



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

15th January 2026

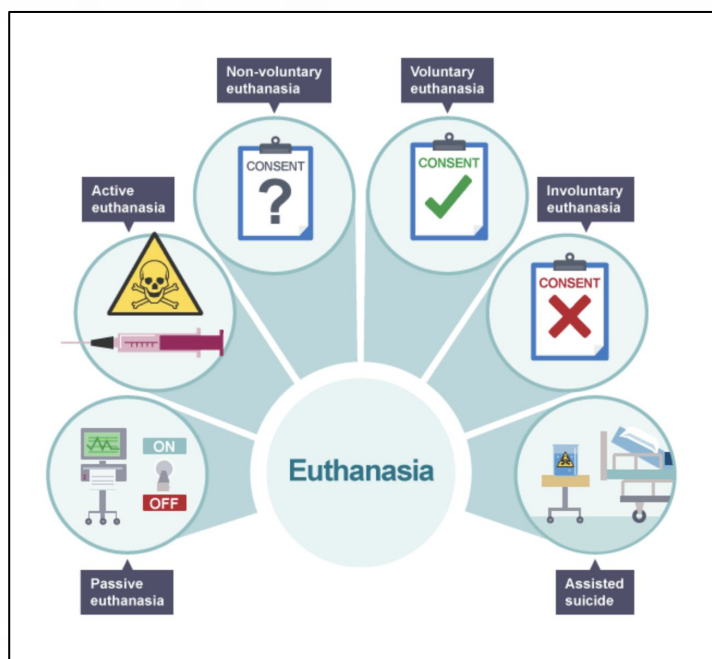


Euthanasia : Between Life and Dignity

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court is scheduled to pass a final order on in a plea for passive euthanasia by means of withdrawing artificial life support to a 31-year-old man.

□ 'Eu' (Good) + 'Thanatos' (Death)

□ *"Euthanasia is defined as the hastening of death of a patient to prevent further sufferings."*



Right to Die – Evolution and Status:

- **Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab (1996)**
 - Right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution does not include the right to die
- **Aruna Shanbaug vs. Union of India, 2011**
 - **Broad guidelines legalising passive euthanasia in India.**
- **Common Cause vs Union of India 2018**
 - Right to refuse medical treatment – **Right to die with dignity.**
 - It recognised 'living wills' or 'advance medical directive'.

IN THE SUPREME COURT

2011: *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* recognised that life-sustaining treatment could legally be withheld/ withdrawn even from persons without decision-making capacity.

of India, and legalised the use of advance medical directives or 'living wills'.

2018: *Common Cause v. Union of India* recognised the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution



2023: *Common Cause v. Union of India* simplified the process for making living wills and withholding/ withdrawing life-sustaining treatment by removing bureaucratic hurdles.

Right to Die – Guidelines:

- **Advance Directive (Living Will)**
 - Any adult with decision-making capacity may issue an advance directive indicating situations in which life-sustaining treatment may be withdrawn.
 - The document must be executed in the presence of **two witnesses** and authenticated by a **Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC)**.
- **When No Living Will Exists**
 - In the absence of an advance directive, the **family, next of kin, or treating doctors** may seek permission through the same **two-tier medical review mechanism**, followed by judicial oversight.
- **Hospital-Level Medical Review**
 - The treating hospital constitutes a **primary medical board** comprising **three senior physicians**.
- **Independent Medical Validation**
 - The hospital's recommendation is examined by a **secondary medical board** set up under the **Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the district**.
- **Magisterial Confirmation**
 - The **JMFC** verifies the genuineness of the living will and concurs with the medical findings before permitting withdrawal of life support.



Euthanasia : Between Life and Dignity



CONTEXT: The Supreme Court is scheduled to pass a final order on in a plea for passive euthanasia by means of withdrawing artificial life support to a 31-year-old man.

Euthanasia – Ethical Debate:

Arguments in Favour

- **Autonomy:** Respect for patient's informed choice.
- **Dignity:** Avoid prolonged, meaningless suffering.
- **Beneficence:** Act in patient's best interest.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoid harm caused by futile treatment.

Arguments Against

- **Sanctity of life:** Life must be preserved at all costs.
- **Slippery slope:** Fear of misuse for economic or social reasons.
- **Medical ethics:** Doctors as healers, not life-enders. (**Non-maleficence**)
- **Kantian Philosophy** – Preserving life as a universal duty

Socio cultural aspects

- Emotional distress – Ethical dilemma of "letting go".
- Strong family-centric decision-making.
- Cultural hesitation in discussing death.
- Risk of coercion in poor or elderly patients.

Challenges for Doctors

- Prognostic uncertainty & Palliative care
- Fear of litigation.
- Emotional burden on medical professionals.

Governance Gaps

- Low awareness among citizens.

Way Forward:

- **Expand Palliative Care Integration:** Ensure access to high-quality palliative services before, during, and after end-of-life decisions, reinforcing comfort and dignity.
- **Safeguard Against Coercion:** Introduce compulsory psychological assessment, counselling, and a reasonable reflection period to confirm that decisions are voluntary and free from external pressure.
- **Build Institutional Capacity:** Train doctors, ethics committees, and judicial officers on end-of-life care laws and ethics to ensure consistent and humane implementation.
- **Strengthen Patient–Doctor Dialogue:** Institutionalise continuous and documented communication between patients, families, and medical teams to clearly understand the patient's values, preferences, and perception of suffering.
- **Ensure Transparent Documentation:** Mandate detailed recording of diagnosis, prognosis, alternative treatments explored, and reasons for considering withdrawal of care, ensuring accountability and traceability.

Mains Practice Question

Q. "Passive euthanasia in India is a judicially evolved right rather than a legislatively enacted one." Discuss the statement while highlighting ethical and sociocultural imperatives around the issue.

(250 word / 15 Marks)



Graft Law : Shielding honest vs Unmasking Corrupt



CONTEXT: A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered a split verdict in a petition challenging the constitutionality of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).

Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA):

"17A. Enquiry or Inquiry or Investigation of offences relatable to recommendations made or decision taken by public servant in discharge of official functions or duties.—

No police officer shall conduct any enquiry or inquiry or investigation into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant under this Act, where the alleged offence is relatable to any recommendation made or decision taken by such public servant in discharge of his official functions or duties, without the previous approval—

(a) in the case of a person who is or was employed, at the time when the offence was alleged to have been committed, in connection with the affairs of the Union, of that Government;

(b) in the case of a person who is or was employed, at the time when the offence was alleged to have been committed, in connection with the affairs of a State, of that Government;

(c) in the case of any other person, of the authority competent to remove him from his office, at the time when the offence was alleged to have been committed:

Provided that no such approval shall be necessary for cases involving arrest of a person on the spot on the charge of accepting or attempting to accept any undue advantage for himself or for any other person:

Split Judgement:

Justice K V Viswanathan

- Recognises need to protect the "Steel Frame"
- Concern: Fear of investigation → risk-averse bureaucracy
- Holds Section 17A constitutionally valid if read down
- Introduces Lokpal / Lokayukta as independent screening authority
- Uses doctrine of reading down to save the law

Justice B V Nagarathna

- **Section 17A:** Protects the corrupt, not the honest
- Creates conflict of interest (government judging its own officers)
- Violates Article 14 - offences linked to **"recommendations made or decisions taken"**
- Court cannot replace "Government" with "Lokpal" → judicial overreach

- Putting Horse before Cart – Rejecting theory of eliminating frivolous complaints
- Damocles' Sword – Arm twisting
- Calls it "old wine in a new bottle" of Section 6A (Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act)

Previous Judgements:

- **Vineet Narain v. Union of India 1998** – Three-judge bench – struck down an executive order that required the CBI to seek permission before investigating officers of the rank of Joint Secretary and above.
- **Subramanian Swamy v. CBI 2014.** – Constitution Bench – struck down Section 6A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act.



Graft Law : Shielding honest vs Unmasking Corrupt



CONTEXT: A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered a split verdict in a petition challenging the constitutionality of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).

⁴[6A. Approval of Central Government to conduct, inquiry or investigation.— (1) The Delhi Special Police Establishment shall not conduct any inquiry or investigation into any offence alleged to have been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (49 of 1988) except with the previous approval of the Central Government where such allegation relates to—

- (a) the employees of the Central Government of the level of Joint Secretary and above; and
- (b) such officers as are appointed by the Central Government in corporations established by or under any Central Act, Government companies, societies and local authorities owned or controlled by that Government.

Civil Services – Dilemma

- Neutral implementers of policy
- Advisors to political executive

- Undermine neutrality
- Encourage “file-pushing” culture

CIVIL SERVANTS

- Political pressure
- Retrospective scrutiny of decisions
- Criminalisation of policy decisions

- Weaken public trust
- Enable elite corruption



Graft Law : Shielding honest vs Unmasking Corrupt



CONTEXT: A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered a split verdict in a petition challenging the constitutionality of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).

Way Forward

Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)

"Ethics in Governance"

- Honest public servants **acting in good faith** should be protected from undue harassment.
- A clear **legal distinction** must be maintained between:
 - ❑ **Policy error:** Wrong judgment, administrative lapse, or unintended consequence.
 - ❑ **Criminal misconduct:** Actions involving personal gain, bribery, or abuse of position.

Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption

- Creation of **independent and strong investigative** agencies to deal with corruption.
- Emphasised that **executive interference in investigations must be avoided**.
- Recommended that **prior sanction requirements should not obstruct or delay investigation**, especially at the preliminary stage.

Law Commission of India

19th Law Commission (various reports on criminal justice & anti-corruption laws):

- Prior sanction is justified **only at the prosecution stage**, not at the **enquiry or investigation stage**.
- Sanction provisions should **not be misused to delay or frustrate anti-corruption proceedings**.

21st Law Commission (Report No. 254, 2015 – "Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill")

- Warned that sanction mechanisms must not become a **"protective shield for the corrupt"**.
- Recommended **time-bound decisions** on sanction to prevent delay.
- Emphasised that corruption laws must balance:
 - ❑ **Administrative efficiency**
 - ❑ **Public accountability**

Mains Practice Question

Q. Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act has remained a matter of the debate on balancing protection of honest civil servants with effective anti-corruption mechanisms. Examine the statement in light of the recent SC judgement. (15 Marks / 250 Words)



SYLLABUS : G.S. 3 : Science and Technology; Biotechnology

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 8

The story so far:

Futuristic space and marine biotechnology research focuses on using underexplored environments, such as the deep oceans and outer space, to develop new biological knowledge, materials, and manufacturing processes. Marine biotechnology involves studying microorganisms, algae, and other marine life to discover bioactive compounds, enzymes, biomaterials, food ingredients, and biostimulants. These organisms have evolved to survive high pressure, salinity, low light, and nutrient-poor conditions. Space biotechnology, meanwhile, studies how microbes, plants, and human biological systems behave under microgravity and radiation.

- **Marine Biotechnology :** Focuses on the study and application of **marine organisms** such as microorganisms, algae, and other ocean life
- Explores **bioactive compounds, enzymes, biomaterials, food ingredients, and biostimulants**
- Marine organisms are valuable due to their **unique adaptive traits**
- Adaptations include survival under:
 - High pressure
 - High salinity
 - Low light conditions
 - Nutrient-deficient environments

- **Space Biotechnology:** Studies biological processes in the **space environment**
- Examines the behaviour of:
 - Microorganisms
 - Plants
 - Human biological systems
- Under conditions of: **Microgravity & Cosmic radiation**

Needs for Marine Biotechnology Research Vast Resource Base:

- India has an **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) exceeding 2 million sq. km**, offering access to rich marine biodiversity and biomass.

Underutilised Potential:

- Despite abundant marine resources, India's **share in global marine bio-outputs is relatively low**, indicating scope for expansion.

Food Security:

- Marine biomanufacturing can provide **alternative protein sources** and functional foods.

Resource Conservation:

- Reduces pressure on **land, freshwater, and conventional agriculture**, supporting sustainable development.

Blue Economy Push:

- Aligns with India's **Blue Economy strategy** and coastal livelihood enhancement.

Where does India stand today?

India's domestic production of marine biomass such as seaweed remains modest, with an annual cultivated output of around 70,000 tonnes. As a result,



SYLLABUS : G.S. 3 : Science and Technology; Biotechnology

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 8

India continues to import seaweed-derived components such as agar, carrageenan, and alginates for use in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical applications. Targeted initiatives

Why India Needs Space Biotechnology Research Long-Term Space Ambitions:

- Essential for **human spaceflight, space stations, and deep-space missions.**

Life-Support Systems:

- Supports **safe food production**, waste recycling, and oxygen generation in space.

Human Health Management:

- Helps understand impacts of **microgravity and radiation** on human physiology.

Manufacturing in extreme environment

- Enables biological production of **medicines, nutrients, and materials** in extreme environments.

India continues to import seaweed-derived components such as agar, carrageenan, and alginates for use in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical applications. Targeted initiatives under the Blue Economy agenda, the Deep Ocean Mission, and, more recently, the BioE3 are pushing the sector toward integrated marine biomanufacturing, linking cultivation, extraction, and downstream applications. A small number of private players, such as Sea6 Energy and ClimaCrew, along with ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and state-led initiatives such as the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference, are exploring pathways to scale marine biomass into high-value ingredients, and bio-based products. In space biotechnology, ISRO's microgravity biology programme is conducting experiments on microbes, algae, and biological systems to study food production, life-support regeneration,

What are other countries doing?

The European Union funds large-scale programmes on marine bioprospecting, algae-based biomaterials, and bioactive compounds, supported by shared research infrastructure such as the European Marine Biological Resource Centre. China has rapidly expanded seaweed aquaculture and marine bioprocessing. In space biotechnology, the U.S. leads through NASA and the International Space Station, where research on microbial behaviour, protein crystallisation, stem cells, and closed-loop life-support systems informs drug discovery, regenerative medicine, and long-duration human missions.

Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)
- **Launch Year:** 2021
- **Core Objective:** Explore and harness **deep-sea resources** in a sustainable manner
- **Key Focus Areas:**
 - I. Deep-sea mining of **polymetallic nodules**
 - II. Development of **manned submersible** and underwater technologies
 - III. Deep-ocean biodiversity and ecosystem studies
- **Strategic Significance:** Strengthens India's **Blue Economy** and ocean research capabilities



Futuristic Marine and Space biotechnology



SYLLABUS : G.S. 3 : Science and Technology; Biotechnology

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BioE³ Mission (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment & Employment)

- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology
- **Core Objective:** Promote **high-value biomanufacturing** using advanced biotechnology
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Bio-based **chemicals, materials, energy, and health products**
 - Sustainable and climate-friendly industrial processes
- **Broader Aim:**
 - Enhance **economic growth, environmental sustainability, and job creation**



Ice Vault in Antarctica

SYLLABUS : G.S. 3: Science and Technology, Environment Conservation

Newspaper : Indian Express **Page No :** 01

SCIENTISTS ON Wednesday inaugurated the first global repository of mountain ice cores, preserving the history of the Earth's atmosphere in an Antarctic vault for future generations to study as global warming melts glaciers around the world.

An ice core is something of a time capsule, containing the history of the Earth's past atmosphere in a frozen climate archive.

With global glaciers melting at an unprecedented rate,

“By safeguarding physical samples of atmospheric gases, aerosols, pollutants and dust trapped in ice layers, the Ice Memory Foundation ensures that future generations of researchers will be able to study past climate conditions using technologies that may not yet exist,” said Carlo Barbante, vice chair of the Ice Memory Foundation and a professor at Ca' Foscari University in Venice.

Ice Memory Project

- ❑ **Launched:** 2015 ; Consortium of research institutes from France, Italy and Switzerland
- ❑ **Objective:** Preserve **climate records stored in glaciers** for future research
- ❑ **Core Idea:** Ice cores contain information on **past climate, atmosphere, and environmental conditions**
- ❑ **Methodology:**
 - Extraction of **ice cores** from threatened glaciers
 - Long-term storage in **Antarctica** (natural deep-freeze conditions)
- ❑ **Why Antarctica?**
 - Extremely low and stable temperatures
 - Ensures preservation for **centuries to millennia**
- ❑ **Scientific Importance:**
 - Reconstructs **Earth's climate history**
 - Helps understand **greenhouse gas concentrations**, volcanic activity, and pollution trends



Ice Vault in Antarctica



SYLLABUS : G.S. 3: Science and Technology, Environment Conservation

Newspaper : Indian Express **Page No :** 01

❑ **Svalbard Global Seed Vault**

❑ **Nature:** World's largest **backup facility** for crop genetic diversity

❑ **Location:** **Svalbard archipelago**, Norway – Situated roughly midway between the **North Pole and mainland Norway**

❑ **Established:** **2008**

❑ **Core Objective:**

- Secure long-term conservation of **global crop genetic material**
- Acts as an insurance against loss from natural or man-made disasters

❑ **Storage Model:**

- Stores **duplicate seed samples** from global, national and regional gene banks
- Avoids unnecessary duplication of collections

❑ **Access & Ownership:**

- Seeds remain the **property of the depositing institution**
- Stored under **"black-box" conditions**
- Only the depositor can access or withdraw its seeds

❑ **Storage Capacity:**

- Up to **4.5 million crop varieties**

❑ **Institutional Framework:**

- Serves a **humanitarian purpose**
- Part of the **international system for plant genetic resource conservation**
- Guided by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**



Chamber of Princes – Narendra Mandal

SYLLABUS : G.S. 1 : History

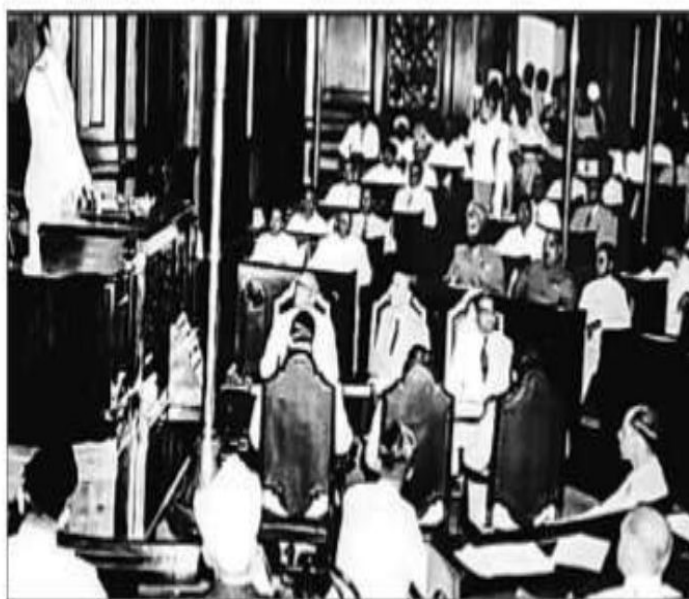
Newspaper : Indian Express Page No : 14

IT IS a room that witnessed several moments of history during the rule of the British Empire, where the Supreme Court functioned until 1958, and which now serves as the Parliament Library. Now, the Chamber of Princes—also known as Narendra Mandal—in the old Parliament House, will be unveiled during the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) that will begin on Thursday.

PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the conference at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan and address the gathering.

The British set up the Chamber in 1920 under the Government of India Act, 1919, as a body for the princely states that could raise issues they deemed fit with the Crown. It began its sittings the following year, with the Viceroy presiding, and continued to function until 1947.

Historians MN Kaul and SL Shakhder write that the Supreme Court functioned from that chamber from Independence



Lord Mountbatten addresses the members of the Chamber of Princes in the 1940s. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

dence until August 1958, when it moved to its present location on Tilak Marg. Then the design of the Chamber was slightly altered and its flooring was raised so as to be in level with the corridor. Thus the Chamber with the rooms skirting its corridor was remodelled to serve the purpose of a spacious reading room as part of the Library and, therefore, came to be known as the Library Hall," they write.

According to the Supreme Court website, "On 28 January 1950, two days after India became a sovereign democratic



Chamber of Princes – Narendra Mandal



SYLLABUS : G.S. 1 : History

Newspaper : Indian Express Page No : 14

Chamber of Princes (Narendra Mandal)

Year of Establishment: 1920

First Meeting: 1921

Authority: Created by a **royal proclamation of King–Emperor George V**

Reform Context: Part of the constitutional framework following the

Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms

Purpose:

- Platform for rulers of princely states to communicate views to the British Government
- Advisory and consultative in nature

Composition:

- **120 members** in total – (Major and smaller states)
- **Minor States remained without representations**

Presiding Authority: Viceroy of India

chaired the annual sessions

First Chancellor: Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner

Powers & Limitations:

- No authority over internal administration of princely states
- Barred from discussing issues related to **existing rights and privileges**
- Functioned strictly as an advisory body

Duration:

Continued till the **end of British rule in 1947**

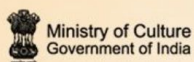


Harvest Festivals in India

SYLLABUS : Prelims: Culture ; Festivals

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No : 04**

Harvest Festival	State / Region
Pongal	Tamil Nadu
Makar Sankranti	Pan-India (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, etc.)
Uttarayan	Gujarat
Lohri	Punjab, Haryana
Magh Bihu (Bhogali Bihu)	Assam



United in Traditions & Celebrations



Harvest Festivals in India



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Culture ; Festivals

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No : 04**

Harvest Festival	State / Region	Month(s)
Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)	Punjab, Haryana	April
Vishu	Kerala	April
Gudi Padwa	Maharashtra	March–April
Chapchar Kut	Mizoram	March
Onam	Kerala	August–September
Nuakhai	Odisha, Western Chhattisgarh	August–September
Bathukamma	Telangana	September–October
Wangala	Meghalaya (Garo Hills)	October–November
Ka Pomblang Nongkrem	Meghalaya (Khasi Hills)	October
Sohrai	Jharkhand	October–November
Nabanna	West Bengal	November
Puthari	Kodagu (Karnataka)	November–December



Iran – Map Location

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Places in News

Newspaper : The Indian express **Page No : 01**



Iran – Map Location

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Places in News

Newspaper : The Indian express **Page No : 01**



Iran – Map Location

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Places in News

Newspaper : The Indian express **Page No : 01**



Q1. The Supreme Court laid down broad guidelines legalising passive euthanasia in India in which of the following cases?

- a) Gian Kaur vs. State of Punjab (1996)
- b) Aruna Shanbaug vs. Union of India (2011)
- c) Common Cause vs. Union of India (2018)
- d) P. Rathinam vs. Union of India (1994)

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to the Deep Ocean Mission, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a mission of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- 2. It envisages the exploration of polymetallic nodules through deep-sea mining.
- 3. Its primary focus is promoting coastal tourism as part of the Blue Economy.

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

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to the Ice Memory Project, consider the following statements:

- 1. It preserves glacier-based climate records by storing extracted ice cores in Antarctica.
- 2. It was launched in 2015 by a consortium led by Arctic Council countries.

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

Answer: a

Q4. With reference to Harvest Festivals in India, consider the following pairs:

S.No	Festivals	State
1.	Pongal	Tamil Nadu
2.	Uttarayan	Maharashtra
3.	Magh Bihu	Assam

How many of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q5. The Zagros Mountains do not pass through which of the following countries?

- a) Iran
- b) Iraq
- c) Turkey
- d) Syria

Answer: d





VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS Examination

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121

Visit us at : www.vajiramandravi.com