

FOREIGN RELATIONS

78th UN General Assembly:

In context: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addressed the 78th UN General Assembly. In his opening remark, Jaishankar said, Namaste from Bharat! Our fullest support to this UNGA's theme of rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

About

- ✓ It was established in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations and is headquartered in New York City.
- ✓ It is one of the six principal organs of the UN and serves as the main policy-making organ of the Organization.
- ✓ It provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations.
- ✓ Each Member States of the United Nations has an equal vote.

The UNGA also makes key decisions for the UN, including:

- ✓ Appointing the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Security Council
- ✓ Electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council
- ✓ Approving the UN budget

Some of the important achievements of UNGA

- ✓ Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000
- ✓ The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document
- ✓ 17 Sustainable Development Goals formulated in September 2015

General debate of UNGA

- ✓ The Assembly's annual general debate provides Member States the opportunity to express their views on major international issues.
- ✓ On this occasion, the Secretary-General presents on the opening day of the debate his report on the work of the Organization.

78th UNGA

About

- ✓ UNGA held its 78th annual gathering from September 18–26, 2023.
- ✓ S Jaishankar led the Indian delegation at the assembly.

President

- ✓ Dennis Francis of Trinidad and Tobago was elected by acclamation.
- ✓ In accordance with the established regional rotation, the President of the 78th session of the UNGA was to be elected from the Latin American and Caribbean States.
- ✓ Theme of the 78th UNGA: "Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all"

Key highlights of the speech delivered by EAM Jaishankar

- ✓ **Veiled attack at Canada:** He underlined that political convenience cannot determine responses to terrorism, extremism and violence.
- ✓ **Highlighted various forms of injustices:** We must never again allow an injustice like vaccine apartheid to recur. Climate action too cannot continue to witness an evasion of historical responsibilities. The power of markets should not be utilized to steer food and energy from the needy to the wealthy.
- ✓ Respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs cannot be exercised in cherry picking: When reality departs from rhetoric, we must have the courage to call it out.
- ✓ **Raised the issue of UN reform:** At India's initiative, the African Union was admitted as a permanent member of the G20. By doing so, India gave voice to an entire continent that has long been denied its due. This significant step in reform should inspire the United Nations, a much older organization, to also make the Security Council contemporary. Broad representation is a pre-requisite for both effectiveness and credibility.

India's G20 Presidency:

- ✓ It was with a sense of exceptional responsibility India took up the presidency of G20.
- ✓ Our vision of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' sought to focus on the key concerns of the many and not just the narrow interests of the few.
- ✓ This vision sought to bridge divides and sow seeds of collaboration.

- ✓ At a time when North-South divide is deep—the Delhi Summit affirms that diplomacy and dialogue is the only way forward, and those days, when a few nations used to set agenda are over.

Cooperation with diverse partners

- ✓ India also seeks to promote cooperation with diverse partners.
- ✓ From the era of non-alignment, we have now evolved to that of ‘Vishwa Mitra – a friend to the world.
- ✓ This is reflected in our ability and willingness to engage with a broad range of nations and where necessary harmonise interests.
- ✓ It is visible in the rapid growth of the QUAD; it is equally apparent in the expansion of the BRICS grouping or emergence of I2U2.

India, that is Bharat - civilisational polity embracing modernity

- ✓ I speak for a society where ancient traditions of democracy have struck deep modern roots. As a result, our thinking, approaches and actions are now more grounded and authentic.
- ✓ As a civilisational polity that embraces modernity, we bring both tradition and technology equally confidently to the table.
- ✓ It is this fusion that today defines India, that is Bharat.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Rabies in India

In Context: The Union Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has deleted a social media post where it said that a rabies infection results in mild fever, restlessness and headache.

About Rabies:

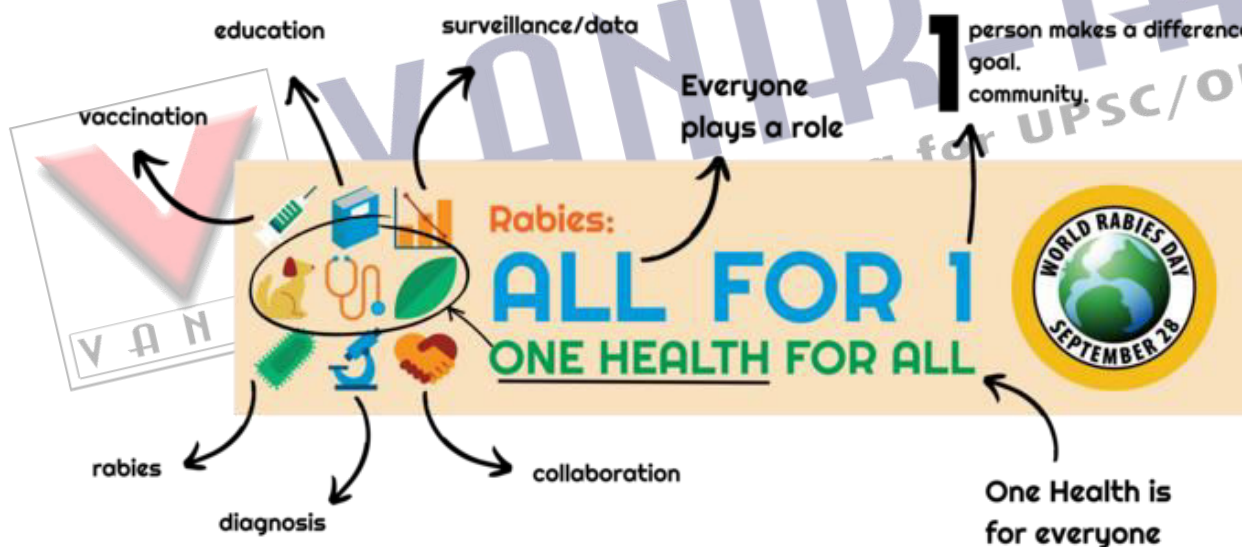
- ✓ Rabies is a zoonotic, viral disease affecting the central nervous system. It causes progressive and fatal inflammation of the brain and spinal cord.
- ✓ **Virus:** Rabies Virus, its scientific name is ‘genus **Lyssavirus**’
- ✓ It is one of the **neglected tropical diseases (NTD)** that predominantly affects already marginalized, poor and vulnerable populations.
- ✓ Clinically, it has **two forms:**
 - **Furious rabies** – characterized by hyperactivity and hallucinations.
 - **Paralytic rabies** – characterized by paralysis and coma.
- ✓ It is a vaccine preventable disease.
- ✓ It is estimated to cause 59 000 human deaths annually in over 150 countries, with 95% of cases occurring in Africa and Asia.
- ✓ **Transmission:**
 - Through a deep bite or scratch from an animal with rabies
 - Direct contact with the saliva of infected animals
- ✓ **Symptoms:**
 - Fever, Headache, Nausea, Vomiting
 - Anxiety, Confusion, Hyperactivity, Hallucinations, Insomnia
 - Difficulty swallowing
 - Excessive salivation
 - Fear brought on by attempts to drink fluids because of difficulty swallowing water, etc
- ✓ **Severity:** If a person does not receive the appropriate medical care after a potential rabies exposure, the virus can cause disease in the brain, ultimately resulting in death.
- ✓ **Treatment:**
 - Extensive washing with water and soap for at least 15 minutes and local treatment of the wound as soon as possible after a suspected exposure;
 - A course of potent and effective rabies vaccine that meets WHO standards; and
 - The administration of rabies immunoglobulin or monoclonal antibodies into the wound, if indicated.
- ✓ **Prevention:** Rabies can be prevented by vaccinating pets, staying away from wildlife, and seeking medical care after potential exposures before symptoms start.
- ✓ **Facts and Figures:**
 - India accounts for 36% of the world’s rabies deaths.
 - About 30-60% of reported rabies cases and deaths in India occur in children under the age of 15 years as bites that occur in children often go unrecognized and unreported.

About Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

- ✓ These diseases are a diverse group of 20 conditions that are mainly prevalent in tropical areas, where they affect more than 1 billion people who live in impoverished communities.
- ✓ They are caused by a variety of pathogens including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and toxins. These diseases cause devastating health, social and economic consequences to more than one billion people.
- ✓ They are ‘neglected’ because they are almost absent from the global health agenda.

Initiatives Taken:

- ✓ **National Action Plan for Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination (NAPRE):** Under this, the union will encourage all the States and UTs to make Rabies a notifiable Disease.
 - A notifiable disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities.
- ✓ **Joint Inter-Ministerial Declaration Support Statement** for Elimination of Dog mediated Rabies from India by 2030 was also launched. It emphasized on the need of One Health Approach for achieving the 2030 targets.
- ✓ **The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)** has also requested the concerned authorities to take appropriate action and to effectively implement the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2023 to control the dog population.
- ✓ **National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP):** It provides rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin through free national drug initiatives, conducting training on appropriate animal bite management, prevention and control of rabies, surveillance and intersectoral coordination, strengthening surveillance of animal bites and rabies deaths reporting and creating awareness about rabies prevention.



- ✓ **September 28th 2023 is the 17th World Rabies Day.**
 - World Rabies Day theme 2023 is “All for One, One Health for All”.
 - The day also honours the memory of the French scientist named Louis Pasteur, who passed away on September 28, 1895. Pasteur created the vaccine to prevent rabies, a deadly disease.

PRELIMS FACTS

1. Arogya Manthan 2023

IN CONTEXT: The National Health Authority (NHA), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) is organising ‘Arogya Manthan’ to celebrate five years of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) and two years of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).

ABOUT:

- ✓ The two-day event (25th and 26th September ‘23) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi
- ✓ Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, launched on 23rd September 2018, has scripted a saga of health, productivity and prosperity. With 5.5 Cr free hospitalizations worth Rs. 69,000
- ✓ The ABDM, launched on 27th September 2021, is a very ambitious scheme of government aimed at creating a digital highway connecting different stakeholders of healthcare ecosystems.

- ✓ NHA will acknowledge the best-performing States & Union Territories and health facilities during the event. Kerala has received the 'Arogya Manthan 2023' award for the third consecutive time for providing free medical treatment to the highest number of individuals in the country, particularly through the Karunya Arogya Suraksha Scheme (KASP).
- ✓ In terms of highest number of treatments, the awards were won by Kerala, Meghalaya, and Puducherry in the category of large state, small state, and Union Territory respectively.
- ✓ In Gender Equity in Service Delivery, the awards were won by Karnataka, Meghalaya, and Jammu and Kashmir in the category of large state, small state, and Union Territory respectively.

2. The State Of The Rhino Report, 2023

IN CONTEXT: The State Of The Rhino Report, 2023: The greater one-horned rhino population in India and Nepal is growing, as highlighted in the State of the Rhino Report, 2023, by the International Rhino Foundation (IRF).

RHINOCEROS

Assam recorded Zero poaching of Rhinoceros for 1st time in 2022 in the nearly 45 years.

Rhinos are one of the most critically endangered species on earth. Rhino **horn is poached** to sell on the black market mostly in **China and Vietnam**. The misconception that the **keratin in rhino horn** has medicinal properties that can cure a variety of ailments from hangovers to erectile dysfunction has made rhino poaching lucrative. **Indian Rhinos are Asia's largest species** of Rhino. In India they are found in Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

Assam is home to the largest population of greater-one horned rhinos, with more than 90% in Kaziranga National Park. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (Assam) harbors the highest density of rhino population.

Assam now a Safe Abode for Rhinos



0 Poaching in 2022

Lowest Poaching in 22 years

TYPES OF RHINOS FOUND IN THE WORLD



Black Rhino
Critically endangered



White Rhino
Near Threatened



Sumatran Rhino
Critically Endangered



Lesser One-Horned Rhino (Javan Rhino)
Critically Endangered



Greater One-Horned Rhino (Indian Rhino)
Vulnerable

Rhino conservation efforts:

- **Indian Rhino Mission (2020):** To increase rhino population in Assam to 3000 by establishing population in 7 protected areas.
- **Special Rhino Protection Force:** Assam government constituted it to check Rhino poaching and related activities.

Global rhino population



Greater one-horned: 4,014
Black: 6,195
White: 15,942
Sumatran: 34-47
Javan: 76

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ABOUT:

- ✓ Every year, World Rhino Day is observed on 22th September to spread awareness for all five species of rhino and work being done to save them.
- ✓ It was first announced by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) - South Africa in 2010.
- ✓ While poaching and habitat loss remain significant threats to rhinos globally, climate change is also impacting their survival.
- ✓ The collaboration among India, Bhutan, and Nepal, along with strict government protection and management, has led to a 20 per cent increase in their population over the past decade.
- ✓ India is estimated to be home to 3,262 rhinos.

3. Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2023

IN Context: Recently, the Indian Army Contingent departed for the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus Expert Working Group (EWG) on Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2023.

About Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2023:-

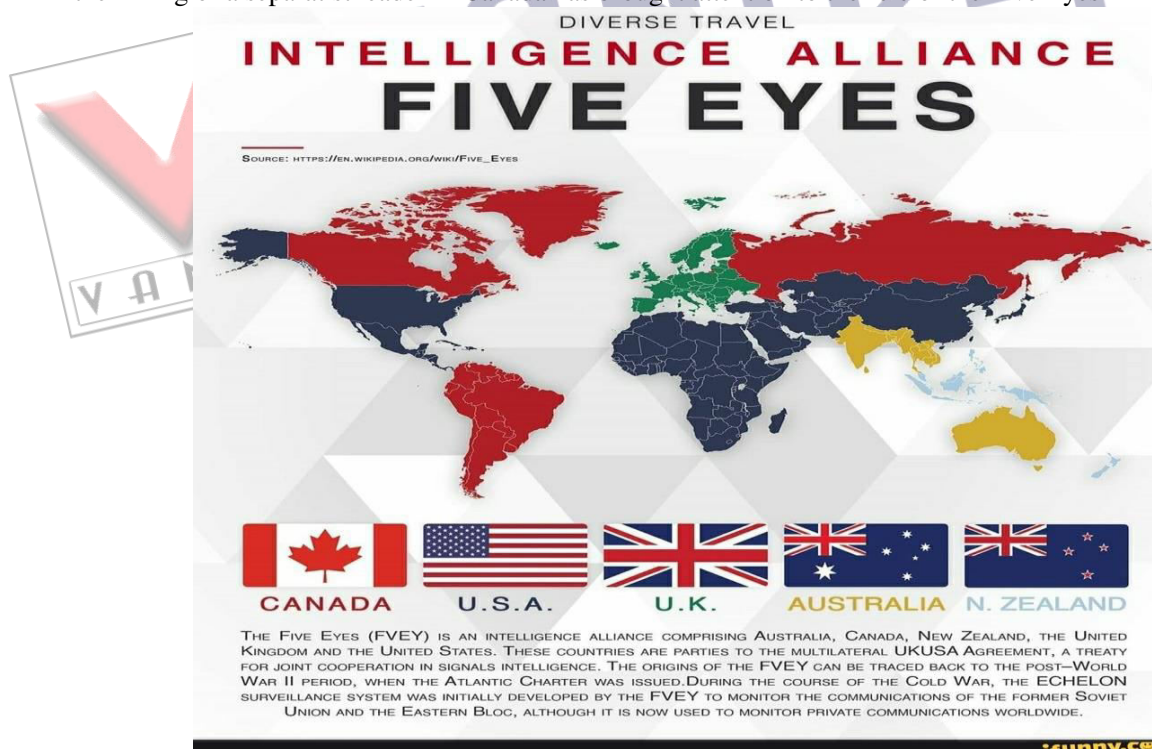
- ✓ Date: 25th to 30th September 2023.
- ✓ Venue: Russia.
- ✓ It is a multinational joint military exercise being hosted by Russia as a co-chair of the EWG along with Myanmar. (Exercise IBSAMAR)
- ✓ It was preceded by the Table Top Exercise of the ADMM Plus EWG on Counter-Terrorism at Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar from 2nd to 4th August 2023.

Historical Background:-

- ✓ Since 2017, the ADMM Plus has met annually to allow dialogue and cooperation among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Plus countries.
- ✓ The inaugural ADMM Plus was convened in Ha Noi, Vietnam on 12th October 2010.
- ✓ This year ASEAN member states along with Plus Group will be participating in the exercise.
- ✓ Objective of the exercise: strengthening and promoting regional cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.
- ✓ The exercise will comprise a number of counter-terrorism drills including destroying of terrorist groups in a fortified area.
- ✓ ADMM Plus EWG on Counter-terrorism 2023 will provide the Indian Army with a platform to share their expertise and best practices in counter-terrorism operations.
- ✓ It will increase the cooperation between the other 12 participating countries. (Military Exercises)
- ✓ The Indian Army looks forward to an enriching professional experience from the exercise.

4. Five Eyes Alliance

IN Context: The recent India-Canada standoff regarding allegations of Indian government involvement in the killing of a separatist leader in Canada has brought attention to the role of the Five Eyes Alliance.



About Five Eyes Alliance:

- ✓ Five Eyes Alliance: The Five Eyes Alliance refers to an intelligence-sharing partnership among five countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.
- ✓ These nations collaborate closely on intelligence matters, sharing information to protect their shared national interests.
- ✓ Origins of the Alliance: The alliance traces its origins back to World War II when the UK and the US decided to share intelligence after successfully breaking German and Japanese codes.

- ✓ It began as the Britain-USA (BRUSA) agreement, later evolving into the UK-USA (UKUSA) agreement, with Canada joining in 1949 and New Zealand and Australia in 1956.

5. **PRIP scheme**

IN CONTEXT: Recently, the union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India launched the Scheme for promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector (PRIP).

About PRIP scheme:

- ✓ The objective of the scheme is to transform Indian pharmaceuticals sector from cost based to innovation-based growth by strengthening the research infrastructure in the country.
- ✓ Aim: To promote industry-academia linkage for R&D in priority areas and to inculcate the culture of quality research and nurture our pool of scientists.
- ✓ This will lead to sustained global competitive advantage and contribute to quality employment generation in the country.
- ✓ Time period: Five years (2023-24 to 2027-28).

The scheme has two components-

- ✓ Component A: Strengthening the research infrastructure by establishment of 7 Centre of Excellence (CoEs) at National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs). -These CoEs would be set up in pre identified areas with a financial outlay of Rs 700 Crores.
- ✓ Component B: Promoting research in pharmaceutical sector by encouraging research in six priority areas like New Chemical Entities, Complex generics including biosimilars, medical devices, stem cell therapy, orphan drugs, Anti-microbial resistance etc.,
- ✓ Financial assistance will be provided for the Industries, MSME, SME, Startups working with government institutes and for both in- house and academic research.
- ✓ The component has a financial outlay of Rs.4250 Crores.

ANSWER WRITING

Q.India has high income inequality despite equalizing forces. Do you agree with this imperative? Give examples in favor of your answer.

INTRODUCTION: There is convergence in income over the world. Poorer countries are catching up with richer countries; the poorer Chinese provinces are catching up with the richer ones. But in India the less developed States are not catching up; instead they are, on average, falling behind the richer States, in spite of government of India trying to equalize or reduce disparities various schemes and governance reforms.

While India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, it is also one of the most unequal countries. Inequality has been rising sharply for the last three decades. The richest have cornered a huge part of the wealth created through crony capitalism and inheritance. They are getting richer at a much faster pace while the poor are still struggling to earn a minimum wage and access quality education and healthcare services, which continue to suffer from chronic under-investment. These widening gaps and rising inequalities affect women and children the most.

Examples of income inequality

- ✓ The top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth. 73% of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest 1%, while 67 million Indians who comprise the poorest half of the population saw only a 1% increase in their wealth.
- ✓ There are 119 billionaires in India. Their number has increased from only 9 in 2000 to 101 in 2017. Between 2018 and 2022, India is estimated to produce 70 new millionaires every day.
- ✓ As per the Oxfam International, it would take 941 years for a minimum wage worker in rural India to earn what the top paid executive at a leading Indian garment company earns in a year.
 - ✓ Reasons behind this inequality
- ✓ Convergence happens essentially through trade and through mobility of factors of production. In spite of increased flow of goods and migration of people across various India stands out as an exception.
- ✓ Within India, where borders are porous, convergence has failed whereas across countries where borders are much thicker (because of restrictions on trade, capital and labor) there is a convergence dynamic. That is the cross-country puzzle.
- ✓ Tax progressivity, which is a powerful policy tool to contain the rise in inequality, was reduced subsequently. Top tax rates, which were very high in the 1970s (up to 98%), decreased to 30% in the 1980s and after.
- ✓ Inequality has increased due to rise in prices. During inflation workers in the or-ganised sector get higher wages which partly off-set the effect of price rise. But wages and salaries of workers in

unorganised sectors (such as agri-culture and small-scale and cottage industries) do not increase. So their real income (purchase in-come) falls.

- ✓ The main reason for low level of income of the majority of Indian people is unemployment and underemployment and the consequent low productivity of labour. Low labour productivity implies low rate of economic growth which is the main cause of poverty and inequality of the large masses of people.
- ✓ India's new agricultural strategy led to the Green Revolution and raised agricultural productivity. But the benefits of higher productivity were enjoyed mainly by the rich farmers and landowners. At the same time, the economic conditions of landless workers and marginal farmers deteriorated over the years.
- ✓ Most farmers in India could not enjoy the benefits of higher agricultural productivity. As a result, inequality in the distribution of income in the rural areas has increased.
- ✓ Wage inequality dispersion also increased in many sectors, as privatizations removed government set pay scales, which were less unequal. On the other hand, growth at the bottom of the distribution was notably lower than average growth rates since the 1980s.
- ✓ Many ordinary Indians are not able to access the health care they need. 63 million of them are pushed into poverty because of healthcare costs every year - almost two people every second.

Conclusion: Reducing the rising inequality is a challenge that requires sustained government interventions. The government needs to break the vicious circle of poverty which causes inequality, which in turn not only adversely affects sustainable economic growth but also breeds various socio-economic problems.

MCQs

1. Considered the following statement:

1. Every year September 28th 2023 is the 17th World Rabies Day.
2. World Rabies Day theme 2023 is All for One, One Health for All

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Recently, Researchers from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal (IISER Bhopal) identified a specific circular RNA (circRNA) called 'ciTRAN', Considered the following statement:

1. It plays a crucial role in the multiplication of the AIDS-causing HIV-1 virus within the human body.
2. Ribonucleic acid is a molecule in living cells that carries genetic information and helps in the production of proteins.
3. These circular RNA ('circRNA') forms a closed-loop.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) **All of the above**

3. Recently, the Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting announced that legendary actress Ms Waheeda Rehman will be honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award for the year 2021.

1. It is India's highest award in the field of cinema.
2. It is by the Ministry of Tourism.
3. The first recipient of the award was actress Devika Rani, "the first lady of Indian cinema."

Which of the above statement is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) **2 only**
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

4. Consider the following with respect to 'Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT)'

1. AFT is a military tribunal in India established under the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007.
2. Any appeal by a person against a decision given by the tribunal can only be taken up in the Supreme Court.
3. All proceedings in the Tribunal will be either in English or Hindi.

Select the correct statement(s):

- a) **1 and 2 only**
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3
- d) All of the above

5. With reference to 'Breakthrough Agenda' consider the following statements

1. It was launched by a coalition of 45 world leaders at the COP21.
2. The Breakthrough Agenda is an international clean technology plan to help keep 1.5°C in reach.

Select the INCORRECT statement

- a) **Only 1**
b) Only 2
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Consider the following statements regarding the Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector scheme:
1. It aims to inculcate the culture of quality research and nurture pool of scientists in India.
 2. Under this scheme financial assistance will be provided for Startups working with government institutes.

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
7. The word ' Neanderthals.' is sometimes mentioned in media in reference to:
- a) fossils of a kind of dinosaurs
 - b) an early human species**
 - c) a cave system found in North-East India
 - d) a geological period in the history of Indian subcontinent
8. Recently, Sift Kaur Samra won the gold medal in Asian games 2023, she plays which sport?
- a) Boxing
 - b) Swimming
 - c) Shooting**
 - d) Squash

9. Recently, Five Eyes Alliance Considered the following statements:
1. The Five Eyes Alliance refers to an intelligence-sharing partnership.
 2. Five countries are included the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Canada, and New Zealand.

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
10. Consider the following applications:
1. Healthcare
 2. Automobile
 3. Aerospace
- How many of the applications given above can be achieved by 3-D printing?
- a) Only one
 - b) Only two
 - c) All three**
 - d) None