



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

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CONTEXT: A Madurai court awarded death penalty to 9 police personnel in the Sathankulam custodial deaths case (2020).

What are Custodial Deaths?

- Custodial death refers to death of a person in police or judicial custody due to:
 - Torture
 - Assault
 - Harassment
 - Rape, molestation
 - Negligence
 - Suicide
 - Medical denial
- **Types**
 - **Police Custody** Deaths – During interrogation (most controversial)
 - **Judicial Custody** Deaths – In prisons
 - Other Custody – Army, paramilitary, etc



Magnitude and Trends in India

- The NHRC reported **2,739 custodial deaths in 2024**, an increase from 2,400 in 2023, with over 155 attributed to police custody.
- **Uttar Pradesh** recorded the highest number of custodial deaths, followed by Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Maharashtra.
- The **Global Torture Index 2025** classified India as a **“high-risk” country** for systemic torture.
- Based on data presented in the Indian Parliament on March 24, 2026, **170 custodial deaths** were reported across India in the first 74 days of **2026** (January 1 to March 15)
 - Bihar (19) and Rajasthan (18)
 - Tamil Nadu reported 7 cases

Legal & Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 14** – Equality Before Law
- **Article 20(3)** – Protection against self-incrimination
- **Article 21** – Right to Life & Dignity (core violation)
- **Article 22** – Protection against arbitrary arrest
- Custodial torture = Direct assault on rule of law

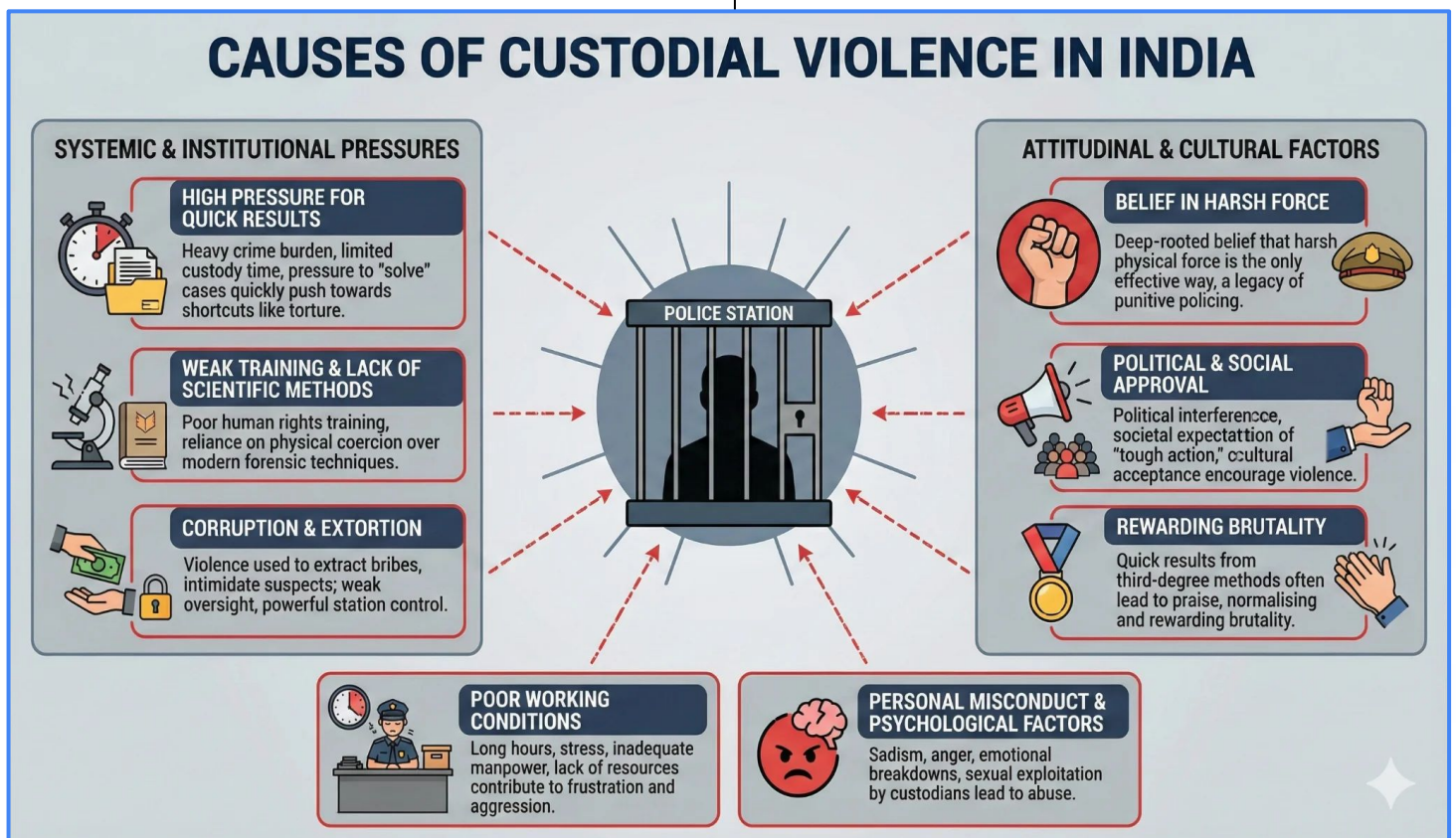


Custodial Deaths

CONTEXT: A Madurai court awarded death penalty to 9 police personnel in the Sathankulam custodial deaths case (2020).

<p>IPC Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 330/331 – Hurt to extract confession • 302 – Murder (used in TN case) 	<p>Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023)</p>	<p>It penalizes those who intentionally cause hurt to extract confessions, information, through violence or coercion.</p>
<p>CrPC Safeguards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 41 → arrest guidelines • Section 50 → right to know grounds 	<p>Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS, 2023)</p>	<p>It mandates that arrests and detentions follow valid reasons, documented procedures.</p>
<p>Evidence Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confession to police inadmissible 	<p>Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (2023)</p>	<p>It invalidates confessions made under threat, coercion, or promise.</p>

CAUSES OF CUSTODIAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA



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Custodial Deaths

Institutional & Judicial Guidelines

- **NHRC Guidelines (1993 Onwards)**
 - Mandatory reporting of custodial death/rape within 24 hours
 - Post-mortem, videography & magisterial inquiry
 - Compensation and accountability
- **D.K. Basu vs. State of West Bengal (1997)**
 - Arrest memo, family notification
 - Medical examination every 24 hours
 - Legal counsel access
 - Mandatory diary entries and custody records
 - SOPs against torture
- **Prakash Singh vs. Union of India (2006)**
 - Separation of investigation & law-order
 - Police Complaints Authority for independent investigation
 - Structural police reforms
- **Nambi Narayanan v. Siby Mathews and Others (2018):**
 - The SC awarded him compensation for the immense humiliation caused by wrongful arrest and harassment, underscoring the severe psychological harm of custodial abuse and false prosecution.

- **Paramvir Singh Saini vs. Baljit Singh (2020)**

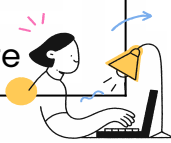
- Mandatory installation of CCTV cameras in:
- Police stations, NIA, CBI & other law enforcement offices
- Required features: audio recording, night vision, proper storage
- Mandatory state and district-level oversight committees.

Government Measures and Reforms

- Mandatory CCTV implementation (following SC directives)
- SMART Policing Model (ethical & technology-driven policing)
- Model Police Act, 2006
- Prison reforms (Mulla Committee, Krishna Iyer Committee)
- Fast-track courts for custodial crimes
- Forensic-based investigations
- Human rights sensitization in police training

Persisting Challenges

- CCTV not fully functional across states
- Police Complaints Authorities remain weak
- No dedicated Torture Prevention Law
- High undertrial population in prisons
- Overcrowded and poorly equipped prisons
- Political interference in policing
- Staff shortages & stressful working conditions
- Inadequate forensic infrastructure



CONTEXT: A Madurai court awarded death penalty to 9 police personnel in the Sathankulam custodial deaths case (2020).

Reforms & Way Forward

- **Legal Reforms**
 - Enact anti-torture law (LC 273rd report)
 - Ratify UNCAT (1997)
- **Police Reforms**
 - Implement Prakash Singh reforms
 - Separate investigation wing
 - Body cameras & CCTV in police stations
- **Institutional Reforms**
 - Strengthen Police Complaints Authority
 - Independent investigation
 - Upgrade prison infrastructure & healthcare
- **Technological Measures**
 - Mandatory CCTV (as per SC guidelines)
 - Digital custody records
 - Body Cameras
- **Capacity Building**
 - Human rights training
 - Forensic-based investigation
- **Social Measures**
 - Legal awareness
 - Civil society vigilance
- **Judicial Reforms**
 - Bail as the norm → reduce undertrial population

Significance of TN Case (Value Addition)

- Why Landmark?
 - Rare instance of death penalty for police officers
 - Recognizes custodial torture as “rarest of rare” crime
- Strengthens:
 - Judicial accountability
 - Deterrence

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Ques. In light of the recent Sathankulam case, critically examine the causes of custodial violence in India and suggest institutional reforms to ensure accountability. (10 marks, 150 words)



Illegal Sand Mining



CONTEXT: Rapid illegal sand mining reported in and around the National Chambal Sanctuary (spread across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh).

Definition

- Extraction of sand without authorization or beyond permissible limits, especially from:
 - Terrestrial,
 - Riverine,
 - Coastal or marine environment.
- **Source of Sand:**
 - Riverbeds
 - Floodplains
 - Eco-sensitive zones
 - Coastal sand
 - Sand from agricultural fields

Demand-Supply Dynamics of Sand in India

- Construction sector contributes ~9% of India's GDP.
- Annual demand for sand: ~700 million tonnes.
 - Legal supply: ~400 million tonnes
 - Deficit: ~300 million tonnes, met through illegal mining.
- Estimated value of the "Sand Mafia Economy": ₹40,000–₹50,000 crore annually

Judiciary Interventions

- **Deepak Kumar vs State of Haryana (2013)**
 - Made environmental clearance mandatory even for small mining

State	Major Affected Rivers
Uttar Pradesh	Yamuna, Ken, Betwa, Son, Ganga
Madhya Pradesh	Narmada, Chambal, Tapti
Maharashtra	Godavari, Bhima
Tamil Nadu	Vellar, Kolar, Cauvery
Bihar	Son, Gandak
Odisha	Brahmani, Mahanadi
Haryana-Punjab	Yamuna, Sutlej

- **M.C. Mehta vs Union of India**
 - Strengthened environmental governance
- **NGT v. TN Sand Mining Case (2018)**
 - Mandated digital monitoring of sand transportation.



Illegal Sand Mining

CONTEXT: Rapid illegal sand mining reported in and around the National Chambal Sanctuary (spread across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh).



Key Reasons for Illegal Sand Mining

- **Structural Causes**
 - Rapid urbanization and soaring construction demand
 - High demand-supply gap
 - Lack of alternatives
- **Institutional Causes**
 - Weak monitoring
 - Fragmented regulation
 - Complex and slow mining approval process
- **Economic Causes**
 - High profit margins
 - Low risk of punishment
 - Lack of affordable substitutes like Manufactured Sand (M-sand)
 - Poverty and Unemployment

● **Political Causes**

- Nexus between politicians & mafias
- Works as an organised crime



CONTEXT: Rapid illegal sand mining reported in and around the National Chambal Sanctuary (spread across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh).

Impacts of Illegal Sand Mining

Ecological Impacts

- Riverbed Deepening & Waterflow Disruption
- Bank Erosion & Flooding Risk
- Groundwater Depletion

Chambal Case:

- Gharial Nesting Collapse
- Dolphin Breeding Disturbance

Biodiversity Loss

- Habitat Destruction
- Keystone Species Threat

Chambal Sanctuary:

- Gharials Under Threat

Economic Impacts

- Revenue Loss to State
- Black Market Expansion
- Distorted Legal Mining

Governance & Law-and-Order

- Organized Sand Mafia
- Attacks on Officials

Central India:

Clashes in Chambal Region

Social Consequences

- Livelihood Loss
- Resource Conflicts

Ethical Concerns

- Exploitation of Resources
- "Tragedy of Commons"

Illegal Sand Mining



CONTEXT: Rapid illegal sand mining reported in and around the National Chambal Sanctuary (spread across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh).

Way Forward

- **Policy Measures**
 - Strict enforcement of guidelines
 - Uniform national sand policy
 - Defines sustainable extraction limits and natural replenishment cycles.
- **Technological Solutions**
 - Satellite monitoring
 - AI-based tracking
 - E-auction systems
- **Institutional Reforms**
 - Strengthen district-level task forces
 - Independent regulatory bodies
- **Community Participation**
 - Involvement of Gram Panchayats for local monitoring and reporting.
 - Social audits
- **Alternative Materials**
 - Manufactured sand (M-sand)
 - Produced by crushing stones; eco-friendly and cost-effective substitute.
 - Recycled construction waste
 - Use of fly ash, slag, and recycled materials in construction to reduce sand dependency.
- **Ethical Governance**
 - Transparency
 - Accountability
 - Zero tolerance for nexus

“Rivers are the soul of our civilization – and sand is their body; if the body turns hollow, how long can the soul survive?”

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Ques. Illegal sand mining in ecologically sensitive areas like the Chambal sanctuary poses a serious threat to biodiversity and river systems. Examine.

(10 Marks, 150 words)



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Constitutional Body
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number:** 04

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

- **Constitutional** authority under **Article 148–151**
 - Article 148 – Appointment & Independence
 - Article 149 – Duties & Powers
 - Article 150 – Form of Accounts
 - Article 151 – Audit Reports
- Appointment:
 - By the **President** of India
- Tenure:
 - **6 years** or **65 years** of age (whichever earlier)
- Removal:
 - Same as **Supreme Court judge** (by Parliament)
- Independence Safeguards:
 - **Salary charged** on Consolidated Fund of India
 - Not eligible for further office
- **Functions:**
 - Audits Union & State accounts
 - Audits PSUs, government bodies
 - Ensures financial accountability of executive
- **Reports Submitted To:**
 - President (Centre) / Governor (States)
 - Examined by PAC (Public Accounts Committee)
- **Types of Audit:**
 - Financial audit
 - Compliance audit
 - Performance audit
- Important Concept:
 - CAG is not a court → only reports, no enforcement power

- **Why CAG reports** on the conservation and management of **lakes** ?
- Key reasons for CAG focus on lake conservation include:
 - **Auditing Financial Mismanagement:** Highlighting instances where funds were spent without achieving measurable improvement in lake health (e.g., Dal Lake rehabilitation)
 - **Administrative Failure:** Pointing out fragmented governance, where multiple departments fail to coordinate
 - **Transparency and Public Oversight:** Reviewing the lack of community involvement and poor public disclosure
 - **Flagging Ecological Degradation**
 - **Ensure legal compliance**

Exam Traps

- Statutory body → WRONG
- Appointed by Prime Minister → WRONG
- Can directly punish officials → WRONG
- Reports submitted to Parliament directly → WRONG
- Tenure fixed at 5 years → WRONG
- Salary charged on Consolidated Fund of States → WRONG

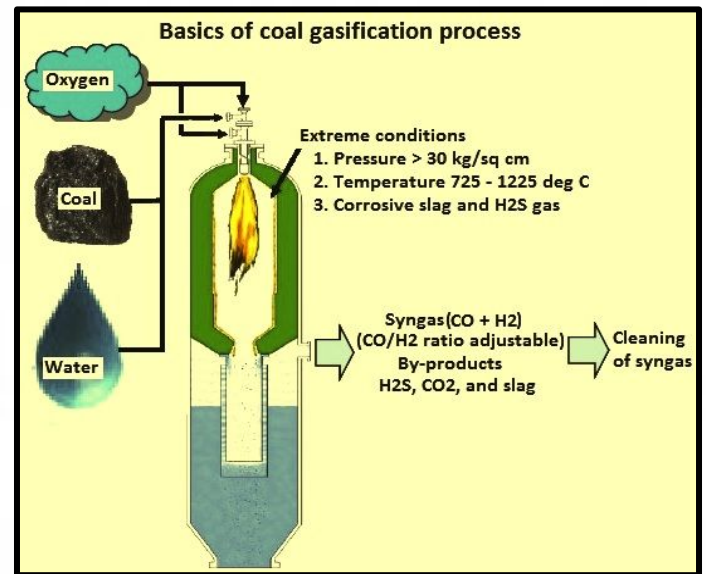


SYLLABUS: Prelims : Economy & Environment
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number** : 15

Syngas (Synthesis Gas)

- Also known as **synthesis** gas, **synthetic** gas, or **producer** gas
- It is a primary **byproduct of gasification** and the predominant byproduct of high-temperature **pyrolysis** of any biomass, leftovers, or garbage.
- **Primary** Components:
 - Mixture of carbon monoxide (CO) + hydrogen (H₂) in varying amounts.
- **Secondary/Trace Components:**
 - Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)
 - Methane (CH₄)
 - Water Vapor (H₂O)
 - Nitrogen (N₂): If air (rather than pure oxygen) was used.
- **Production Methods:**
 - Gasification of coal, biomass, municipal waste
 - Steam reforming of natural gas (to produce Hydrogen)
- **Uses:**
 - Because syngas has half the energy density of natural gas, it may be burned and utilised as a fuel source.
 - Production of methanol, ammonia, synthetic fuels
 - Hydrogen production
 - Power generation
- **Feedstock Flexibility:**
 - Can be produced from fossil fuels + renewable biomass
 - It may be made from a wide range of carbon-containing materials

- **Other Key Processes:**
 - Fischer–Tropsch process → converts syngas to liquid fuels
 - Used in coal-to-liquid (CTL) technology
- **Environmental Aspect:**
 - Can be cleaner than direct coal burning
 - Still emits CO₂ (unless carbon capture used)



- Syngas contains CO₂ and methane mainly → WRONG
- Produced only from petroleum → WRONG
- Used only for electricity generation → WRONG
- Fischer–Tropsch converts crude oil to gas → WRONG
- Syngas is pure hydrogen → WRONG
- Cannot be produced from biomass → WRONG



SYLLABUS : Prelims: History

Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page Number :** 12

Piprahwa Relics

- Location: **Piprahwa** (near Indo-Nepal border, Siddharthnagar district, **UP**)
 - The site is believed to be associated with ancient **Kapilavastu**, the homeland of Gautama Buddha
- Discovery:
 - Excavated in **1898** by **William Claxton Peppé**
- What was found:
 - Stupa containing relic caskets
 - Bone fragments believed to be of Gautama Buddha
 - The vessels contained bone fragments, ash, and over 1,800 offerings such as gold leaves, pearls, rubies, garnets, and finely carved ornaments.
 - Inscribed urns (Brahmi script)
- **Historical Significance:**
 - Linked to ancient city of Kapilavastu
 - One of the earliest Buddhist archaeological discoveries
- **Inscription:**
 - An inscription in **Brahmi script** on one of the caskets links the relics directly to the Sakya clan
- Present Status:
 - Some relics **preserved in Indian Museum** and other global institutions
- While most relics were handed to the Indian Museum, Kolkata in 1899, descendants of British excavator William Claxton Peppé retained some relics.



Exam Traps

- Located in Nepal → **WRONG**
- Discovered in 20th century → **WRONG**
- Related to Jainism → **WRONG**
- No inscriptions found → **WRONG**
- Associated with Mauryan emperor Ashoka directly → **WRONG**



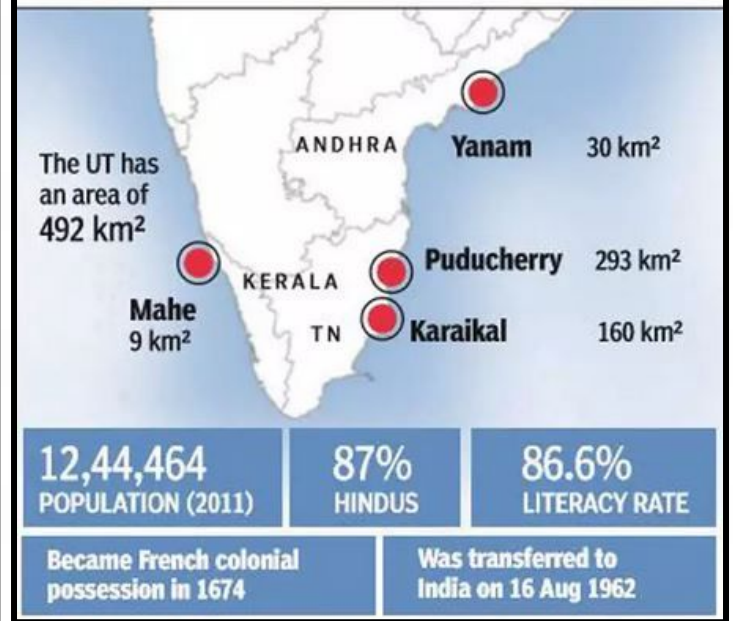
SYLLABUS : Prelims : Polity

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number** : 06

Puducherry

- Type: Union Territory (UT) with legislature
- **4 geographically separated enclaves:**
 - Puducherry
 - Karaikal
 - Mahe
 - Yanam
 - Only UT with non-contiguous regions **across 3 states**
- Colonial History:
 - Former **French colony**
 - De facto transfer: 1954
 - De jure transfer: **1962**
- **Official Languages:**
 - Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, English, French (cultural legacy)
- **Administration:**
 - Headed by Lieutenant Governor
- **Constitutional & Legal Framework:**
 - **Article 239A:** Introduced via the 14th Constitutional Amendment Act (1962), it allows Parliament to create a Legislature and Council of Ministers for Puducherry.
 - **Government of Union Territories Act, 1963:** This law governs Puducherry's administration.
 - **The "Special" Status:** Unlike Delhi (governed by Article 239AA), Puducherry's legislature can make laws on all subjects in the State List (including Police, Land, and Public Order). However, subject to the President's assent and the Parliament's overriding power.
- **Economy & Culture:**
 - Tourism hub (French architecture, beaches)

Puducherry comprises four unconnected districts



Exam Traps

- It is a full-fledged state → WRONG
- All its regions are contiguous → WRONG
- Was a British colony → WRONG
- Has no legislature → WRONG
- Only Tamil is official language → WRONG



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Places in News

Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page Number :** 22

Nigeria (West Africa)

- **Bounded by:**
 - Niger (north), Chad (northeast), Cameroon (east), Benin (west)
 - Coast along Gulf of Guinea (Atlantic Ocean)
- Capital: **Abuja**
- Largest City: **Lagos**
- Political System: Federal republic
- Population: **Most populous** country in Africa with 24 cr. people
- Economy:
 - Major oil producer (member of OPEC)
 - Also large agricultural sector
- Rivers:
 - Niger River and Benue River (meet at Lokoja)
- **Ethnic Groups:**
 - Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo (major groups)
- **Colonial History:**
 - Former British colony
 - Independence: 1960
- **Security Issues:**
 - Insurgency by Boko Haram
- Regional Importance:
 - Key player in ECOWAS (West African bloc)



Exam Traps

- Located in East Africa → WRONG
- Capital is Lagos → WRONG
- Landlocked country → WRONG
- Not an OPEC member → WRONG
- Colonized by France → WRONG



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Places in News

Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 22



Q1. Consider the following pairs Constitutional Articles and their provisions:

Articles	Provisions
1. Article 148	Appointment and independence of CAG
2. Article 149	Form of government accounts
3. Article 150	Duties and powers of CAG
4. Article 151	Audit reports

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

Answer: a

Q2. Consider the following gases:

- 1. Carbon monoxide
- 2. Hydrogen
- 3. Methane
- 4. Nitrogen

Which of the above are commonly found as components of syngas?

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

Answer: c

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Piprahwa excavation:

- 1. Piprahwa is located in the state of Bihar near the Indo-Nepal border.
- 2. The relics included bone fragments believed to be of Gautama Buddha.

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: b

Q4. With reference to the constitutional framework of Union Territories, consider the following statements:

- 1. Article 239A was introduced by the 14th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1962.
- 2. It provides for the creation of Legislatures and Councils of Ministers for certain Union Territories.

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: c

Q5. With reference to Nigeria, consider the following statements:

- 1. Nigeria shares its western border with Cameroon.
- 2. It has a coastline along the Gulf of Guinea.
- 3. Nigeria is a federal republic.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b





VAJIRAM & RAVI

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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