

# UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS

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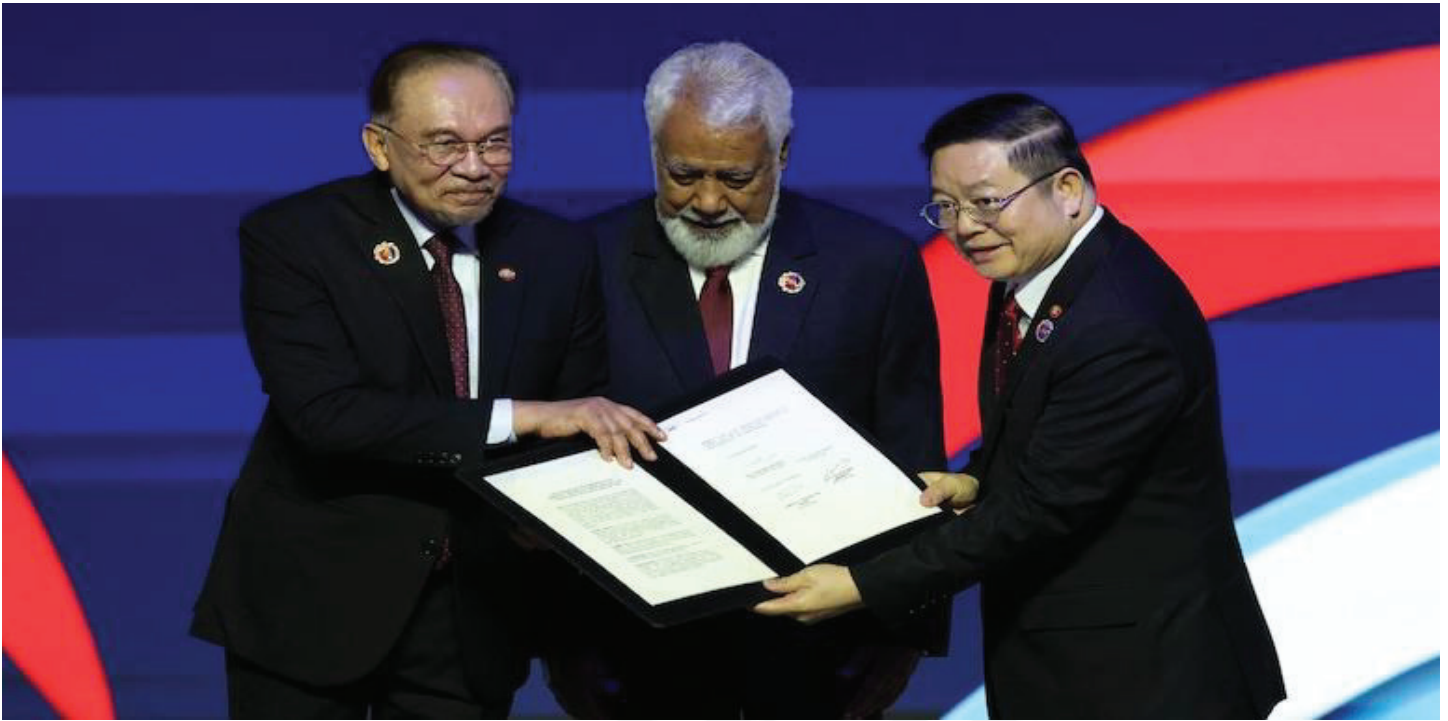
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# 1. East Timor Joins ASEAN



## 1. East Timor Becomes ASEAN's 11<sup>th</sup> Member

- On October 26, 2025, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) officially welcomed East Timor (Timor-Leste) as its newest and 11<sup>th</sup> member during its summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- This marks ASEAN's first expansion in over two decades, following Cambodia's entry in 1999.
- The inclusion was hailed as a historic moment, symbolizing both regional unity and Timor-Leste's long pursuit of integration into Southeast Asia's premier political and economic bloc.

## 2. ASEAN's Growing Global and Regional Role

- Established in 1967, ASEAN has evolved into a vital organization for economic, political, and security cooperation in Southeast Asia.
- Over the decades, it has developed strong engagement with major powers such as the United States, China, and India.

### ASEAN today represents:

- Over 680 million people
- A combined GDP of \$3.8 trillion
- A key voice in the Indo-Pacific region, balancing relations between global powers.

## 3. East Timor: From Colonization to Independence

### Geographical and demographic overview:

- **Population:** Around 1.4 million
- **Location:** Eastern half of the island of Timor, north of Australia, sharing the island with Indonesia's West Timor.

## Colonial past and struggle for sovereignty:

- Portuguese colony for over four centuries until 1975.
- Declared independence in November 1975, but invaded by Indonesia just nine days later.
- The invasion was influenced by Cold War geopolitics, Indonesia's anti-Communist stance, and concerns about potential Chinese influence.
- Support from Western powers like the United States bolstered Indonesia's occupation.

## Resistance and international response:

- The invasion resulted in thousands of deaths and decades of armed and diplomatic resistance.
- Jose Ramos-Horta and other East Timorese leaders worked tirelessly through the United Nations to advocate for self-determination.
- A UN-supervised referendum in 1999 finally allowed citizens to vote for independence, leading to the formal establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in 2002.

## 4. Leadership of a Nobel Laureate: Jose Ramos-Horta

- Jose Ramos-Horta, current President of East Timor, is a globally respected figure and 1996 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, shared with Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo.
- Their award recognized their peaceful advocacy for East Timor's independence and justice amid decades of occupation.
- Ramos-Horta co-founded the FRETILIN liberation movement and spent two decades promoting the East Timorese cause internationally, particularly at the UN General Assembly.
- His leadership symbolizes continuity between Timor-Leste's independence struggle and its ongoing journey toward prosperity and regional integration.

## 5. The Economic Context: Challenges and Opportunities

- Despite political stability and democratic progress, East Timor faces steep economic hurdles:
- 42% of the population lives below the national poverty line.
- Nearly two-thirds of citizens are under 30 years old, creating an urgent need for youth employment.
- The economy is heavily dependent on oil and gas revenues, which are rapidly depleting.
- Agriculture and tourism remain underdeveloped, and diversification is a top priority.

## Why ASEAN membership matters economically?

- Access to ASEAN's regional trade mechanisms and initiatives like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
- Opportunity for infrastructure development, investment inflows, and skills partnerships.
- Enhanced participation in regional supply chains and education and labor mobility programs.
- Exposure to collective policy learning from ASEAN peers, especially in governance and economic reform.

## 6. Building Institutional Capacity for Regional Integration

### Challenges include:

- A weak administrative system and limited bureaucratic efficiency.
- Low per capita GDP, the lowest among ASEAN members.
- Dependence on extractive industries, making the economy vulnerable to global price fluctuations.

- President Ramos-Horta himself acknowledged that “full capacity-building will be a long-term process.”
- Nonetheless, ASEAN membership offers East Timor a platform for institutional strengthening, policy coordination, and regional solidarity.

## Cold War

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- The Cold War was a period of intense political, military, and ideological rivalry between the United States (and its allies) and the Soviet Union (and its allies) that lasted roughly from the end of World War II (1945) until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Although it never escalated into a full-scale war between the superpowers (hence the term “cold”), it shaped world politics for nearly half a century.

### Ideological conflict:

- **U.S. and the West:** Capitalism, democracy, individual freedoms.
- **USSR and the East:** Communism, state control, one-party rule.

### Nuclear arms race:

- Both sides developed vast arsenals of nuclear weapons, leading to the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).

### Space race:

- Competition extended into space exploration (*e.g.*, Sputnik in 1957, Apollo 11 Moon landing in 1969).

### Proxy wars:

- The U.S. and USSR avoided direct conflict but fought indirectly through local wars:
  - Korean War (1950–1953)
  - Vietnam War (1955–1975)
  - Afghanistan (1979–1989)

### Political and military alliances:

- **NATO (1949):** U.S.-led Western alliance.
- **Warsaw Pact (1955):** Soviet-led Eastern alliance.

### Espionage and propaganda:

- Both sides used intelligence agencies (like the CIA and KGB) and media to spread their ideologies and gain advantages.

### Major Events

- **1945–1949:** Division of Germany and Europe; Iron Curtain descends.
- **1948–1949:** Berlin Blockade and Airlift.
- **1950s:** Nuclear arms buildup and McCarthyism in the U.S.
- **1961:** Berlin Wall constructed.
- **1962:** Cuban Missile Crisis — the closest the world came to nuclear war.
- **1970s:** Détente period — attempts at easing tensions (*e.g.*, SALT treaties).
- **1980s:** Renewed tensions under Reagan and Brezhnev; rise of Solidarity in Poland.
- **1989–1991:** Fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union — end of the Cold War.

## Consequences

- The world became bipolar, divided into two spheres of influence.
- Decolonization and the Non-Aligned Movement emerged as third-world countries sought independence from both blocs.
- Massive technological, military, and scientific advancements occurred.
- After 1991, the U.S. became the sole global superpower, marking the start of a new world order.

### QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements regarding ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations):

1. The ASEAN Secretariat is located in Bangkok, Thailand.
2. ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 through the Bangkok Declaration.
3. The founding members of ASEAN were Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 3 only       |

2. With reference to ASEAN's external relations, consider the following statements:

1. ASEAN Plus Three includes China, Japan, and South Korea.
2. ASEAN Plus Six includes ASEAN Plus Three and Australia, India, and New Zealand.
3. The East Asia Summit includes ASEAN Plus Six along with Russia and the United States.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 1, 2 and 3   |
| B. 1 and 2 only | D. 2 and 3 only |

3. Consider the following statements regarding East Timor (Timor-Leste):

1. East Timor was a Portuguese colony for more than four centuries before its occupation by Indonesia in 1975.
2. The country achieved independence through a UN-supervised referendum in 1999.
3. It became the 11<sup>th</sup> member of ASEAN in October 2025.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

4. Consider the following countries:

- |              |          |          |
|--------------|----------|----------|
| 1. Australia | 3. China | 5. Japan |
| 2. Canada    | 4. India | 6. USA   |



Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

A. 1, 2, 4 and 5

C. 1, 3, 4 and 5

B. 3, 4, 5 and 6

D. 2, 3, 4 and 6

5. India is a member of which among the following?

1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

2. Association of South-East Asian Nations

3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

A. 1 and 2 only

C. 1, 2 and 3

B. 3 only

D. India is a member of none of them

6. Consider the following pairs:

**Organization**

**Location of Headquarters**

1. Asian Development Bank

Tokyo

2. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Singapore

3. Association of South East Asian Nations

Bangkok

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

A. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

B. 2 only

D. 3 only

## 2. Cyclone Montha landfall



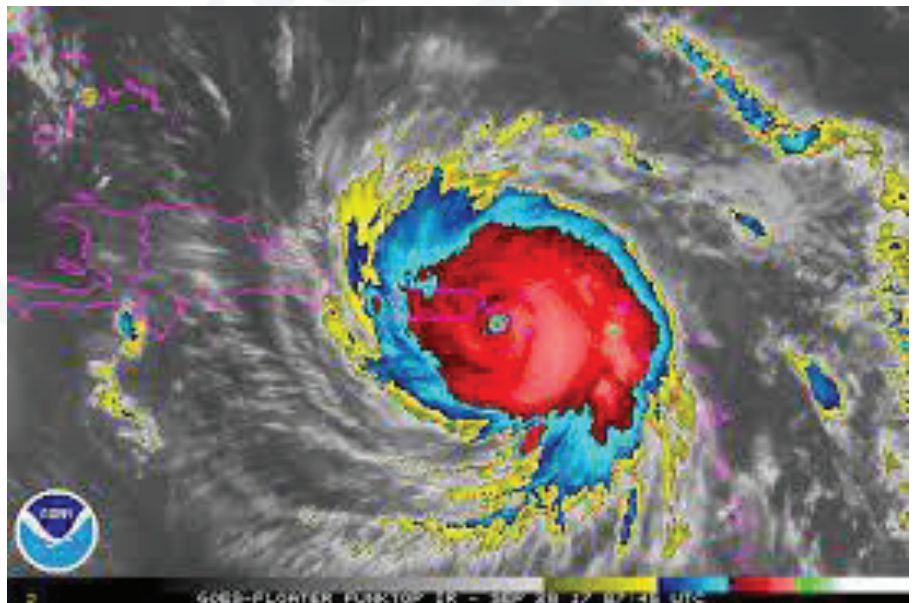
- Several districts in Andhra Pradesh experienced strong winds and heavy rain as Cyclone Montha approached the coast.
- The districts of Kakinada, Visakhapatnam, Konaseema, Krishna, West Godavari, and Vizianagaram experienced heavy rainfall, accompanied by wind speeds of up to 80 km per hour.
- The cyclone is expected to make landfall between Kakinada and Machilipatnam.

### The cyclone named Cyclone Montha got its name as follows:

- The name “Montha” (sometimes spelled “Montha”) was submitted by Thailand as part of a predetermined list of names for tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region.
- In Thai, Montha means a “fragrant flower” or “beautiful flower”.
- The naming system is managed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the regional panel under the World Meteorological Organization / United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).
- Cyclones in that region are named once they reach the “cyclonic storm” intensity (wind speeds above a threshold) so that warnings, communication and historical records are easier to manage.
- So in short: it was named “Montha” because Thailand provided that name meaning “beautiful/fragrant flower” and it follows the region-wide naming list for tracking such storms.

### What is the ‘landfall’ of a cyclone?

- Simply put, landfall is the event of a tropical cyclone coming onto land after being over water.
- As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a tropical cyclone is said to have made landfall when the centre of the storm – or its eye – moves over the coast.
- Crucially, a landfall should not be confused with a ‘direct hit’, which refers to a situation where the core of high winds (or eyewall) comes ashore but the centre of the storm may remain offshore.
- As per the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), because the strongest winds in a tropical cyclone are not located precisely at the centre, it is possible for a cyclone’s strongest winds to be experienced over land even if landfall does not occur.



### What is the damage caused by a cyclone’s landfall?

- The damage caused by the landfall will depend on the severity of the cyclone, marked by the speed of its winds.
- If the cyclonic storm is “very severe”, the impact may include extensive damage to kutcha houses, partial disruption of power and communication lines, minor disruption of rail and road traffic, potential threat from flying debris and flooding of escape routes.
- The factors behind this kind of damage include extremely strong winds, heavy rainfall and storm surges, which cause devastating floods on the coast.



## How long does a landfall last?

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- Landfalls can last for a few hours, with their exact duration depending on the speed of the winds and the size of the storm system.
- Cyclones lose their intensity once they move over land because of a sharp reduction in moisture supply and an increase in surface friction.
- This means that while landfalls are often the most devastating moments of cyclones, they also mark the beginning of their end.

## Cyclone – Meaning

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- A cyclone is a large-scale air mass that rotates around a strong center of low atmospheric pressure. It is a violent storm characterized by strong winds and heavy rains.
- Cyclones are known by different names in different parts of the world:
  - **Hurricane** – in the Atlantic Ocean and Northeast Pacific
  - **Typhoon** – in the Northwest Pacific
  - **Cyclone** – in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean
  - **Formation (Generation) of a Cyclone**
- Cyclones usually form over warm ocean waters near the equator.
- **The steps of their formation are:**
- **Warm Ocean Water**
  - Sea surface temperature must be at least 26.5°C up to a depth of 60–70 meters.
  - Warm water heats the air above, causing it to rise.

## Evaporation and Condensation

- As warm, moist air rises, it cools and condenses to form clouds.
- Condensation releases latent heat, which further warms the air, making it rise faster.

## Formation of Low Pressure Area

- Rising air reduces pressure at the surface, causing surrounding air to rush in.

## Coriolis Effect

- Due to Earth's rotation, the moving air starts to spin (anticlockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere).

## Cyclone Development

- The system grows as the warm air keeps feeding it energy from the ocean.
- A clear circular structure with an “eye” (calm center) forms when it matures.

## Landfall and Weakening

- When the cyclone moves over land, it loses its energy source (warm ocean water) and gradually weakens.

## Effects of a Cyclone

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### 1. Destructive Effects

- **Strong Winds** – uproot trees, damage houses, power lines, and infrastructure.
- **Heavy Rainfall** – causes floods and landslides.
- **Storm Surges** – rise in sea level leading to coastal flooding.

- **Loss of Life and Property** – people, livestock, and crops can be severely affected.
- Disruption of Transport and Communication.

## 2. Beneficial Effects (in some cases)

- Brings rainfall to dry regions.
- Helps maintain heat balance of the Earth by transferring heat from tropics to poles.

### QUESTIONS

7. Consider the following statements:

1. Jet streams Occur in the Northern Hemisphere only.
2. Only some cyclones develop an eye.
3. The temperature inside the eye of a cyclone is nearly 10 C lesser than that of the surroundings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 2 only       |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1 and 3 only |

8. Consider the following statements regarding Cyclone Montha:

1. Cyclone Montha made landfall between Kakinada and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
2. The name 'Montha' was suggested by Thailand and means 'beautiful flower'.
3. The naming of cyclones in the North Indian Ocean is managed by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) directly.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

9. With reference to the concept of landfall, consider the following statements:

1. A tropical cyclone is said to make landfall when its centre or eye crosses the coastline.
2. The strongest winds of a cyclone are located exactly at its centre.
3. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) uses the term "landfall" to describe the moment a cyclone dissipates after reaching land.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 1 and 2 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

10. Consider the following statements about cyclones:

1. Cyclones rotate clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and anticlockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

2. Cyclones generally weaken after landfall due to reduced moisture and heat supply.
3. Warm ocean temperatures above 26.5°C are necessary for cyclone formation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 only       | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

## 3. Supreme Court on Minors' Right to Reject Guardian's Property Sale

- The Supreme Court held that a minor, upon attaining majority, can repudiate or reject a property sale made by their guardian without court approval.

### Such repudiation can be done:

#### By filing a suit, or

- By clear conduct, such as reselling the property, within the three-year limitation period under the Limitation Act, 1963.
- The Court reaffirmed a century-old principle that a minor's rights can be protected by conduct, not only by formal legal action.

#### Case Background

- Concerned two plots (Nos. 56 & 57) in Davanagere, Karnataka, purchased in 1971 in the names of three minor sons.
- Their father, as natural guardian, sold both plots without court permission, violating the law.
- After reaching majority, the sons sold both plots to K.S. Shivappa.
- Two separate ownership disputes arose — one involving Jayadevamma (Plot 56) and another involving Neelamma (Plot 57).

### Lower Courts' Findings

#### Trial Court (Plot 57 case):

- Held that the father's sale was voidable since no court approval was taken.
- Found that the sons had validly repudiated it by selling the property after attaining majority.

#### Appellate & High Court:

- Reversed the trial court's decision, reasoning that no formal suit was filed to cancel the earlier sale.
- Declared Neelamma as the rightful owner.

#### Supreme Court:

- Overturned the High Court's ruling.
- Upheld that repudiation by conduct was sufficient.

## Legal Framework Involved

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### 1. Indian Contract Act, 1872

- **Section 11:**
  - Minors are not competent to contract.
  - Contracts entered by minors are void ab initio (invalid from inception).
  - Only contracts for the minor's benefit may be enforceable.

### 2. Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956

- **Section 8(1):** Guardian can act only for the benefit of the minor's estate.
- **Section 8(2):** Prohibits sale or mortgage of minor's property without court permission.
- **Section 8(3):** Such a sale is voidable at the minor's instance once majority is attained.

### 3. Guardian and Wards Act, 1890

- Section 29: Guardian cannot dispose of minor's property without court sanction.

### 4. Limitation Act, 1963

- A former minor has three years after attaining majority to challenge or repudiate a guardian's unauthorized property transfer.

## Key Legal Issue

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- Whether a now-major person must file a formal suit to set aside a guardian's unauthorized sale,  
**or**
- Whether unequivocal conduct (like reselling the property) is enough to repudiate the transaction.

## Supreme Court's Observations & Findings

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### Voidable Transactions:

- A guardian's unauthorized sale is voidable, not automatically void.
- The minor, after becoming major, has the right to repudiate or affirm it.

### Mode of Repudiation:

- Can be done either by filing a suit or by clear conduct rejecting the earlier sale.
- Such conduct must be unequivocal and within the limitation period.

### Effect of Repudiation:

- Once repudiated, the earlier sale becomes void from the beginning, transferring no rights to the original buyer.

### In the Present Case:

- The sons sold the property to Shivappa within the limitation period.
- Their names remained on revenue records, and the original buyer never took possession.
- This constituted clear repudiation, making the father's sale ineffective.

### On Power of Attorney Evidence

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- The Court held that personal knowledge cannot be substituted by a power-of-attorney holder.

- A power-of-attorney holder's testimony is inadmissible on personal matters if the principal does not testify.
- Thus, the plaintiff's failure to appear personally weakened her case.

### Significance of the Judgment

- Strengthens minors' property rights by allowing repudiation through conduct.
- Reduces unnecessary litigation, as minors-turned-adults need not always file suits.
- Clarifies legal position on unauthorized guardian transactions, reaffirming Abdul Rahman v. Sukhdayal Singh (1905).
- Ensures courts focus on intent and timing rather than procedural formality.

### QUESTIONS

11. With reference to the Supreme Court's ruling on minors' right to reject guardian's property sale, consider the following statements:
1. A minor, after attaining majority, can repudiate an unauthorized sale made by their guardian only by filing a formal legal suit.
  2. The Court held that such repudiation may also be done through clear conduct, such as reselling the property, within the limitation period.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| A. 1 only | C. Both 1 and 2    |
| B. 2 only | D. Neither 1 nor 2 |
12. According to the Supreme Court judgment, what is the limitation period available to a former minor to repudiate a guardian's unauthorized sale?
- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| A. One year after attaining majority  | C. Three years after attaining majority |
| B. Two years after attaining majority | D. Five years after attaining majority  |

## 4. India's National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

- **Launched:** January 2025
- **Duration:** 2024–25 to 2030–31 (7 years)
- **Outlay:** Rs. 16,300 crore (Govt. expenditure) + Rs. 18,000 crore (investments by PSUs & stakeholders)
- **Objective:** Secure India's critical mineral supply chains, support clean energy transition, ensure industrial growth, and promote technological independence.

### What are Critical Minerals?

- **Definition:** Minerals vital for economic growth, national security, and clean technologies.
- **Applications:** Clean energy (solar, wind, EVs), electronics, telecom, transport, and defence.



- **Challenge:** Global supply chain vulnerabilities and heavy import dependence.
- **India's List (2023):** 30 critical minerals including Lithium, Nickel, Cobalt, Copper, REE, Graphite, Titanium, Tungsten, Vanadium, Gallium, Indium, Tellurium, etc.

## Why Critical Minerals Matter for India's Clean Energy Future

### 1. Solar Energy

- **Key elements:** Silicon, Tellurium, Indium, Gallium
- India's solar capacity: 64 GW, expanding rapidly.

### 2. Wind Power

- Uses Neodymium & Dysprosium (for turbine magnets).
- **Target:** Increase wind power capacity from 42 GW → 140 GW by 2030.

### 3. Electric Vehicles (EVs)

- **Core minerals:** Lithium, Nickel, Cobalt.
- **Goal:** 30% EV penetration by 2030.

### 4. Energy Storage

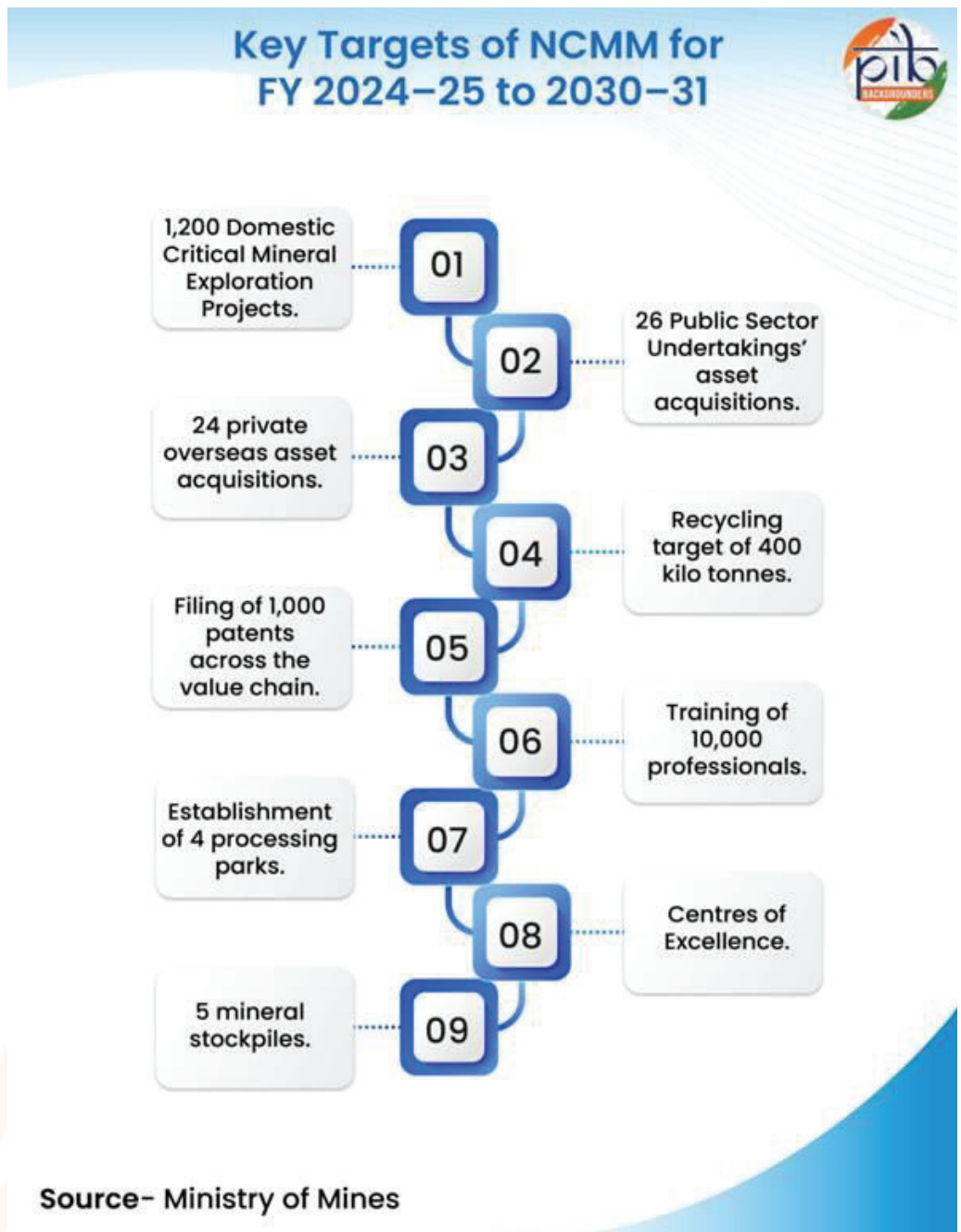
- Lithium-ion systems depend on lithium, cobalt, and nickel.
- Crucial for renewable energy integration and grid stability.

## Charting India's Critical Mineral Roadmap

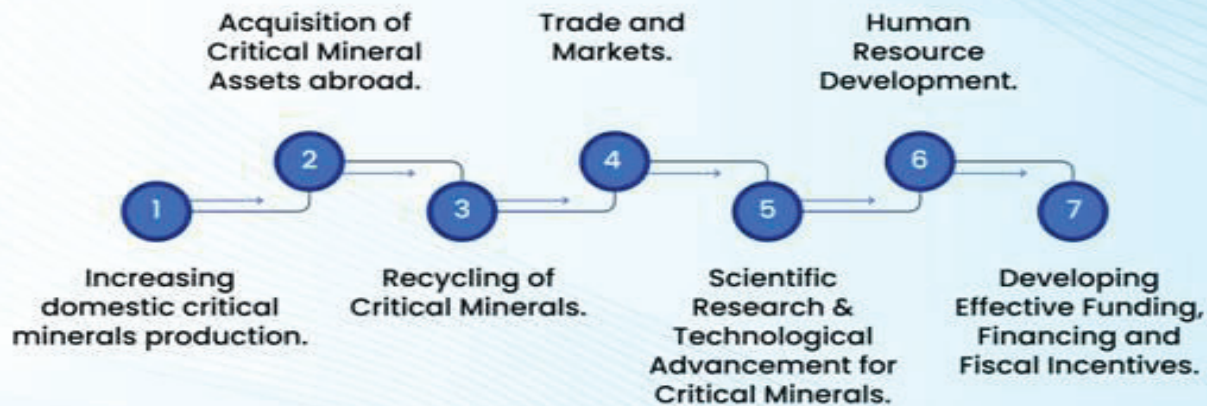
**Legal Framework:** Anchored in the MMDR Act amendment giving the Centre power to auction 24 of 30 critical minerals.

### Core Objectives:

- Secure domestic and global supply chains.
- Strengthen value chains: Exploration → Mining → Processing → Recycling → R&D → HRD.



# Components of NCMM



Source: Ministry of Mines

## Pilot Projects & Recycling Initiatives

- Rs. 100 crore allocated for pilot recovery from non-traditional sources – mine tailings, fly ash, red mud, etc.
- Rs. 1,500 crore Incentive Scheme to boost critical mineral recycling (from e-waste, Li-ion batteries, end-of-life vehicles).
  - **Capacity:** 270 KT/year recycling, 40 KT mineral output.
  - **Investment:** Rs. 8,000 crore, 70,000 jobs created.

## Global & Domestic Exploration

- Over 1,000 projects planned for domestic exploration.
- Encourage PSUs and private players to acquire overseas critical mineral assets.
- Develop processing parks, R&D centres, patents, recycling incentives, upskilling, and strategic mineral reserves.

## Mines of Innovation: Patent & R&D Push

- **Target:** File 1,000 patents in the critical mineral value chain by 2030–31.
- **Early Results (2025):**
  - 21 patents (May) → 41 patents (June) filed.
  - 10 patents granted (May–June) covering lithium, nickel, tungsten, vanadium, ytterbium, tantalum, etc.
- **Research Focus:** Extraction, processing, battery tech, advanced materials, and clean energy applications.

## Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Mining

### 7 Institutions designated under NCMM:

- **IITs:** Bombay, Hyderabad, ISM Dhanbad, Roorkee
- **CSIR Labs:** IMMT Bhubaneswar, NML Jamshedpur

## NFTDC Hyderabad

- **Mandate:** Lead R&D, innovation, and technology development in critical minerals.
- **Funding:** Government schemes, industry collaborations, and venture capital.
- Strategic Significance
- Critical minerals are the “oil of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

### Essential for:

- Energy security & clean tech leadership.
- Reducing import dependence.
- Boosting manufacturing & job creation.

### Aligns with India's climate goals:

- Cut emission intensity by 45% by 2030 (from 2005 levels)
- Source 50% power from non-fossil fuels by 2030
- Achieve net-zero emissions by 2070

## QUESTIONS

13. Which of the following statements about the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) is/are correct?
1. The mission aims to ensure self-reliance in critical minerals and supports India's clean energy transition.
  2. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) is responsible for conducting domestic exploration projects under the mission.
  3. All critical minerals identified by the Ministry of Mines are now included in Part A of the MMDR Act, 1957.

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

14. Consider the following pairs regarding critical minerals and their primary uses:

Critical Mineral	Usage
1. Neodymium	(a) Lithium-ion batteries
2. Lithium	(b) Permanent magnets in wind turbines
3. Gallium	(c) Solar photovoltaic cells

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| A. 1-a, 2-b, 3-c | C. 1-a, 2-b, 3-c |
| B. 1-b, 2-a, 3-c | D. 1-c, 2-b, 3-a |

15. Which of the following initiatives are part of NCMM's international collaboration efforts?

1. KABIL signed a lithium exploration agreement with Argentina covering 15,703 hectares.
2. MoU with Australia's Department of Industry, Science and Resources for strategic investments in lithium and cobalt.
3. India signed a strategic partnership with Chile to develop rare earth element (REE) refining units.

A. 1 and 2 only

C. 1 and 3 only

B. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

16. Consider the following statements:

1. India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership as a member.
2. India is a resource-rich country in all the 30 critical minerals that it has identified.
3. The Parliament in 2023 has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowering the Central Government to exclusively auction mining lease and composite license for certain critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

C. 1 and 3 only

B. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

## 5. Japan sees world's first yen-pegged stablecoin debut



- Japan's first yen-pegged stablecoin launched by the startup JPYC.



## Issuer Details:

- JPYC will issue stablecoins fully convertible to the yen, backed by domestic savings and Japanese government bonds (JGBs).

## Regulatory & Global Context:

- Launch follows U.S. President Donald Trump's support for the digital currency sector.
- China is also exploring yuan-backed stablecoins, reflecting growing global interest in fiat-pegged digital currencies.
- Japan introduced rules in 2023 allowing the issuance of stablecoins.
- South Korea plans to allow won-based stablecoins as well.

## Market Landscape:

- USD-backed stablecoins currently make up over 99% of global supply (Bank for International Settlements).
- Japan's three megabanks are also planning to jointly issue stablecoins, signaling wider adoption.

## Policy & Regulatory Concerns:

- Policymakers worry that stablecoins could bypass regulated banking systems and reduce the role of commercial banks in payments.
- Bank of Japan Deputy Governor Ryozi Himino emphasized that stablecoins might partially replace bank deposits, urging regulators to adapt.

## Japan's Digital Payment Shift:

- Historically cash-heavy, Japan's cashless payment ratio rose to 42.8% in 2024, up from 13.2% in 2010.
- Reflects a gradual digital transformation in consumer behavior.

## Business Model:

- JPYC will not charge transaction fees initially to encourage adoption.
- Revenue will come from interest on JGB holdings rather than user fees.

## Stablecoin

- A stablecoin is a type of cryptocurrency designed to maintain a stable value, typically pegged to a reserve asset like a fiat currency (e.g., US Dollar, Euro) or commodities (e.g., gold).
- The main goal is to reduce the extreme price volatility commonly seen in cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin or Ethereum.

### 1. Types of Stablecoins

- Fiat-collateralized:** Backed 1:1 by fiat currency in a bank account.  
**Example:** USDT (Tether), USDC (USD Coin)
- Crypto-collateralized:** Backed by other cryptocurrencies, often over-collateralized to handle volatility.  
**Example:** DAI
- Algorithmic / Non-collateralized:** Use smart contracts and algorithms to control supply and stabilize value, without needing reserves.  
**Example:** TerraUSD (before collapse)

### 2. Key Uses

- Payments:** Easier, faster cross-border transactions.



- **Trading:** Safe haven for crypto traders during market volatility.
- **DeFi applications:** Lending, borrowing, and earning interest in decentralized finance platforms.

### 3. Advantages

- Stability in value.
- Faster transactions than traditional banking.
- Can be integrated with DeFi and crypto ecosystems.

### 4. Risks

- Centralization (for fiat-backed stablecoins).
- Regulatory scrutiny.
- Algorithmic stablecoins can fail (as seen in past collapses).

## Cryptocurrency

- Cryptocurrency is a type of digital or virtual currency that uses cryptography for security, making it very difficult to counterfeit or double-spend.
  - Unlike traditional currencies issued by governments (like USD or EUR), cryptocurrencies are typically decentralized and operate on a technology called blockchain, which is a distributed ledger maintained by a network of computers (nodes).
    - **Decentralization:** Most cryptocurrencies aren't controlled by any central authority, like a bank or government. Instead, transactions are verified by a network of computers.
    - **Blockchain:** This is the underlying technology. A blockchain is a chain of blocks, each containing a list of transactions. Once a block is added, it's nearly impossible to change, ensuring security and transparency.
    - **Security:** Cryptography secures transactions and controls the creation of new units. Public and private keys are used for sending and receiving funds.
- Examples:** The most well-known cryptocurrency is Bitcoin. Others include Ethereum, Cardano, Solana, and Ripple (XRP).
- **Uses:** Cryptocurrencies can be used for payments, investment, smart contracts, and decentralized finance (DeFi) applications.
  - **Volatility:** Prices of cryptocurrencies can fluctuate wildly, which makes them risky as investments.

### Mining vs. Staking:

- Mining is solving complex mathematical problems to validate transactions (common in Bitcoin).
- Staking is holding coins in a network to help validate transactions (common in Ethereum 2.0 and other proof-of-stake networks).

## QUESTIONS

17. Consider the following statements regarding Japan's first yen-pegged stablecoin:

1. It is issued by Japan's central bank under the Bank of Japan Act.
2. The stablecoin is fully backed by Japanese Government Bonds (JGBs) and savings deposits.
3. It was launched by a private startup, JPYC.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

18. Which of the following statements best defines a stablecoin?

- A. A cryptocurrency whose value is entirely determined by market supply and demand.
- B. A digital asset pegged to a stable reserve such as a fiat currency or commodity.
- C. A government-issued central bank digital currency.
- D. An algorithm used to mine cryptocurrencies.

19. Which of the following is NOT a type of stablecoin?

- A. Fiat-collateralized
- B. Crypto-collateralized
- C. Algorithmic
- D. Proof-of-stake-based

20. With reference to the regulation of stablecoins in East Asia, consider the following statements:

- 1. Japan legalized the issuance of stablecoins in 2023.
- 2. South Korea plans to introduce won-based stablecoins.
- 3. China already allows free trading of yuan-backed stablecoins in private markets.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

21. Which of the following statements correctly differentiates between cryptocurrency and stablecoin?

- A. Stablecoins are government-issued, while cryptocurrencies are privately mined.
- B. Cryptocurrencies are inherently stable, while stablecoins are volatile.
- C. Stablecoins are a subset of cryptocurrencies designed to minimize price fluctuations.
- D. Cryptocurrencies and stablecoins operate under identical legal frameworks.

22. With reference to Central Bank digital currencies, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is possible to make payments in a digital currency without using US dollar or SWIFT system.
- 2. A digital currency can be distributed with condition programmed into it such as a time- frame for spending it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

## 6. South Korea presents country's highest decoration to US President



- South Korean President presented US President Donald Trump with a replica of a gold crown and award him with the country's highest decoration, "Grand Order of Mugunghwa."
- The crown will symbolise the history of Silla, which maintained a long period of peace on the Korean Peninsula.
- Trump, who openly lobbied to be awarded the Nobel Prize, will be the first US president to be presented the Korean award.

### Grand Order of Mugunghwa

- It is the highest order awarded by the Republic of Korea (South Korea).
- Established on 13 August 1949.
- Named after the national flower, the "mugunghwa" (rose of Sharon / hibiscus syriacus).
- **Eligibility:** Typically awarded to the President of South Korea, their spouse; also may be awarded to heads of state (and spouses) of allied countries for outstanding contributions to the development and security of South Korea.





### Criteria & purpose

- The law states it's awarded for “outstanding meritorious services in the interest of promoting the development and security of the Republic of Korea.”
- When awarded to foreign leaders, it often serves a diplomatic function—recognizing or supporting bilateral ties rather than only specific achievements.

### Appearance & significance

- The insignia consists of multiple elements: a collar decoration worn around the neck, a badge on a sash over the shoulder, a star worn on the chest, and a lapel badge.
  - **Materials:** gold, silver, rubies, amethysts are used. For example, the gold in some recent issues alone was valued at over 130 million won.
  - **Symbolism:** Elements like phoenix, sun, laurel wreath, Taegeuk (Korean national symbol) appear in its design—representing the presidency, national prestige, peace & freedom.

### Notable facts & controversies

- It is standard practice for a South Korean President to receive it around the time they enter or leave office. But that practice has stirred controversy because it can look like self-award.
- For example: production cost has become a subject of public debate (one article noted a cost of ~68 million won for a set).
- The award has been given to many foreign heads of state as a diplomatic gesture.

## Example recipients

- **Domestic:** The first recipient was Syngman Rhee (President of South Korea) in 1949.
- **Foreign:** For instance, in July 2023, Andrzej Duda (President of Poland) was awarded the Grand Order of Mugunghwa.

## Indians to receive Korean Honours

## 1. Venu Srinivasan

- He was awarded the South Korean civilian honour Order of Diplomatic Service Merit for his contribution to promoting bilateral relations between South Korea and India.
- He also received honorary citizenship of the city of Busan in Korea.

## 2. Galavi Sharma

- Galavi Sharma became the first non-Korean to win the Presidential Award in the 24<sup>th</sup> World K-SPEECH Contest.
- The award is regarded as a top Korean honour in language proficiency and cultural exchange for non-Korean participants.
- This is an example of an Indian being recognised by a Korean institution/government body for excellence in Korean language/culture.

### 3. Lt Col A. G. Rangaraj

- He served in the Korean War with the Indian Army's 60<sup>th</sup> Parachute Field Ambulance unit.
- The South Korean government announced that he would be honoured as a “Korean War Hero” (for July 2020) in recognition of his service.
- Although this is more of a war-hero recognition rather than a formal civilian honour, it still represents Korea honouring an Indian individual.

## QUESTIONS

**23.** Consider the following statements regarding the Grand Order of Mugunghwa:

1. It is the highest civilian award of the Republic of Korea.
2. It is named after the national flower of South Korea.
3. It is awarded only to citizens of South Korea.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

24. Which of the following Indian citizens have been honoured by South Korean institutions or the government?

1. Venu Srinivasan – for promoting India–Korea relations.
2. Lt Col A. G. Rangaraj – recognised as a Korean War Hero.
3. Galavi Sharma – recipient of the Grand Order of Mugunghwa.



Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 1 and 3 only  
C. 2 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

25. The Grand Order of Mugunghwa was presented to U.S. President Donald Trump by South Korea for which of the following reasons?

- A. His support for the reunification of North and South Korea.  
B. His contributions to strengthening diplomatic relations and peace on the Korean Peninsula.  
C. His efforts to promote trade between the United States and ASEAN nations.  
D. His role in the reconstruction of post-war South Korea.

26. Consider the following statements in respect of Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards:

1. Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are titles under the Article 18(1) of the Constitution of India.
2. Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, were suspended only once.
3. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.

Which of the above statements are not correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

## 7. Rashtriya Ekta Diwas

- **Date:** Observed annually on October 31.
- **Purpose:** Commemorates the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the “Iron Man of India.”

### Objective:

- Promote national unity, sovereignty, and integrity.
- Encourage citizens to uphold unity in diversity.
- **First Observed:** In 2014, following a Government of India declaration.

### Key Initiative:

- During the 2015 celebration, PM Narendra Modi launched “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB)” to strengthen inter-state cultural and emotional bonds.
- **2025 Significance:** Marks 150 years since Sardar Patel’s birth, making the occasion a year-long nationwide commemoration.
- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB):** Continuing Patel’s Vision
- **Launched:** 31 October 2015 by PM Modi.
- **Aim:** Strengthen emotional and cultural unity among citizens.



### Core Objectives:

- Foster national integration through inter-state partnerships.
- Celebrate and understand India's linguistic, cultural, and social diversity.
- Build long-term relationships between states and union territories.
- **Approach:** State and UT pairings for exchange programs, language learning, and cultural interaction.

### Key EBSB Initiatives

- **Bhasha Sangam App:** Learn 100+ useful sentences in 22 Indian languages.
- **Cultural Events & Food Festivals:** Promote regional heritage and cuisine.



### Student Programs:

- Yuva Sangam and EBSB Clubs in schools and colleges.
- Foster youth interaction and understanding.
- **Kashi Tamil Sangamam:** Highlights cultural and spiritual connections between Kashi and Tamil Nadu.

### Digital Outreach:

- My Bharat Portal, EBSB Quizzes, and Online Campaigns promoting unity and patriotism.

### EBSB Portal:

- Digital platform showcasing activities like Dekho Apna Desh, indigenous sports, and the EBSB Wall documenting monthly unity events.

### Rashtriya Ekta Diwas 2025:

- **Theme:** “Unity in Diversity – Sardar@150”
- **Prime Minister’s Participation:** PM Narendra Modi to lead celebrations at Ekta Nagar, Kevadia, Gujarat.
- **Significance:** Reinforces the timeless relevance of Patel’s ideals in maintaining national solidarity amid modern challenges.



### Unique Marching Contingent of Indian Breed Dogs

- **Participants:** Indigenous breeds – Rampur Hounds and Mudhol Hounds of the Border Security Force (BSF).

- Symbolize Aatmanirbhar Bharat and national pride.
- Mudhol Hound “Riya” to lead after winning the All India Police Dog Competition.
- **Purpose:** Showcase India’s native strength and contribution to national security.

### Sardar@150 Unity March (Yatra)

- **Organised By:** Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports via My Bharat platform.
- **Launch:** October 6, 2025 by Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya.

### Components:

- Social Media Reels Contest, Essay Competitions, and Young Leaders Program.
- 150 national winners to join the National Padyatra.

### Two Phases:

- **Phase 1 (Oct 31 – Nov 25):** District-level padyatras and activities—seminars, debates, street plays, cleanliness & plantation drives.
- **Phase 2 (Nov 26 – Dec 6):** National March (152 km) from Karamsad to Statue of Unity, involving NSS, NCC, and My Bharat volunteers.
- **Features:** Cultural exhibitions, community projects, and development activities en route.

### Run for Unity 2025

- **Type:** Nationwide marathon symbolizing collective strides for unity.
- **Date:** October 31, 2025.
- **Participation:** Thousands across major cities; flagship event in New Delhi led by Union Ministers.
- **Prime Minister’s Call:** PM Modi urges citizens to participate in honour of Sardar Patel’s 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary.

### Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875–1950), known as the “Iron Man of India”, was one of the foremost leaders of India’s freedom struggle and played a decisive role in shaping modern India after independence.

#### 1. Role in the Freedom Struggle

- **Early activism:** Patel was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi’s principles of truth and non-violence.
- He joined the Indian National Congress and became one of Gandhi’s closest associates.

#### Kheda and Bardoli Satyagrahas:

- In **Kheda (1918)**, Patel organized peasants to protest unjust tax collection during a famine, leading to the suspension of taxes.
- In **Bardoli (1928)**, his leadership in a non-violent farmers’ movement forced the British government to reduce land revenue. This earned him the title “Sardar” (leader).

#### 2. Architect of India’s Political Integration

- **Unifying 562 Princely States:** After India gained independence in 1947, there were over 560 princely states that were not directly under British rule.
- Patel, as India’s first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, led the integration of these states into the Indian Union.

- Using diplomacy, persuasion, and where necessary, firmness (as in the case of Hyderabad and Junagadh), he ensured India became one united nation.
- His efforts prevented the Balkanization of India and laid the foundation for a strong, cohesive republic.

### 3. Administrator and Nation Builder

- Patel established the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS) to ensure efficient governance and national unity.
- He played a vital role in stabilizing the nation during the chaotic post-partition period, managing refugee resettlement and maintaining internal security.

### 4. Legacy

- Known for his integrity, determination, and pragmatic approach, Patel is remembered as the “Bismarck of India.”

## QUESTIONS

27. Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is celebrated in India to commemorate which of the following?
- The adoption of the Constitution of India
  - The birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
  - The merger of princely states into the Indian Union
  - The establishment of the Indian Administrative Service
28. The ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ initiative, launched in 2015, primarily seeks to:
- Promote foreign investment and global competitiveness
  - Strengthen cultural and linguistic unity among Indian states
  - Increase inter-state trade and agricultural productivity
  - Develop border-area infrastructure
29. Which of the following statements about the Sardar@150 Unity March is/are correct?
1. It was launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through the My Bharat platform.
  2. It included two phases—district-level padyatras and a national march from Karamsad to the Statue of Unity.
  3. It commemorated the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1, 2 and 3 |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1 only     |
30. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel earned the title “Sardar” during which of the following movements?
- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Champaran Satyagraha | C. Bardoli Satyagraha       |
| B. Kheda Satyagraha     | D. Non-Cooperation Movement |



## 8. ECI announces phase 2 of Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in 12 States

- The Election Commission of India announced the phase two of Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in 12 States and Union Territories from October 28, 2025.
- The 12 States and UTs where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) will begin from tomorrow are Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, Puducherry, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Lakshadweep.
- The printing of Enumeration Forms will begin on October 28 and would be given to each voter in States where SIR would take place now.
- The ECI also said that revision of electoral rolls in Assam will be announced separately.
- No SIR was announced for the State in this phase despite Assembly elections in Assam in 2026.
- In the 12 States going for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), there are around 51 crore voters.
- A total of 5.33 lakh BLOs will be working on it, along with over 7 lakh BLAs appointed by political parties.
- Printing and training will begin from tomorrow till November 3, followed by house-to-house enumeration from November 4 to December 4.
- The draft electoral rolls will be published on December 8, 2025, with claims and objections accepted from December 9, 2025, to January 8, 2026.
- Hearings for those served notices will continue till January 31, and the final electoral rolls will be published on February 7.

### What is Special (Intensive) Revision?

- The Special Summary Revision (SSR) or Special Intensive Revision is a periodic, large-scale verification and update of the electoral rolls (voter list) carried out by the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- It ensures that every eligible citizen (18 years and above) is included in the electoral roll and that names of ineligible persons (deceased, shifted, disqualified) are removed.
- It is usually conducted every year — typically between October and January, ahead of elections.

### Objectives

- Ensure accuracy of the electoral roll.
- Enroll all eligible voters who have turned 18 by the qualifying date (usually 1<sup>st</sup> January of the coming year).
- Delete or correct entries for deceased or migrated voters.
- Update details like name corrections, address changes, or photo mismatches.

## Stages / Process of Special Intensive Revision

Stage	Description
1. Publication of Draft Electoral Roll	The existing roll is updated and published as a draft at polling stations and on the CEO (Chief Electoral Officer) website. Public can check their details.
2. Period for Claims and Objections	Citizens can file Form 6 (new inclusion), Form 7 (deletion), Form 8 (correction), Form 8A (address change). Usually open for 30 days.
3. Field Verification	Booth Level Officers (BLOs) verify the claims and objections by visiting households.
4. Disposal of Claims and Objections	Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) decide on inclusion, deletion, or correction based on verification and documents.
5. Final Publication of Electoral Roll	After all corrections and decisions, the final voter list is published (usually in January). This list is used for all elections until the next revision.

## Benefits & Advantages

### 1. Accuracy and Purity of Electoral Roll

- Removes duplicate, fake, or deceased entries.
- Ensures that only eligible voters remain on the list.

### 2. Inclusion of New Voters

- Provides an opportunity for citizens who have just turned 18 to register.

### 3. Public Participation

- Encourages transparency and involvement of citizens in the democratic process.

### 4. Smooth Conduct of Elections

- Updated rolls minimize disputes, reduce chances of impersonation, and improve election logistics.

### 5. Digital and Field Verification

- Integration with online platforms (like NVSP and Voter Helpline App) and door-to-door verification by BLOs ensures both accessibility and reliability.

## Election Commission of India (ECI)

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering elections in India.
- It ensures that elections are free, fair, and impartial across the country.

## Basic Information

- **Established:** 25 January 1950
- **Constitutional Provision:** Article 324 of the Indian Constitution
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Motto:** “Free and Fair Elections”

## Composition

- The Commission currently consists of:
  - Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

- Two Election Commissioners (ECs)
- They have equal powers, and decisions are made by majority vote.

#### **Appointment:**

- Appointed by the President of India.
- Their tenure and conditions of service are the same as those of a Supreme Court judge.

#### **Removal:**

- The Chief Election Commissioner can only be removed by Parliament through a process similar to that of removing a judge of the Supreme Court.
- Other Election Commissioners can be removed by the President, but only on the recommendation of the CEC.

#### **Functions and Powers**

- The ECI supervises, directs, and controls the entire process of elections to:
  - Parliament (Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha)
  - State Legislatures (Vidhan Sabha & Vidhan Parishad)
  - President and Vice President of India

#### **Major Functions:**

- Preparing and updating electoral rolls.
- Recognizing political parties and allotting election symbols.
- Model Code of Conduct enforcement during elections.
- Monitoring election expenditure by candidates and parties.
- Ordering re-polls or countermanding elections in case of malpractice.
- Using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and VVPATs.

#### **National Voters' Day:**

- Celebrated on 25 January every year to encourage young voters to participate in the democratic process.

### **QUESTIONS**

31. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls conducted by the Election Commission of India primarily aims to—
  - A. Increase voter turnout through awareness drives
  - B. Verify and update the accuracy of the electoral rolls
  - C. Introduce new electronic voting machines
  - D. Conduct simultaneous elections across states
32. Which of the following statements regarding the Election Commission of India (ECI) is correct?
  - A. It is a statutory body established under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
  - B. It is a constitutional body established under Article 324 of the Constitution.
  - C. It functions under the supervision of the Ministry of Law and Justice.
  - D. It is headed by the President of India.

**33.** Consider the following statements regarding the composition and functioning of the Election Commission of India:

1. It consists of the Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.
2. The Election Commissioners enjoy the same tenure and service conditions as Supreme Court judges.
3. The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed by the President only on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 1 and 3 only |
| B. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3   |

**34.** Consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | C. 2 and 3 only |
| B. 2 only       | D. 3 only       |

**35.** Consider the following statements:

1. According to the Constitution of India, a person who is eligible to vote can be made a minister in a State for six months even if he/she is not a member of the Legislature of that State.
2. According to the Representation of People Act, 1951, a person convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment for five years is permanently disqualified from contesting an election even after his release from prison.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| A. 1 only | C. Both 1 and 2    |
| B. 2 only | D. Neither 1 nor 2 |

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

### 1. B 2 and 3 only

- Statement 1 is incorrect — The **ASEAN Secretariat** is located in **Jakarta, Indonesia**, not Bangkok.
- Statement 2 is correct — The **Bangkok Declaration** was signed on **8 August 1967**, marking ASEAN's establishment.
- Statement 3 is correct — The **founding members** were **Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand**.
- Hence, the correct answer is **(b)**.

### 2. C All three statements are correct.

- **ASEAN Plus Three (APT)** refers to ASEAN's dialogue mechanism with **China, Japan, and South Korea**.
- **ASEAN Plus Six** expands on APT by adding **Australia, India, and New Zealand**.
- The **East Asia Summit (EAS)** further includes **Russia and the United States**, making it a wider platform for regional cooperation and dialogue on strategic and security issues.
- Hence, the correct answer is **(c)**.

### 3. D 1, 2 and 3

All statements are correct. East Timor remained under Portuguese rule until 1975 when Indonesia invaded it. After decades of resistance and international advocacy, a UN-supervised referendum in 1999 led to independence in 2002. It officially joined ASEAN as its 11<sup>th</sup> member on **October 26, 2025**, during the Kuala Lumpur Summit.

### 4. C 1, 3, 4 and 5.

ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) has free trade agreements (FTAs) with the following countries: Australia, China, India, and Japan. Canada is not an ASEAN FTA partner. USA is not an ASEAN FTA partner.

### 5. B 3 only

India is a member of the East Asia Summit (EAS). However, it is not a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) or the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

### 6. B 2 only

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) headquarters is located in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) headquarters is in Singapore. The headquarters of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is located at 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

### 7. C 2 only

- **Statement A is wrong** → Jet streams exist in *both* hemispheres. Jet streams occur **in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres**. They are fast-moving air currents found in the upper troposphere and are a global phenomenon, not limited to one hemisphere.
- **Statement B is correct** → Only strong cyclones form a clear eye. Not all cyclones form a well-defined eye. **Strong, mature tropical cyclones** typically develop a clear eye. **Weak or developing cyclones** may have an ill-defined or absent eye. Hence, this statement is true. **Statement C is wrong** → The eye is *warmer*, not cooler. The temperature in the eye can be **10°C higher** than the surrounding eyewall, due to descending warm air. So this statement is factually wrong.



8. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Cyclone Montha made landfall between **Kakinada and Machilipatnam** in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** Thailand proposed the name '**Montha**', which means a **fragrant or beautiful flower** in Thai.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** Naming of cyclones in the North Indian Ocean is managed by the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, acting as the regional centre under the **WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones** — not by WMO directly.

9. A 1 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.** According to IMD, a cyclone makes **landfall** when the **eye (centre)** of the cyclone crosses the coastline.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** The **strongest winds** are not at the centre but in the **eyewall**, surrounding the calm eye.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** "Landfall" refers to **arrival on land**, not dissipation — though cyclones weaken **after** landfall due to loss of oceanic heat energy.

10. D 1, 2 and 3

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** Due to the **Coriolis effect**, cyclones rotate **anticlockwise in the Northern Hemisphere** and **clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere**.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** Cyclones lose strength after **landfall** because they no longer receive warm oceanic moisture, their main energy source.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** A **sea surface temperature of at least 26.5°C** up to about 60–70 metres depth is needed to initiate and sustain a cyclone.

11. B 2 only

The Supreme Court ruled that a minor, upon attaining majority, **need not necessarily file a suit** to reject a sale made without court approval. **Clear conduct**—such as reselling the property or refusing to recognize the earlier sale—within the **three-year limitation period** is sufficient.

Hence, **statement 2 is correct** and **statement 1 is incorrect**.

12. C Three years after attaining majority

- Under the **Limitation Act, 1963**, a former minor has **three years after attaining majority** to challenge or repudiate any property transaction made by their guardian **without court sanction**.
- In this case, the sons repudiated the sale within this period by selling the property themselves.

13. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** NCMM aims to secure critical minerals and support clean energy technologies like solar, wind, EVs, and energy storage.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** GSI conducts domestic exploration projects (1,200 projects from 2024-25 to 2030-31).
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Only **24 out of 30 critical minerals** are included in **Part D of Schedule I of the MMDR Act, 1957**, not Part A.

**14. B** 1-b, 2-a, 3-c

- Neodymium → used in **permanent magnets** for wind turbines.
- Dysprosium → used in **permanent magnets** for wind turbines.
- Gallium → used in **solar photovoltaic cells**.
- Lithium is used in lithium-ion batteries, not Neodymium.

**15. A** 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct → KABIL & Catamarca, Argentina agreement for lithium exploration.
- **Statement 2:** Correct → MoU with Australia for strategic investments in lithium and cobalt.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect → No official partnership with Chile for REE refining is mentioned in NCMM initiatives.

**16. C** 1 and 3 only

India became the 14<sup>th</sup> member of the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) in June 2023. Although India has identified around 30 critical minerals and has substantial deposits, it is not resource-rich in all of them. Many are under-explored, technologically challenging or heavily import-dependent. Under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (Amendment) Act, 2023, the Central Government was empowered to exclusively auction mining leases and composite licences for specified “critical and strategic” minerals listed under Part D of Schedule I.

**17. B** 2 and 3 only

- Statement 1 – **Incorrect:** The yen-pegged stablecoin was not issued by the Bank of Japan but by a **private startup, JPYC**.
- Statement 2 – **Correct:** JPYC’s stablecoin is **fully backed by domestic savings and Japanese Government Bonds (JGBs)** to ensure stability.
- Statement 3 – **Correct:** The **startup JPYC** launched the stablecoin as Japan’s first yen-backed digital currency under 2023 regulations.

**18. B** A digital asset pegged to a stable reserve such as a fiat currency or commodity.

- A **stablecoin** maintains a **stable value** by pegging itself to reserve assets like fiat currencies (USD, yen) or commodities (gold).
- Unlike Bitcoin or Ethereum, which fluctuate in price, stablecoins reduce volatility, making them suitable for payments and decentralized finance (DeFi).

**19. D** Proof-of-stake-based

The **three main types** of stablecoins are:

- **Fiat-collateralized:** backed by currency like USD (*e.g.*, USDT, USDC).
- **Crypto-collateralized:** backed by cryptocurrencies (*e.g.*, DAI).
- **Algorithmic:** stabilized via algorithms (*e.g.*, TerraUSD).

“Proof-of-stake” refers to a **blockchain consensus mechanism**, not a type of stablecoin.

**20. A** 1 and 2 only.

- **Statements 1 & 2:** Correct – Japan’s 2023 law allowed stablecoin issuance; South Korea is planning won-backed stablecoins.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect – China has not legalized private yuan-based stablecoin trading; it only experiments with state-controlled digital yuan (e-CNY).

21. C Stablecoins are a subset of cryptocurrencies designed to minimize price fluctuations.
- A **stablecoin** is a **specialized type of cryptocurrency** meant to maintain a **stable value**, often pegged to fiat currency.
  - **Cryptocurrencies** like Bitcoin or Ethereum are **not pegged** and can fluctuate widely.
  - Stablecoins thus act as a **bridge** between fiat money and volatile digital currencies.
22. C Both 1 and 2
- **Statement 1 is correct.** It is possible to make payments in digital currencies without using US dollar or SWIFT system.
  - **Statement 2 is correct.** The digital yuan is programmable to the extent that the currency can be designed to expire, forcing users to spend it all by a specific date. It means that the digital currencies can be programmed to be spent within a predetermined time range.
23. A 1 and 2 only.
- **Statement 1 – Correct:** The *Grand Order of Mugunghwa* is indeed the **highest order** awarded by South Korea.
  - **Statement 2 – Correct:** It is named after **Mugunghwa**, the *Rose of Sharon* (*Hibiscus syriacus*), South Korea's **national flower**.
  - **Statement 3 – Incorrect:** The award can also be conferred upon **foreign heads of state** and their spouses for promoting bilateral ties, not only South Korean citizens.
24. A 1 and 2 only
- **Venu Srinivasan** received the *Order of Diplomatic Service Merit* for strengthening **India–Korea relations**.
  - **Lt Col A. G. Rangaraj** was honoured as a **Korean War Hero** for his service in the Korean War.
  - **Galavi Sharma** received the **Presidential Award** in the *World K-Speech Contest*, not the Grand Order of Mugunghwa.
- Therefore, the correct answer is (a) 1 and 2 only.
25. B His contributions to strengthening diplomatic relations and peace on the Korean Peninsula.
- The award was given to **Donald Trump** by the South Korean President to **recognize his diplomatic efforts toward peace and security on the Korean Peninsula** and to symbolize strong U.S.–South Korea ties.
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  - The award was given to **Donald Trump** by the South Korean President to **recognize his diplomatic efforts toward peace and security on the Korean Peninsula** and to symbolize strong U.S.–South Korea ties.
  - The gift of a **replica gold crown** representing the *Silla dynasty* further symbolized peace and stability in Korean history.
26. D 1, 2 and 3
- **Article 18(1) of the Indian Constitution states:** “No title, not being a military or academic distinction, shall be conferred by the State.” However, the Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are not conferred as titles under Article 18(1). Instead, they are civilian honors recognizing exceptional

service to the nation in various fields such as arts, literature, sports, and public service. Additionally, the Supreme Court of India clarified that these awards do not violate Article 18 because they are not titles; the recipients cannot use these awards as prefixes or suffixes to their names. Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.

- Padma Awards were indeed instituted in 1954, however; these awards have been suspended three times: Between 1977–1980 (during Morarji Desai’s government, which questioned the relevance of such awards). Once again briefly during 1978 (as part of a policy review under the Janata government). Between 1993–1997 (due to legal and procedural challenges). Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.
- The practice of awarding more than three recipients was first broken in 1999, when the award was given to four people. In 2024, this record was surpassed when five individuals were conferred the award, setting a new maximum for the highest civilian honor in India. The premise that the Bharat Ratna is limited to three recipients per year is a common misconception; there is no official limit, and it has been awarded to five people in 2024, which was the maximum number ever given in a single year. The five recipients in 2024 were:
  1. Karpoori Thakur, a former Chief Minister of Bihar.
  2. L. K. Advani, a former Deputy Prime Minister.
  3. P. V. Narasimha Rao, a former Prime Minister.
  4. Chaudhary Charan Singh, a former Prime Minister.
  5. M. S. Swaminathan, a renowned agricultural scientist.

Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.

**27. B** The birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, or **National Unity Day**, is observed annually on **October 31**, marking the **birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, the “Iron Man of India.” It was first observed in **2014** to honour Patel’s role in uniting 562 princely states into the Indian Union after Independence.

**28. B** Strengthen cultural and linguistic unity among Indian states

- The **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB)** programme was launched by PM Narendra Modi on **31 October 2015** to **foster cultural, linguistic, and emotional integration among Indian states and Union Territories**.
- It involves **state pairing**, language exchange, and cultural programs to reinforce India’s “unity in diversity.”

**29. C** 1, 2 and 3

- All three statements are correct. The **Sardar@150 Unity March (Yatra)** was launched on **6 October 2025** by **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya** through the **My Bharat platform**, featuring district and national padyatras from **Karamsad to the Statue of Unity**, to celebrate **Sardar Patel’s 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary**.

**30. C** Bardoli Satyagraha

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel earned the title “**Sardar**” (**leader**) during the **Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928**, a non-violent peasants’ movement against unjust land revenue hikes imposed by the British.
- His leadership compelled the British to roll back the tax increase, cementing his reputation as a resolute leader and Gandhian reformer.

**31. B** Verify and update the accuracy of the electoral rolls

The **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** or **Special Summary Revision** is a periodic verification and update of electoral rolls. Its purpose is to ensure **accuracy**, include new eligible voters (18+), and remove names of deceased or shifted individuals. It strengthens the integrity of the electoral process.

**32. B** It is a constitutional body established under Article 324 of the Constitution.

The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is a **constitutional authority** established under **Article 324** of the Indian Constitution (25 January 1950). It is an **independent body** responsible for conducting free and fair elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice President.

**33. A** 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1:** Correct. The ECI currently consists of **one Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** and **two Election Commissioners (ECs)**.
- **Statement 2:** Correct. Their **tenure and service conditions** are equivalent to those of **Supreme Court judges**.
- **Statement 3:** Incorrect. The **CEC** can only be removed through a **parliamentary process** similar to the removal of a **Supreme Court judge**, not by the President or Council of Ministers.

**34. D** 3 only

- The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Legislative Assemblies and the offices of the President and Vice President. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties. Originally the commission had only a Chief Election Commissioner. It currently consists of Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners. The Election Commission of India itself decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.

**35. A** 1 only

- Constitution does not mention eligibility as a condition to be made a minister in a State. Qualifications a person should possess to become eligible for appointment as a minister are: He should be a citizen of India. He should be above 25 years of age. He should not hold any office of profit under the government of India. If he is not a member of Parliament, then he should be elected to the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha within six months after his appointment as a minister. Section 8 in The Representation of the People Act, 1951: A person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years [other than any offence referred to in sub-section (1) or sub-section (2)] shall be disqualified from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his release.