

3 ALY CURRENT AFFAIRS

26 August 2024



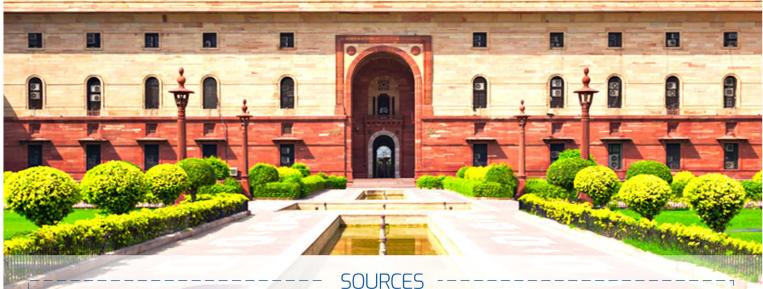




















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GS I

1. Classical language centres ask for autonomy

Source: The Hindu

Context: Special centres set up for the promotion of Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia after they were designated classical languages are demanding autonomy in their functioning in order to better carry out their functions.

Classical Languages in India:

- Recognized Classical Languages: India officially designates six languages as classical:
 - o Tamil (2004)
 - o Sanskrit (2005)
 - o Kannada (2008)
 - o Telugu (2008)
 - Malayalam (2013)
 - Odia (2014)
- Additional Preservation: India's National Education Policy-2020 emphasises the preservation of Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, along with their literature. The inclusion of Farsi (Persian) might expand this list, though further clarification is needed.
- Criteria for Classical Status: The Ministry of Culture defines the criteria for a language to be declared as classical:
 - **High Antiquity:** A recorded history of 1500–2000 years.
 - Valuable Heritage: A significant body of ancient literature cherished over generations.
 - o **Originality:** A unique literary tradition not derived from other linguistic communities.
 - **Distinctness:** Clear distinction from modern or derivative forms of the language.
- Benefits of Classical Language Status: Recognition as a classical language brings several advantages:
 - o International Awards: Two prestigious awards for distinguished scholars in classical
 - o **Centre of Excellence:** Establishment of a specialised Centre for Classical Language Studies.
 - o **Professional Chairs:** Creation of dedicated academic positions in Central Universities, facilitated by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution:

- Purpose and Usage:
 - The Eighth Schedule, established under Articles 344(1) and 351 of the Constitution, originally aimed to represent and enrich Hindi and English, the Union's official languages.
 - It allows candidates to use any language from the Eighth Schedule for public service examinations.
- Languages Included: Currently, the Eighth Schedule comprises 22 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.
- **Chronological Additions:**
 - o **1950:** Initially included 14 languages.
 - o 1967: Sindhi added via the 21st Constitutional Amendment Act.









- o **1992:** Konkani, Manipuri (Meitei), and Nepali included through the 71st Constitutional Amendment Act.
- o **2003:** Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santali added via the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- o **2011:** Spelling "Oriya" was updated to "Odia" through the 96th Constitutional Amendment Act.

GS II

2. Ukraine PM seeks tie-up with India for producing drones, electronic warfare systems

Source: The Hindu

Context: India-Ukraine relations have gained prominence with the recent visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine, marking the first visit since diplomatic ties began in 1992.

• Historical Background:

- o Diplomatic relations established in January 1992.
- India opened an embassy in Kyiv in May 1992, and Ukraine opened its mission in Delhi in February 1993.

Areas of Cooperation:

- o **Geopolitical**: Regular high-level exchanges and communications.
- **Defence**: Ukraine has supplied military technology; India has started exporting defence equipment to Ukraine.
- **Economic**: Trade peaked at \$3.39 billion in 2021–22 but has since dropped; main exports include agricultural products, machinery, and pharmaceuticals.
- Humanitarian Assistance: India has provided aid including medicines and medical equipment; Indian pharmaceutical companies have donated significant medical aid.
- Diaspora: Indian community involved in business and education, with cultural events organised by associations.
- **Cultural**: Promotion of Indian art, yoga, and Ayurveda in Ukraine; Indian films shot in Ukraine.
- Institutional: ITEC, ICCR, and Kendriya Hindi Sansthan scholarships for training and education.

Challenges:

- o **Declining Trade**: Trade volume reduced significantly due to the Russia-Ukraine war.
- o **Impact on Imports**: Disruption in supplies, such as sunflower oil, affecting inflation.
- o **Relations with Russia**: Balancing ties with Russia while engaging with Ukraine.
- o **Past Criticisms**: Ukraine's past criticisms of India's nuclear and Kashmir policies.

Way Forward:

o **Diplomatic Balance**: Maintain balanced relations with both Russia and Ukraine.



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- Peace Initiatives: India should lead in peace negotiations to restore global food supply chains.
- Non-Alignment: Reaffirm non-alignment by strengthening ties with Ukraine while maintaining relations with Russia.

GS III

3. CBI begins polygraph tests on 7 in Kolkata doctor rape-murder case

Source: The Hindu

Context: The CBI has begun polygraph tests on seven individuals in connection with the rape and murder of a doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Polygraph test:

- Definition:
 - A polygraph, or **lie detector test**, measures physiological indicators (blood pressure, pulse, respiration, skin conductivity) while a person answers questions.
 - Based on the idea that lying triggers different physiological responses.
- Historical Context:
 - Similar tests were first conducted in the 19th century by an Italian criminologist using blood pressure measurements.
- Comparison with Narco-Analysis Test:
 - o **Polygraph:** Measures physiological responses.
 - Narco-Analysis: Uses sodium pentothal to induce a state where the person is supposed to reveal truthful information.
- Accuracy and Use:
 - o Both tests are controversial and not 100% accurate.
 - They are used as alternatives to torture for extracting information.
- Legal Admissibility:
 - **Violation of Article 20(3):** Conducting tests without consent violates the right against self-incrimination.
 - Consent Required: Mandatory to avoid breaching constitutional rights.
 - o **Judicial Concerns:** Tests can be seen as mental torture and infringe on the right to privacy.
- Landmark Judgments:
 - Selvi v. State of Karnataka (2010): Involuntary administration of such tests violates mental privacy and the right against self-incrimination.
 - D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal (1997): Involuntary tests amount to cruel and degrading treatment.
 - State of Bombay v. Kathi Kalu Oghad (1961): Right against self-incrimination does not extend to physical evidence.
- Section 27 of the Evidence Act:
 - o Allows admissibility of information from tests if it leads to the discovery of a fact.
 - o Only the portion directly related to the discovered fact can be used.



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• NHRC Guidelines:

- **Voluntary Consent:** Must be given willingly.
- **Informed Consent:** Accused must be fully informed about the test.
- Recorded Consent: Formal recording in the presence of a Judicial Magistrate.
- **Documentation:** Evidence of voluntary consent must be presented in court.
- o Clarification: Statements made are considered police statements, not confessions.
- Judicial Consideration: Judges consider factors like detention length and interrogation nature when evaluating results.

4. US govt approves sale of anti-submarine warfare sonobuoys to India for `hunter-killer' helicopters

Source: Times of India

Context: The US recently approved a USD 52.8 million government-to-government deal for the sale of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Sonobuoys that will be integrated with the Indian Navy's Romeo helicopters.

Sonobuoys

- **Definition:** Small, expendable devices used in underwater acoustics and sonar systems to detect and analyse sound in the ocean, primarily for tracking submarines and underwater objects.
- Importance:
 - o Essential for anti-submarine warfare.
 - Helps track potentially hostile submarines in open ocean and coastal areas.
 - Provides data for precision attacks with air-launched torpedoes.
- **Historical Use:** First employed during World War II to detect German U-boats.
- Deployment Methods:
 - Dropped from aircraft or launched from ships/submarines.
 - Sinks to a specific depth and starts listening for acoustic signals.
 - Multiple sonobuoys can be deployed in a pattern to pinpoint the location of a target.
- Types of Sonobuoys:
 - Passive Sonobuoys:
 - Listen for and record ambient sounds without emitting signals.
 - Utilise a hydrophone to detect sound energy from targets.
 - Active Sonobuoys:
 - Emit sound pulses and analyse the returning echoes to detect and locate targets.
 - Use a transducer to send out acoustic signals.
 - Special Purpose Sonobuoys:
 - Provide environmental data such as water temperature and ambient noise levels.
- Components:
 - o Cylindrical or spherical buoy housing.
 - Acoustic sensors for detecting sounds.
 - o Battery or power source.
 - Radio transmitter or communication system to relay data to the host platform (aircraft or ship).
- Additional Applications:









- Used in scientific research and environmental studies.
- Help in studying marine life, such as whales and other marine creatures.

5. Govt gives nod to BioE3 policy, Vigyan Dhara scheme to foster R&D

Source: Business Standard

Context: The Union Cabinet recently approved the 'BioE3' (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy, for fostering high-performance biomanufacturing of the Department of Biotechnology.

BioE3:

- Steered By: Department of Biotechnology
- Objective:
 - Foster high-performance biomanufacturing for a range of applications from medicine to materials.
 - Address challenges in farming and food production.
 - Promote manufacturing of bio-based products through advanced biotechnological processes.

Key Features:

- o Innovation-driven support for research, development, and entrepreneurship.
- Accelerate technology development and commercialization.
- Establish biomanufacturing and bio-AI hubs, and biofoundries.

Focus Areas:

- Regenerative bioeconomy models and green growth.
- o Expansion of India's skilled workforce and job creation.

• Strategic/Thematic Sectors:

- High-value bio-based chemicals
- Biopolymers and enzymes
- o Smart proteins and functional foods
- Precision biotherapeutics
- Climate-resilient agriculture
- o Carbon capture and utilisation
- Marine and space research







Editorial, Ideas and Opinions

6. Reality of reel life, exploitation as a structural problem

Source: The Hindu

Context: The Justice K. Hema Committee report, released by the Kerala government, sparks debate on issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry.

Background

- The **Justice K. Hema Committee report** was released by the Kerala government on August 19, 2024.
- The report, submitted in 2019, addresses issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry but also has broader implications.

Main Issues Highlighted

- Sexual Exploitation and Assault:
 - Women are pressured to exchange sexual favours for opportunities.
 - Those who refuse are often marginalised or excluded from the industry.
- Discriminatory Practices and Lack of Facilities:
 - Women face discrimination and lack basic amenities in the workplace.

• Cultural Context

- The issues are part of a larger pattern of gender inequality and patriarchal norms.
- Rape and sexual assault are symptoms of societal views that undermine women's autonomy and dignity.

• Legal Framework

- **Supreme Court Guidelines (1997):** Established duties for employers and complaint mechanisms to prevent workplace harassment.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013): Mandates an internal complaints committee (ICC) in workplaces, including the film industry.

Criticism of the ICC

- o The Hema Committee suggests that ICCs may be influenced by abusers or employers.
- o Calls for an independent government forum to handle complaints in the film industry.

• Registration of Crimes

- o The report's redacted version maintains survivor anonymity.
- Legal protections are in place to ensure privacy and avoid discrimination.

Structural Reforms Needed

- The report calls for comprehensive reforms to address workplace issues and improve conditions for women in the industry.
- Highlights the need for greater awareness and structural changes similar to the #MeToo movement's impact globally.



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7. New-age gateway devices, the latest health threat

Source: The Hindu

Context: Gateway devices like e-cigarettes and vaping pens were marketed as healthier alternatives to smoking and aids for quitting tobacco. However, they have instead triggered a public health crisis, causing significant physical harm and worsening mental health among children. Their widespread use among youth underscores the urgent need for stricter regulation and reassessment.

New-Age Devices as Alternatives:

• E-cigarettes, vaping pens, and other heated tobacco products (HTPs) were promoted as healthier alternatives to smoking.

Reality Check:

• These devices have led to a public health crisis, harming physical health and mental well-being, particularly among children.

Youth Impact:

- E-cigarettes have become popular among middle and high school students.
- Flavoured products attract children, with a significant increase in youth usage reported.

Psychological Factors:

- Marketing strategies target younger audiences, making them vulnerable.
- Peer pressure and the desire for social acceptance drive children towards these devices.

Health Risks:

- Physical harm includes lung damage and vaping-related lung injury.
- Mental health issues include depression, anxiety, and increased risk of substance abuse.

Addiction Concerns:

- E-cigarettes are designed to be highly addictive, with advanced nicotine delivery methods.
- Early and frequent use contributes to stronger addiction and potential future substance use disorders.

Misconceptions:

• Many mistakenly believe vaping is harmless; however, it can lead to serious health and addiction issues

8. Investing in persons with disabilities

Source: The Hindu

Context: Parents of children with disabilities often face societal stigma, leading them to believe their children are not worth investing in. This reflects broader issues of discrimination and marginalisation for persons with disabilities (PwDs) across education and employment.

• Social Attitudes and Stigma:

- Persons with disabilities (PwDs) face social stigma and marginalisation, with a common belief that they are not worth investing in.
- o Discrimination in education and employment, and a lack of dignity, are prevalent issues.

Education Sector:

- Less than 1% of educational institutions in India are disability-friendly.
- Fewer than 40% of school buildings have ramps, and about 17% have accessible restrooms.
- o Implementation of disability reservations in education and jobs is inadequate.











• Employment Sector:

- Only five out of fifty major companies employ more than 1% PwDs.
- Existing policies and reservations for PwDs are poorly implemented in workplaces.
- States need to develop compliance mechanisms and incentives, similar to models from other countries.

• Institutional Frameworks:

- U.S. universities have strong support systems for PwDs, including specialised coordinators and resource centres.
- Indian universities have varying levels of support, with some offering personalised assistance but lacking uniformity and comprehensive policies.

Need for Reform:

- Educational and employment institutions need to invest in and implement inclusive frameworks to support PwDs effectively.
- There is a need for robust diversity policies and infrastructure improvements.

• Cultural Representation:

- PwDs are often depicted negatively, which affects societal attitudes and their ability to be treated with dignity.
- Negative portrayals and stereotypes contribute to the marginalisation of PwDs and hinder their full participation in society.







In Brief

9. Assured pensions return as govt. backtracks on NPS

Source: The Hindu

Context: The Centre has introduced a Unified Pension Scheme similar to the Old Pension Scheme. It guarantees government employees 50% of their final salary as a monthly pension for life.

Old Pension Scheme (OPS):

- **Pension Payment:** Under the OPS, the government provides the entire pension amount to retired government employees.
- Example: For a government employee with a final basic monthly salary of Rs 10,000, the pension under OPS would be Rs 5,000.
- Pension Amount: Guarantees 50% of the final drawn salary plus Dearness Allowance (DA) for life.
- Eligibility: Exclusively available to government employees.

New Pension Scheme (NPS):

- **Contributions**: Employees contribute a portion of their salary towards their pension corpus, with the government matching their contributions.
 - Employees contribute 10% of their salary (basic + dearness allowance).
 - The government contributes 14% to the employees' NPS accounts.
- **Pension Amount:** The pension amount is variable and depends on the accumulated corpus and investment performance.
- Eligibility: Open to all Indian citizens (including NRIs) between the ages of 18 and 70, as well as self-employed and unorganised workers. The NPS does not apply to the armed forces.

10. Nicobar project will not disturb or displace tribes: Environment Minister

Source: The Hindu

Context: The development of a port and airport in the pristine Nicobar Islands "will not disturb or displace" any of the Shompen, the Union Environment Minister said recently.

Shompen Tribe:

- **Isolation**: One of the most isolated tribes globally and among the least studied Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India.
- Location:
 - Inhabit the dense tropical rainforests of Great Nicobar Island, part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands group.
 - About 95% of the island is covered in rainforest.



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- **Habitat Significance:** Their habitat is a critical biological hotspot with notable protected areas: Campbell Bay National Park, Galathea National Park, and Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve.
- **Population**: As of the 2011 Census, the estimated population is 229, but the exact current number remains unknown.
- Lifestyle and Livelihood:
 - o Primarily semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers.
 - Sources of livelihood include hunting, gathering, fishing, and rudimentary horticulture.
 - They live in small groups, moving between forest camps every few weeks or months.
- Language: Speak a unique language with several dialects, which are often mutually unintelligible among different bands.
- **Physical Features:** Generally short to medium stature, with a round or broad head shape, narrow nose, broad facial profile, and Mongoloid features, including light to yellow-brown skin and oblique eye shape.
- Social Structure:
 - Nuclear families consisting of a husband, wife, and unmarried children.
 - Family life is controlled by the eldest male, who oversees the activities of women and children.
 - Monogamy is common, though polygamy is also practised.







Daily Quiz

Q1.Which physiological indicators are measured during a polygraph (lie detector) test?

- A. Heart rate, body temperature, blood sugar, and muscle tension
- B. Blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity
- C. Blood pressure, temperature, breathing rate, and metabolic rate
- D. Pulse, blood sugar, respiration rate, and eye movement

Q2.Which of the following states/Union Territories is home to the Shompen Tribe?

- A. Kerala
- B. West Bengal
- C. Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- D. Tamil Nadu

Q3.Which of the following statements about sonobuoys is/are correct?

- 1. Sonobuoys are used exclusively for detecting surface vessels and are not employed in anti-submarine warfare.
- 2. Passive sonobuoys record ambient sounds without emitting any signals, while active sonobuoys emit sound pulses and analyse the returning echoes.
- Sonobuoys can be deployed from aircraft or ships and are used to provide environmental data such as water temperature.

Choose the correct options given below:

- A. Only 1
- B. 2 and 3
- C. Only 3
- D. All 1,2 and 3

Q4.Which of the following statements regarding the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy is/are correct?

1. The BioE3 Policy is steered by the Department of Science and Technology

- and aims to foster high-performance biomanufacturing for applications ranging from medicine to materials.
- The policy includes the establishment of biomanufacturing and bio-AI hubs, as well as biofoundries, and focuses on strategic areas such as climate-resilient agriculture and carbon capture.
- 3. Key features of the BioE3 Policy include promoting innovation–driven support for research and development, and the expansion of India's skilled workforce and job creation.

Choose the correct options given below:

- A. Only statement 1 is correct.
- B. Statements 2 and 3 are correct.
- C. Only statement 3 is correct.
- D. All statements 1, 2, and 3 are correct.

Q5.Which of the following groups of languages were included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution by the 71st Constitutional Amendment Act?

- A. Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati
- B. Konkani, Manipuri (Meitei), Nepali
- C. Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Santali
- D. Sindhi, Kashmiri, Maithili, Santali

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the polygraph test:

- 1. A polygraph test measures physiological responses such as blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity.
- 2. The polygraph test is widely accepted in courtrooms across India as reliable evidence for criminal cases.

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









Q7.Consider the following statements regarding the geographical features of Ukraine:

- 1. Ukraine is the largest country entirely in Europe by land area.
- 2. The Carpathian Mountains are located in the northern part of Ukraine.
- 3. Ukraine's coastline along the Black Sea is significant for its major ports and maritime activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q8.Consider the following statements regarding Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India:

- PVTGs are a subcategory of Scheduled Tribes identified based on their low levels of socio-economic development and isolation.
- 2. PVTGs are provided special benefits and development schemes under the Constitution of India, including financial assistance and priority in employment.

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

Q9.Consider the following statements regarding the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and the New Pension Scheme (NPS):

- 1. Under the OPS, the government provides a fixed pension amount based on 50% of the final drawn salary plus Dearness Allowance (DA), whereas the NPS involves contributions from employees and the government, with the pension amount depending on the performance of the investment corpus.
- 2. The OPS is available exclusively to government employees, while the NPS is open to all Indian citizens, including self-employed and unorganised workers, but does not apply to the armed forces.

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

Q10. Which of the following ministries oversees the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)?

- A. Ministry of Home Affairs
- B. Ministry of Law and Justice
- C. Ministry of Finance
- D. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions











Solutions

1.Correct Answer is B Explanation:

- Blood Pressure: Monitored to observe changes in blood pressure that might correlate with physiological responses to stress or deception.
- **Pulse** (**Heart Rate**): Measured to detect changes in heart rate that could indicate stress or nervousness, which are sometimes associated with lying.
- Respiration: Monitored to track changes in breathing patterns that might occur under stress.
- Skin Conductivity: Also known as galvanic skin response (GSR), this measures the electrical conductance of the skin, which increases with sweating and can indicate stress.

2.Correct Answer is C

Explanation: The Shompen Tribe resides in the Great Nicobar Island, which is part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Union Territory of India.

3.Correct Answer is B Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect because sonobuoys are specifically designed for anti-submarine warfare and are used to detect underwater objects, including submarines.
- Statement 2 is correct as passive sonobuoys listen and record sounds without emitting signals, while active sonobuoys emit sound pulses and analyse the echoes.
- Statement 3 is correct because sonobuoys can indeed be deployed from aircraft or ships and are used for various data, including environmental data.

4.Correct Answer is B Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect** because the BioE3 Policy is steered by the Department of Biotechnology, not the Department of Science and Technology.
- Statement 2 is correct as the policy includes establishing biomanufacturing and bio-AI hubs, biofoundries, and focuses on key areas such as climate-resilient agriculture and carbon capture.
- **Statement 3 is correct** since the policy aims to support research and development, promote innovation, and expand the skilled workforce while creating jobs.

5.Correct Answer is B Explanation:

- The 71st Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 added Konkani, Manipuri (Meitei), and Nepali to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which recognizes the official languages of India.
- The other options include languages added by different amendments or are incorrect combinations.

6.Correct Answer is A Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** A polygraph test measures physiological indicators like blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity.
- Statement 2 is incorrect. Polygraph tests are not widely accepted in Indian courtrooms as reliable evidence due to concerns over accuracy and constitutional rights violations.











7.Correct Answer is B Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct. Ukraine is indeed the largest country entirely in Europe by land area, excluding Russia which spans both Europe and Asia.
- Statement 2 is incorrect. The Carpathian Mountains are located in the western part of Ukraine, not the northern part.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** Ukraine has a significant coastline along the Black Sea which is crucial for its major ports and maritime trade.

8.Correct Answer is C Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct. PVTGs are indeed a subcategory of Scheduled Tribes recognized for their particularly vulnerable status, characterised by low levels of socio-economic development and high levels of isolation.
- Statement 2 is correct. The Constitution of India and various government schemes provide special benefits and development support to PVTGs, including financial assistance and priority in certain employment opportunities, to help improve their socio-economic conditions.

9.Correct Answer is C Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The OPS provides a guaranteed pension amount based on a percentage of the final drawn salary plus DA, while the NPS is based on contributions from employees and the government, with the pension amount depending on the performance of the investment corpus.
- Statement 2 is correct. The OPS is restricted to government employees, whereas the NPS is accessible to all Indian citizens, including those in the private sector, self-employed individuals, and unorganised workers, but not to the armed forces.

10.Correct Answer is D Explanation:

• The CBI operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions. This ministry is responsible for administrative oversight and provides the necessary support to the CBI in its functioning.

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1.Discuss the key issues faced by women in the film industry as highlighted by the recent Justice K. Hema Committee report. How do these issues reflect broader societal problems, and what reforms are necessary to address them effectively?



















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