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Question 1. With reference to the proposed framework for bringing petroleum products under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), consider the following statements:

1. The framework suggests a single, fixed GST rate of 28% to replace all existing central and state taxes on petrol and diesel immediately.
2. A new 'Energy Transition Cess' has been proposed, with the revenue being exclusively kept by the Central Government.
3. The framework provides a five-year transition period during which states can continue to levy a local VAT.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 3 only

- Statement 1 is incorrect. The proposal is for a dual-rate structure, not a single fixed rate. More importantly, it is not for an immediate replacement of all state taxes. The news clearly states that a 5-year transition period is provided for states.

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- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** While an 'Energy Transition Cess' is proposed, the news specifies that the revenue from it will be "shared with the states" to compensate them for their VAT revenue loss, not kept exclusively by the Centre.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The news item explicitly mentions that a key feature for achieving consensus was the inclusion of a "five-year transition period, during which states will have the option to levy a local VAT, which will be gradually phased out."

Question 2. The Supreme Court's recent judgment upholding the Election Commission of India's (ECI) power to recommend the deregistration of political parties for hate speech is primarily based on:

- (a) An explicit provision granting this power within the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- (b) The "implied powers" of the ECI are derived from Article 324 of the Constitution to ensure free and fair elections.
- (c) A new Parliamentary law amending the functions and responsibilities of the ECI.
- (d) The inherent power of the Supreme Court under Article 142 to do "complete justice".

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Answer: (b) The "implied powers" of the ECI are derived from Article 324 of the Constitution to ensure free and fair elections.

- The news report clearly states that the Supreme Court's Constitution Bench ruled that while the Representation of the People Act, 1951, does not explicitly grant this power, it is "implicitly vested" in the ECI under Article 324 of the Constitution. This article mandates the ECI to conduct free and fair elections, and the court interpreted this mandate to include the power to act against parties that fundamentally violate the constitutional ethos through hate speech.
- **Option (a) is incorrect** as the report specifies that the power is not explicitly mentioned in the RPA, 1951.
- **Option (c) is incorrect** as this was a judicial verdict, not a new law passed by Parliament.
- **Option (d) is incorrect** because while Article 142 grants powers to the Supreme Court itself, the judgment was about upholding the powers of the ECI based on Article 324.

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Question 3. Consider the following statements with reference to INS Vindhyagiri, which was recently inducted into the Indian Navy:

1. It is an advanced stealth frigate built under Project 17A.
2. It is equipped with both BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and the Barak-8 surface-to-air missile system.
3. Project 17A, under which it was built, is a joint venture between India and Russia for naval shipbuilding.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The news clearly identifies INS Vindhyagiri as the fourth advanced stealth frigate built under Project 17A.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The report explicitly mentions that the frigate is equipped with the "Barak-8 surface-to-air missile system" and the "BrahMos supersonic cruise missile."

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- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The news highlights Project 17A as a flagship of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) initiative. It states that over 75% of the orders for equipment and systems were placed with indigenous firms. There is no mention of it being a joint venture with Russia; its core principle is indigenous manufacturing.

Question 4. Which of the following are key proposals included in the draft Digital India Act (DIA), 2025, as mentioned in the recent public consultation launch?

1. A 'Safe Harbour Plus' framework making internet intermediaries more accountable for content.
2. A risk-based regulatory model for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
3. The complete replacement of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2, and 3

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The news report on the draft Digital India Act, 2025, mentions all three provisions as key features of the proposed legislation.

- **Statement 1 is correct.** It states that one of the most debated provisions is the introduction of a "'Safe Harbour Plus' framework, which requires platforms to proactively identify and remove misinformation... to retain their liability protections."
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The report highlights that the Act "proposes specific regulations for AI, categorising its use based on a risk-based framework."
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The very first sentence of the report states that the Digital India Act "is set to replace the 25-year-old Information Technology Act, 2000."

Question 5. In the context of the recently concluded India-GCC Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the pact aims to boost bilateral cooperation beyond trade in goods by including provisions for:

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- (a) A military alliance and joint patrols in the Indian Ocean.
- (b) A common visa and unified currency system.
- (c) Services, investment, and easier mobility of professionals.
- (d) India's exclusive access to the GCC's rare earth mineral reserves.

Answer: (c) Services, investment, and easier mobility of professionals.

The news item details the scope of the India-GCC CEPA. It explicitly states that the pact "covers trade in goods, services, investment, intellectual property rights, and, significantly, provisions for easier mobility of professionals and a streamlined remittance process." This directly corresponds with option (c).

- **Option (a) is incorrect.** While strategic cooperation is a goal, the report does not mention a formal "military alliance" or joint patrols.
- **Option (b) is incorrect.** The text mentions "easier mobility" but not a comprehensive common visa or a unified currency, which are much deeper levels of integration not mentioned in the report.



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- **Option (d) is incorrect.** The report mentions energy and petrochemicals, but there is no mention of exclusive access for India to rare earth minerals or any other resource. This is an extreme and inaccurate statement.