent but constitutionally significant.

Q21. D

The writ jurisdiction under **Article 226** (High Courts) is broader than that under **Article 32** (Supreme Court). While the Supreme Court can issue writs **only for enforcement of Fundamental Rights**, High

Courts can issue writs not only for Fundamental Rights but also for “**any other purpose**”, including legal rights. Hence, Statement I is correct.

Article 32 is itself a **Fundamental Right**, which means the Supreme Court generally **cannot refuse to entertain a petition** for enforcement of Fundamental Rights. In contrast, the High Court’s jurisdiction under Article 226 is **discretionary**, meaning it may refuse to exercise it even when a legal right exists. Therefore, Statement II is also correct.

Under Article 226, High Courts have a **wider territorial reach**. A High Court can issue writs even to authorities located outside its territorial jurisdiction, provided that the **cause of action arises within its territory**. This makes Statement III correct.

There is **no constitutional requirement** that a person must first approach the High Court before moving to the Supreme Court for enforcement of Fundamental Rights. An aggrieved party can directly approach the Supreme Court under Article 32. However, in practice, the Supreme Court may sometimes advise approaching the High Court first, but this is **not a mandatory legal requirement**.
(Statement IV is incorrect)

Q22 . B

Article 3 of the Indian Constitution forms the constitutional basis for changing India’s internal political map. It empowers Parliament to create new States and modify existing ones according to administrative needs and regional demands. The provision reflects a flexible federal design where unity is preserved while boundaries remain adjustable. Since Independence, this Article has been repeatedly invoked to reorganize territories, upgrade Union Territories into States, and rename or reshape regions. It ensures that constitutional procedure, not political convenience, governs every territorial alteration within the Union of India.

Article 3 empowers Parliament to **form new States, alter boundaries, or change the name of existing States** through legislation.

While the President refers the Bill to the concerned State Legislature for its views, those views are **only advisory**. Parliament is **not bound** by them and retains full authority to proceed with the reorganization. (Statement II is correct)

Laws made under Article 3 are **not treated as constitutional amendments under Article 368**. They can be passed by a **simple majority** in Parliament, even though they may involve changes to the First Schedule (States) or Fourth Schedule

Q23 . D

Recently, it cleared proposals worth nearly **₹3.60 lakh crore**, highlighting its central role in strengthening India’s defence preparedness.

The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** is the apex decision-making body of the Ministry of Defence for matters related to **procurement of defence equipment and systems**. It is chaired by the **defence minister**, not the Prime Minister. (Statement I incorrect.)

The DAC plays a crucial role in ensuring **timely and efficient acquisition of defence capabilities** required by the Armed Forces. Its objective is to facilitate **expeditious procurement** while optimally utilizing allocated budgetary resources.

The DAC was **established in 2001** following the recommendations of the **Group of Ministers (GoM)** on reforming the national security system after the **Kargil War (1999)**. This historical context is important because it reflects the need for **streamlined and coordinated defence procurement mechanisms**.

Although executive actions of the Union flow from **Article 53**, the DAC is not a body that **derives its authority directly from the Constitution**. Instead, it is an **executive/administrative body created through government policy**, functioning under the Ministry of Defence. (Statement II incorrect.)

Q24 . C

This question tests knowledge of key **landmark constitutional cases** and the principles they established. The **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)** laid down the **Basic Structure Doctrine**, holding that while Parliament has wide powers to amend the Constitution, it cannot alter its basic structure.

The **Golaknath case (1967)**, In this case, the Supreme Court held that **Parliament cannot amend Fundamental Rights**, although this position was later modified by subsequent judgments, particularly in Kesavananda Bharati.

The **Minerva Mills case (1980)**, The case actually emphasized that Parliament's amending power is **limited**, not unlimited, and it reaffirmed the need to maintain a balance between **Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy**. The use of the term "unlimited" makes this a deliberate trap. (Incorrect pairing)

The **SR Bommai case (1994)**, as it established that **federalism is part of the basic structure** of the Constitution and that the imposition of **President's Rule is subject to judicial review**.

Q25. B

The Governor's powers under **Article 200** have come under increasing constitutional scrutiny in recent years, primarily due to **delays in granting assent**, withholding assent, or reserving Bills for the President. This has raised concerns about the balance between the **elected State Legislature** and the **unelected constitutional office of the Governor**.

The Constitution does **not prescribe any time limit** for the Governor to act on a Bill. This constitutional silence creates room for **prolonged inaction**, which can effectively stall legislation passed by an elected legislature. It is this absence of a timeline that has become a core reason for recent debates and litigation.

Statement III reflects the **general principle of parliamentary democracy**, where the Governor is expected to act on the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**. However, this statement does not fully capture the controversy surrounding Article 200. The debate arises not from the general rule of

advice, but from **situations involving discretion, delay, or reservation of Bills**, where the extent of binding advice itself becomes contested.

Thus, while both Statements II and III are correct, **only Statement II explains why Article 200 has become controversial**

Q26 . B

Article 30(1) guarantees minorities the right to **establish and administer educational institutions**, but this right has been consistently interpreted by the Supreme Court as **not absolute** and subject to reasonable regulations.

In the recent proceedings relating to **Aligarh Muslim University (2024–25)**, the issue revolved around whether AMU could claim minority status despite being declared an institution of national importance. The Court did **not lay down an absolute rule** that institutions of national importance are constitutionally barred from claiming minority status. The matter involves a nuanced constitutional interpretation rather than a blanket prohibition. (Statement I is incorrect)

Minority educational institutions enjoy a degree of protection under Article 30, and the Supreme Court has held that they are **exempt from the application of Article 15(5)**, which enables the State to provide for reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs in educational institutions. Applying such reservations to minority institutions would dilute their core right to administer and preserve their character. (Statement II is correct)

The right to administer under Article 30(1) is **not absolute**. The State can impose **reasonable regulations**, particularly in matters relating to **academic standards, qualifications of teachers, and institutional excellence**. Such regulations are considered necessary to maintain the quality of education and do not violate the minority character of the institution. (Statement III is incorrect).

Q27. B

The legal position on **narco-analysis and similar techniques** in India has been shaped primarily by constitutional protections under **Article 20(3)** (right against self-incrimination) and **Article 21** (right to life and personal liberty, including mental privacy and dignity).

Statement I is consistent with the settled position that **forced or involuntary narco-analysis is unconstitutional**, as it compels an individual to provide testimonial responses and intrudes into mental privacy. Such practices were clearly disapproved by the Supreme Court, making this statement correct.

Even if an accused person gives consent, there is **no absolute or indefeasible right to demand a narco-analysis test**. The administration of such tests is subject to **judicial discretion, procedural safeguards, and relevance to investigation**, and cannot be claimed as a matter of right by the accused. (Statement II is incorrect)

While the direct results of narco-analysis are not admissible as evidence, any **material or fact discovered as a consequence of such information** may be admissible under **Section 27 of the Evidence Act**, provided it satisfies the conditions of discovery.

Even when conducted voluntarily, the results of a narco-analysis test **cannot be the sole basis for conviction**, as they do not meet the standards of reliable and voluntary testimony required in criminal law.

Q28 . B

The concept of **justiciability** relates to whether a matter can be examined and decided by a court of law. In the Indian constitutional framework, some areas are **explicitly or inherently non-justiciable**, while others, though seemingly discretionary, are subject to **limited judicial review**.

Under **Article 74(2)**, the **advice tendered by the Council of Ministers to the President is expressly barred from judicial inquiry**. Courts cannot question what advice was given or whether it was appropriate. (Statement II is correct)

The determination of **territorial disputes between sovereign nations** falls within the domain of **international law and executive diplomacy**, not domestic courts. Indian courts generally refrain from adjudicating such matters as they involve **foreign policy and sovereignty issues**. (Statement IV is correct)

Although the President's satisfaction in promulgating an Ordinance under **Article 123** is largely discretionary, courts have held that it can be reviewed on **limited grounds such as mala fide or abuse of power**.

While the **Speaker's decision under the Tenth Schedule** was initially considered final, the Supreme Court in the **Kihoto Hollohan case** held that such decisions are subject to **judicial review**, particularly on grounds of procedural irregularity or mala fide intent.

Q29. C

The government used a multi-pronged approach under the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 to manage a sudden supply shock.

The crisis was triggered in late February/early March 2026 due to the escalation of conflict in West Asia, which led to the effective closure or severe disruption of the Strait of Hormuz. (Statement I is Correct)

Since nearly 60% of India's LPG imports pass through this narrow waterway, the government invoked the ECA to prevent hoarding and ensure that available stocks were diverted from industrial/commercial use to household kitchens.

On March 18, 2026, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) officially designated the **Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC)** as the nodal agency with statutory powers. Previously, data sharing by private refiners was largely voluntary; the new order mandates real-time reporting of production, stocks, and logistics to allow the government to "pool" and redistribute fuel where needed.

To solve the LPG shortage permanently, the "Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order, 2026" (notified March 24, 2026) introduced a radical "Deemed Clearance" mechanism. (Statement II is Correct)

- Under this rule, if local authorities or housing societies do not grant permission to lay PNG (Piped Natural Gas) pipelines within a fixed timeline (e.g., 10–15 days), the permission is "deemed" to have been granted.
- This was a strategic move to force a shift from cylinder-based LPG to piped gas, reducing the country's reliance on imported sea-borne LPG.

Q30. D

This question tests nuanced understanding of **Parliamentary motions and their procedural characteristics**.

A **Privilege Motion** is not limited to being moved only against a Minister. It can be moved against **any member or even non-members** if there is a breach of parliamentary privilege. But it is often used against Ministers for misleading the House. (Pair I is correct)

An **Adjournment Motion** is an extraordinary device used to draw attention to a **definite matter of urgent public importance**, and it requires the support of **at least 50 members** to be admitted.

A **No-Day-Yet-Named Motion** refers to a motion that has been **admitted by the Speaker but has not yet been assigned a date for discussion**, making it procedurally valid.

A **Call Attention Motion** is indeed a **purely Indian innovation (introduced in 1954)**. Unlike an Adjournment Motion, it does not carry an element of **censure against the government**, but is meant to seek clarification from the government on urgent matters.

Q 31 . C

An ordinance issued under **Article 123** is a temporary law meant to operate only until Parliament has an opportunity to consider it. Once Parliament reassembles, the ordinance must be laid before both Houses, and it **automatically ceases to operate after six weeks from the date of reassembly** unless it is approved and converted into an Act.

It does not become permanent simply because no disapproval motion is moved, nor does it continue indefinitely until formally withdrawn by the President. Its validity is constitutionally time-bound. Also, no authority, including the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, has the power to extend its life. The only way for it to continue is through **Parliamentary approval within the prescribed period**. (Statement III is correct)

Q32 . B

The concept of **Zero Hour** is indeed an **Indian innovation** that began around **1962**. It is not formally mentioned in the **Rules of Procedure**, yet it has become an established parliamentary practice. It allows members to raise urgent matters **without prior notice**, immediately after Question Hour.

An **Adjournment Motion** is a formal parliamentary device used to draw attention to a **definite matter of urgent public importance**. Its admission interrupts normal business and carries an implicit **element of censure against the government**, as it highlights a serious issue requiring accountability.

However, Statement II does **not explain Statement I**. The two statements describe **different parliamentary devices**—Zero Hour (an informal practice) and Adjournment Motion (a formal procedural device). The nature and purpose of an Adjournment Motion do not explain why Zero Hour exists or why it is not codified.

Thus, both statements are correct, but there is **no explanatory relationship** between them, making option **(b)** the correct answer.

Q33 . C

The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976**, often called the “**Mini-Constitution**”, made several significant additions to the **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)** to strengthen the social and economic goals of the State.

The 42nd Amendment **expanded Article 38** by adding clause (2) which reads, the State shall strive **to minimize inequalities in income, status, facilities, and opportunities**. Earlier, this principle was implicit in the DPSPs of the original Constitution.

The directive **to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife** was **newly inserted by the 42nd Amendment** as **Article 48A**. This marked the first explicit constitutional recognition of **environmental protection**, reflecting growing global concerns in the 1970s.

The directive **to promote the management of industries by workers** was also **introduced by the 42nd Amendment** under **Article 43A**. It aimed to encourage **industrial democracy** and worker participation in management, aligning with the socialist orientation emphasized during that period.

The directive **to promote voluntary formation of co-operative societies** was **not part of the 42nd Amendment**. It was added much later by the **97th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011** under **Article 43B**, focusing on strengthening the cooperative movement.

Q34 . A

The constitutional and legal framework of Fundamental Duties in India is characterized by a unique balance between moral obligation and legislative authority. While these duties, enshrined in **Article 51A**, are technically **non-justiciable**—meaning they cannot be directly enforced by the courts through writs—they are not mere "pious expressions

Parliament remains fully competent to prescribe penalties for their non-performance. This is achieved not through the Constitution itself, but through the enactment of specific statutes. For instance, the *Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act (1971)* and various environmental protection laws serve as the functional teeth for duties that would otherwise remain aspirational.

Although the Judiciary often invokes the "**Doctrine of Constitutional Trust**" and other interpretive principles to ensure that state authorities uphold constitutional spirit, this does not render Fundamental Duties "inherently justiciable." (Statement II is incorrect)

In the absence of a specific statutory law passed by Parliament, the courts cannot create punishments or compel a citizen to perform a duty.

While the judiciary may use these duties as a "vantage point" to determine the constitutional validity of a law or the reasonableness of a restriction on Fundamental Rights, they cannot bypass the requirement for legislative backing to make a duty mandatory or punishable.

Q35 . A

The question tests the concept of "**situational discretion**" of the President, which arises in exceptional political circumstances where the President is required to exercise judgment due to the absence of clear constitutional direction or political certainty.

The **appointment of the Prime Minister when no party has a clear majority** in the Lok Sabha is a classic case of situational discretion. In such a scenario, the President must decide whom to invite to form the government based on factors like coalition support and likelihood of securing confidence.

Similarly, the **dismissal of the Council of Ministers when it cannot prove majority support** also involves situational discretion. If a government clearly loses majority and refuses to resign, the President may act to uphold parliamentary democracy.

The **dissolution of the Lok Sabha when the Council of Ministers has lost its majority** can also involve discretion, especially if there are competing claims to form a stable government. The President may decide whether to allow an alternative government to be formed or dissolve the House.

However, the **power to grant pardon** under Article 72, including in cases of **Court Martial**, is **not situational discretion**. It is a **constitutional power exercised on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**, not based on political circumstances. (Statement IV is incorrect)

Q36 . B

Parliamentary privileges in India are governed by **Articles 105 and 194** and are **not fully codified**. The Constitution allows Parliament to define these privileges by law, but since comprehensive legislation has not been enacted, they continue to be based on **conventions, precedents, and British parliamentary practice**. (Statement I is correct).

Members of Parliament do enjoy **freedom from arrest**, but this immunity applies **only in civil cases**, not in criminal cases. There is **no immunity from arrest in criminal matters**, even during the session or the so-called "40 days before and after" period, which is often misunderstood and is not applicable to criminal offences. (Statement II is incorrect)

The House of Parliament has the power to punish for **breach of privilege or contempt**, and this power extends not only to its members but also to **non-members** whose actions obstruct or undermine the functioning or dignity of the House. (Statement III is correct.)

Q37. B

For **Constitutional Amendment Bills**, both Houses have **equal powers**. Such Bills must be passed by a **special majority in each House separately**, and there is no provision for a joint sitting.

In the case of **approval of Emergency Proclamations** (National, State, and Financial Emergency), both Houses again have **equal authority**. Each House must approve the proclamation within the prescribed time.

Regarding the **CAG report**, it is laid before Parliament and examined through committees like the **Public Accounts Committee**, which involves members from both Houses. There is **no legislative superiority of one House over the other**,

However, for the **discontinuance of a National Emergency**, the Constitution provides a special mechanism. If the **Lok Sabha passes a resolution** disapproving the continuation of the Emergency, the President must revoke it. This special power is **not given to the Rajya Sabha in the same manner**.

Q38. C

Indian federalism is often described as **“sui generis” (unique)** because it combines both **federal and unitary features**. The question specifically asks for **unitary features**, i.e., elements that strengthen the **Central (Union) authority**.

Under **Article 3**, Parliament can alter State boundaries or even create/dissolve States. This leads to the idea of **“destructible States within an indestructible Union,”** showing the dominance of the Centre.

India follows **single citizenship**, unlike classical federations like the USA which have dual citizenship. Additionally, India has a **unified judiciary**, where both Union and State laws are interpreted by the same court system. This promotes uniformity and central coherence.

The **residuary powers of legislation** (subjects not listed in Union, State, or Concurrent Lists) are vested in the **Union Parliament**, unlike many federations where such powers lie with the States.

Q39. C

The **Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)** are an important part of the Parliamentary committee system, designed to ensure detailed scrutiny of legislation, budgetary allocations, and policy functioning of various ministries.

There are **24 DRSCs**, each broadly aligned with specific ministries and departments of the Government of India.

Each committee consists of **31 members**, with **21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha**, ensuring representation from both Houses.

Ministers are not allowed to be members of these committees. This restriction exists to maintain the independence of the committee system and ensure **objective scrutiny of the executive by Parliament**. If Ministers were members, it would defeat the purpose of legislative oversight. (Statement III is incorrect.)

The recommendations made by DRSCs are **advisory in nature** and are not binding on the government or Parliament, though they carry significant persuasive value.

Q40 . B

When **President's Rule under Article 356** is imposed in a State, it signifies a **breakdown of the constitutional machinery** in that State. As a result, the **Council of Ministers is dismissed**, and the executive authority of the State is exercised by the **President through the Governor**. This makes the removal of the Council of Ministers an **inevitable consequence**.

Another inevitable outcome is that **Parliament assumes the legislative powers of the State Legislature**. Under Article 356, Parliament may either directly legislate for the State or authorize the President (and in practice, the Governor) to do so. Additionally, **Parliament can delegate this power to the President**, who may further delegate it to other authorities, ensuring continuity in governance.

However, the **State Legislative Assembly is not necessarily dissolved**. It may be placed under **"suspended animation"**, meaning it is kept in existence but does not function. Dissolution is a separate step and is not automatic upon the proclamation of President's Rule. This distinction was emphasized in judicial decisions like the **S.R. Bommai case**, which also established that the imposition of President's Rule is **subject to judicial review**.

Further, the **High Court of the State continues to function normally**, and its constitutional powers remain unaffected. President's Rule does not impact the **judicial structure**, thereby preserving the independence of the judiciary.

Q41 . C

Article 263 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of an **Inter-State Council (ISC)** to facilitate coordination and cooperation between the Union and the States. However, the Constitution does not mandate its compulsory creation; it leaves it to the **President's discretion** to establish such a body if required.

Although the provision existed since the commencement of the Constitution, the **Inter-State Council was not set up as a permanent body for several decades**. It was only after the recommendations of the **Sarkaria Commission (1988)**—which examined Centre-State relations—that the Council was formally established in **1990** to promote **cooperative federalism**.

The other options are incorrect because:

- **Zonal Councils** were created under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, not Article 263.
- The **National Integration Council** is an **executive body**, not constitutionally provided.
- The **Central Council of Health and Family Welfare** is also a **non-constitutional advisory body**.

Q42 . A

The **91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003** was enacted to strengthen the **anti-defection framework** and to curb the problem of **jumbo-sized ministries**. It introduced a cap on the size of the **Council of Ministers**, limiting it to **15% of the strength of the Lok Sabha (or State Legislative Assembly)**, with a minimum of **12 ministers at the State level**.

A key additional provision of this amendment was that a **member disqualified under the Tenth Schedule (anti-defection law)** is also **disqualified from being appointed as a Minister** or holding any remunerative political office **until they are re-elected or the term of the House expires**. This was aimed at preventing defectors from being rewarded with ministerial positions. (Statement I is correct)

The removal of the Prime Minister is not done by a 2/3rd majority of the Council of Ministers; instead, the Prime Minister remains in office as long as they enjoy the **confidence of the Lok Sabha**.

The provision making the **advice of the Council of Ministers binding on the President** was introduced earlier by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1976)** and reinforced by the **44th Amendment (1978)**.

The amendment sets a **minimum of 12 ministers in States**, not 7.

Q43 . C

The **Fifth Schedule** of the Constitution provides a special governance framework for **Scheduled Areas** to protect the interests of **Scheduled Tribes**. One of its key features is the role of the **Governor**, who is given special powers regarding the application of laws in these areas. The Governor can **direct that any Act of Parliament or State Legislature may not apply, or may apply with modifications**, which reflects the intent to provide flexibility in administration. This makes Statement I correct.

Statement II is incorrect because the **Tribes Advisory Council (TAC)** is **not required in every State**. It is **mandatory only in States having Scheduled Areas**. In States with Scheduled Tribes but without Scheduled Areas, the TAC may be constituted, but it is not compulsory.

Statement III is correct. The Governor exercises certain **discretionary powers under the Fifth Schedule**, particularly in matters relating to Scheduled Areas, such as making regulations for peace and good governance and controlling land transfers. These powers distinguish the Fifth Schedule framework from the normal constitutional scheme.

Thus, only Statement III is correct and helps explain the special powers mentioned in Statement I, making option **(c)** correct.

Q44 . B

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) is correctly matched with the recommendation of a three-tier Panchayati Raj system—Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and Zila Parishad at the district level. Hence, this pair is correct.

The Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) is also correctly matched. It recommended a two-tier system consisting of the Zila Parishad as the primary body and the Mandal Panchayat at a lower level, aiming to strengthen decentralization. Therefore, this pair is correct.

However, the L.M. Singhvi Committee (1986) is incorrectly matched. It is primarily known for recommending constitutional recognition of Panchayati Raj Institutions, which later led to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The recommendation of “regular elections and District Development Commissioner” is associated with the G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985), not the Singhvi Committee.

Q45. D

The concept of **Basic Structure** was first evolved in the **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)**, where the Supreme Court held that Parliament cannot alter the basic structure of the Constitution. However, the Court did **not specifically include “effective access to justice”** as a component of the basic structure in this case.

In the **Minerva Mills case (1980)**, the Court reaffirmed the **limited amending power of Parliament** and emphasized the balance between **Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles**, but again, it did not explicitly recognize “effective access to justice” as part of the basic structure.

The **Central Coal Fields Ltd. case (1980)** dealt with service and industrial matters and is **not associated with the evolution of the Basic Structure doctrine**

It was in the **I.R. Coelho case (2007)** that the Supreme Court expanded the understanding of the basic structure and held that laws placed in the **Ninth Schedule** are subject to judicial review if they violate fundamental rights forming part of the basic structure. In this broader interpretation, the Court emphasized elements such as **judicial review and access to justice**, thereby recognizing **“effective access to justice” as part of the basic structure.**

Q46 . B

The distinction between a **Money Bill (Article 110)** and a **Financial Bill (II) (Article 117(3))** lies in their **content, procedure, and the role of the Rajya Sabha.**

A **Money Bill requires the President’s recommendation** for introduction, whereas a **Financial Bill (II)** also requires such recommendation—but specifically **before it is passed**, not necessarily for introduction in the same strict sense. The statement wrongly suggests that a Money Bill does not require it. (Statement I is incorrect)

A **Money Bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha**, while a **Financial Bill (II)** can be introduced in **either House of Parliament**, making this a key procedural difference. (Statement II is correct)

The **Rajya Sabha cannot amend a Money Bill**; it can only make **recommendations**, which the Lok Sabha may accept or reject. In contrast, for a **Financial Bill (II)**, the Rajya Sabha has **full legislative powers**, including the power to amend. (Statement III is incorrect.)

A **Money Bill** deals strictly with matters listed in **Article 110** (such as taxation, borrowing, Consolidated Fund, etc.), whereas a **Financial Bill (II)** involves expenditure from the **Consolidated Fund of India** but does **not exclusively deal with Article 110 matters**, which is why it is treated differently. (Statement IV is correct.)

Q47 . A

The **Attorney General of India (AGI)**, provided under **Article 76**, is the **highest law officer of the Union Government**, but his position is **distinct from a regular government employee**.

the Attorney General is **not a full-time counsel**. Unlike government servants, he is allowed to **engage in private legal practice**, except in matters where there may be a conflict with government interests. This flexibility reflects the nature of the office as a **constitutional legal advisor**, not a salaried, full-time executive post. (Statement I is incorrect)

To prevent **conflict of interest**, the Attorney General is subject to certain restrictions. He **cannot accept directorships in companies or corporations without prior permission of the Government of India**, and he is also restricted from advising or appearing against the government in legal matters. (Statement II is correct)

The Attorney General **does not fall under the category of a government servant**. He does not enjoy the protections, service conditions, or disciplinary framework applicable to civil servants. Instead, he holds office **at the pleasure of the President**, and his relationship with the government is more **professional and advisory** in nature. (Statement III is correct)

Additionally, the Attorney General has certain **special privileges**:

- He has the **right to speak and participate in proceedings of both Houses of Parliament and their committees**
- However, he **does not have the right to vote**
- He represents the Government of India in the **Supreme Court and other courts**

Q48 . C

The Indian constitutional framework is based on the principle of constitutional supremacy, not parliamentary sovereignty as seen in countries like the UK.

The Indian Parliament is not sovereign. Its powers are limited by the Constitution, and any law it makes can be reviewed by the judiciary under the power of judicial review. If a law violates constitutional provisions, especially Fundamental Rights or the Basic Structure, it can be struck down by the courts. (Statement I is correct)

The Constitution of India is the supreme law of the land, and all organs of the State—legislature, executive, and judiciary—derive their powers and authority from it. This establishes a clear hierarchy where the Constitution is above all institutions. (Statement II is also correct)

The implication of both statements together is that Parliament functions within the framework of the Constitution, and not above it. Therefore, both statements correctly reflect this constitutional principle.

Q49 . B

Article 32 is one of the most important provisions of the Constitution, often described by **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the “heart and soul” of the Constitution**, because it guarantees the **right to constitutional remedies**.

Article 32 is **strictly limited to the enforcement of Fundamental Rights**. It cannot be used for enforcing ordinary legal or statutory rights. That broader power is available to the **High Courts under Article 226**, which can issue writs not only for Fundamental Rights but also for **“any other purpose.”** This is a key distinction frequently tested in exams. (Statement I is incorrect)

The Supreme Court’s jurisdiction under Article 32 is **original**, meaning a person can directly approach it without going through lower courts. However, it is **not exclusive**, because High Courts also have the power to enforce Fundamental Rights under Article 226. In fact, High Courts have **wider jurisdiction** than the Supreme Court in this context. (Statement II is correct)

There is **no constitutional requirement** to approach the High Court first before moving the Supreme Court. However, as a matter of judicial practice, the Supreme Court may sometimes advise petitioners to approach the High Court first, but this is **not a legal mandate**. (Statement III is incorrect)

While **Parliament can empower other courts to issue writs**, this does **not override or diminish the powers of the Supreme Court under Article 32**. The power of the Supreme Court to enforce Fundamental Rights is part of the **Basic Structure of the Constitution**, and therefore cannot be curtailed even by constitutional amendment. (Statement IV is incorrect)

Q50 . B

The concept of a **Curative Petition** is a judicial innovation developed by the Supreme Court to address **gross miscarriage of justice even after the dismissal of a Review Petition**.

The Curative Petition was evolved in the **Rupa Ashok Hurra v. Ashok Hurra (2002)** case. Its purpose is to ensure that the Supreme Court can correct its own judgments in rare and exceptional cases to prevent abuse of process and miscarriage of justice. (Statement I is correct)

A Curative Petition can be filed **only after a Review Petition under Article 137 has been dismissed**, making it the **last judicial remedy** available in the Indian legal system. (Statement II is correct)

A Curative Petition must be **certified by a Senior Advocate**, confirming that it meets the strict requirements laid down by the Court. This ensures that only genuine and serious cases are entertained. (Statement III is correct)

A Curative Petition is **not necessarily heard in open court**. In fact, it is generally decided by judges **in chambers (in-camera proceedings)** unless the Court specifically directs otherwise. The statement is a trap because it assumes greater transparency at this stage, whereas the process is actually more restrictive. (Statement IV is incorrect)

Q51 . A

The question tests conceptual clarity regarding different legal doctrines used in Indian constitutional and equity jurisprudence. These doctrines are frequently used by courts to balance legislative intent, fairness, and protection of Fundamental Rights.

The **Doctrine of Severability** is a well-established principle in constitutional law. It ensures that when a part of a law violates Fundamental Rights, only that specific offending portion is struck down, while the remaining valid part continues to operate, provided it is separable. This reflects judicial restraint and respect for legislative intent. Hence, Statement I is correct.

The **Clean Hands Doctrine** is derived from equity principles and is widely applied in Indian courts, especially in writ jurisdiction. It requires that a person approaching the court must act in good faith and must not suppress material facts or engage in unfair conduct related to the case. Courts may deny relief if the petitioner is found to have acted dishonestly. Since writ remedies are discretionary, this doctrine plays an important role in maintaining the integrity of judicial processes. Therefore, Statement II is correct.

The **Doctrine of Eclipse**, however, is often misunderstood and forms a classic UPSC trap. It applies to laws that are inconsistent with Fundamental Rights. Such laws are **not void ab initio (completely null from the beginning)**. Instead, they become **inoperative or dormant** to the extent of inconsistency. The law is said to be under an “eclipse” — it is overshadowed but not dead. If the inconsistency is removed (for example, through a constitutional amendment), the law can revive automatically without re-enactment. Therefore, Statement III is incorrect.

- The key distinction UPSC tests here is between “**void**” and “**inoperative**” — a frequent source of confusion.
- Questions often mix **constitutional doctrines (Severability, Eclipse)** with **equity doctrines (Clean Hands)** to test depth of understanding.
- Such questions are typically framed in a “**How many statements are incorrect**” format, requiring precise elimination rather than guesswork.

Thus, only one statement is incorrect.

Q52 . B

The concept of **“due process of law”** is not explicitly mentioned in the Indian Constitution. Article 21 uses the phrase **“procedure established by law”**, which originally meant that any procedure enacted by a valid law would be sufficient, regardless of its fairness. Therefore, Statement I is incorrect.

However, this narrow interpretation was expanded by the Supreme Court, particularly in *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*. The Court held that the procedure must be **just, fair, and reasonable**, thereby effectively incorporating the essence of due process into Indian constitutional law. Hence, Statement II is correct.

The core idea of due process is that laws should not only follow proper procedure but must also be **substantively fair and non-arbitrary**. This makes Statement III correct.

- Article 21 is a **high-frequency area with evolving meaning**
- The shift from **procedure-based to fairness-based interpretation** is a key conceptual trap

Q53 . B

The appointment of District Judges is governed by **Article 233 of the Constitution**, which ensures judicial independence at the district level.

District Judges are **not appointed by the President**, but by the **Governor of the State**, making Statement I incorrect.

The Constitution mandates that such appointments must be made **in consultation with the High Court**, which plays a crucial role in safeguarding judicial independence. Hence, Statement II is correct.

Additionally, eligibility conditions include:

- The candidate must **not already be in government service**, and
- Must have **at least 7 years of experience as an advocate or pleader**

Q54 . B

Zonal Councils are **not constitutional bodies**, which makes Statement I incorrect. They do not derive their authority from the Constitution.

They were established under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, to facilitate coordination among states and between the Centre and states. Hence, Statement II is correct.

Their main function is to:

- Promote **cooperative federalism**
- Resolve **interstate disputes**
- Encourage **regional planning and coordination**

Thus, Statement III is also correct.

Q55 . B

The **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India to regulate the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections.

The MCC is indeed **issued and enforced by the Election Commission**, making Statement I correct.

However, it is **not a law** and is **not part of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**. It is **not legally enforceable** in itself, although violations may attract action under other laws. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

The MCC comes into effect **immediately after the announcement of the election schedule** by the Election Commission, ensuring a level playing field. Thus, Statement III is correct.

Q56 . C

The **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution** is a unique feature of Indian federalism designed to accommodate the distinct socio-cultural and administrative needs of tribal populations in the **North-Eastern region**. It provides for **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** with legislative, administrative, and judicial powers, thereby ensuring a degree of self-governance.

Statement I is correct. The Sixth Schedule currently applies to tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**. These areas have been granted autonomy due to their distinct ethnic composition and historical context.

The Autonomous District Councils are empowered to:

- Make laws on subjects like **land, forest (other than reserved forests), shifting cultivation, village administration, and customs**
- However, these laws require the **assent of the Governor**, ensuring constitutional oversight

The provisions of the Sixth Schedule **cannot be extended by a simple executive order**. Any such extension requires a **constitutional amendment**, as the Schedule is part of the Constitution. This is a classic UPSC trap distinguishing **executive action vs constitutional process**.

In recent years, there have been **demands from regions such as Ladakh and certain tribal areas in other states** for inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. These demands are often linked to:

- Protection of **land rights**
- Preservation of **cultural identity**
- Greater **administrative autonomy**

Q57 . B

The **Secretariat of Parliament** is an essential institutional mechanism that ensures the smooth functioning of legislative business in both Houses—Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. It provides administrative, procedural, and research support to Members of Parliament and the Presiding Officers.

Each House of Parliament has its own independent secretariat:

- **Lok Sabha Secretariat** works under the **Speaker**
- **Rajya Sabha Secretariat** works under the **Chairman (Vice-President of India)**

This arrangement ensures autonomy of the legislature from the executive. Therefore, Statement I is correct.

The Parliamentary Secretariat **does not function under the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs**. The Ministry acts as a coordinating body between the government and Parliament, but it does not control the internal functioning of the Houses. The Secretariats are **independent of executive control**, making Statement II incorrect.

The recruitment and service conditions of officers and staff of each Secretariat are governed by:

- **Rules made by the respective House**, and
- In some cases, by laws enacted by Parliament

This provides institutional independence and administrative control within the legislature itself. Hence, Statement III is correct.

Q58 . B

The Parliamentary form of government in India is based on the principle of executive accountability to the legislature. The Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, functions as the real executive and is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. This means that the ministry must enjoy the confidence of the Lok Sabha and can be removed by a vote of no-confidence. Hence, Statement I is correct.

The Prime Minister is appointed by the President, but the Constitution does not mandate that the person must be a member of the Lok Sabha at the time of appointment. A person who is not a member of either House can be appointed as Prime Minister, but must become a member of Parliament within six months. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

In the Indian system, the President is the nominal executive, while the real executive authority is exercised by the Council of Ministers led by the Prime Minister. Decisions are taken in the name of the President but are actually made by the elected government. Hence, Statement III is correct.

- The system is characterized by dual executive: nominal (President) and real (Prime Minister and Council of Ministers)
- It ensures accountability through mechanisms such as Question Hour, motions, and debates
- Fusion of powers exists between legislature and executive as ministers are members of Parliament

Q59. B

The Preamble reflects the philosophy and objectives of the Constitution. In the landmark judgment of the Kesavananda Bharati case, the Supreme Court held that the Preamble is a part of the Constitution and can be amended under Article 368, provided that its basic structure is not altered. Hence, Statement I is correct.

The Preamble is not a source of power. It does not confer any substantive powers on the legislature or executive. Instead, it serves as an interpretative tool to understand the intent and spirit of the Constitution. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

The Preamble contains key values such as sovereignty, socialism, secularism, democracy, republic, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. These principles form part of the basic structure of the Constitution, which cannot be destroyed by amendment. Hence, Statement III is correct.

- The words "Socialist," "Secular," and "Integrity" were added by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976
- It serves as a guiding framework for constitutional interpretation
- It reflects the aspirations of the people and the nature of the Indian state

Q60. B

Constitutional morality refers to fidelity to the core principles and values embedded in the Constitution such as justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, rule of law, and dignity of the individual. It requires that institutions and individuals act not merely in accordance with the literal provisions of the Constitution but in a manner that sustains its spirit and democratic ethos. Option (a) is limited to textual compliance and ignores underlying values, hence incorrect. Option (c) reflects majoritarian supremacy, which is constrained in a constitutional democracy by Fundamental Rights and rule of law. Option (d) relates to constitutional conventions, which are practices developed over time but are distinct from the normative framework of constitutional morality.

- It acts as a safeguard against arbitrary and majoritarian exercise of power
- It guides judicial interpretation in expanding rights and preserving constitutional values
- It ensures that governance remains aligned with the transformative vision of the Constitution

Q61 . B

Article 30 is a Fundamental Right that protects the cultural and educational rights of minorities in India. It ensures that minorities, both religious and linguistic, have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, thereby preserving their distinct identity. Hence, Statement I is correct.

The protection is not limited to religious minorities alone; linguistic minorities are equally covered under Article 30. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

The State has the authority to impose reasonable regulations on minority educational institutions in the interest of maintaining academic standards, ensuring fairness, and promoting excellence. However,

such regulations must not interfere with the essential right of administration or dilute the minority character of the institution. Hence, Statement III is correct.

- Article 30 is linked with Article 29 which protects cultural rights
- Minority status is determined at the state level
- Rights under Article 30 are not absolute but subject to reasonable regulation

Q62. D

Article 93 provides that the Lok Sabha shall choose two of its members to be the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker as soon as possible after its formation. This reflects the importance of these offices in ensuring the smooth functioning of the House. Hence, Statement I is correct.

The Constitution does not prescribe any specific time limit for the election of the Deputy Speaker. The phrase “as soon as may be” is not legally defined and allows flexibility, which in practice has led to delays in election. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

The Deputy Speaker, being a member of the Lok Sabha, vacates office upon dissolution of the House. Unlike the Speaker, who continues until the first sitting of the new Lok Sabha, the Deputy Speaker does not continue after dissolution. Hence, Statement III is incorrect.

- The Deputy Speaker is elected by the Lok Sabha from among its members
- By convention, the post is often offered to the opposition
- The Deputy Speaker presides over the House in the absence of the Speaker

Q63 . C

Contempt of court refers to acts or omissions that interfere with the authority, administration, or dignity of a court of law. The Constitution of India confers specific powers on higher courts to deal with such acts in order to ensure the effective administration of justice.

Article 129 declares the Supreme Court as a court of record and grants it the power to punish for contempt of itself. Similarly, Article 215 declares that every High Court shall be a court of record and shall have the power to punish for contempt of itself. Therefore, both the Supreme Court and High Courts possess constitutional authority to deal with contempt proceedings, making Statement I correct.

The statutory framework governing contempt is provided by the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**. The Act defines civil and criminal contempt and prescribes penalties. According to the Act, the maximum punishment that may be imposed for contempt is simple imprisonment for a term up to six months, or a fine which may extend to two thousand rupees, or both. Hence, Statement II is correct.

- Civil contempt involves willful disobedience of any judgment, decree, direction, order, writ, or undertaking given to a court
- Criminal contempt includes acts that scandalize the court, prejudice judicial proceedings, or obstruct administration of justice
- The law also recognizes that fair and reasonable criticism of judicial acts does not amount to contempt

Q64 . A

Article 143 provides for the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, enabling the President to refer questions of law or fact that are of public importance. The Court may consider such questions and provide its opinion after due deliberation, making Statement I correct.

The opinion rendered by the Supreme Court under Article 143 is advisory in nature and not binding on the President. The President may choose to act according to the opinion or may disregard it. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

- The Supreme Court may decline to give opinion in certain cases
- Advisory jurisdiction is not the same as adjudicatory jurisdiction
- It is invoked in matters of constitutional and national importance

Q65 . B

Tribunals in India derive their framework partly from the Constitution and partly from statutory provisions. Articles 323A and 323B empower Parliament to establish Administrative Tribunals and other specialized tribunals for adjudication of disputes in specified matters, making Statement I correct.

The jurisdiction of tribunals does not completely exclude judicial review by High Courts. The Supreme Court has held that the power of judicial review under Articles 226 and 227 is part of the basic structure of the Constitution and cannot be ousted. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

The National Green Tribunal was established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, which is a law enacted by Parliament, making Statement III correct.

- Tribunals function as quasi-judicial bodies dealing with specialized subjects
- They are intended to reduce burden on regular courts
- Decisions of tribunals are subject to scrutiny by constitutional courts

Q66 . A

A Private Member's Bill is introduced by any Member of Parliament who is not a Minister. It represents the legislative initiative of individual MPs and allows them to propose laws or highlight issues independent of the government's legislative agenda. Hence, Statement I is correct.

A Private Member's Bill can be introduced in either House of Parliament, that is, both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. There is no constitutional or procedural restriction confining it only to the Lok Sabha. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.

It is incorrect to state that no Private Member's Bill has ever been enacted into law in India. Although their passage is rare, several such Bills have been successfully passed by Parliament and received Presidential assent. One notable example is the **Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Act, 1970**, which originated as a Private Member's Bill. Another example is the **Proceedings of Legislature (Protection of Publication) Act, 1956**, which also began as a Private Member's Bill. Hence, Statement III is incorrect.

- Private Member's Bills require prior notice, generally one month before introduction, to the Secretariat of the concerned House
- They are usually taken up for discussion on Fridays, which are reserved for non-government business
- The procedure for passage is the same as that of Government Bills, including consideration, passage in both Houses, and assent of the President
- Despite procedural equality, the success rate is very low due to lack of government support and limited time allocation
- They serve as an important instrument for legislative debate, policy innovation, and highlighting public concerns within Parliament

Q67 . B

The Lokpal is a key institution in India's anti-corruption framework, established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 to promote accountability and transparency in public administration.

(Statement I is incorrect) While the Act indeed provides that the Lokpal shall consist of a Chairperson and up to eight members. The provision is:

- **Actual provision: At least 50% of the members shall be from SC/ST/OBC/Minorities/Women categories, and not necessarily judicial members**
- Further, judicial members must be present, but they do not need to constitute half of the total membership.

(Statement II is correct). The jurisdiction of Lokpal is deliberately wide to ensure comprehensive anti-corruption coverage. It includes:

- Serving and former public servants
- Prime Minister, Ministers, MPs (with conditions)
- Government officials across all groups (A to D)
- Employees of bodies, societies, trusts, or NGOs receiving substantial government funding

This inclusion is significant because it extends accountability beyond formal government structures to entities that utilize public funds, reflecting a broader understanding of corruption.

Q68 . C

The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 (originally introduced as the 2024 Bill) is one of the most significant and debated legislative reforms in recent Indian history. It fundamentally alters how Muslim religious and charitable endowments (Waqf) are managed.

Abolition of "Waqf by User"

This change addresses how a property qualifies as a religious endowment.

- **Definition of "Waqf by User":** Under the 1995 Act, if a piece of land had been used for religious purposes (like a graveyard, mosque, or idgah) for decades, it was automatically considered Waqf, even if the original owner hadn't signed a formal document.
- **The New Mandate:** The 2025 Amendment mandates that only "Waqf by Deed" is valid. A property is only recognized as Waqf if there is a formal, registered "Waqf-nama" (legal instrument).
- **Requirement of "Vakif":** The person creating the Waqf (the Vakif) must have been the lawful owner of the property and must be a person practicing Islam for at least five years.
- **Objective:** The government's intent is to prevent "frivolous claims" over public or private land where no legal paperwork exists. It aims to make Waqf titles as verifiable as any other real estate title in India.

Enhanced Authority of the District Collector:

This shift moves the "deciding power" from religious boards to state administrative officials.

- **Repeal of Section 40:** Previously, the Waqf Board had the power to conduct an inquiry and declare any property as "Waqf land." Their decision was often final unless challenged in a Tribunal. This section has been deleted.
- **The Collector as Arbiter:** Under the new law, if there is a dispute regarding whether a property is "Government land" or "Waqf land," the District Collector will conduct the inquiry.
- **Revenue Record Integration:** The Collector's primary task is to cross-check claims against state revenue records. If the property is identified as Government land in the records, it will be updated as such, and the Waqf claim will be dismissed.
- **Interim Power:** Until the Collector finishes the inquiry and submits a report to the State Government, the property cannot be treated as Waqf.

Q69 . A

Money Bill:

The concept of a Money Bill is defined under Article 110 of the Constitution. It is a special category of financial legislation that deals exclusively with specified financial matters.

Option (a) is correct because a Bill qualifies as a **Money Bill only if it contains exclusively provisions related to:**

- Taxation (imposition, abolition, regulation)
- Borrowing of money by the Government of India
- Custody or withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund of India
- Appropriation of money
- Additionally, a crucial procedural feature is that the Bill must be certified as a Money Bill by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, whose decision is final.
- not every Bill with financial implications is a Money Bill. Many such Bills are classified as Financial Bills, which follow a different procedure.

- In the case of a Money Bill:
- Lok Sabha has dominant power
- **Rajya Sabha can only make recommendations**
- It must return the Bill within 14 days

Money Bill:

- **Can be introduced only in Lok Sabha**
- Rajya Sabha has no veto power

Q70 . B

The office of the Leader of Opposition is a critical component of the Westminster model of democracy, ensuring accountability and a "Government-in-waiting."

- **Legal and Constitutional Status:** Contrary to common belief, the **LoP is not mentioned in the Constitution of India**. It was initially a matter of parliamentary convention. It received official statutory recognition only through the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977. This Act defines the LoP as the leader of the party in opposition to the Government having the greatest numerical strength. (Statement I is incorrect)
- **The "10% Rule":** To be formally recognized as the LoP, the leader's party must command at least one-tenth (10%) of the total strength of the House. This requirement is known as the Mavalankar Rule, named after the first Speaker, G.V. Mavalankar. If no party meets these criteria, the House may function without a formal LoP, although the leader of the Single Largest Opposition Party (SLOP) is often invited to selection committees via specific legislative amendments.
- **Powers and Role:** The LoP is accorded the rank, salary, and perks equivalent to a Cabinet Minister. Beyond criticizing government policies, the LoP plays a structural role in governance by sitting on high-level selection committees, including:
 - The Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC)
 - The Central Information Commissioner (CIC)
 - The Director of the CBI
 - The Lokpal
 - The Chairperson of the NHRC

Q71 . A

Finance Commission of India:

The Finance Commission of India is a key constitutional body under Article 280, designed to manage fiscal federalism in India. It acts as a neutral arbiter between the Union and the States, ensuring equitable distribution of financial resources.

(Statement I is correct.) **One of the important functions of the Finance Commission, especially after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments**, is to recommend measures to augment the Consolidated Fund

of a State so that States can better support local self-government institutions like Panchayats. This reflects the deepening of grassroots fiscal decentralisation.

- The Commission suggests how States can strengthen finances of Panchayats
- This ensures better delivery of local public goods
- It links Union fiscal transfers indirectly with local governance

(Statement II is also correct.) **A core constitutional mandate of the Finance Commission is to recommend the principles governing grants-in-aid to States from the Consolidated Fund of India.**

- These grants help bridge fiscal deficits of States
- Support special category or weaker States
- Promote balanced regional development

Thus, grants-in-aid are an essential instrument for correcting vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalances.

(Statement III is incorrect.) The Finance Commission does not deal with non-tax revenue sharing. **Its jurisdiction is limited to:**

- **Distribution of net proceeds of taxes between Union and States (vertical devolution)**
- **Distribution among States (horizontal devolution)**

Non-tax revenues such as:

- Fees
- Dividends
- Spectrum revenues

Q72 . A

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is an important investigative agency dealing with economic offences, particularly under **the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)**. The question tests both legal provisions and institutional nature.

(Statement I is correct.) The ED, like any authority involved in judicial proceedings, can approach constitutional courts to ensure a fair trial.

- Under Article 32 → Supreme Court
- Under Article 226 → High Courts
- It may seek transfer of cases if:
 - There is apprehension of bias
 - Local conditions affect fairness
 - Witnesses or evidence are at risk

This reflects the broader constitutional principle that fair trial is part of Article 21.

(Statement II is correct.) Under PMLA, statements recorded by ED officers are admissible as evidence in court, which marks a significant departure from ordinary criminal law.

- Normally, confessions to police are inadmissible
- But ED officers are not treated as “police officers” in the strict legal sense
- Hence, statements recorded by them carry evidentiary value

This position has been upheld in cases such as the *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary (2022)* judgment, making it highly relevant for UPSC.

(Statement III is incorrect.) **The ED is not a statutory body created by PMLA.**

- It is an executive agency under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance
- It existed prior to PMLA (origin in 1956)
- PMLA only confers powers, not establishes the institution

Q73 . A

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG):

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is a crucial constitutional authority under Article 148, designed to ensure financial accountability of the executive to the legislature

(Statement I is correct.) The CAG audits government accounts and submits reports to the President, which are then laid before Parliament. These reports broadly fall into three categories:

- **Appropriation Accounts:** Examine whether government expenditure was in accordance with parliamentary approval
- **Finance Accounts:** Provide a detailed picture of the government’s financial position
- **Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs):** Audit of government companies and corporations

(Statement II is also correct.) The audit process does not end with submission of reports. The Public Accounts Committee of India (PAC), a parliamentary committee, scrutinizes these reports in detail. Its role is central to legislative oversight:

- It examines irregularities and audit objections raised by CAG
- It ensures that public money is spent efficiently and lawfully
- It submits its findings back to Parliament

Thus, PAC acts as the operational arm of Parliament’s financial control, using CAG reports as its primary input.

(Statement III is incorrect) The CAG is often loosely described as a “**friend and guide of Parliament,**” but **constitutionally, it is not an officer of Parliament.** Instead:

- It is an independent constitutional authority
- Appointed by the President
- Removed in the same manner as a Supreme Court judge (ensuring independence)
- Not subordinate to either executive or legislature
- CAG reports are submitted to the President and laid before Parliament
- PAC depends heavily on CAG findings

Q74. C

- The Delimitation Commission plays a crucial role in ensuring fair political representation by redrawing constituency boundaries based on population changes. It is a high-powered, independent body whose decisions have finality and binding force.
- **The orders of the Delimitation Commission have the force of law and cannot be challenged in any court.**
- This is a very important constitutional feature designed to:
 - Prevent prolonged litigation that may delay elections
 - Ensure certainty and finality in electoral boundaries
 - Maintain neutrality and independence of the process
- Once the Commission publishes its final orders in the Gazette, they become legally binding.
- The Commission's orders, once laid before the Lok Sabha (and State Legislative Assemblies), cannot be modified or altered.
- This provision ensures:
 - No political interference in delimitation
 - Preservation of the independent character of the Commission
 - Avoidance of partisan gerrymandering

Thus, **Parliament does not have the power to amend or reject the orders**—this is a unique exception in India's legislative framework where executive/independent body decisions override legislative discretion.

- The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President of India under the Delimitation Commission Acts enacted by Parliament (e.g., 1952, 1962, 1972, 2002).
- Its composition typically includes:
 - A retired Supreme Court judge (Chairperson)
 - The Chief Election Commissioner or nominee (member)
 - State Election Commissioners of concerned states
- **Thus, it works in close coordination with the Election Commission of India, especially in matters of electoral rolls and logistics.**

Q75 . A

Prison administration in India reflects the federal distribution of powers as well as evolving penological approaches—from punishment-centric to reformative justice.

- (Statement I is incorrect.) 'Prisons' and 'persons detained therein' are listed under **Entry 4 of the State List (List II) in the Seventh Schedule, not the Concurrent List**. This means that State Governments have primary legislative and administrative authority over prisons. This is a standard UPSC trap where subjects are often confused between State and Concurrent Lists.
- (Statement II is correct.) The Model Prison Act, 2023 has been proposed to replace the colonial-era Prisons Act, 1894. **The 1894 Act was largely custodial and punitive in nature, focusing on discipline and security. In contrast, the Model Act reflects modern penological principles, emphasizing:**
 - Rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners
 - Use of technology (e-prisons, surveillance systems)
 - Focus on correctional administration
 - Provisions for legal aid, skill development, and reintegration
- **Although it is a "Model" Act (not automatically binding), it serves as a guiding framework for states to update their prison laws.**
- (Statement III is correct.) Since prisons fall under the State List, their management and administration are exclusively handled by State Governments. This includes staffing, infrastructure, prison reforms, and implementation of laws. However, the Union can influence policy through model laws, advisories, and schemes.

Q76 . B

- The UPSC represents the institutionalization of merit-based civil services recruitment in India and has evolved through colonial legislation into a constitutional authority.
- The UPSC is explicitly provided for under Articles 315 to 323 of the Constitution of India, making it a constitutional body.
- It is responsible for conducting examinations for recruitment to All India Services, Central Services, and advising the government on matters related to appointments, promotions, and disciplinary actions. (Statement I is correct.)
- The idea of establishing a Public Service Commission in India can be traced to the Government of India Act, 1919, which first recognized the need for such a body.
- However, the commission was actually established in 1926 following the recommendations of the Lee Commission (1924) (Statement II is correct.)
- The recommendations made by UPSC are advisory in nature, not binding on the government.
- However, Article 323 mandates that the government must place before Parliament an annual report explaining cases where UPSC advice was not accepted. This creates a mechanism of indirect accountability without restricting executive discretion. (Statement III is incorrect.)

Q77 . A

- The role of the Governor has been a subject of constitutional debate, especially regarding delays in assenting to Bills.
- The Supreme Court, in recent rulings, has emphasized that the Governor is not an independent authority, but a constitutional functionary expected to act within the framework of parliamentary democracy.
- Statement I is incorrect. While Article 163 provides that the Governor acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, **there are limited discretionary powers (e.g., reservation of Bills, reporting constitutional breakdown)**. Hence, it is incorrect to say, "without exception."

- Statement II is correct. Under Article 200, the Governor may reserve a Bill for the consideration of the President, especially in cases involving constitutional questions, conflict with central laws, or matters affecting national interest.
- Statement III is incorrect. **The Constitution does not prescribe any fixed time limit for the Governor to act on Bills.**
- However, the Supreme Court has recently criticized undue delays and emphasized that such inaction violates the spirit of constitutional governance and federalism.

Q78 . A

- **The RFCTLARR Act, 2013** represents a significant shift from the colonial-era Land Acquisition Act, 1894 by introducing transparency, participatory processes, and enhanced compensation mechanisms in land acquisition. It attempts to balance developmental needs with the rights of landowners and affected families.
- Statement I is correct. **One of the core features of the Act is the requirement of a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) before acquisition**, which evaluates the potential socio-economic consequences on affected communities. Additionally, the Act mandates prior consent of at least 80% of affected families in case of private projects and 70% in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects. This ensures participatory decision-making and reduces arbitrary state action.
- Statement II is incorrect. **Land is primarily a State subject under Entry 18 of the State List (List II) in the Seventh Schedule.** However, acquisition and requisitioning of property is placed in the Concurrent List (Entry 42, List III), allowing both Parliament and State Legislatures to make laws. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that Parliament has exclusive competence. This reflects India's quasi-federal structure, where both levels of government share legislative authority in key areas.
- Statement III is incorrect. While certain sectors such as defence, railways, and atomic energy are exempted from procedural requirements like SIA and consent in specific cases, the Act clearly mandates that provisions related to compensation and **Rehabilitation & Resettlement (R&R) must still be followed.** This ensures that affected persons are not deprived of fair compensation even in strategic or critical projects.
- Key takeaways:
 - RFCTLARR Act institutionalizes transparency, consent, and accountability in land acquisition
 - It enhances compensation (up to 4× in rural and 2× in urban areas)
 - It integrates welfare measures through Rehabilitation & Resettlement provisions
 - Land remains a sensitive federal subject involving both Centre and States
 - The Act reflects a rights-based approach compared to the coercive framework of 1894 law

Q79 . C

Q80 . A

- Article 21 guarantees that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. Over time, the Supreme Court has expansively interpreted this provision to include various derivative rights essential for a dignified human existence.

- Statement I is correct. The “right to life” under Article 21 has been interpreted to mean more than mere animal existence. It includes the right to live with dignity, covering aspects such as health, education, livelihood, and humane conditions of life.
- Statement II is correct. In the recent judgment of *Amar Jain v. Union of India* (2025), the Supreme Court held that inclusive digital access, including accessible digital KYC processes, is an integral part of Article 21. The Court emphasized that denial of such access excludes vulnerable groups from welfare and governance, thereby affecting their right to a dignified life.
- Statement III is incorrect. The right to equality before law is guaranteed under Article 14, not Article 21, although both may operate together in ensuring fairness and non-arbitrariness.
- Statement IV is correct. The right to privacy has been recognized as a fundamental right under Article 21 in the landmark judgment of *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India* (2017). It includes informational privacy, bodily autonomy, and decisional freedom.
 - Article 21 has evolved through judicial interpretation into a repository of multiple rights
 - Courts often read Articles 14, 19, and 21 together (Golden Triangle doctrine) to ensure substantive due process
 - The recent ruling expands Article 21 into the digital domain, addressing issues of accessibility and inclusion
 - It also reflects the linkage between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles (e.g., Article 38) in promoting social justice

Q81 . A

- Pair I is correct. Sikkim became the 22nd state of India in 1975 through the 36th Constitutional Amendment Act. This amendment added Article 371F, granting special provisions and formally integrating Sikkim into the Indian Union after a referendum. The completion of 50 years of its statehood makes it highly relevant.
- Pair II is correct. Goa attained statehood in 1987 via the 56th Constitutional Amendment Act. Earlier a Union Territory after liberation from Portuguese rule (1961), Goa was granted full statehood along with special provisions under Article 371I.
- Pair III is correct. Mizoram became a state in 1987 following the 53rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1986. This amendment inserted Article 371G, providing special protections for Mizo customary laws, religious practices, and land ownership, reflecting the unique socio-cultural context of the Northeast.
- Pair IV is incorrect. Uttarakhand (formerly Uttaranchal) was created in 2000 by the Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000 under Article 3, not by the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. The 1956 Act primarily reorganized states on linguistic lines and did not create Uttarakhand.

Q82 . A

- The Emergency provisions in the Indian Constitution (Part XVIII, Articles 352–360) provide extraordinary powers to the Union government to deal with exceptional situations such as war, breakdown of constitutional machinery, or financial instability.
- National Emergency is provided under Article 352 and can be proclaimed on grounds of war, external aggression, or armed rebellion. It has far-reaching implications, including centralization of power and impact on fundamental rights. (Pair I is correctly matched.)

- Article 356 deals with State Emergency, commonly known as President's Rule. It is imposed when the constitutional machinery in a state fails, allowing the Union to assume control of the state's governance. (Pair II is also correct)
- Financial Emergency under Article 360 can be declared when the financial stability or credit of India is threatened. Though never invoked so far, it empowers the Centre to control financial matters, including reduction of salaries of government officials. (Pair III is correct)
- Article 368 deals with the procedure for amendment of the Constitution, not the suspension of Fundamental Rights. Suspension of Fundamental Rights during Emergency is governed by Articles 358 and 359. Article 358 suspends freedoms under Article 19 during a National Emergency (on grounds of war or external aggression), while Article 359 allows the President to suspend the right to move courts for enforcement of certain Fundamental Rights. (Pair IV is incorrect)
 - Emergency provisions reflect a balance between flexibility and federalism
 - The 44th Constitutional Amendment introduced safeguards against misuse, especially for National Emergency
 - Article 20 and 21 cannot be suspended even during Emergency (post-44th Amendment)
 - Misuse of Article 356 in the past led to judicial scrutiny in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994), which limited arbitrary imposition of President's Rule

Q83 . C

- Personality rights in India are not governed by a single, dedicated legislation. Instead, they have evolved through judicial interpretation and are protected through a combination of constitutional provisions and existing statutory frameworks. This makes Statement I correct.
- The right to privacy, a core component of personality rights, was recognized as a fundamental right under Article 21 by the Supreme Court in the landmark *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India* (2017) judgment. This case forms the constitutional bedrock for protecting individual autonomy, dignity, and control over personal attributes. Hence, Statement II is also correct.
 - Personality rights include control over name, image, voice, likeness, and identity
 - They have both commercial (right to publicity) and non-commercial (right to privacy, dignity) aspects
 - Indian courts have protected these rights through cases like *Rajinikanth v. Varsha Productions* (2015)
 - Emerging challenges like AI-generated deepfakes have increased the relevance of personality rights in contemporary law

Thus, both statements correctly capture the constitutional and legal position of personality rights in India.

Q84 . C

The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025 proposes significant changes in the framework governing the tenure and accountability of the executive at both Union and State levels. It seeks to address concerns related to criminalization of politics and ethical governance.

- The Bill provides that the Prime Minister, Chief Minister, or any Minister shall be removed from office if they are arrested and remain in custody for 30 consecutive days for offences punishable with imprisonment of five years or more. This provision introduces a new ground for cessation of office based on prolonged detention, making Statement I correct.

- The proposed amendment specifically seeks to modify Articles 75 (Union Council of Ministers), 164 (State Council of Ministers), and 239AA (special provisions for Delhi), thereby extending its applicability across Union, States, and certain Union Territories. Hence, Statement II is correct.
- The removal under the Bill is not contingent upon conviction by a court of law. Instead, it is triggered by continued detention for a specified period, which marks a departure from the existing legal framework where disqualification generally follows conviction, not arrest. Therefore, Statement III is incorrect.
- The Bill explicitly provides that a Minister, Prime Minister, or Chief Minister who has ceased to hold office due to detention may be reappointed after release from custody. This provision allows restoration to office, making Statement IV correct.
- The Bill introduces an automatic cessation mechanism if resignation or advice for removal is not tendered by the 31st day of detention
 - It attempts to address the gap between arrest and conviction under the existing legal framework
 - The current law under the Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides for disqualification only upon conviction, not mere detention
 - The proposal raises issues relating to presumption of innocence, as removal is triggered without judicial determination of guilt
 - It also brings into focus concerns regarding potential misuse of investigative agencies and implications for federal balance and political stability

Q85 . A

- The National Medical Commission (NMC) is **the apex regulatory body for medical education and practice in India. It was established under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019**, which came into force on 25 September 2020.
- It replaced the earlier Medical Council of India (MCI) with the objective of improving transparency, accountability, and quality in medical education and healthcare regulation. Hence, Statement I is correct.
- The Commission is structured to include a Chairperson, ex officio members, and part-time members appointed by the Central Government. It operates through four autonomous boards dealing with undergraduate education, postgraduate education, assessment and rating of institutions, and ethics and registration of medical practitioners. Its functions include laying down policies, regulating standards, licensing medical practitioners, maintaining the National Medical Register, and overseeing professional conduct.
- **However, the NMC does not regulate fees for all seats in private medical colleges. Its authority extends only to a limited portion—up to 50% of seats in private medical institutions and deemed universities.** The remaining seats are left to market forces, which has raised concerns regarding high fees and accessibility. Therefore, Statement II is incorrect.
 - The NMC replaced the Medical Council of India to address issues of corruption and inefficiency in the earlier regulatory system
 - The Ethics and Medical Registration Board maintains the National Medical Register (NMR), a digital database of licensed practitioners
 - The Medical Assessment and Rating Board evaluates and accredits medical institutions
 - Concerns have been raised regarding limited representation of public health experts and non-medical stakeholders in its composition

- Issues such as delays in updating the National Medical Register and lack of robust grievance redressal mechanisms have been highlighted in recent assessments

Q86 . A

- Article 19(1)(a) guarantees the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression, but this right is not absolute and is subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).
- The Supreme Court, through its evolving jurisprudence, has developed multiple doctrinal tools to balance individual liberty with societal interests.
- Prior restraint refers to restrictions imposed before the expression is made public, such as pre-censorship of films or publications. While generally disfavoured in democratic systems, it is not completely unconstitutional in India and has been upheld in certain contexts like film certification to maintain public order and morality. Hence, Statement I is correct.
- The “clear and present danger” test, evolved through judicial interpretation, implies that speech can be restricted only when there is a proximate and imminent threat to public order or security. Indian courts have incorporated similar reasoning while assessing the validity of restrictions, ensuring that vague or distant threats are not used to curb expression. Therefore, Statement II is correct.
- Article 19(2) explicitly provides for reasonable restrictions on specific grounds such as sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, public order, decency, morality, contempt of court, defamation, and incitement to an offence. These restrictions must be narrowly tailored and constitutionally justified. Thus, Statement III is correct.
- Freedom of expression in India is not absolute. The Constitution itself places clear limitations through Article 19(2), and judicial interpretation has consistently upheld that individual liberty must be balanced with collective interests. Hence, Statement IV is incorrect.
 - Article 19(1)(a) is essential for democracy, dissent, and accountability
 - The concept of reasonable restriction ensures that state power is not arbitrary
 - Judicial doctrines like proportionality and proximity test strengthen free speech protection
 - Landmark cases such as *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* (2015) reinforced protection against vague and overbroad restrictions
 - The balance between liberty and order remains a core theme in Indian constitutional jurisprudence

Q87 . A

- The election of the Vice-President of India is governed by constitutional provisions, primarily Articles 63–71, with the superintendence, direction, and control vested in the Election Commission under Article 324.
- The Assertion (A) is correct. The Vice-President is elected by an electoral college consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha). The election follows the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote (STV), and voting is conducted by secret ballot. This ensures representation and fairness in the electoral process.
- The Reason (R) is also correct and directly explains the Assertion. A key distinction between the election of the President and the Vice-President lies in the composition of their respective electoral colleges. For the Vice-President, the electoral college includes all members of Parliament—both

elected and nominated members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. In contrast, the Presidential electoral college excludes nominated members and includes elected members of State Legislative Assemblies.

- This inclusion of nominated members in the Vice-Presidential election explains why the Constitution specifically defines the electoral college differently and necessitates a proportional representation system to reflect the diversity within Parliament. Hence, R correctly explains A.
- The Vice-President is not a member of either House of Parliament; if an MP is elected, they vacate their seat upon assuming office
- Qualification includes: Indian citizenship, minimum age of 35 years, and eligibility to be elected to Rajya Sabha
- The election is conducted under the supervision of the Election Commission of India
- Disputes related to the election are adjudicated by the Supreme Court of India, whose decision is final
- The system of proportional representation via STV ensures that the election reflects the collective will of Parliament rather than a simple majority

Thus, the question tests not just factual recall but the conceptual distinction between the electoral mechanisms of the President and Vice-President—an area frequently explored in UPSC Prelims.

Q88 . B

Under the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946**, the CBI requires **consent of the State government** to exercise its jurisdiction within that State. This consent can be either **general (blanket)** or **case-specific**.

Withdrawal of **general consent** only prevents the CBI from registering **new cases in that State without prior approval**. It does **not affect ongoing investigations or trials already pending** before courts. Those proceedings continue normally. (Statement 1 is incorrect)

The CBI can still exercise jurisdiction in certain categories of cases even in States that have withdrawn general consent. For instance, matters involving **Central Government employees**, or offences occurring in areas under **Union jurisdiction such as Railways**, can still be investigated. Railway property falls under the **Union List**, allowing continued CBI jurisdiction. (Statement 2 is correct)

The Supreme Court has clearly held (notably in cases like **Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights, 2010**) that **High Courts and the Supreme Court can direct a CBI investigation without State consent**. Thus, State consent is **not an absolute constitutional requirement** that overrides judicial powers. (Statement 3 is incorrect)

Q89 . D

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** regulates political parties under the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** and the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**. Political parties in India are broadly classified as **Recognized Parties** (National/State) and **Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs)**. In recent years, the ECI has taken administrative actions to **clean up inactive or non-compliant RUPPs**, especially those suspected of being shell entities or misusing benefits.

- The ECI does **not have explicit statutory power to de-register a political party solely for not contesting elections for a fixed period like ten years**. De-registration powers are limited and usually arise in cases like **fraud, registration obtained by misrepresentation, or violation of constitutional provisions**. (Option III is incorrect)
- **Free airtime on state-owned media (Doordarshan and Akashvani)** is provided only to **recognized political parties**, not to RUPPs. This is an important distinction. (Option III is incorrect)
- While RUPPs can be allotted a **common symbol**, the condition is not rigidly tied to contesting **exactly 5% of seats**. The criteria are more nuanced and based on ECI guidelines rather than a fixed percentage rule. (Option III is incorrect)
- The ECI has been actively **“de-listing” RUPPs** that are found to be **non-existent at their registered addresses or non-functional during physical verification**. This is part of administrative reforms to ensure transparency and accountability in the political system. (Option IV is correct).

Q90 . A

- The demand for including **Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule** is rooted in concerns over **protection of tribal identity, land rights, and local autonomy**. The **Fifth and Sixth Schedules** of the Constitution provide different frameworks for administration of tribal areas, and understanding their scope is key to this question.
- The **Sixth Schedule (under Article 244)** applies only to certain tribal areas in the **North-Eastern states (Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram)**. However, Ladakh is **not governed under the Fifth Schedule** either. It is a **Union Territory without a legislature**, administered directly by the Union. This makes the statement misleading. (Statement 1 is incorrect)
- If Ladakh is brought under the **Sixth Schedule**, it would lead to the creation of **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** with powers to make laws on subjects like **land, forest, water, agriculture, and social customs**. This would significantly enhance **local self-governance**, shifting certain powers away from the Union Territory administration. (Statement 2 is correct)
- The existing **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs)** in Leh and Kargil are **administrative bodies with limited powers**. They do **not enjoy the same legislative, judicial, and financial autonomy** as Sixth Schedule Autonomous District Councils, which have **constitutional backing and wider law-making powers**. (Statement 3 is incorrect.)

Q91 . B

- The **Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008** was enacted to establish **village-level courts** aimed at providing **speedy, inexpensive, and accessible justice** to rural populations. These courts are designed to reduce the burden on regular courts and promote **decentralized justice delivery**.
- A **Gram Nyayalaya has jurisdiction over both civil and criminal cases**, specifically petty offences and disputes notified under the Act. Hence, it is not limited to civil matters alone.
- The **Nyayadhikari (Presiding Officer)** of a Gram Nyayalaya is appointed by the **State Government in consultation with the High Court**, ensuring judicial independence along with administrative involvement. (Option II is correct)
- Gram Nyayalayas are **not strictly bound by the Indian Evidence Act, 1872**. They are allowed to follow **simplified procedures** and principles of natural justice to ensure speedy disposal of cases, which is a key feature of the Act.
- Appeals from Gram Nyayalayas do **not lie directly to the Supreme Court**. Instead, appeals in civil matters generally lie to the **District Court**, maintaining the regular judicial hierarchy.

Q92 . A

- The Cabinet Secretariat plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Union executive, particularly in coordinating the work of different ministries and facilitating Cabinet decision-making.
- The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for preparing the agenda for Cabinet meetings, circulating notes, recording decisions, and ensuring that the Transaction of Business Rules are properly followed during deliberations. It acts as the administrative backbone of Cabinet functioning. (Statement I is correct)
- The Cabinet Secretary, who is the senior-most civil servant in India, functions as the ex-officio Chairman of the Senior Selection Board (SSB). This body is involved in appointments under the Central Staffing Scheme, including the selection of officers at the level of Joint Secretaries. (Statement II is also correct)
- The Cabinet Secretariat does not function under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It operates directly under the Prime Minister, which ensures neutrality and effective coordination across ministries. This independence is essential for its role in inter-ministerial coordination. (Statement III is incorrect).

Q93 . C

The **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** is an administrative exercise conducted by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to ensure that electoral rolls are **accurate, updated, and free from duplication or errors**, making Statement I correct.

Statement II is correct and directly explains Statement I, as the process of **house-to-house verification and detailed field checks** is the mechanism through which accuracy and integrity of voter lists are ensured.

There is **no constitutional mandate** requiring SIR before every general election. It is conducted based on **administrative necessity and ECI's discretion**, not due to any constitutional provision. (Statement III is incorrect.)

Q94 . D

The proposed **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025** seeks to introduce a structured mechanism for the removal of high executive functionaries—such as the **Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and Ministers**—on grounds of “**proven misconduct**.” This marks a significant departure from the existing constitutional scheme.

The Bill proposes that the removal process can be initiated only through a **resolution supported by at least one-third of the total membership of the concerned House**, ensuring that the process is not triggered frivolously. (Statement I is correct)

It provides for an **independent judicial inquiry**, typically by a **Judicial Commission headed by a sitting Supreme Court Judge**, before any final decision is taken. The **President or Governor would act on the findings of this inquiry**, thereby introducing a quasi-judicial safeguard. (Statement II is also correct)

At present, Ministers hold office during the **pleasure of the President or Governor (Articles 75 and 164)**, which in practice operates on the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**. The proposed

amendment would **override or qualify this doctrine** by introducing a formal, rule-based removal mechanism for specified grounds like misconduct. (Statement III is correct)

Q95 . B

- This related recent judicial interpretations of the **Governor's role under Article 200**, especially concerning assent to Bills.
- Under the **first proviso to Article 200**, if the Governor **returns a Bill (other than a Money Bill)** and the Legislature passes it again, the Governor is **constitutionally bound to grant assent**. Recent Supreme Court observations have reinforced that this is a **mandatory obligation**, not discretionary. (Pair I is correct.)
- The Governor does have the option to **withhold assent**, but this **cannot be exercised arbitrarily or indefinitely**. The Supreme Court has emphasized that such powers are subject to **constitutional limitations and judicial review**, especially in cases of **unreasonable delay or misuse**. Therefore, the idea of an **absolute or indefinite veto is incorrect**. (Pair II is incorrect.)
- The Legislature can **re-pass a Bill only when it has been formally returned by the Governor with a message**. Without such return, there is no procedural basis for reconsideration and re-passage under Article 200. (Pair III is correct.)

Q96 . C

The 84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001 extended the freeze on the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies based on the 1971 Census. This freeze will continue until the figures of the first Census after 2026 are published. The objective was to ensure that States which successfully controlled population growth were not penalized in terms of representation. (Statement I is correct.)

The Delimitation Commission's orders, once published in the Gazette of India, have the force of law and cannot be challenged or modified by any court or even by Parliament. They are final and binding. This provision ensures independence and prevents political interference in the process of delimitation. The statement is misleading because it suggests that Parliament can modify these orders, which is not correct. (Statement II is incorrect.)

Q97. D

The **Election Commissioner (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023** was enacted to formalize the process of appointing the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** and **Election Commissioners (ECs)**.

The Act provides for a **Selection Committee** comprising the **Prime Minister (Chairperson)**, the **Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha**, and a **Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister**. (Statement I is correct.)

The Act effectively **replaces the interim mechanism laid down by the Supreme Court in the Anoop Baranwal (2023) judgment**, where the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** was part of the selection committee. Under the Act, the CJI is **no longer included**. (Statement II is also correct)

The Act establishes a **Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary**, which prepares a **panel of names** (commonly understood as a shortlist) for consideration by the Selection Committee. (Statement III is correct.)

While the Act may contain provisions regarding the **validity of appointments despite vacancies or defects in the Selection Committee**, it does **not completely bar judicial review**. Any claim that such appointments **“cannot be challenged in court”** is constitutionally untenable, as **judicial review is part of the Basic Structure** of the Constitution. (Statement IV is incorrect)

Q98 . C

The transition from the colonial-era **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** and **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)** to the new criminal laws—**Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** and **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**—introduced several substantive and procedural changes.

The BNS has **removed the explicit offence of “sedition” (Section 124A IPC)** and replaced it with a broader provision dealing with **acts endangering the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India**. While the terminology has changed, the scope has been restructured and, in some interpretations, widened. (Statement I is correct)

The BNSS introduces a significant procedural reform by making **forensic investigation mandatory for offences punishable with seven years or more of imprisonment**. This aims to strengthen evidence-based investigation and improve conviction rates. (Statement II is correct)

The BNSS provides for **“trial in absentia”** in specific circumstances, particularly for **proclaimed offenders who deliberately evade the legal process**. This is intended to prevent delays in justice caused by absconding accused persons. (Statement III is also correct)

Q99 . B

The **National Cooperative Policy 2025**, guided by the vision of **“Sahakar se Samriddhi” (Prosperity through Cooperation)**, focuses on strengthening the cooperative sector through modernization, transparency, and capacity building—while preserving its **cooperative character**.

The policy emphasizes **integration of PACS with initiatives like the grain storage plan**, aiming to enhance rural infrastructure and strengthen grassroots cooperatives.

The creation of a **National Cooperative Database** is a key reform measure to enable **data-driven governance, monitoring, and policy intervention** in the cooperative sector.

The policy focuses on **capacity building**, including strengthening **cooperative education and training**, with proposals such as establishing a **dedicated national-level institution/university** for cooperatives.

The policy does **not mandate conversion of Multi-State Cooperative Societies into Public Limited Companies**. Such a move would fundamentally alter the **cooperative nature**, which is based on principles like **democratic control and mutual benefit**, not corporate profit orientation. (Statement II is incorrect)

Q100 . C

The proposed framework for **“One Nation, One Election” (ONOE)** aims to synchronize elections across different levels of government to improve **governance efficiency, reduce costs, and minimize disruption due to frequent elections.**

The committee recommended a **phased (two-step) approach**—first conducting **simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies**, followed by **local body elections within a specified window (such as 100 days)**. This ensures gradual synchronization rather than a sudden overhaul. (Statement 1 is correct)

To maintain the synchronization cycle, the committee proposed that in case of a **hung House or premature dissolution**, fresh elections should be conducted only for the **remainder of the original term**, not a full five-year term. This ensures that the election cycle remains aligned with the broader ONOE framework. (Statement 2 is also correct)

*For further clarifications and feedback feel free to
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