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IMPORTANT INSIGHTS

New GDP Series with 2022-23 Base Year Introduces Five Further Changes in India's National Income Measurement

Recent Developments:

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the new series of Annual and Quarterly National Accounts Estimates with **2022-23 as the base year** on 27 February 2026, replacing the earlier 2011-12 series. The revision aims to capture structural changes, incorporate newer data sources, improve estimation methods and strengthen the coverage and accuracy of national accounts.
- MoSPI subsequently released “**Sources and Methods for Compilation of National Accounts Statistics**” on 21 September 2026, providing a consolidated account of the concepts, data sources, classifications and methodologies used in the new series. The series remains based on 2022-23 despite subsequent incorporation of updated price and industrial indicators.
- The revision is broader than **base-year rebasing** and includes methodological improvements such as better deflation, wider use of administrative data, improved informal-sector measurement and more granular sectoral estimation.

Five Additional Methodological Changes:

1. Activity-Based Classification of Manufacturing and Services:

- Under the **2011-12 series**, enterprises engaged in multiple activities were generally classified according to their principal or major activity, with their GVA largely assigned to the sector contributing the largest share of turnover.
- Under the **2022-23 series**, GVA of a multi-activity enterprise is distributed between manufacturing and services according to the respective activity shares, providing a more granular representation of sectoral production.
- MoSPI uses activity-wise information from **MGT-7 and MGT-7A forms** filed with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, where business activities contributing at least **10% of turnover** are reported with their respective shares.
- This change is important because large enterprises increasingly operate across manufacturing and service activities, making single-sector classification less representative of their actual economic contribution.

2. Inclusion of Government-Provided Housing Services:

- Government employees receiving official accommodation obtain a **housing service** even though they may not receive an equivalent House Rent Allowance for that accommodation.
- Under the earlier methodology, the imputed value of this housing service was not separately captured in the same manner, creating a coverage gap in measuring government-provided services.
- The new methodology values such housing services using the **cost of construction**, after accounting for repairs, maintenance and annual consumption of fixed capital.
- The change illustrates the national accounting principle that **non-market services can also have an economic value** and may need to be imputed when no market transaction directly records their value.

3. Revision of Useful Life of Fixed Assets:

- The new GDP series revises the estimated **average useful life of several fixed assets** for calculating consumption of fixed capital, commonly referred to as depreciation.
- For dwellings, the assumed average useful life has been revised to **60-75 years**, compared with **70-80 years** under the earlier series.
- MoSPI periodically reviews asset lives by considering **technological change, obsolescence, operating conditions, maintenance practices and regulatory requirements**.
- A revised useful life changes the annual consumption of fixed capital and therefore affects the measurement of **GVA and other national accounts aggregates**.

4. Improved Measurement of Household Savings:

- Household savings in national accounts include savings through **financial assets, physical assets and valuables**, including gold and silver ornaments.
- For financial savings, the new series uses data from **SEBI** for instruments such as shares, debentures, hybrid instruments and mutual funds, replacing the earlier reliance on RBI-based data for these components.
- The broader SEBI-based coverage facilitates the inclusion of newer investment instruments such as **REITs, InvITs and Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)**.
- The estimated nominal household savings in gold and silver ornaments for **2022-23 increased to ₹1.65 lakh crore**, compared with ₹64,504 crore in the previous series.
- These estimates continue to rely on the **2019 All India Debt and Investment Survey (AIDIS)**, while MoSPI initiated a fresh AIDIS in July 2026, scheduled for completion in June 2027.

5. Inclusion of Household Rooftop Solar Electricity:

- The new series includes electricity generated by households through **rooftop solar systems for self-consumption**, thereby expanding the measured production boundary of the economy.
- For **2022-23 and 2023-24**, estimates are based on the respective Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys and population projections from the Ministry of Health.
- From **2024-25 onwards**, estimation uses growth in installed rooftop solar capacity reported by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** along with the applicable per-unit electricity price.
- The estimated output is included under the **electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services** sector.
- The change improves measurement of decentralised renewable-energy production because electricity generated and consumed within households may not appear in conventional electricity-sales data.

Wider Methodological Improvements in the 2022-23 Series:

Better Measurement of Real Economic Growth:

- The new series moves towards more **granular deflation techniques**, including double deflation for most manufacturing categories, instead of relying predominantly on a single broad deflator.
- As of the latest methodology information, **28 of 30 manufacturing categories** use double deflation, while work continues for the remaining two categories.
- Double deflation separately adjusts output and intermediate consumption for price changes, allowing real GVA to better reflect changes in physical economic activity.

New Data Sources and Administrative Databases:

- The revised national accounts make wider use of **GST data, PFMS, e-Vahan, household surveys and other administrative datasets**, reducing dependence on proxy indicators and improving sectoral estimation.

- The household sector is also estimated using more recent survey information, including the **Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE)** and Periodic Labour Force Survey-related information.
- The new framework also incorporates **Supply and Use Tables (SUTs)** to strengthen consistency between production, consumption and expenditure estimates. MoSPI released the first SUTs under the 2022-23 base year in May 2026.

Significance for Indian Economy and Policy:

More Representative National Accounts:

- The revised methodology captures economic activities that were previously **under-measured or classified less precisely**, including multi-activity enterprises, government housing services and self-consumed rooftop electricity.
- Greater use of administrative and survey data improves the **granularity, timeliness and sectoral coverage** of national income estimation.
- The revised asset lives and improved price-adjustment methods can alter measured GVA, depreciation and real growth without implying an equivalent change in the underlying physical economy.
- Better measurement of household financial assets is increasingly important because Indian households now use a wider range of **market-linked financial instruments**.

Implications for States and Regional Accounts:

- The base-year revision also requires States and Union Territories to update their **GSDP and regional accounts** to maintain consistency and comparability with national-level estimates. MoSPI issued uniform guidelines for Gross State Value Added (GSVA) estimates with the 2022-23 base year in May 2026.

UPSC Prelims and Mains Relevance:

Key Facts to Remember:

- **New GDP base year:** 2022-23.
- **Previous GDP base year:** 2011-12.
- **Revised by:** MoSPI.
- **Release of new GDP series:** 27 February 2026.
- **MGT-7/MGT-7A:** Used for activity-wise classification of multi-activity enterprises.
- **Turnover threshold for reported activities:** 10%.
- **SEBI:** New source for several household financial-savings components.
- **Gold and silver household savings, 2022-23:** ₹1.65 lakh crore.
- **Useful life of dwellings:** 60-75 years under the new methodology.
- **Rooftop solar:** Household self-consumption is included in national accounts.
- **MNRE:** Provides installed rooftop-solar capacity data used for later-year estimation.
- **AIDIS:** Provides important information for household assets and liabilities.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Conceptual Linkages:

- **GDP → GVA:** GVA measures value added by producers, while GDP at market prices additionally incorporates net taxes on products.

- **Base Year → Real GDP:** The base year provides the reference-price structure used for calculating constant-price estimates and real economic growth.
- **Double Deflation → Real GVA:** Output and intermediate consumption are separately adjusted for price changes, improving measurement of real value added.
- **Consumption of Fixed Capital → GVA:** Revised asset lives affect depreciation estimates and consequently influence national accounts aggregates.
- **Imputation → Non-Market Production:** Government-provided housing and self-consumed rooftop solar demonstrate how national accounts assign economic values to production without conventional market transactions.
- **Administrative Data → Statistical Modernisation:** GST, MCA filings, SEBI information, PFMS and e-Vahan illustrate the growing role of administrative datasets in official statistics.
- **UPSC GS-III Link:** The topic connects **national income accounting, economic growth, statistical reforms, renewable energy, financialisation of household savings and evidence-based policymaking.**
- **Mains Angle:** A strong answer can argue that GDP rebasing is not merely a statistical exercise; it is a periodic attempt to align the measurement framework with **structural transformation, technological change, emerging economic activities and improved data availability.**

Right to Vote in India: Electoral Roll Concerns Renew Debate over Its Legal Status and Constitutional Protection

Recent Developments:

- Recent concerns over **electoral roll management** and the functioning of the Election Commission of India have renewed attention to the legal status of the **right to vote** in India.
- In Goa, **97 electors** who had initially been flagged for logical discrepancies during the Special Intensive Revision were subsequently found eligible after examination by Electoral Registration Officers but were not included in the final electoral roll published in February 2026. The Goa Chief Electoral Officer later stated that the cases were separately processed through house-to-house visits, that many had since been enrolled and that the remaining cases were being processed.
- The episode has highlighted the importance of **accurate electoral rolls, procedural safeguards, digital election systems and timely correction mechanisms** in protecting effective participation in elections.
- The Election Commission currently provides mechanisms for voter registration, correction, deletion and electoral-roll searches, including **Form 6 for new registration, Form 7 for deletion and Form 6A for eligible overseas electors.**

Universal Adult Suffrage in India:

Constitutional Foundation:

- India adopted **universal adult suffrage** from the commencement of the Republic, allowing eligible adult citizens to participate in elections without discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, education or property.
- **Article 326** provides that elections to the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies shall be based on adult suffrage, subject to constitutionally permitted disqualifications.
- The constitutional framework therefore established mass political participation from the beginning rather than introducing voting rights gradually through separate social or property-based expansions.

- The Election Commission confirms that elections to the House of the People are conducted on the basis of **adult suffrage under Article 326**, and the first general election was held during **1951-52**.

India Compared with the United States:

- India adopted universal adult suffrage at the outset of the Republic, whereas the United States expanded formal voting rights through constitutional amendments and subsequent legislation over a longer period.
- The **15th Amendment** prohibited denial of voting rights on grounds of race, colour or previous condition of servitude, while the **19th Amendment** prohibited denial of voting rights on grounds of sex.
- Despite these constitutional developments, discriminatory mechanisms such as poll taxes and literacy tests continued to restrict effective political participation in parts of the United States for decades.
- India therefore began its constitutional democracy with a substantially broader formal electoral franchise.

Constitutional and Statutory Framework:

Article 326 and Representation of the People Acts:

- **Article 326** establishes the constitutional basis for adult suffrage, while detailed rules governing electoral registration and elections are primarily provided through legislation.
- The **Representation of the People Act, 1950** deals with electoral rolls, qualifications of voters, allocation of seats and delimitation-related matters.
- The **Representation of the People Act, 1951** regulates the conduct of elections, qualifications and disqualifications for membership, corrupt practices, electoral offences and other election-related matters.
- This framework creates a distinction between the **constitutional basis of adult suffrage** and the statutory mechanisms through which electoral participation is operationalised.

Legal Status of the Right to Vote:

Fundamental Right, Constitutional Right and Statutory Right:

- A **Fundamental Right** receives direct protection under Part III of the Constitution, whereas a constitutional right derives from the Constitution but may operate through statutory provisions; a statutory right is created and regulated primarily by legislation.
- The Constituent Assembly considered whether the right to vote should be placed within the **Fundamental Rights** chapter but ultimately provided for adult suffrage separately through Article 326.
- In **Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006)**, a Constitution Bench reiterated the distinction between the right to vote and the freedom of voting and described the right to elect as a **statutory right**.
- In **Rajbala v. State of Haryana**, the Supreme Court referred to the right to vote under Article 326 as a **constitutional right**, while also recognising that the right operates subject to constitutionally permitted restrictions.
- In **Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023)**, the Constitution Bench examined the earlier decisions and noted the tension between these formulations but did not finally determine the issue, stating that it could proceed on the basis of the position established in *Kuldip Nayar*.
- Therefore, the judicial position should be presented carefully: **the right to vote is not a Fundamental Right**, while judicial decisions have used both statutory-right and constitutional-right formulations in discussing its legal character.

Freedom of Voting and Article 19(1)(a):

- The Supreme Court has distinguished the **right to vote** from the **freedom of voting**, particularly the expression of political choice when an eligible elector casts a vote.

- In *Anoop Baranwal*, the Court discussed earlier jurisprudence recognising that the act of expressing a choice through voting can have a connection with **freedom of expression under Article 19(1)(a)**.
- This distinction is important because the legal entitlement to participate in an election and the constitutional protection associated with the expression of political preference are not necessarily identical concepts.

Importance of Electoral Rolls:

Legal Framework:

- The practical exercise of the right to vote depends on the elector's **name being correctly included in the electoral roll**.
- Under **Section 19 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950**, an eligible citizen meeting the statutory conditions relating to age and ordinary residence can be registered as an elector.
- **Section 21** provides for the preparation and revision of electoral rolls and empowers the Election Commission to direct revision, including special revision where required.
- **Section 22** provides for correction, transposition or deletion of entries after appropriate verification, while **Section 23** deals with inclusion of names in electoral rolls.

Electoral Roll Integrity:

- Electoral-roll management must address **omission of eligible electors, inclusion of ineligible persons, duplicate registration and incorrect personal details**.
- The principle of **one person, one vote** requires both accurate inclusion of eligible citizens and exclusion of persons who are not legally entitled to vote.
- The Election Commission describes itself as the constitutional authority responsible for administering elections and provides mechanisms for **registration, correction, electoral-roll search and voter services**.

Digitalisation and Electoral Administration:

Emerging Governance Issues:

- Increasing reliance on digital systems makes **data accuracy, auditability, interoperability, access control and correction mechanisms** important components of electoral administration.
- The Goa controversy brought attention to the interaction between decisions taken by Electoral Registration Officers and the technical capabilities of the electoral-roll software.
- Reports stated that the digital system did not provide a rollback facility after certain deletion actions, while the Election Commission explained the applicable software and statutory process; the Goa CEO subsequently stated that the affected cases were processed separately.
- The episode demonstrates that digitalisation can improve administrative efficiency but also requires **human oversight, procedural safeguards and effective grievance-redress mechanisms**.

Why the Legal Protection Debate Matters:

Democratic Participation and Constitutional Safeguards:

- The debate over the legal status of the right to vote concerns the degree of **constitutional protection** that should accompany universal adult suffrage.
- A stronger constitutional character for voting could potentially affect the manner in which legislative restrictions and administrative decisions concerning electoral participation are examined.

- At the same time, electoral participation necessarily requires statutory rules concerning **eligibility, residence, registration, disqualification, electoral-roll revision and election administration.**
- The constitutional framework therefore combines **adult suffrage under Article 326, statutory regulation through election laws and constitutional supervision of elections through Article 324.**

UPSC Relevance:

GS-II Constitutional and Governance Linkages:

- **Constitution:** Articles 324 and 326, constitutional position of adult suffrage, constitutional protection of electoral democracy.
- **Legislature:** Parliament's role in establishing the statutory framework governing electoral registration and election conduct.
- **Election Commission:** Superintendence, direction and control of elections under Article 324.
- **Electoral Reforms:** Electoral-roll accuracy, voter registration, deletion safeguards, digitalisation and grievance redressal.
- **Judiciary:** *Kuldip Nayar, Rajbala and Anoop Baranwal* illustrate the evolving judicial discussion concerning the legal nature of voting rights.
- **Democratic Governance:** The issue connects individual electoral participation with the broader constitutional requirement of **free and fair elections.**

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Conceptual Takeaways:

- **Article 326:** Provides the constitutional basis for adult-suffrage but does not place the right to vote among the Fundamental Rights in Part III.
- **Article 324:** Entrusts the Election Commission with the superintendence, direction and control of elections.
- **Representation of the People Act, 1950:** Primarily governs electoral rolls and elector registration.
- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Primarily governs the conduct of elections and election-related offences.
- **Kuldip Nayar (2006):** Treated the right to elect as a statutory right and distinguished it from freedom of voting.
- **Rajbala:** Referred to the right to vote under Article 326 as a constitutional right.
- **Anoop Baranwal (2023):** Discussed the conflicting judicial formulations but did not finally resolve the statutory-versus-constitutional-right question.
- **Electoral Roll Principle:** Democratic participation requires both **inclusion of eligible electors and exclusion of ineligible persons.**
- **Mains Argument:** The legal status of the right to vote must be examined alongside the constitutional design of adult suffrage, statutory electoral regulation, Election Commission autonomy and safeguards for accurate electoral rolls.

Lottery Regulation in India: Constitutional Framework, Judicial Position and the Debate over Regulation versus Prohibition

Recent Developments:

- The debate over **lottery regulation in India** has gained renewed attention because strict prohibition can coexist with continued demand through illegal lotteries, matka, satta and offshore betting platforms, while legal lotteries can generate public revenue and support regulated livelihoods.
- The present framework therefore raises an important governance question: how can **consumer protection, prevention of gambling-related harm, fiscal interests and regulatory accountability** be balanced without allowing illegal markets to expand?
- The taxation framework has also changed significantly. From **22 September 2025**, specified actionable claims including **lotteries, betting, gambling, horse racing, casinos and online money gaming** attract **40% GST**.
- The Supreme Court has previously recognised lotteries as **actionable claims** for GST purposes. In *Skill Lotto Solutions Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India (2020)*, the Court upheld the statutory framework treating lottery as goods for GST purposes.

Constitutional and Statutory Architecture:

Distribution of Legislative Powers:

- The constitutional framework distributes legislative competence over lotteries and gambling between the Union and the States.
- **Union List, Entry 40:** Parliament has exclusive competence over **lotteries organised by the Government of India or the Government of a State**.
- **State List, Entry 34:** State Legislatures have competence over **betting and gambling**, subject to the constitutional distribution of legislative powers.
- The earlier reference to **State List Entry 62** as a source of State taxation over lotteries is no longer applicable because the **101st Constitutional Amendment** altered the taxation framework; GST now governs the taxation of lottery supplies.

Lotteries Regulation Act, 1998:

- The **Lotteries (Regulation) Act, 1998** provides the principal central statutory framework for State-organised lotteries and lays down conditions governing their organisation and conduct.
- The Act requires State-organised lotteries to satisfy prescribed conditions relating to **government responsibility, ticket printing, draws and prize distribution**.
- **Section 5** permits a State Government to prohibit the sale of tickets of a lottery organised by another State within its territory, subject to the statutory framework.
- The Act therefore creates a regulatory structure in which **State Governments organise lotteries**, while the Union and States exercise different regulatory powers.

Online Lottery Regulation:

- The **Lotteries (Regulation) Rules, 2010** provide additional safeguards for online lottery operations, including requirements concerning lottery software and restrictions on unauthorised online sales.
- Digital lottery systems create additional regulatory challenges involving **identity verification, payment monitoring, software integrity, geolocation, audit trails and cross-border transactions**.
- Effective regulation therefore requires coordination between State authorities, financial regulators, technology agencies and law-enforcement institutions.

Judicial Jurisprudence:

Gambling as Res Extra Commercium:

- In **State of Bombay v. R.M.D. Chamarbaugwala (1957)**, the Supreme Court held that gambling is **res extra commercium**, meaning it falls outside the constitutionally protected sphere of ordinary trade and commerce.
- The Court held that gambling activities do not receive protection as a trade or business under **Article 19(1)(g)** and are not protected as trade and commerce under **Article 301**.
- This principle is significant because operators cannot automatically claim that restrictions on gambling violate the fundamental freedom to practise a profession or carry on trade or business.

Regulation and Inter-State Lotteries:

- In **B.R. Enterprises v. State of Uttar Pradesh (1999)**, the Supreme Court examined the power of States to restrict lotteries organised by other States under the 1998 regulatory framework.
- The judgment addressed the relationship between **State autonomy, inter-State lottery sales and the statutory power to prohibit lotteries**.
- The case is important for understanding the constitutional balance between the Union's role concerning State-organised lotteries and the States' regulatory authority over gambling and sales within their territories.

Lottery as Goods under GST:

- In **Skill Lotto Solutions Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India (2020)**, the Supreme Court upheld the inclusion of lottery within the GST framework as an actionable claim treated as goods for taxation purposes.
- The judgment recognised that Parliament had specifically brought **lottery, betting and gambling** within the taxable category of actionable claims under GST legislation.
- The case demonstrates that an activity may remain subject to restrictions under gambling law while simultaneously being brought within a **taxation framework**.

Major Concerns in Lottery Regulation:

Socio-Economic Risks:

- Lotteries can disproportionately affect **low-income households**, particularly where frequent purchases, instant-win formats and jackpot-based advertising encourage repeated participation.
- Gambling-related harm may include **compulsive behaviour, loss-chasing, household debt and financial distress**, creating a consumer-protection challenge for regulators.
- Regulation therefore needs to address both the legality of the activity and the behavioural risks associated with excessive participation.

Illegal and Offshore Markets:

- Complete prohibition does not necessarily eliminate demand for gambling-related products because consumers may shift towards **illegal lotteries, matka, satta and offshore betting platforms**.
- Illegal operators generally operate outside formal systems of **age verification, financial auditing, responsible-gambling safeguards, taxation and grievance redressal**.
- The growth of digital payments and offshore platforms makes enforcement more complex because operators, payment intermediaries and users may be located in different jurisdictions.

Revenue and Fiscal Federalism:

- State-organised lotteries can generate **tax and non-tax revenue**, creating a fiscal incentive for some States to retain regulated lotteries.
- The present GST framework imposes **40% GST** on specified actionable claims including lotteries, betting and gambling, making taxation an important component of the regulatory architecture.
- Lottery policy therefore intersects with **fiscal federalism**, because regulatory choices can influence State revenues while taxation is governed substantially through the GST framework.

Livelihood Concerns:

- Legal lottery distribution can provide income to **small vendors and economically vulnerable groups**, particularly where States reserve distribution opportunities for registered vendors.
- Sudden prohibition can therefore affect legitimate livelihoods even though the underlying activity carries gambling-related risks.
- A regulatory framework must distinguish between protecting vulnerable workers and encouraging excessive gambling participation.

International and Domestic Regulatory Approaches:***Controlled Legality:***

- Different jurisdictions adopt different approaches ranging from prohibition to **strictly regulated legality**, with variations in State ownership, licensing, taxation, advertising controls and consumer safeguards.
- Regulated models generally seek to bring operators within an identifiable legal framework so that transactions can be monitored and unlawful activity can be detected.

Public-Operator Model:

- A **State-operated or State-controlled model** can provide greater direct governmental oversight over ticket issuance, draws, prize distribution and revenue utilisation.
- Private entities may still provide technological, logistical or distribution services subject to contractual and regulatory controls.
- Independent auditing becomes important where the same governmental institution is responsible for both operating and supervising a lottery.

Kerala Model:

- Kerala's State lottery system provides an example of linking a regulated lottery with **social-welfare expenditure**.
- The State operates lotteries through its governmental lottery department and uses lottery-related revenues within the broader framework of State finances and welfare programmes.
- The model is relevant to UPSC because it raises the question of whether potentially harmful activities should be regulated and taxed with **earmarked public-interest objectives** rather than being left entirely to illegal markets.

Measures for a More Accountable Regulatory Framework:

Strengthening Inter-State Regulation:

- The legal framework should ensure that restrictions on lotteries from other States are **clear, transparent and non-discriminatory**, while respecting the statutory powers available to destination States.
- Greater coordination between States can reduce regulatory arbitrage in which operators shift activities to jurisdictions with weaker enforcement.

Independent Technical and Financial Audits:

- Lottery systems should undergo **independent audits** covering draw procedures, random-number generation, ticket databases, cybersecurity, payment systems and prize distribution.
- Separation between the agency operating the lottery and the institution responsible for auditing it can improve **institutional accountability**.
- Digital lottery platforms should maintain tamper-resistant audit trails to facilitate investigation of irregularities.

Consumer Protection:

- Regulators can introduce **age verification, purchase limits, responsible-gambling warnings and restrictions on misleading advertisements**.
- Credit-based lottery purchases can be restricted to reduce the risk of excessive borrowing and loss-chasing.
- Advertising should clearly communicate that winning depends on chance and should not create misleading expectations of guaranteed financial gain.

Combating Illegal Digital Gambling:

- Enforcement agencies should strengthen mechanisms for identifying and blocking **illegal offshore gambling platforms**, unlawful payment channels and money-laundering networks.
- Coordination between financial-intelligence, cybercrime, taxation and law-enforcement authorities is necessary because illegal gambling increasingly operates through digital ecosystems.
- Cross-border cooperation is particularly important where operators are located outside India's jurisdiction.

UPSC Relevance:

GS-II: Constitution and Governance:

- **Seventh Schedule:** Distribution of legislative competence over lotteries, betting and gambling.
- **Article 19(1)(g):** Freedom to practise any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business, subject to constitutional limitations; gambling does not receive the same protection as lawful trade.
- **Article 301:** Freedom of trade, commerce and intercourse throughout India; gambling has been held outside its protected scope.
- **Federalism:** Interaction between Union competence over State-organised lotteries and State competence over betting and gambling.
- **Governance:** Regulatory capacity, inter-State coordination, digital enforcement and consumer protection.

GS-III: Economy and Internal Security:

- **Taxation:** GST treatment of lotteries and other specified actionable claims.

- **Fiscal Federalism:** Revenue implications of State-regulated lotteries.
- **Digital Economy:** Offshore betting platforms, payment gateways and cyber-enabled financial crime.
- **Financial Crime:** Illegal gambling can create channels for fraud, tax evasion and money laundering.
- **Social Sector:** Use of regulated lottery revenues for healthcare and welfare expenditure.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Constitutional and Judicial Takeaways:

- **Union List, Entry 40:** Covers lotteries organised by the Government of India or a State Government.
- **State List, Entry 34:** Covers betting and gambling.
- **Article 19(1)(g):** Does not provide constitutional protection to gambling as an ordinary trade or business.
- **Article 301:** Does not constitutionally protect gambling as trade and commerce.
- **Lotteries (Regulation) Act, 1998:** Provides the principal statutory framework for regulation of State-organised lotteries.
- **R.M.D. Chamarbaugwala, 1957:** Established the principle of **res extra commercium** for gambling activities.
- **B.R. Enterprises, 1999:** Examined State restrictions concerning lotteries organised by other States.
- **Skill Lotto Solutions, 2020:** Upheld the GST treatment of lottery as an actionable claim included within the taxable category of goods.
- **GST from 22 September 2025:** Specified actionable claims including **lottery, betting and gambling** attract 40% GST.
- **Mains Analytical Link:** Lottery regulation demonstrates the tension between **individual choice, consumer protection, public morality, State revenue, federalism and enforcement against illegal markets.**
- **Balanced Policy Framework:** The central governance challenge is not merely whether lotteries should exist, but how a legally authorised activity can be subjected to **transparent regulation, independent oversight, responsible advertising, consumer safeguards, effective taxation and strong action against illegal operators.**

Dam Safety in India: IIT Madras Study Highlights Need for Site-Specific Seismic Risk Assessment and Stronger Dam Governance

Recent Developments: IIT Madras Study and Seismic Risk

- A 2026 IIT Madras study developed a national-scale **Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Analysis (PSHA)** framework covering **6,545 operational dams** listed in the National Register of Specified Dams, 2025, highlighting the limitations of conventional seismic zonation for assessing risks to large dams.
- The study used regional seismic-source models, ground-motion models and a **logic-tree framework** to generate site-specific seismic hazard estimates and uniform hazard response spectra for different return periods.
- Its **PSHA-based approach** enables dam sites to be prioritised according to seismic hazard potential and supports more detailed seismic evaluation of dams located in earthquake-prone regions.
- The study is significant because many existing dams were designed using earlier deterministic approaches that may not adequately incorporate updated **seismo-tectonic information, ground-motion characteristics and site-specific effects.**
- The study also developed **PSHA_India_IITM**, a graphical tool for site-specific seismic hazard assessment, uniform hazard response spectra generation and selection and scaling of ground motions.

India's Dam Landscape and Emerging Safety Risks:

Scale and Ageing Infrastructure:

- India ranks **third globally** in terms of large dams, after China and the United States; the 2025 inventory records **6,628 specified dams**, comprising **6,545 operational dams** and **83 under construction**.
- **Maharashtra** has the largest number of specified dams, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Odisha.
- More than **26% of specified dams are over 50 years old**, increasing the importance of rehabilitation, instrumentation, periodic safety evaluation and adequate maintenance.
- India's dam heritage extends to **Kallanai or Grand Anicut in Tamil Nadu**, constructed in the 2nd century CE and still functioning as a major hydraulic structure.

Major Causes of Dam Failure:

- **Poor maintenance:** Deferred repairs, deterioration and inadequate operation and maintenance can weaken structural and hydraulic safety.
- **Design deficiencies:** Older dams may not fully reflect present-day hydrological, seismic or engineering knowledge, requiring reassessment against updated design standards.
- **Extreme natural events:** Earthquakes, extreme rainfall, floods and other hazards can impose stresses beyond the assumptions used during original design.
- **Overtopping:** Excessive inflows can exceed reservoir or spillway capacity, allowing water to flow over the dam and potentially cause erosion and breaching.
- **Inadequate monitoring:** Weak surveillance and insufficient instrumentation can delay detection of seepage, deformation, cracking or other distress.
- **Sedimentation:** Reservoir siltation reduces effective storage and can alter flood-management capacity, increasing operational and safety challenges.
- The Central Water Commission records **breaching and overtopping** among the major causes of historical dam failures in India, with breaching accounting for about **44%** and overtopping about **25%** of recorded cases in its cited dataset.

Why Dam Safety Is a Major Governance and Disaster-Management Concern:

Ageing and Structural Vulnerability:

- Age alone does not automatically make a dam unsafe; the **quality of maintenance, structural integrity, safety instrumentation and operational practices** determine its continuing safety.
- Many older dams face structural deficiencies, inadequate monitoring facilities and design assumptions that may not correspond to present hydrological and seismic conditions.
- Dam safety therefore requires a shift from one-time construction-based assessment towards **life-cycle risk management** involving surveillance, rehabilitation and periodic reassessment.

Downstream Risk and Disaster Management:

- Dam failure can produce sudden downstream flooding, affecting **human settlements, agricultural land, roads, bridges, power infrastructure and other critical assets**.
- The consequences are particularly severe where settlements and economic infrastructure have expanded downstream after dam construction.
- Effective dam safety therefore requires integration of **structural safety, flood forecasting, early-warning systems, emergency action plans and downstream preparedness**.

Dam Safety Act, 2021: Institutional Framework

National-Level Institutions:

- The **Dam Safety Act, 2021**, which came into force on **30 December 2021**, provides a statutory framework for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams and prevention of dam-failure-related disasters.
- The Act created a **four-tier institutional architecture** comprising the National Committee on Dam Safety, National Dam Safety Authority, State Committees on Dam Safety and State Dam Safety Organisations.
- The **National Committee on Dam Safety** functions as the policy-oriented body responsible for evolving dam-safety policies, maintaining standards and recommending necessary regulations.
- The **National Dam Safety Authority** functions as the national regulatory and implementing body for dam-safety policies and standards and can address issues between State Dam Safety Organisations and specified-dam owners.

State-Level Institutions and Dam Owners:

- States having specified dams are required to establish **State Committees on Dam Safety and State Dam Safety Organisations**; all **28 States and 3 Union Territories** with specified dams had established the prescribed institutional structures.
- State Dam Safety Organisations undertake surveillance, inspection and monitoring, maintain dam-related information and recommend corrective measures.
- Dam owners are responsible for **operation and maintenance**, adequate funding for repairs, establishment of Dam Safety Units, regular inspections, preparation of Emergency Action Plans and periodic comprehensive safety evaluations.

Risk Assessment and Safety Evaluation:

- The regulations require specified dams to undergo **risk assessment studies** and comprehensive safety evaluations at prescribed intervals; the first comprehensive evaluation of existing specified dams is to be followed by evaluations at **10-year intervals**, or earlier where directed.
- Dam owners must also undertake **pre-monsoon and post-monsoon inspections** and inspections following calamities or signs of distress.
- Post-monsoon inspection results are categorised according to the urgency of remedial action; for 2025, **3 specified dams were placed in Category-I and 216 in Category-II**, requiring urgent or prompt remedial measures respectively.

Government Initiatives and Technology-Based Dam Safety:

DHARMA and Digital Monitoring:

- The **Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA)** functions as a digital repository for dam inventories, inspection records, health assessments and rehabilitation monitoring.
- Digital recording of inspections strengthens **data-based surveillance, transparency, institutional coordination and evidence-based maintenance planning**.

Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project:

- **DRIP Phase II and III** focuses on improving dam safety and operational performance while strengthening institutional capacity; the programme has a **₹10,211 crore outlay**, covers **736 dams**, and is designed for a 10-year period from 2021 to 2031.
- DRIP combines **physical rehabilitation, instrumentation, emergency action planning, operation and maintenance improvements, capacity building and technical standardisation**.
- International Centres of Excellence for Dams at **IIT Roorkee and IISc Bengaluru** are supporting research and capacity building in areas including seismic analysis, sediment management, rehabilitation materials and risk assessment.

Key Challenges in India's Dam-Safety Governance:

Technical and Institutional Gaps:

- States and dam-owning agencies vary considerably in their **technical expertise, financial resources, instrumentation capacity and maintenance practices**, creating uneven safety standards.
- The growing complexity of climate and seismic risks requires continuous updating of **hydrological models, earthquake catalogues, geological mapping and design parameters**.
- The National Committee on Seismic Design Parameters continues to develop **site-specific seismic design parameters**, while revised guidelines for site-specific seismic studies were issued in 2025.

Climate Change and Compound Hazards:

- Increasing variability in extreme rainfall, floods, landslides and other hazards can alter the risk profile of existing dams.
- Dam safety planning should therefore move towards **multi-hazard risk assessment**, integrating seismic, hydrological, geological and climate-related hazards rather than evaluating them in isolation.

Way Ahead:

- **Adopt site-specific seismic assessment:** Integrate PSHA and updated seismo-tectonic information into the design, rehabilitation and safety evaluation of dams in high-risk regions.
- **Institutionalise periodic reassessment:** Combine structural evaluation with updated hydrological and seismic data, particularly for ageing and high-consequence dams.
- **Strengthen instrumentation:** Expand seismic instruments, piezometers, deformation monitoring, automated weather stations and other real-time systems at vulnerable dams.
- **Improve downstream preparedness:** Regularly update **Emergency Action Plans, dam-break analyses, flood-inundation maps and early-warning systems**, followed by mock drills involving district authorities and downstream communities.
- **Ensure dedicated financing:** Enforce the statutory requirement for dam owners to earmark adequate funds for maintenance and repairs, preventing deferred maintenance from becoming a systemic safety risk.
- **Promote risk-informed governance:** Integrate consequence classification with seismic hazard, structural condition, exposure and vulnerability to prioritise rehabilitation and inspection resources.

UPSC Relevance:***GS-I — Geography:***

- Seismic zones, earthquakes, Himalayan tectonics, geological hazards, river-valley projects and reservoir sedimentation.

GS-II — Governance and Federalism:

- Dam Safety Act, 2021, Centre-State coordination, regulatory institutions, statutory responsibilities and institutional capacity.

GS-III — Disaster Management and Infrastructure:

- Dam failures, disaster-risk reduction, critical infrastructure resilience, early-warning systems, climate risks and rehabilitation of ageing infrastructure.

Essay and Ethics:

- Development versus safety, intergenerational infrastructure responsibility, precautionary principle, public accountability and technology-enabled governance.

Value Addition for UPSC:

- **Core Concept:** Dam safety is a **life-cycle risk-management** issue, not merely a structural-engineering concern.
- **Current Data:** India has **6,628 specified dams**, of which **6,545 are operational** and **83 are under construction**.
- **Key Law:** **Dam Safety Act, 2021** provides the statutory architecture for surveillance, inspection, operation, maintenance and institutional coordination.
- **Technology:** **PSHA + DHARMA + instrumentation + early-warning systems** represents a transition towards risk-informed and data-driven dam safety.
- **Analytical Link:** The IIT Madras study demonstrates why **national-scale seismic zonation should be supplemented by site-specific hazard assessment** for high-consequence infrastructure.
- **Mains Framework:** In an answer, connect **ageing dams → multi-hazard exposure → institutional capacity → technological monitoring → statutory regulation → downstream disaster preparedness**.

Kashmir and Ladakh as India's Potential Eurasian Gateway: Connectivity, Economic Integration and Strategic Challenges

Recent Developments: Reimagining Kashmir's Eurasian Connectivity

- A recent policy argument proposes moving beyond an overwhelmingly **security-centric approach** towards Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh by exploring their potential role as India's northern economic gateway to **Central Asia and Eurasia** through secure and regulated trans-Himalayan connectivity.

- The proposal gains relevance amid India's wider efforts to deepen economic and connectivity links with Central Asia; the **4th India–Central Asia Dialogue in June 2025** emphasised greater trade, financial connectivity, digital payments and optimum utilisation of the **International North-South Transport Corridor**.
- India is simultaneously strengthening connectivity within Jammu & Kashmir; the **272-km Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla Rail Link** has been commissioned, improving all-weather connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India and creating opportunities for agricultural and small-business markets.
- The strategic idea is therefore not merely about reopening historical routes but about combining **border security, economic integration, logistics infrastructure, employment generation and regional diplomacy**.

Kashmir and Ladakh as a Historic Crossroads:

Silk Route and Trans-Himalayan Legacy:

- Kashmir and Ladakh historically functioned as important **trans-Himalayan trade corridors**, linking the Indian subcontinent with Tibet and Central Asia through caravan routes.
- Leh emerged as an important trading centre where merchants from India, Tibet and Central Asia exchanged commodities, while routes connected Ladakh with **Yarkand, Kashgar and other Central Asian markets**.
- Trade involved commodities such as **shawls, wool, silk, spices, carpets, tea and handicrafts**, while the movement of traders also facilitated the circulation of ideas, languages, technologies and artistic traditions.
- Kashmir's historical interaction with Persian and Central Asian societies also influenced **carpet weaving, shawl-making, papier-mâché and other handicrafts**, demonstrating that connectivity generated cultural as well as economic integration.

Post-1947 Geopolitical Transformation:

- Partition and subsequent India–Pakistan and India–China tensions transformed the region from a major commercial crossroads into a **strategically sensitive frontier**.
- The **Line of Control and Line of Actual Control** disrupted traditional trans-Himalayan movement, while difficult terrain and heightened security requirements further constrained cross-border economic interaction.
- The resulting geographical isolation has contributed to a shift from the region's historical role as a **trade intermediary** towards a predominantly security-oriented strategic landscape.

Demographic Dividend and the Aspiration–Employment Gap:

India's Economic Opportunity:

- India's large working-age population creates potential for a **demographic dividend**, but the dividend depends on productive employment, skills, infrastructure and access to markets.
- The gap between exposure to global opportunities through **smartphones, internet connectivity and digital media** and the availability of suitable local employment can generate an aspiration–reality gap.
- Educational qualifications do not automatically translate into secure employment when economies face limited industrial diversification, recruitment delays or inadequate private-sector opportunities.

Economic Opportunity in Jammu & Kashmir:

- Expanding opportunities in **horticulture, tourism, handicrafts, logistics, food processing and trade-related services** can help convert local economic strengths into employment.
- Better connectivity can allow Kashmiri products such as **apples, dry fruits, saffron, pashmina and handicrafts** to access wider domestic and international markets.

- The economic argument should complement rather than replace security considerations because border regions require both **economic resilience and effective security management**.

Connectivity as an Instrument of Economic Integration and Stability:

From Security-Centric to Risk-Informed Connectivity:

- Regulated economic connectivity can potentially create incentives for **legal commerce, employment and regional economic interdependence**, while security agencies retain control over sensitive border infrastructure.
- The objective is not unrestricted border opening but **controlled connectivity** involving customs, cargo verification, financial monitoring and intelligence coordination.
- Land-based corridors can distribute economic activity beyond major airports by creating demand for **trucking, warehousing, cold chains, construction, hospitality, insurance, banking and trade finance**.

India's Existing Eurasian Connectivity Architecture:

- India already pursues Central Asian connectivity through **Chabahar Port, the International North-South Transport Corridor and the India–Central Asia Dialogue**.
- The 2025 India–Central Asia Dialogue specifically stressed greater use of the **International North-South Transport Corridor** and highlighted Chabahar's potential for facilitating trade between India and Central Asian countries.
- The International North-South Transport Corridor provides a **multimodal connectivity framework** linking India with Iran, Central Asia, Russia and wider Eurasian markets.
- Chabahar provides India with an alternative access route to Central Asia that does not depend upon transit through Pakistan; India has also emphasised the port's role in accessing markets in **Central Asia and Eurasia**.
- A Kashmir–Ladakh corridor, if ever considered feasible, would therefore constitute an additional geographical pathway rather than replacing existing maritime and multimodal connectivity projects.

Major Challenges in Unlocking Trans-Himalayan Corridors:

Geopolitical and Sovereignty Constraints:

- Any substantial reopening of traditional routes would involve complex relations with **Pakistan and China**, making connectivity inseparable from border management and national-security considerations.
- Proposed routes could intersect or approach territories subject to competing sovereignty claims, including **Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir and Aksai Chin**, creating significant diplomatic and strategic sensitivities.
- India has consistently maintained that connectivity initiatives must respect **sovereignty and territorial integrity**; this principle is also reflected in India–Central Asia discussions on regional connectivity.
- Existing mistrust, cross-border terrorism concerns and restrictions on cross-LoC trade substantially limit the feasibility of immediate large-scale corridor development.

Security and Illicit-Trafficking Risks:

- Greater cross-border movement could create vulnerabilities relating to **narcotics, weapons, counterfeit currency, smuggling, illegal finance and infiltration** if regulatory capacity is inadequate.
- Any commercial corridor would therefore require integrated customs systems, cargo tracking, risk profiling, financial intelligence and real-time information sharing among security agencies.

- Economic connectivity should consequently be designed as **secure connectivity**, rather than connectivity treated as an end in itself.

Geography and Ecological Fragility:

- High-altitude Himalayan terrain involves **extreme winters, landslides, avalanches, seismic hazards, difficult gradients and fragile ecosystems**, increasing construction and maintenance costs.
- Large-scale road, rail and logistics infrastructure can create ecological pressures through habitat fragmentation, slope instability, water stress and construction-related disturbance.
- Infrastructure planning therefore requires **environmental impact assessment, climate-resilient engineering and carrying-capacity considerations**.

Institutional and Infrastructure Requirements:

Smart Border and Trade Infrastructure:

- Potential pilot corridors would require integrated **land ports, customs facilities, non-intrusive inspection systems, electronic documentation and secure cargo-tracking mechanisms**.
- Technologies such as **radio-frequency identification-based tracking, digital payments, electronic seals and risk-based customs clearance** can facilitate legitimate trade while strengthening enforcement.
- Financial monitoring should be integrated with customs and border-security systems to detect suspicious transactions and illicit trade networks.

Local Value Addition:

- Connectivity should not merely facilitate the movement of raw commodities; it should create **local value chains** through cold storage, grading, packaging, food processing, testing laboratories and export-oriented logistics.
- Kashmir's horticulture, saffron, handicrafts and textile products could benefit from improved **market access and supply-chain infrastructure**.
- Local participation is essential because economic corridors are more sustainable when surrounding communities gain employment, entrepreneurship opportunities and improved access to markets.

India's Wider Eurasian Strategy:

Central Asian Engagement:

- India's Central Asian policy combines **economic diplomacy, connectivity, energy security, development partnerships, digital cooperation and people-to-people linkages**.
- The 2025 India–Central Asia Dialogue identified sectors including **pharmaceuticals, information technology, agriculture, energy, textiles, gems and jewellery** as areas with potential for greater trade and investment.
- India has also emphasised greater financial connectivity through **digital payment systems, interbank cooperation and trade in national currencies**.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation provides a multilateral platform through which India engages with major Eurasian states on regional economic and strategic issues.

Balancing Connectivity Initiatives:

- India's connectivity strategy must balance the economic benefits of regional integration with concerns relating to **sovereignty, territorial integrity, terrorism and strategic autonomy**.
- India has supported connectivity that produces equitable economic benefits while opposing projects that, in its assessment, disregard its sovereignty and territorial-integrity concerns.
- The practical approach is therefore likely to involve multiple complementary corridors rather than dependence on a single route.

Way Ahead:

- **Adopt a phased approach:** Begin with economically viable and tightly monitored connectivity initiatives, expanding them only after evaluating security, environmental and institutional outcomes.
- **Strengthen domestic connectivity first:** Integrate Kashmir and Ladakh more effectively with national road, rail, digital and logistics networks to build the economic base required for international trade.
- **Develop secure trade architecture:** Combine customs modernisation, cargo tracking, financial intelligence, digital documentation and coordinated border management.
- **Build local value chains:** Link horticulture, saffron, handicrafts and tourism with cold chains, processing facilities, laboratories, logistics hubs and export markets.
- **Use existing Eurasian platforms:** Strengthen the **International North-South Transport Corridor, Chabahar connectivity, India–Central Asia Dialogue and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation mechanisms** while exploring additional feasible routes.
- **Apply ecological safeguards:** Himalayan connectivity projects should incorporate disaster-resilient engineering, environmental assessment, slope stabilisation and climate-risk planning.
- **Maintain security–development balance:** Economic integration should complement effective counter-terrorism and border management rather than being presented as a substitute for them.

UPSC Relevance:***GS-I — Indian Geography and Society:***

- Himalayan geography, trans-Himalayan passes, fragile mountain ecosystems, borderland development, historical trade routes and cultural exchanges.

GS-II — International Relations and Governance:

- India–Pakistan relations, India–China relations, India–Central Asia relations, regional organisations, border governance, sovereignty and connectivity diplomacy.

GS-III — Economy, Infrastructure and Security:

- Trade corridors, logistics infrastructure, border management, employment generation, economic diversification, critical infrastructure and transnational organised crime.

Essay:

- Connectivity versus isolation, development and security, geography as an economic asset, borderland development and the role of infrastructure in regional integration.

Value Addition for UPSC:

- **Core Concept:** Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh can be examined not only as strategic border regions but also as potential **economic interfaces between South Asia, Central Asia and Eurasia**.
- **Historical Link:** Traditional caravan networks demonstrate that Himalayan geography has historically functioned as a **connector as well as a barrier**.
- **Strategic Link:** The proposed approach connects **border security → economic opportunity → infrastructure → regional connectivity → diplomatic engagement**.
- **Contemporary Link:** India's existing **Chabahar–International North-South Transport Corridor–Central Asia** architecture provides a practical framework for understanding its wider Eurasian connectivity strategy.
- **Critical Perspective:** Physical connectivity can generate trade and employment, but its success depends on **security, diplomatic feasibility, environmental sustainability, institutional capacity and local economic participation**.
- **Mains Framework:** A balanced answer can be structured as **historical connectivity → post-1947 geopolitical disruption → demographic and employment challenge → economic potential → security and sovereignty constraints → existing Eurasian alternatives → phased and secure connectivity**.



Best Institute for OAS/IAS

QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following items and economic activities:

- (1) Imputed rental value of government-provided housing to public servants
- (2) Household rooftop solar energy generated and consumed internally
- (3) Capital gains derived from trading equity instruments on secondary markets
- (4) Household financial savings invested through Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)
- (5) Unpaid domestic labor and household care services performed by family members

In the context of India's National Accounts Statistics framework, how many of the above items/activities are explicitly included within the production boundary or measurement of national savings?

- (A) Only two
- (B) Only three
- (C) Only four
- (D) All five

2. With reference to the legal framework governing electoral rolls and voting rights in India, consider the following statements:

- (1) The preparation, revision, and maintenance of electoral rolls are primarily regulated under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- (2) Under Section 19 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, every person who is not less than 18 years of age on the qualifying date and is ordinarily resident in a constituency is entitled to be registered.
- (3) The Constitution of India explicitly provides that no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in an electoral roll on grounds only of religion, race, caste, or sex under Article 25.
- (4) Overseas electors are registered in the electoral rolls under the provisions introduced through Form 6A under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 3 only
- (B) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (C) 2 and 4 only
- (D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

3. Consider the following statements regarding the legal status of lotteries under Indian law:

Statement 1: Parliament possesses the legislative power to enact laws regulating state-organised lotteries across all Indian States and Union Territories.

Statement 2: "Lotteries organised by the Government of India or the Government of a State" is explicitly enumerated in List I (Union List) of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (A) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct and Statement 2 is the correct explanation for Statement 1
- (B) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct but Statement 2 is NOT the correct explanation for Statement 1

- (C) Statement 1 is correct but Statement 2 is incorrect
(D) Statement 1 is incorrect but Statement 2 is correct

4. With reference to the institutional framework under the Dam Safety Act, 2021, consider the following statements:

- (1) The National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS) is empowered as a regulatory body to enforce penal provisions against state dam owners for non-compliance with maintenance protocols.
- (2) The National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) acts as the executive agency responsible for resolving inter-state disputes between State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs) or between a state and a dam owner in another state.
- (3) The establishment of State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS) is mandatory only for coastal states and states situated in High Seismic Zones (Zones IV and V).
- (4) Specified dam owners are legally bound to conduct comprehensive safety evaluations at 10-year intervals and carry out compulsory pre-monsoon and post-monsoon inspections.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 3 only
(B) 1, 2 and 4 only
(C) 2 and 4 only
(D) 2, 3 and 4 only

5. With reference to the historic trans-Himalayan trade networks connecting Kashmir, Ladakh, and Central Asia, consider the following statements:

- (1) Leh historically functioned as a primary commercial entrepôt where Indian, Tibetan, and Central Asian merchants exchanged commodities like Pashmina wool, silk, and spices.
- (2) Historical commercial exchanges between Kashmir and Central Asia were strictly limited to tangible goods, having negligible impact on regional art, craftsmanship, or social architecture.
- (3) The Yarkand and Kashgar trade routes provided vital commercial access linking the Ladakh region directly to the Tarim Basin in East Turkestan.
- (4) Post-1947 geopolitical divisions, specifically the draw of the Line of Control (LoC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC), transformed these traditional commercial crossroads into militarized frontier borders.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1, 3 and 4 only
(B) 1 and 3 only
(C) 2 and 4 only
(D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (B), 2 – Answer (C), 3 – Answer (A), 4 – Answer (C), 5 – Answer (A)



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