

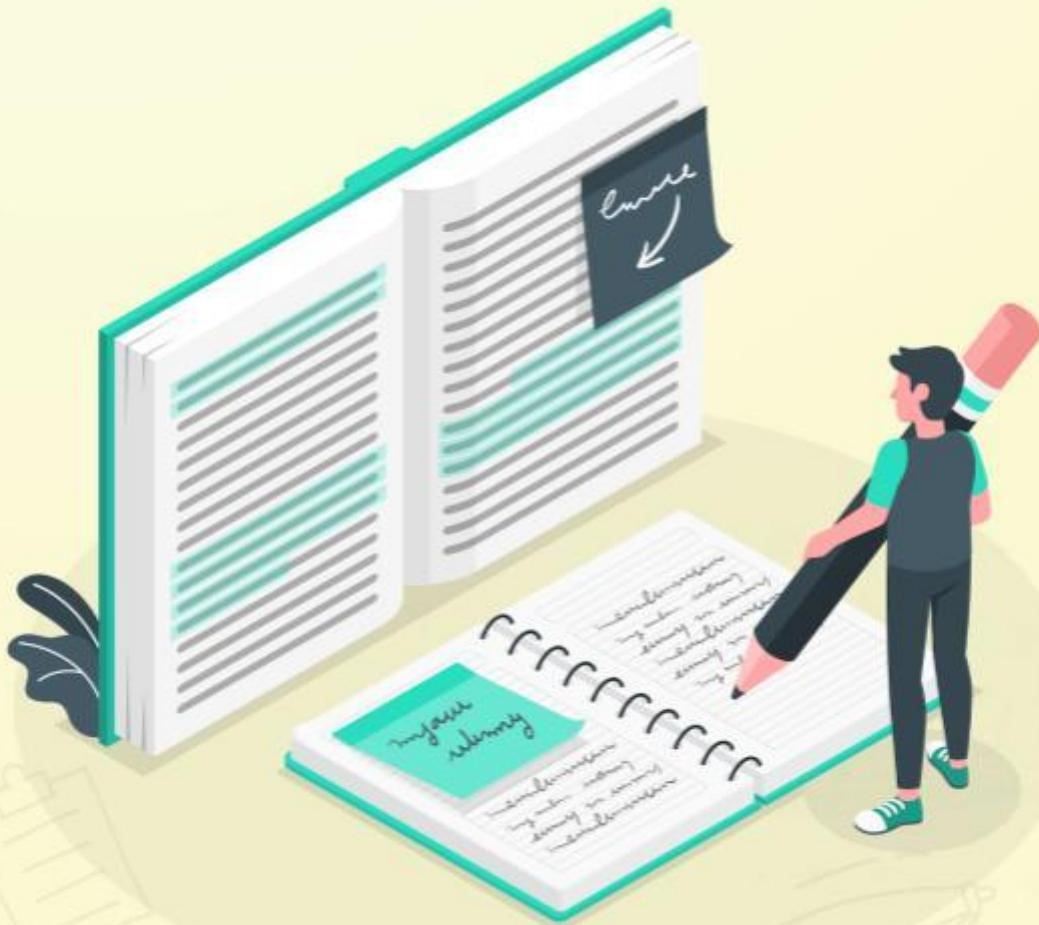


VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

26th March 2026



CONTEXT: The union cabinet cleared a modified UDAN scheme with an outlay of Rs 28,840 crore for 10 years.

Revamped UDAN 2.0 – Changes

- **Extended subsidy period** for air- lines on select Tier-2 and Tier-3 routes from three to five years
- **The subsidy will also shift** from a levy embedded in airfares (RCS) to direct funding from the exchequer.
- **Enhanced Viability Gap Funding (VGF):** ~₹10,000+ crore earmarked for airlines
- **100 new airports** will be developed in challenge mode, with an average cost of Rs 100 crore per airport and budgetary support of Rs 12,159 crore.
- **Helicopter & Remote Connectivity** – 200 helipads planned

UDAN Scheme- Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik

- Introduced under the **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), 2016** – **Regional connectivity as a growth multiplier**
- **Aim** – To make air travel affordable and widespread, especially for Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, and regions with poor or no air connectivity.

Revamped UDAN 2.0 – Need

1. **Highly Skewed Air Connectivity** – Air traffic concentrated in **metro ~70% passenger traffic**
2. **Regional imbalance in aviation access**
3. **Underutilisation of Existing Infrastructure** – 75 out of 400+ airstrips/airports
4. **Low Air Penetration in India** – India's **per capita air travel** (~0.1 trips/person/year)

5. **High Cost Barrier** – Lack of competition on regional routes → high pricing
6. **Poor Connectivity in Strategic & Remote Regions**
7. **Airline focus of high demand routes** – **Aviation ecosystem suffers**
8. **Hindrance to Regional Economic Growth**
9. **Multi-modal Transport Imbalance**



Objectives & Significance of UDAN Scheme

- Enhances regional air connectivity by operationalizing unserved and underserved airports across India.
- Makes air travel affordable through Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and operational cost concessions.
- Promotes tourism and boosts local economies, leading to balanced regional development.
- Generates employment opportunities in the aviation sector and related industries.
- Strengthens socio-economic integration by bridging the rural-urban connectivity divide.
- Encourages private participation in aviation through a market-driven approach.

UDAN
Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik



CONTEXT: The union cabinet cleared a modified UDAN scheme with an outlay of Rs 28,840 crore for 10 years.

Revamped UDAN 2.0 – Performance

Dimension	Key Highlights
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 649 routes operationalised • 93 airports connected (15 Heliports and 2 water aerodrome) • ~1.56 crore passengers served (in ~9 years) • ~3.23 lakh flights conducted • ₹4300+ crore VGF disbursed
Geographical Spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded connectivity to North-East • Coverage in Central India • Inclusion of coastal & island regions
Infrastructure Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revival of unused/underutilised airstrips • Development of multi-modal connectivity (air + heli + water aerodromes)

Revamped UDAN 2.0 – Challenges

1. Commercial Unviability

- Low passenger demand on many routes
- Routes collapse after subsidy withdrawal

2. Airline Constraints

- Limited fleet size of regional carriers
- Financial stress & operational discontinuity

3. Infrastructure Issues

- Inadequate facilities: Night landing, Refuelling , ATC

4. Declining Momentum

- Only **4 new airports operationalised in FY2025–26** (lowest pace)

5. Policy Design Issues

- Demand estimation inaccuracies
- Market-driven model → uneven success

THE Hindu

Airports in Tier-II cities are not financially viable after end of UDAN scheme: Karnataka Minister M.B. Patil

Karnataka Minister M.B. Patil highlights financial challenges for Tier-II city airports post-UDAN scheme; proposes extending support for...

2 weeks ago



Subsidies were also capped at three years to push airlines towards self-sustaining routes. However, a **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report found that only 7% to 10% of these routes had remained viable beyond the subsidy period.** As of February 2026, of the 663 routes launched under the UDAN scheme since 2017, 327 routes had been discontinued, according to data recently presented in Parliament by Minister of State for Civil Aviation **Muralidhar Mohol.** The data showed that **15 of the 95 airports revived under the scheme have also fallen into disuse.**

THE Hindu

Watch: From take-off to turbulence: What is going wrong with UDAN scheme?

Watch: From take-off to turbulence: What is going wrong with UDAN scheme? Launched in 2016, the UDAN scheme aimed to make air travel affordable...

4 weeks ago



CONTEXT: The union cabinet cleared a modified UDAN scheme with an outlay of Rs 28,840 crore for 10 years.

Revamped UDAN 2.0 – Measures

Strategy Area	Key Measures
Demand-driven Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific route selection based on economic activity • Incorporate tourism potential
Strengthening Regional Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial support mechanisms • Develop aircraft leasing ecosystem • Promote small aircraft/regional carriers
Infrastructure Upgradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure night landing facilities • Improve maintenance infrastructure • Strengthen safety standards
Integrated Transport Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link UDAN routes with rail (e.g., Vande Bharat Express) • Integrate with major road corridors • Develop multi-modal transport hubs
Focus on Niche Segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tourism circuits (spiritual, eco-tourism)
Long-term Viability Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual subsidy (VGF) tapering • Integrate cargo & logistics for revenue diversification

Mains Practice Question

“Regional air connectivity is crucial for inclusive growth in India.” Evaluate the role of the UDAN scheme in addressing regional imbalances.

(250 word / 15 Marks)

12. भारत में क्षेत्रीय वायु कनेक्टिविटी के विस्तार की क्या आवश्यकता है? इस संदर्भ में, सरकार की ‘उड़ान’ योजना तथा इसकी उपलब्धियों की चर्चा कीजिए।
(उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए)

What is the need for expanding the regional air connectivity in India? In this context, discuss the government’s UDAN Scheme and its achievements.

(Answer in 250 words) 15



26th March 2026

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising three senior women IPS officers to investigate the alleged rape of a three year old child in Gurgaon.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 – Background

Prior to 2012:

- **Provisions under IPC**
 - Fragmented and gender-specific
 - Section 354 & 375 of IPC
 - Inadequate to address non-penetrative and child-specific offences
- **Law commission recommendations**
 - 42nd Report (1971): Inclusion of a dedicated provision
 - 172nd Report (2000): Recommended amendments to IPC sections
- **Rising awareness:**
 - Studies (MWCD 2007) indicated over 50% children faced some form of abuse
- **International commitment:**
 - India is a signatory to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

POCSO Act 2012 – Key features

1. **Comprehensive Coverage:** Addresses various sexual offenses against children, including assault, harassment, and pornography.
2. **Gender-Neutral:** Applies to both male and female children under 18.
3. **Child-Friendly Procedures:** Ensures child-friendly processes during investigation and trial.
4. **Mandatory Reporting:** Requires any person aware of child sexual abuse to report it.
5. **Special Courts:** Establishes Special Courts for swift and sensitive handling of cases.
6. **Support Services:** Provides medical, legal, and emergency assistance to victims.
7. **Strict Penalties:** Imposes stringent penalties to deter offenses.

The Hindu

Supreme Court flags misuse of POCSO Act to penalise adolescent relationships, mulls directions to raise awareness

A separate Bench of the Supreme Court is presently hearing a petition challenging the blanket criminalisation of consensual sexual activity...

4 Nov 2025



The Indian Express

'Young boys in consensual relationship often bear brunt of POCSO': Madras High Court acquits youth

Madras High Court acquits youth in POCSO case, says boys often face consequences in consensual teen relationships; asks Tamil Nadu to spread...

3 weeks ago

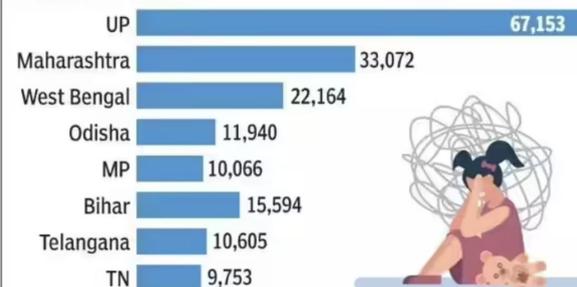


POCSO Act 2012 – Issues

1. **Low Conviction Rates** – issues in investigation and prosecution
2. **Criminalisation of Consensual Adolescent Relationships** – Misuse in cases of **teenage consensual relationships**
3. **Implementation Gaps** – Special courts
4. **Lack of Trained personnel**
5. **Social Stigma & Underreporting** – Mandatory reporting proves counter productive
6. **Emerging Digital Threats** – Online grooming, Child pornography – Law struggles with **technological adaptability**
7. **Disbursal of compensation** – Complex procedures and delays.
8. **Lack of awareness**

PILING UP DESPITE FAST-TRACK COURTS

Pocso Act cases



Note: Total 2.4 lakh rape cases booked under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act pending in 764 special fast-track courts, as on 31st January 2023.

Source: Law ministry



26th March 2026

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising three senior women IPS officers to investigate the alleged rape of a three year old child in Gurgaon.

Justice for Children: Way forward

Strategy Area	Key Measures
Context-sensitive Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiate between exploitative abuse and consensual adolescent relationships Avoid over-criminalisation
Strengthening Institutional Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of special courts Expand fast-track mechanisms Train police, prosecutors, and judiciary
Victim-Centric Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide psychological counselling Ensure witness protection Develop child-friendly infrastructure
Awareness & Social Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote community-level sensitisation Introduce school-based awareness programs
Tackling Cyber Crimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen digital surveillance Improve coordination with IT laws and enforcement agencies
Improving Conviction Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance investigation quality - forensic support and strengthened evidence collection mechanisms

Disposals up, convictions down

The trend of faster case disposals raises questions about investigative capacity, forensic delays and support systems for children

Year-wise disposal and conviction data (2019-25)

Year	Disposal rate /Case resolution	Conviction rate
2019	10.8% of total pending trials completed	34.9% (National average, NCRB*)
2020	5.0% (Sharp decline due to COVID-19 lockdowns and court closures)	39.6% (Temporary spike reported during pandemic year)
2021	71% (67,734 cases disposed of out of 95,238 registered)	32.2% (Resumption of declining trend)
2022	88% (97,616 cases disposed of out of 1,11,357 registered)	~30% (National trend; variations reported across studies)
2023	90% (1,06,919 cases disposed of out of 1,19,016 registered)	29% (National average, NCRB)
2024	87% (1,06,982 cases disposed of out of 1,22,500 registered)	19% (Fast track special courts; ~81% acquittals)
2025	109% (87,754 cases disposed of against 80,320 registered)	Conviction outcomes uneven; State-wise variation remains high

(Sources: National Judicial Data Grid via Lok Sabha Q.1018; *National Crime Records Bureau Crime in India 2019-2023)

Mains Practice Question

“The POCSO Act marks a shift towards a child-centric justice system, yet implementation gaps persist.” Analyse.

(15 Marks / 250 Words)



26th March 2026

Syllabus: PRELIMS: Environment
Newspaper: The Hindu, **Page No. 1**

Panchamrit of India's climate action



Reduce total projected carbon emissions by **1 billion tonnes by 2030.**



Cut carbon intensity of the economy by **less than 45% by 2030.**



Fulfil **50% of energy** requirements from renewable sources by **2030.**



Create **500 GW** of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by **2030.**



Achieve net-zero emissions by **2070.**

- India commits to reduce **Emissions Intensity of its GDP by 47 percent** by 2035 from 2005 level
- India to achieve **60 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources** by 2035
- India to create Carbon Sink of **3.5 to 4.0 billion tonnes of CO₂ eq.** through Forest and Tree Cover by 2035 from 2005 level

In the new targets, approved by the Cabinet on Wednesday, India has promised to attain at least 47 per cent reduction in emission intensity of its GDP (emission per unit of GDP) from 2005 baseline by 2035. Its current commitment, for the year 2030, is to achieve a 45 per cent reduction. By the year 2020, the last year for

India has also promised to ensure that at least 60 per cent of its total electricity generation capacity would comprise non-fossil fuel sources by 2035. The existing target for 2030 was 50 per cent, which has already been achieved well ahead of schedule. As of February this year, more than 52 per cent of total electricity generation capacity was based on non-fossil fuel sources.

India's third commitment relates to creation of additional capacity in its forests to absorb carbon dioxide. For 2030, India is committed to create an additional sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent over its 2005 stock.

By 2021, at least 2.3 billion tonnes of additional sink had already been created. For 2035, India is targeting to enlarge this to 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.



Syllabus: PRELIMS: Institutions
Newspaper: The Hindu, **Page No. 12**

National Council for Transgender Persons (NCTP)

- Statutory body constituted under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the provisions of Act
- Making recommendations to the government on measures to promote and protect the rights of transgender persons

Aim

- **Focus on livelihood issues as well as to raise awareness about the trans community** for achieving the goal of social justice so that transpersons are accepted within families and in the larger society.
- Ensure to **set up of transgender welfare boards in all states** and **also ensure that essential needs** of the transgender community, like housing, food, healthcare, and education, are met

Provisions	Description
Chairperson (ex-officio member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment.
Vice Chairperson (ex-officio member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment
Representation from central government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from 10 central departments. The council will have joint secretary-level members from the Ministries of Health, Home, Minority Affairs, Education, Rural Development, Labour, and Law.
Representation from states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from five states or Union Territories (one each from the north, south, east, west, and northeast regions) on a rotational basis.
Transgender community representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five members of the transgender community (one each from the north, south, east, west and northeast regions).
Additional members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member from the Department of Pensions (Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions), NITI Aayog, National Human Rights Commission, and National Commission for Women



Syllabus: PRELIMS: Geography
Newspaper: The Hindu, **Page No. 4**

Origin

- Talakaveri – **Brahmagiri Hills (Western Ghats)**
- District: **Kodagu, Karnataka**
- **Major Tributaries**
- **Basin – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry**

Left Bank Tributaries

- Harangi River
- Hemavati River
- Shimsha River
- Arkavathi River

Right Bank Tributaries

- Lakshmanatirtha River
- Kabini River
- Bhavani River
- Noyyal River
- Amaravati River



Kaveri River System Dams

- Krishnarajasagar in Karnataka is a major dam project for irrigation and water storage in the Kaveri basin.
- Mettur Dam in Tamil Nadu is an essential for irrigation and power generation, supporting the Kaveri river basin.
- Kaveri Delta System in Tamil Nadu, An irrigation network that sustains agricultural activities in the Kaveri Delta region.
- Lower Bhavani Project in Tamil Nadu is a crucial irrigation project on the Bhavani River for water management and agricultural development.
- Hemavati Project in Karnataka, An irrigation initiative on the Hemavati River, providing water to the Kaveri basin.
- Harangi Project in Karnataka, An important irrigation project on the Harangi River, contributing to water resources in the region.
- Kabini Project in Karnataka and Kerala, A key irrigation and water supply project on the Kabini River, benefiting both Karnataka and Kerala.



26th March 2026

Syllabus: PRELIMS: Places In News
Newspaper: Indian Express, **Page No. 21**



CSE 2014

Q. What is the correct sequence of occurrence of the following cities in South-East Asia as one proceeds from south to north?

1. Bangkok
2. Hanoi
3. Jakarta
4. Singapore

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 4-2-1-3
- (b) 3-2-4-1
- (c) 3-4-1-2
- (d) 4-3-2-1



26th March 2026

Syllabus: PRELIMS: Reports & Indices
Newspaper: Indian Express, Page No. 21

QS World University Rankings

- It is published annually
- Global higher education consultancy Quacquarelli Symonds. (London)
- 1900 institutes in 100 Countries

• Top 5 ranks among Indian institutions

Institution	Subject	2026	2025
IIT-ISM Dhanbad	Engineering-Mineral & Mining	21	20
IIM Ahmedabad	Business & Management Studies	21	27
	Marketing	21	Debut*
IIT Kharagpur	Engineering-Mineral & Mining	22	45
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences	Dentistry	25	26
JNU	Development Studies	26	29

* DEBUT ENTRY IN SUBJECT; SOURCE: QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT 2026

Lens	Weighting	Indicator	Weighting
Research and Discovery	50%	Academic Reputation	30%
		Citations per Faculty	20%
Employability and Outcomes	20%	Employer Reputation	15%
		Employment Outcomes	5%
Learning Experience	10%	Faculty Student Ratio	10%
Global Engagement	15%	International Faculty Ratio	5%
		International Research Network	5%
		International Student Diversity	0%
		International Student Ratio	5%
Sustainability	5%	Sustainability	5%

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026

- Northern America is the most represented region, with the highest total number of ranked subjects.
- Eastern Asia has the most new entries, including both newly ranked institutions and newly ranked subjects.
- Southern Asia is the most improved region proportionally, with the largest share of subjects moving up in the rankings.
- Computer Science & Information Systems and Medicine are the most widely ranked subjects globally.
- Data Science and Artificial Intelligence is the subject area with the most new entries.

In the broad 'Engineering and Technology' category, five IITs feature in the global top 100, but have seen a drop in the rankings compared to last year. The top performer in the category, IIT Delhi, has dropped 10 ranks – from 26 last year to 36 this year. Both IIT Kanpur (from 72 last year to 86 this year) and IIT Bombay (from 28 last year to 42 this year) have dropped 14 ranks.

Explaining the drop among the IITs in the Engineering and Technology category, QS said, "For IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay, the employer reputation score has dropped more significantly than the academic reputation indicator. This highlights the importance of ensuring that graduates have the right skills that employers are seeking. Both have seen their scores in the citations indicator fall this year too."

A total of 99 Indian institutions feature in the global rankings this year, up from 79 last year. In terms of the number of institutions represented in the rankings, India stands fourth globally, after the US (228 institutions), China (158) and the UK (114). On the flip side, QS noted that "the picture is not uniformly positive" with Arts and Humanities remaining "a weak spot".

In the broad subject area of Arts and Humanities, no Indian institution features in the top 100. The highest ranked Indian institution is Delhi University at 231, which saw a sharp drop compared to last year's rank of 160. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has also seen a steep fall in this category, from 177 last year to 260 this year.

Similarly, in Life Sciences and Medicine, no Indian institution is in the top 100, with the best performer being AIIMS Delhi (217). In the Medicine category, AIIMS ranked 105, up from 145 last year.

Among the top 10 highest ranked Indian institutions across subjects, there are two private universities – Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences at rank 25 for Dentistry and OP Jindal Global University at 35 for Law. The rankings cover around 1,900 institutions across 100 countries.



Q1. Regarding India's Panchamrit commitments announced at COP26, consider the following statements:

1. India aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.
2. India has committed to meeting 50% of its energy requirements from renewable sources by 2030.
3. India has pledged to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030.
4. India has committed to achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity by 2030.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

Answer: c

Q2. With reference to the National Council for Transgender Persons (NCTP) in India, consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body established under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
2. It is chaired by the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment.
3. It includes representatives from State Governments, civil society, and the transgender community.
4. It has the power to enforce penalties for discrimination against transgender persons.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 1 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: a

Q3. Which of the following rivers are right-bank tributaries of the Cauvery River?

1. Kabini
2. Hemavati
3. Arkavathi
4. Bhavani

Select the correct answer using the code below.

- a) 1 and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following countries:

1. Laos
2. Cambodia
3. Vietnam
4. Thailand

Which of the above countries is/are landlocked?

- a) 2, 3 and 4 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 3 and 4 only

Answer: c

Q5. With reference to the QS World University Rankings, consider the following statements:

1. It is published annually by an international higher education analytics organisation.
2. It evaluates universities based only on academic research output and citations.
3. Employer reputation and international faculty ratio are among the indicators used in the rankings.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b





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