NOVEMBER 2026

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Topic 1: India–ASEAN Relations & Act East Policy (GS-2: Bilateral, Regional & Global Groupings)

Context & Milestones

- **High-Level Summits:** The Indian Prime Minister participated in the **ASEAN-India Summit** and the **21st East Asia Summit** held in Manila under the Philippine chairmanship.
- **Year of Maritime Cooperation (2026):** The year 2026 was commemorated as the **ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**.
- **Institutional Timelines:** The India–ASEAN Dialogue Partnership marks **35 years** and the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership marks **5 years**.

Core Dimensions of Cooperation

- **Maritime Domain & Security:**
  - Operational engagement was demonstrated through the second **ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise**, alongside multilateral platforms including **MILAN 2026**, the **International Fleet Review**, and the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium** hosted in Visakhapatnam.
  - Six ASEAN member nations are formally associated with the **Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** located in Gurugram to exchange real-time shipping data.
  - Core focus areas encompass maritime domain awareness, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), and securing **submarine cables**.
- **Economic & Digital Integration:**

Bilateral trade reached approximately **$128 billion**, with Indian exports to ASEAN registering a **56% increase** in the recent period, primarily driven by petroleum products.

Negotiations continue regarding the long-pending review of the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)**, focusing on addressing non-tariff barriers, market access, and **rules of origin**.

Financial integration is advancing under **Project Nexus**, which aims to connect national instant payment systems across borders.

Technological cooperation includes digital infrastructure, cloud computing, and the **ASEAN-India Scale Hub** convened in Bali to interface start-ups, investors, and technology enterprises.

Geopolitical Balancing: India balances its active role in the **Quad** with strategic ties with Russia, normalized dialogue with China, and expanded partner engagement through the **BRICS** framework (where Indonesia participated as a full member, and Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam participated as partners).

Topic 2: India–Nepal Bilateral Ties & Economic Integration (GS-2: India and Its Neighbourhood)

Political Transition & Strategic Framework

Political Context: Nepal witnessed the election of a single-party majority government led by the **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)**, shifting away from post-2015 coalition volatility and emphasizing youth employment and governance delivery.

The "HIT" Paradigm: Introduced during the Indian Prime Minister's visit in 2014, the framework focuses on **Highways, Infoways, and Transmission ways**.

Strategic Gains & New Initiatives

Power Trade & Hydro-Diplomacy:

Bilateral agreements target **10,000 MW** of electricity exports over a decade.

Nepal currently exports nearly **1,200 MW** of electricity to India during the wet season.

India's public sector undertaking **Satluj Jal Vikas Nigam (SJVN)** is executing the **Arun-3** hydroelectric project.

Cross-Border Trade & Connectivity:

Modernized via operational **Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)** at Birgunj, Biratnagar, and Nepalgunj, complemented by cargo rail links.

Retail financial connectivity is enabled through India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** across Nepal.

Proposed connectivity includes an **Ayodhya–Janakpur** passenger rail line to strengthen religious tourism and cultural integration.

Knowledge & Industrial Linkages: Initiatives include the **INSPAN** programme linking Nepali start-ups with **Pravartak** (the technology incubator of IIT Madras), proposals for offshore IIT campuses in Nepal, and regional supply chain integration for ancillary manufacturing.

Sensitive Bilateral Issues: Post-disaster recovery following the **Bhotekoshi-Rasuwa floods**, calls for a joint Himalayan early warning system, and ongoing boundary pillar maintenance handled by the bilateral **Boundary Working Group**.

Topic 3: China–Pakistan Strategic Nexus & "Karakoram-2026" (GS-2 & GS-3: Security Challenges & Neighbourhood)

The "Karakoram-2026" Drill & Strategic Evolution

- **Nature of Exercise:** Marked the first dedicated joint army-level field exercise between China's **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** and the **Pakistan Army**, going beyond prior naval, air, or counter-terrorism drills.
- **Location & Command Structure:** Conducted in China's **Xinjiang province** bordering Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, directly under the operational theatre of the PLA's **Western Theatre Command**.
- **Tactical Features:** Included close-quarter combat, high-altitude warfare, drone integration, joint command, and mixed fire drills exclusively using Chinese military equipment.
- **Ground Collusion:** Preceded by joint ground patrols at the **Mantika Pass** in Gilgit-Baltistan and interoperability demonstrated during India's **Operation Sindoor** (May 2025 aerial strikes on cross-border terror infrastructure).

Five Pillars of the Beijing–Islamabad Nexus

- **Direct Arms Supplies:** China supplies **70% to 80%** of Pakistan's imported arms, including J-10C fighters, Type 054 A/P frigates, Hangor-class submarines, and Wing Loong combat drones.
- **Co-production:** Joint manufacturing of the **JF-17 Thunder** fighter aircraft and the **Al-Khalid** main battle tank.
- **Information & Cyber Sphere:** Integration across cyber warfare, electronic intelligence, and China's **BeiDou** satellite navigation network.

Strategic Infrastructure: The **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), running from Kashgar to **Gwadar Port** through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Joint Military Drills: Bilateral multi-domain military exercises.

Strategic Challenges for India

Two-Front Operational Dilemma: Convergence towards full joint interoperability rather than two separate adversaries.

Eastern Flank Vulnerability: Bangladesh's prospective acquisition of Chinese **J-10CE** fighters, coupled with Pakistani air force training at **Jessore airbase**, poses strategic exposure near India's narrow **Siliguri Corridor**.

Territorial Cession: The **1963 Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement** saw Pakistan illegally ceding the **5,180 sq km Shaksgam Valley** (located north of the Siachen Glacier) to China—an arrangement rejected as null and void by India.

Topic 4: Maritime Logistics & Smart Ports in India (GS-3: Infrastructure & Ports)

Port Performance & Operational Indicators

- **Cargo Throughput:** Major ports handled a record **915.17 million tonnes (MT)** in 2025–26 (a **7.06% year-on-year growth**), surpassing the annual target of 904 MT.
- **Top Performing Ports: Deendayal Port** (160.11 MT) ranked first, followed by **Paradip Port** (156.45 MT) and **Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)** (102.01 MT).
- **Operational Efficiencies:**
  - Average **Vessel Turnaround Time (TRT)** decreased from ~96 hours (2014) to **48.8 hours** (2025–26).
  - Average **Output Per Ship Berth Day** expanded from 12,458 tonnes to **18,915 tonnes**.

Transition to Smart Ports

- **Concept:** Moving from physical berth expansion to digital logistics nodes integrating shipping lines, terminals, road, rail, and customs.
- **Technology Architecture:**
  - **Port Community Systems (PCS)** for universal electronic documentation.
  - Optical Character Recognition (OCR), RFID tracking, and cloud/blockchain integrations.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) for predictive vessel arrival and yard management; IoT sensors for **predictive maintenance**; and **Digital Twins** for operational simulation.

Institutional Basics: India possesses **12 Major Ports** handling >95% of trade by volume and 70% by value, with **Vadhavan Port** in Maharashtra approved with an outlay of Rs 76,000 crore as the upcoming major port.

Topic 5: Highway Infrastructure Delivery & Public Procurement (GS-3: Infrastructure & Project Management)

The Mumbai–Goa Highway Project (NH-66)

- **Project Profile:** Four-laning of the **592 km National Highway 66 (NH-66)** corridor from Panvel to Kanyakumari, acting as a freight backbone connecting **JNPT** and Dighi ports with the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport.
- **Status & Cost Escalation:** While the Goa section is completed, an ~8 km bottleneck across 5 packages in Maharashtra remains stalled. The cost of the 472 km Maharashtra stretch rose by ~44% from Rs 12,532 crore to over **Rs 18,100 crore**.

Systemic Causes of Infrastructure Delays

- **Flawed Procurement & Private Insolvency:** Concessionaires awarded packages under Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) suffered severe financial distress (e.g., concessionaire landing on RBI's top-100 defaulters list or entering Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process under the IBC).
- **Project Clearance Hurdles:** Pre-construction clearances (forest/environmental clearances, utility shifting, and right-of-way land acquisition) were left pending until post-contract award.
- **Dispute Resolution Lag:** Protracted arbitration processes following contract terminations.

Institutional Reforms by MoRTH

- **Land Acquisition Threshold:** Mandatory acquisition of at least **90% of required land** prior to project contract award.

Statutory Clearances: Mandate that forest and environmental clearances must be finalized prior to inviting tenders.

Financial Diligence & Scope Control: Financial screening of prospective bidders and expenditure caps on projects executed via State Public Works Departments (PWDs).

Topic 6: Health Economics & National Health Accounts 2023–24 (GS-2: Social Justice & Health)

Macro Health Spending Trends

- **Total Health Expenditure (THE):** Stood at **3.3% of GDP** in 2023–24 (down from 3.8% in pandemic year 2021–22, affected in part by the revision of the GDP base year).
- **Government Health Expenditure (GHE):** Accounts for **43.5%** of THE, surpassing Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (42.7%) for the third consecutive year.
- **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 Target:** Targets public health expenditure reaching **2.5% of GDP by 2025**, which remains unfulfilled as government spending remains below 2% of GDP.

The Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) Trajectory

- **Structural Decline:** OOPE as a percentage of THE dropped from **64.2% in 2013–14 to 42.7% in 2023–24**—a drop of 21.5 percentage points in one decade.
- **Public Outlay Expansion:** Union government health spending more than tripled from Rs 1.30 lakh crore (2013–14) to **Rs 4.14 lakh crore** (2023–24).
- **Per Capita Figures:** Government per capita health spending increased from Rs 1,042 to **Rs 2,959**, while overall per capita total health spending reached **Rs 6,801**.

Risk Pooling & Insurance Architecture

- **Social Health Insurance:** Government schemes (e.g., Ayushman Bharat) and public employee covers rose to **11% of THE** (from 6% in 2013–14).

Private Voluntary Insurance: Rose to **10.2% of THE** (from 3.4% in 2013–14).

Persistent Vulnerabilities: Private healthcare facilities still consume **31.8% of Current Health Expenditure (CHE)**, and secondary/tertiary hospital bias leaves outpatient care and pharmaceuticals exposed to direct household expenditure.

Topic 7: Social Equity & Institutional Safeguards in Higher Education (GS-2: Vulnerable Sections & Governance)

Regulatory Framework

- **UGC Regulations 2012:** The Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions Regulations, 2012 mandated establishing **Equal Opportunity Cells (EOCs)** and dedicated SC/ST Cells in colleges and universities.
- **Stalled 2026 Reforms:** The updated UGC Regulations 2026, designed to implement time-bound grievance disposal, have been stayed under Supreme Court proceedings.

Findings of the Supreme Court National Task Force (NTF)

- **Procedural vs. Substantive Compliance:** While **87% of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)** (1,264 out of 1,456 audited) reported functional EOCs, they remain severely underutilized due to institutional distrust and fear of academic retribution.
- **Data Paradox:** Out of 2,473 registered complaints, all but 43 were classified as "resolved," with 10 States reporting zero complaints—masking reporting fears rather than an absence of discrimination.
- **Institutional Stigmatization:** Academic remediation programs designated with explicit "SC/ST-only" labels reinforce social isolation and campus prejudice.
- **Mental Health Deficit: 73% of HEIs** surveyed by the NTF lacked a full-time mental health professional, exacerbating stress arising from academic pressures and social discrimination.

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MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India relations, consider the following statements:

1. The year 2026 was observed as the ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation.
2. The Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), located in Visakhapatnam, houses liaison officers exclusively from ASEAN countries.
3. Project Nexus is an initiative aimed at standardizing tariff lines under the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the East Asia Summit (EAS) and India's regional diplomacy:

1. The East Asia Summit is an ASEAN-centred forum held annually under the chairmanship of an ASEAN member state.
2. All member nations of the Quad are dialogue partners of ASEAN and participants in the East Asia Summit.
3. In the 2026 BRICS summit, Indonesia participated as a full member while Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam participated as partner countries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. With reference to India–Nepal bilateral relations, consider the following statements:

Under the "HIT" connectivity framework, the three components refer to Highways, Infoways, and Transmission ways.

The bilateral long-term power trade agreement sets a target of exporting 10,000 MW of power from Nepal to India over a decade.

The Arun-3 hydroelectric project in Nepal is being executed by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC).

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

Q4. Consider the following pairs:

Initiative / Project	Domain / Feature
1. INSPAN	Linking Nepali start-ups with IIT Madras incubation centre
2. Boundary Working Group	Joint survey and repair of India-Nepal border pillars
3. Integrated Check Posts	Multi-modal air cargo terminals exclusively for landlocked nations

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?
(a) Only one pair
(b) Only two pairs
(c) All three pairs
(d) None of the pairs

Q5. With reference to the "Karakoram-2026" military exercise, consider the following statements:

1. It marked the first joint army-level field exercise between China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Pakistan Army.
2. The exercise was conducted in the Tibet Autonomous Region under the operational command of the PLA Central Theatre Command.
3. The tactical drills exclusively deployed military hardware originating from Chinese manufacturers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q6. Regarding the strategic geography of the Karakoram and India's northern borders, consider the following statements:

The Shaksgam Valley is situated immediately south of the Siachen Glacier.

Pakistan ceded the Shaksgam Valley to China under the Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963.

India formally recognizes the Pakistan-China Boundary Joint Commission established to administer trans-Karakoram boundaries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 2 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding the performance and administration of Major Ports in India:

Major ports are governed under the jurisdiction of the respective State Maritime Boards.

In the fiscal year 2025–26, Deendayal Port recorded the highest cargo throughput among all major ports in India.

The average vessel turnaround time across major ports has declined by roughly half compared to 2014 levels.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q8. Consider the following ports:

1. Paradip
2. V.O. Chidambaranar
3. Vadhavan
4. Kamarajar
5. Mormugao

Which of the above are located on the Western Coast of India?
(a) 1, 2 and 4 only
(b) 3 and 5 only
(c) 2, 3 and 5 only
(d) 1, 3 and 5 only

Q9. With reference to the development of "Smart Ports" in India, consider the following statements:

1. A Port Community System (PCS) serves as an integrated digital platform facilitating paperless data exchange among ports, customs, shipping lines, and logistics operators.
2. Digital Twins in port logistics are virtual representations of physical port operations used to simulate and optimize container flow before actual field implementation.
3. The Sagarmala program and PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan serve to align port-led development with multi-modal inland connectivity.

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

Q10. In the context of highway project execution and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in India, consider the following statements:

1. Under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Toll model, the private concessionaire bears both construction and commercial traffic revenue risks.
2. According to recent MoRTH procurement guidelines, a minimum of 90% of the required project land must be acquired before the commercial award of a highway contract.
3. Statutory environmental and forest clearances are legally required to be obtained by the contractor within six months after the award of the project.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q11. National Highway 66 (NH-66), recently in the news, serves as an economic corridor primarily connecting which of the following regions?
(a) Kolkata to Chennai along the Eastern Coastal Plain
(b) Panvel to Kanyakumari along the Western Coastal belt
(c) Mumbai to Kolkata across the Central Highlands
(d) Ahmedabad to Bengaluru via the Deccan Plateau

Q12. According to the National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates 2023–24, consider the following statements:

1. Out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) accounts for more than half of India's Total Health Expenditure (THE).
2. Government Health Expenditure (GHE) as a share of Total Health Expenditure has exceeded Out-of-Pocket Expenditure for three consecutive years.
3. India has achieved the National Health Policy 2017 target of public health spending reaching 2.5% of GDP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q13. With reference to health financing architecture in India, consider the following statements:

1. Current Health Expenditure (CHE) includes operational expenses on healthcare delivery but excludes capital investments such as hospital construction.
2. The share of social security health expenditure, including schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, has risen to over 10% of Total Health Expenditure.
3. Private hospitals account for a lower share of current health spending compared to public sector hospitals.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q14. With reference to Equal Opportunity Cells (EOCs) in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), consider the following statements:

Equal Opportunity Cells were statutorily conceptualized under the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012.

The Thorat Committee (2007) investigated institutional discrimination and social exclusion of SC/ST students at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

The Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force found that more than 70% of surveyed HEIs lacked full-time mental health professionals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q15. Consider the following statements regarding institutional grievance redressal in universities:

Statement-I: A high percentage of resolved complaints in campus Equal Opportunity Cells does not necessarily indicate the eradication of caste discrimination.

Statement-II: Fear of academic retribution, lack of independent external committee members, and absence of confidential complaint pathways deter marginalized students from formally registering grievances.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

(b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I

(c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect

(d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

Answer Key and Explanations

Q1. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: The year 2026 was commemorated as the **ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The **Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** is located at **Gurugram** (Haryana), not Visakhapatnam. Visakhapatnam hosted naval exercises like MILAN 2026 and the International Fleet Review. Moreover, while six ASEAN countries are linked to it, IFC-IOR hosts international liaison officers from partner countries worldwide, not exclusively ASEAN.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Project Nexus is an international payment connectivity scheme designed to link domestic instant payment systems (like UPI) for cross-border retail payments, not a tariff rationalization scheme under AITIGA.

Q2. Correct Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: The East Asia Summit is an ASEAN-led dialogue platform anchored on **ASEAN centrality**, where ASEAN hosts set the regional agenda.

Statement 2 is correct: The Quad consists of India, the United States, Japan, and Australia. All four countries are official dialogue partners of ASEAN and participating members of the 18-nation East Asia Summit.

Statement 3 is correct: At the BRICS Summit hosted in New Delhi, Indonesia participated as a full member, while Southeast Asian partners Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam participated in partner country capacities.

Q3. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: The "HIT" formula enunciated by the Indian Prime Minister in 2014 stands for **Highways, Infoways, and Transmission ways**.

Statement 2 is correct: The bilateral framework sets a bilateral trade target of **10,000 MW** over 10 years, with Nepal currently supplying ~1,200 MW during high-water monsoon months.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The 900 MW Arun-3 hydroelectric project in Nepal is being constructed by **Satluj Jal Vikas Nigam (SJVN)**, an Indian public sector undertaking, not NHPC.

Q4. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Pair 1 is correctly matched: The **INSPAN** programme connects Nepali start-up entrepreneurs directly with **Pravartak**, the incubation hub of IIT Madras.

Pair 2 is correctly matched: The bilateral **Boundary Working Group** is tasked with technical ground surveys and the physical restoration and repair of border pillars between India and Nepal.

Pair 3 is incorrectly matched: Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) (e.g., at Birgunj, Biratnagar, and Nepalgunj) are integrated land border facilities providing unified customs, immigration, and cargo handling services along land frontiers, not air cargo terminals.

Q5. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Karakoram-2026 was the first dedicated joint **army-to-army** field exercise between the PLA and the Pakistan Army, stepping beyond past naval, air (Shaheen series), or anti-terror drills.

Statement 2 is incorrect: It took place in China's **Xinjiang province** (adjacent to Ladakh and J&K), under the strategic area of the PLA's **Western Theatre Command**, not the Central Theatre Command or Tibet.

Statement 3 is correct: All artillery, armoured vehicles, small arms, and unmanned aerial systems deployed in the exercise were of Chinese origin.

Q6. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: The Shaksgam Valley (measuring ~5,180 sq km) lies **north** of the Siachen Glacier and the Karakoram Range, not south.

Statement 2 is correct: Pakistan illegally ceded the Shaksgam Valley (part of Gilgit-Baltistan) to China under the **1963 Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement**.

Statement 3 is incorrect: India maintains that Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh are integral parts of India, and has outrightly rejected the Pakistan-China Boundary Joint Commission meetings as having no legal basis.

Q7. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: Major Ports in India fall under the Union List of the Seventh Schedule and are administered under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (under the Major Port Authorities Act), unlike non-major ports which are managed by State Maritime Boards.

Statement 2 is correct: Deendayal Port (Kandla) led the country with **160.11 MT** of cargo handled in 2025–26, followed by Paradip Port (156.45 MT).

Statement 3 is correct: The average vessel turnaround time across major ports dropped from ~96 hours in 2014 to **48.8 hours** in 2025–26, representing a roughly 50% improvement.

Q8. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Vadhavan (Maharashtra) and **Mormugao** (Goa) are located on the Western Coast of India.

Paradip (Odisha), **V.O. Chidambaranar / Tuticorin** (Tamil Nadu), and **Kamarajar / Ennore** (Tamil Nadu) are located on the Eastern Coast of India along the Bay of Bengal. Hence, only 3 and 5 are on the Western Coast.

Q9. Correct Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Port Community Systems (PCS) are centralized cloud-based platforms enabling real-time digital interchange of cargo documents, customs clearances, and manifests among logistics stakeholders.

Statement 2 is correct: Digital twins are virtual software simulations of physical berths and logistics ecosystems, allowing operators to test operational scenarios and prevent bottlenecks without interrupting active yard handling.

Statement 3 is correct: The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan provides geospatial multi-modal connectivity to bridge hinterland connectivity gaps with coastal maritime hubs under the Sagarmala framework.

Q10. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: In a standard Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Toll model, private developers finance, construct, and manage highway corridors, recouping investments through user fee tolls while absorbing traffic demand risk.

Statement 2 is correct: Following systemic bottlenecks in stalled corridors like the Mumbai-Goa Highway (NH-66), MoRTH mandated that at least **90% of land acquisition** must be finalized prior to awarding contracts.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Under revised MoRTH guidelines, statutory forest and environmental clearances must be secured **before tenders are invited**, rather than after project award.

Q11. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

NH-66 is the coastal arterial highway running **592 km between Panvel (Maharashtra) and Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu)** along India's western coast. It links major ports such as JNPT and Dighi, industrial Konkan zones, and the Navi Mumbai International Airport.

Q12. Correct Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: Out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) has declined significantly from 64.2% in 2013–14 to **42.7%** in 2023–24, which is less than half of Total Health Expenditure.

Statement 2 is correct: Government Health Expenditure reached **43.5%**, surpassing OOPE (42.7%) for the third consecutive year.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Total public health spending remains below **2% of GDP**, falling short of the National Health Policy 2017 target of **2.5% of GDP by 2025**.

Q13. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Current Health Expenditure (CHE) measures operational, recurring expenditure on healthcare provisions, diagnostic tests, and pharmaceuticals, strictly excluding long-term capital assets such as infrastructure or hospital construction.

Statement 2 is correct: Social security health expenditure (including public insurance programs like Ayushman Bharat/PM-JAY and government employee health schemes) rose from 6% in 2013–14 to **11% of THE** in 2023–24.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Indian households spend approximately **twice as much** in private general hospitals as in public healthcare facilities; private healthcare providers represent **31.8% of Current Health Expenditure**.

Q14. Correct Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Equal Opportunity Cells (EOCs) and SC/ST Cells were introduced under the University Grants Commission's Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions Regulations, 2012.

Statement 2 is correct: The **Thorat Committee (2007)** was established to investigate widespread complaints of social

exclusion, teaching disparities, and systemic bias faced by SC/ST students at AIIMS New Delhi.

Statement 3 is correct: The Supreme Court National Task Force documented that **73% of responding HEIs** had no full-time mental health counselor or service provider on campus.

Q15. Correct Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement-I is correct: Although institutional datasets indicate a paper resolution rate of over 98% (with 2,430 out of 2,473 registered cases closed), this metric reflects bureaucratic file closures rather than genuine prevention or structural redress.

Statement-II is correct and provides the direct rationale: EOCs operate within the internal administrative hierarchy of institutions, creating widespread fear among students regarding assessment penalties, hostile faculty backlash, or degree delays; this institutional structure silences complainants and results in artificially low dispute numbers across institutions