

16 July 2025

Question 1. In the context of the recent Supreme Court judgment on the Governor's discretion under Article 356, which of the following statements most accurately reflects the Court's position?

- (a) The Governor's decision to recommend President's Rule is an absolute political power and cannot be subjected to judicial review.
- (b) The Court has now empowered the Governor to recommend President's Rule based on their subjective political satisfaction about the state's governance.
- (c) The Governor's recommendation must be based on verifiable "objective material," and the exercise of this discretion remains subject to judicial review.
- (d) The Court has stripped the Governor of all discretionary powers related to Article 356, making the recommendation binding only on the advice of the State's Council of Ministers.

Answer: (c)

- **Statement (c) is correct** because it accurately captures the dual nature of the ruling: it upholds the Governor's discretionary power but puts a strong qualifier on it, insisting it must be based on "objective material" (not subjective whim) and reiterating that the decision can be reviewed by the judiciary. This reinforces the principles of the S.R. Bommai case.
- **Statements (a), (b), and (d)** are incorrect as they represent extreme and inaccurate interpretations of the judgment described in the news. The ruling explicitly states that the power is not absolute and is subject to judicial review, must be based on objective facts, and does not strip the Governor of discretion.

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Question 2. Consider the following statements regarding the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) or 'e-Re':

1. Unlike UPI, which is a payment system that transfers money between commercial bank accounts, the retail CBDC represents a direct liability of the Reserve Bank of India.
2. The recent expansion of the CBDC pilot by the RBI includes its testing for cross-border remittances.
3. The primary and immediate objective of the CBDC pilot is to completely replace physical currency and UPI to streamline the monetary system.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

- **Statement 1 is correct.** This is the fundamental difference. UPI facilitates payments from your commercial bank account (e.g., SBI, HDFC). A retail CBDC is the digital equivalent of a physical banknote and is a direct claim on the central bank (RBI), not a commercial bank.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The news clearly states that a significant part of the pilot's expansion is to test the use of the digital rupee for cross-border remittances, starting with the India-UAE corridor.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The RBI's stated position is that the CBDC is meant to be an additional payment avenue that supplements existing systems like cash and UPI, not replace them. The pilot is a cautious, phased rollout to test the technology and its implications, not a rapid replacement strategy.

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Question 3. The primary objective of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan is to:

- (a) Provide Viability Gap Funding for all infrastructure projects in India.
- (b) Accelerate road construction by creating a new authority to bypass environmental clearances.
- (c) Break down departmental silos and promote integrated infrastructure project planning using a geospatial digital platform.
- (d) Privatize the operation and maintenance of all national highways, railways, and ports under a single ministry.

Answer: (c)

- **Statement (c) is correct.** As per the news report and the core idea of the scheme, PM Gati Shakti is a technology-driven platform that integrates multiple government ministries and departments for holistic and integrated planning of infrastructure projects. Its goal is to overcome the problem of different departments working in silos, which causes delays and cost overruns.
- **Statements (a), (b), and (d)** describe other policy tools or potential policies but do not capture the central function of Gati Shakti, which is about integrated planning and coordination.

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Question 4. A recent report by a Parliamentary Standing Committee on the implementation of the Women's Reservation Act has suggested a novel model. This model involves:

- (a) Reserving one-third of all political party tickets for women candidates in the Lok Sabha elections.
- (b) Creating a separate, second legislative chamber in the Parliament and State Assemblies exclusively for women.
- (c) Implementing a 'dual-member constituencies' model for one-third of seats, where each such constituency elects two members, one of whom must be a woman.
- (d) Providing financial incentives from the consolidated fund to political parties based on the percentage of women MPs they elected.

Answer: (c)

- **Statement (c) is correct.** The news item specifically details this unique recommendation from the parliamentary panel. The 'dual-member constituencies' model is proposed as an alternative to the rotational reservation system to address concerns about incumbents losing their seats.
- **Statements (a) and (d)** are alternative suggestions for increasing women's representation that have been debated over the years, but are not the specific recommendation mentioned in the news report.
- **Statement (b)** is a completely different and more radical structural change that is not part of the current discussion on implementing the Act.

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Question 5. The recent finalization of the India-Sri Lanka power grid and ferry service projects is a manifestation of India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. The strategic significance of these projects for India includes:

1. Enhancing regional connectivity and promoting people-to-people ties.
2. Strengthening its economic and strategic influence in the Indian Ocean region.
3. Creating energy and economic interdependence to foster a more stable and robust bilateral relationship.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The ferry service directly promotes tourism and people-to-people connections, reviving historical links.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** These projects deepen India's engagement with a key maritime neighbour, strengthening its strategic position in the Indian Ocean, especially as a counterweight to other influences.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The power grid creates energy interdependence, while the ferry boosts trade, creating mutual economic stakes. This interdependence is a key tool for building a stable, long-term partnership, moving beyond a donor-recipient relationship.