

## 29 Apr 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently.

- Maya Angelou



### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>A. GS 1 Related</u></b>
<b><u>B. GS 2 Related</u></b>
<b><i>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</i></b>
1. <a href="#">Russian roulette with gas supplies</a>
<b><u>C. GS 3 Related</u></b>
<b><i>ECONOMY</i></b>
1. <a href="#">The demand for a revenue share in privatised airports</a>
<b><u>D. GS 4 Related</u></b>
<b><u>E. Editorials</u></b>
<b><i>POLITY</i></b>
1. <a href="#">Revisiting death penalty jurisprudence</a>
<b><i>ECONOMY</i></b>
1. <a href="#">Are freebies affecting the economic growth of India?</a>
<b><u>F. Prelims Facts</u></b>
<b><u>G. Tidbits</u></b>
1. <a href="#">Prepare for swift conflicts: IAF chief</a>
2. <a href="#">Xi's 'Global Security Initiative' looks to counter Quad grouping</a>
<b><u>H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions</u></b>
<b><u>I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions</u></b>

## A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

**Category: POLITY**

### 1. Russian roulette with gas supplies

*Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries*

*Mains: Analysis of Russia's move to cut the supply of gas to European countries and the steps taken by the EU to reduce their dependence on Russia for gas.*

#### Context

Russian energy company Gazprom halted gas supplies to Bulgaria and Poland.

#### Details

- Russia has cut the supply of gas to the countries citing their failure to pay in roubles.
- Recently, the Russian President had announced that “unfriendly foreign buyers” will have to buy gas supplies from Russia in roubles. He also said that defaults would result in the suspension of contracts.
- Poland and Bulgaria have said that Russia has breached the contract, which said that payments were to be made in euros and dollars only.

#### Europe's dependency on Russia for gas supplies

- Russia supplies gas to 23 countries in Europe through various pipelines.
- Russia is the largest supplier of gas to Europe.
- The European Union receives about 40% of its gas from Russia.

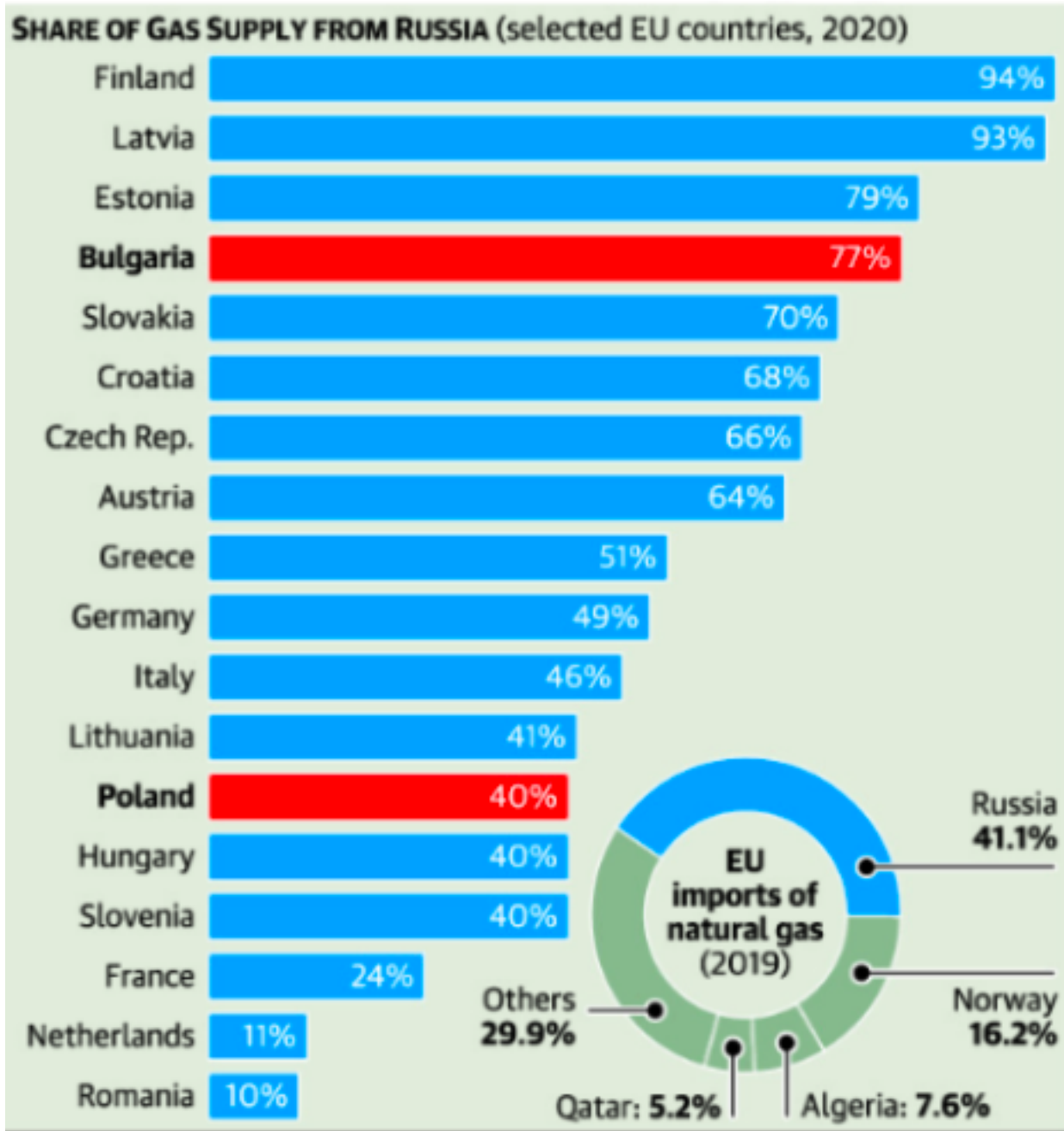


Image Source: The Hindu

### Reasons for Russia targeting Poland and Bulgaria

#### Poland

- Has constantly supplied military hardware equipment to Ukraine during the conflict.
- Poland also plans to send its tanks to Ukraine.
- It also confirmed a new set of sanctions against Russian businesses and oligarchs.

## Bulgaria

- A new liberal government in Bulgaria is severing many of its old ties with Russia.
- Bulgaria also has supported the West's sanctions against Russia.
- It has hosted a fleet of Western fighter jets on its Black Sea coast.
- It is a major producer of non-NATO weapons and plans to send them to Ukraine.

## Impact of suspension of gas supplies

### Poland

- Poland gets about 40% of its natural gas from Russia.
- Poland has been working on alternatives to reduce its dependency on Russia.
- Poland will lose out on the five billion cubic metres of gas as a result of the latest move and it plans to compensate it with supplies from Germany.

### Bulgaria

- It gets about 77% of its natural gas from Russia and hence it has a bigger problem.
- But its Energy Minister said that Bulgaria has enough gas for now.
- Bulgaria must look for alternatives.

### Russia

- Western experts believe that the Russian economy is heavily dependent on gas exports and the move to force EU countries to pay for gas in roubles could backfire if it ends up decoupling the energy 'partnership' between Europe and Russia.
- It is also very difficult to reroute the piped natural gas to different markets and with Russia not having significant storage infrastructure, it may find itself desperate for buyers.

## Response from the European Union

- The [European Union](#) has regarded Russia's move as "blackmail" and accused Russia of trying to influence the West's stance on the Ukraine crisis.
- The EU Commission President also said that "the era of Russian fossil fuel in Europe is coming to an end."

## Steps undertaken by European countries to reduce dependency on Russia for gas

- With climate change being a major political issue in Europe, the EU is looking for ways to procure natural gas which is considered the cleanest source of energy.

- As a short-term plan, they're ordering more liquefied natural gas from places like Norway, Azerbaijan and North Africa.
- Accelerating the deployment of wind and solar energy.
- The longer-term plan is to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the U.S. and the Middle East.

### **Feasibility of shifting from Russian natural gas to LNG**

- It is considered challenging mainly because it is easier and cheaper to transport natural gas via pipeline as LNG requires massive facilities and container ships that require huge capital investments.
- The EU has strengthened its LNG infrastructure by building several large terminals over time. However, the LNG imported from the U.S. by container ships would be more expensive than Russian gas received via pipeline.
- Achieving strategic autonomy by replacing Russian gas with American LNG would increase the gas prices for the consumers who are currently benefiting from cheaper Russian gas.

#### **Nut Graf**

*Russia's unilateral move to suspend its gas supplies to Europe can cause severe disruptions in supplies which can fuel inflation, damage economic activity and even lead to a major recession in the continent. Hence, the EU must immediately look for ways to reduce its reliance on Russia for gas.*

### **C. GS 3 Related**

#### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. The demand for a revenue share in privatised airports**

**Syllabus: Infrastructure: Airports**

**Mains: Critical analysis of the Tamil Nadu government's demand for a revenue share in privatised airports.**

#### **Context**

The Tamil Nadu administration has claimed that state governments should get a share in the revenue whenever the Central government privatises an airport.

## Privatisation of airports

- In India, the privatisation of airports started in 2003 after the government signed to upgrade Mumbai and Delhi airports in a public-private partnership (PPP) model.
- In 2019, airports in Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati were leased through the PPP model.
- In December 2021, the government planned to privatise 25 airports managed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) over the next five years under the [National Monetization Pipeline \(NMP\)](#).

## Tamil Nadu government's proposals

- According to the Tamil Nadu government, the state government acquires and transfers the land to the Centre-run AAI free of cost and if the AAI or the Centre transfers that land to a third party or a private player, the revenue realised thereby must be shared proportionately with the state governments.
- Further, the state's policy says that the value of land, at an appropriate stage, should be converted into equity of the State government in the airport's special purpose vehicle or an appropriate revenue sharing arrangement should be arrived at before the airport is transferred to a third party.
- The policy was drafted by the Tamil Nadu government as the Centre has proposed to privatise four airports in Tamil Nadu under the NMP which include Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, and Trichy.

## Arguments for the proposals

- States such as Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have supported the proposals of Tamil Nadu.
- A Chhattisgarh minister said that "in a joint venture, the Government of India would invest its capital in terms of infrastructure and the State government invests its capital in terms of its land and hence in every such venture, the value of the land should be given to the State government if it is sold to a third party".
- The Jharkhand Finance Minister also voiced his support for the proposal by saying that "Land belongs to the State. When it is under the central government, the state has no issues to give land, water and other resources. But if the Centre is handing it over to private parties, revenue should be shared with the State government. A policy should be framed in this regard for all the States".

## Arguments against the proposals

- Experts feel that the direct economic activity that takes place due to the development of airports benefits the entire state.
- In the region where the airport is being developed, there are catchment areas that reap benefits, which the state benefits from.



- Also, the land value gets enhanced and it translates into better collections of stamp duties for the states.
- The move will affect the attractiveness of the project to the private players if they are made to shell out extra money in addition to what they share with the AAI.

**Nut Graf**

*The Tamil Nadu government's move to seek a share in the revenue from privatised airports is gaining support from various other states and is further intensifying the existing Centre-state tussle over economic issues.*

**D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**E. Editorials**

**Category: POLITY**

**1. Revisiting death penalty jurisprudence**

**Syllabus: Indian Constitution—Features, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure.**

**Prelims: Article 21 of the Indian Constitution**

**Mains: Bachan Singh case principle; Arguments against capital punishment.**

**Context:**

- Recently, a Bench of the Supreme Court of India, looking into the challenge of the **Irfan vs State of Madhya Pradesh case** has decided to critically examine the abrupt way in which trial judges impose the death penalty on convicts.

**Know more about [capital punishment](#) in the link.**

**Background:**

**Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980):**

- Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab (1980) is a well-known landmark judgment credited for developing the **jurisprudence pertaining to the death penalty**. It examined whether the death penalty was in consonance with the provisions of the Indian Constitution.
- The main issue that was addressed in this case was whether the procedure prescribed under **Section 354(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973** pertaining to sentencing the culprit is unconstitutional.
  - According to Section 354(3) in the Code of Criminal Procedure, while imposing capital punishment, the judge should specify “the special reasons” for doing so. By this provision, the courts are vested with unguided discretion and it is completely up to them to ascertain whether the death penalty should be imposed or not.
- The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal in accordance with the majority opinion. The Court dismissed the challenge to the constitutionality of Section 302 of the IPC in so far as it prescribes the death sentence, as well as, the constitutionality of Section 354(3) of the CrPC, 1973 was rejected.
- Though the Constitution Bench in the case refused to declare the death penalty as unconstitutional, it **suggested a humane and reformist framework in the matter of capital punishment**.
  - This case led to the establishment of the “**rarest of the rare**” doctrine applicable while determining whether the death penalty is to be awarded to the accused. According to this principle, the death sentence could be resorted to only in the rarest of rare cases, that too when “the alternate option (in the matter of punishment, such as life imprisonment) is unquestionably foreclosed”. Hence the bench sought to do away with the indiscriminate use of the penal provisions related to capital punishment.
  - The bench had emphasized that apart from examining the gravity of the offence, the courts will also have to consider other factors such as **the condition and the ‘reformability’ of the accused**. It recommended a person-centric approach while considering the **mitigative factors** which could include socio-economic backwardness, mental health, heredity, parenting, socialisation, education, etc. to avert the handing of capital punishment.

### Concerns with current jurisprudence:

#### **Lack of concrete guidelines:**

- Notably, the Bachan Singh judgment has not elaborated on the mitigative elements in the matter of sentencing or the method of invoking them to avert the death penalty. It also does not clearly explain the issues such as the burden of proof and standard of proof in detail.
- This lack of clarity is leading to cases being decided contrary to the principles set under the Bachan Singh case.

#### **Breach of Bachan Singh case principle:**



- Notably, the Bachan Singh principle has been breached by the Supreme Court itself in several cases.
  - In **Ravji vs State of Rajasthan (1995)**, the Supreme Court had stated that it is the nature of the crime and not the criminal which is germane for deciding the punishment. This observation runs contrary to the observations made in the Bachan Singh case.
  - In **Machhi Singh vs State of Punjab (1983)**, the Supreme Court noted that the inadequacy of other punishments could justify the death penalty. This runs against the humanistic liberalism propounded in the Bachan Singh case.

### **Arguments against capital punishment:**

- Capital punishment is described by some as being violative of the right to life envisaged under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.
- As against the belief that the death penalty would act as a deterrent to heinous crimes, a number of surveys and statistical reports have suggested that the **death penalty does not act as a deterrent**.
- Across the world, 108 nations have abolished the death penalty in law for all the crimes and 144 countries (more than two-thirds of the total countries) have put an end to imposing the death penalty in law or practice, according to the **Amnesty Report of 2021**. India is one of the very few countries that are yet to abolish the death penalty.
- In India, as elsewhere, the **poor remain the most affected by capital punishment**. The numbers of the uneducated and the illiterate sentenced to death outweigh those who are educated and literate. This is indicative of the unequal impact on the marginalized sections which amounts to infringement of the constitutionally guaranteed rights. This could be attributed to the unsatisfactory legal assistance received by the poor which often leads to their conviction. And in the matter of sentencing too, the mitigating factors are either not placed before the trial court or not persuaded adequately to convince the trial judge to avoid the death penalty.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Filling gaps in the Bachan Singh case:**

- It is the dire need of the hour to lay down an **effective framework for awarding the death penalty**.
- The Court while looking into the instant case will have to revisit the issues related to **mitigating factors and individual-centred sentencing policy** and come up with concrete guidelines for such policy.
  - The Court should come up with a legal device for procurement of a comprehensive report dealing with the socio-economic and hereditary backgrounds of the accused from experts in the fields of social work, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, etc.

- There should be a comprehensive examination of the factors relating to the crime, the criminal, and the punishment.
- The court should also lay down concrete propositions for assessment of mitigating factors, determination of standard of proof, the burden of proof, etc.
- This could ensure a convict-centric approach so that the imposition of capital punishment becomes **rarer, fairer, and principled**.

### **Relook at the constitutional validity of the death penalty:**

- Given that evolving a just and judicious sentencing policy alone may not be able to accommodate for factors such as judgmental errors, poor quality of adjudication, incapacity or backwardness of the parties and their inadequacy of defence, the disparity in the practical application of the doctrine, etc, the Supreme Court should consider having a relook at the core question in 'Bachan Singh' — the constitutional validity of the death penalty.

#### **Nut Graf**

*The Supreme Court looking into the challenge of the Irfan vs State of Madhya Pradesh case offers an opportunity to radically alter India's death penalty jurisprudence. While trying to fill the gaps in the landmark Bachan Singh case the court should also consider relooking at the constitutional validity of the death penalty.*

### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. Are freebies affecting the economic growth of India?**

**Syllabus:** *Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.*

**Mains:** *Freebie culture - Arguments for and against*

#### **Context:**

- Recently while delivering an address at the Delhi School of Economics, N.K. Singh, the chairperson of the 15th Finance Commission, criticised the practice of providing freebies by some state governments. This he warned could be a “quick path to fiscal disaster.”

For detailed information on this topic refer to the following article:

## CNA dated April 20, 2022: Danger of electoral sops flagged

### Freebie politics:

- Over the years the politics of freebies has become an integral part of the electoral politics in India.
- Political leaders offering freebies to lure voters is quite common during the election time in the country. Political parties promise to offer free electricity/water supply, monthly allowance to unemployed, daily wage workers and women as well as gadgets like laptops, smartphones, etc. to secure the vote of the people.

### Arguments against freebie politics:

#### **Impact on fiscal stability:**

- This freebie culture may be harmful to the long-term economic growth of the country. Given that some of the subsidies are wasteful, they do not lead to the creation of additional capacity but only lead to expenditure. Hence, they are not sustainable, and it could lead to deterioration of fiscal stability of the economy in the light of **mounting interest payments**.

#### **Legal questions:**

- Notably, those promising freebies obviously do not pay from their own pockets, but from the taxpayers' pockets. Hence **promising freebies from the state exchequer**, raises moral, ethical and serious legal issues, because the revenue is collected from taxpayers by the government, and set procedures exist for using this money for the welfare of the people.
- Freebies have become one of the **ways for political parties to entice and influence voters**. The Supreme Court in March 2022 agreed to consider listing for an urgent hearing of a plea, seeking direction to register FIRs against political parties for allegedly inducing voters by offering freebies. The petition pleaded that such inducement using freebies amounted to indulging in corrupt practices and bribery in terms of provisions of Section 123 (1)(b) of the [Representation of the People Act, 1951](#).

#### **Undesirable impact of freebies:**

- Non targeted **loan waivers** have undesired consequences such as destroying the credit culture.
- The **provision of free electricity** to the rural communities has led to disastrous consequences in terms of the declining water table, wastage of electricity and various other things.

### Arguments in favour:

#### **Poverty reduction:**

- **Poverty, existing inequality and the distress caused by the pandemic** may necessitate some kind of relief to the population in the form of subsidies and freebies. Welfare measures such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act ([MGNREGA](#)) and the public distribution system, have contributed to poverty reduction.

#### **Improve productive capacity of population:**

- **Freebies in the education and health** domain will help improve the productive capacity of the population and can be seen as an investment for the long term.
- Subsidies going into education, such as for laptops and other things would help increase productivity, knowledge, and skills.

#### **Economic growth:**

- Also, some of these subsidies may actually be necessary for the economy to continue on its growth path.
- The economic slowdown brought out by the pandemic has led to a steep decline in demand in the economy. Welfare spending has been able to at least **prevent consumption demand from falling any further.**

#### **Recommendations:**

- The priority for welfare spending should be for productive areas.
- Also, such **spending should be more targeted** to reduce the risks of leakage and to also increase the effectiveness of such spending.

#### **Nut Graf**

*Given that well-directed welfare spending can help in economic growth as well as development, there is a need to distinguish between productive and unproductive forms of welfare spending. The focus should be more on areas where the positive impact of welfare spending is visible.*

### **F. Prelims Facts**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

### **G. Tidbits**

#### **1. Prepare for swift conflicts: IAF chief**

- In the backdrop of the Ukraine war and apprehensions about the timely delivery of equipment from Russia, the Chief of the Air Staff said that there is a need to re-evaluate the demand forecasting methods and stocking philosophies.
- The Chief of the Air Staff further added that the way forward will be to have a “serviceability-linked inventory management system”.
- He further added that the geopolitical situation requires the IAF to prepare for intense and small-duration operations at a short notice and the new paradigm of high-intensity operations, coupled with minimal build-up time, would require major changes in terms of operational logistics.

## 2. Xi's 'Global Security Initiative' looks to counter Quad grouping

- A new Global Security Initiative put forward by the Chinese President is said to counter the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and the [Quad](#).
- China proposed a Global Security Initiative which is committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and opposes unilateralism, and says no to group politics and bloc confrontation.
- China's Foreign Minister further said that they oppose the use of the 'Indo-Pacific' strategy to divide the region and create a 'new Cold War', and the use of military alliances to put together an Asian version of NATO.

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

#### Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. India's first e-waste clinic was set up in Bhopal.
2. Maharashtra is the largest producer of e-waste in India.
3. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 according to which producers were made responsible for the collection of E-waste and for its exchange.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (Level: Medium)

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct**, India's first e-waste clinic was established in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh).
  - It is set up jointly by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC).
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Maharashtra is the largest producer of e-waste in India.
  - Maharashtra is followed by Tamil Nadu (2nd), Andhra Pradesh (3rd), Uttar Pradesh (4th), Delhi (5th), Gujarat (6th), Karnataka (7th) and West Bengal (8th).
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) notified the E-Waste Management Rules 2016.

**Q2. Giddha, Sammi, and Kikli are folk dances from which state of India? (Level: Easy)**

- a. Arunachal Pradesh
- b. Himachal Pradesh
- c. Punjab
- d. Sikkim

**Answer: c****Explanation:**

- Giddha, Sammi, and Kikli are folk dances of **Punjab**.
- Giddha is a popular folk dance performed only by women, performed during festive seasons, especially during the sowing and reaping of the harvest.
- Sammi dance is performed by the women of Punjab's tribal communities.
- Kikli is a folk dance of Punjab, where two girls hold hands and twirl each other in a circle and balance their positions in circular motions.

**Q3. Which of the following statements about Poet Jayadeva is/are correct?**

1. Hymns of Jayadeva have been incorporated into the Guru Granth Sahib.
2. He is known for his epic poem Gitanjali.

**Options: (Level: Medium)**

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

**Answer: a**



**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Two hymns of Jayadeva have been incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib which is the holy book of the Sikh religion.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Jayadeva is most known for his epic poem **Gita Govinda**.
  - **Gitanjali** is a collection of poems by **Rabindranath Tagore**.

**Q4. With respect to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
2. The Commission consists of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three other Members whose service conditions and tenure of office are determined by the Parliament.

**Options: (Level: Easy)**

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) is a **constitutional body** under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
  - NCBC was set up under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 and was given a constitutional status through the **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018**.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The conditions of service and tenure of office of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and other Members are determined by the **President**.

**Q5. Which one of the following effects of the creation of black money in India has been the main cause of worry to the Government of India? (Level: Easy)**

- a. Diversion of resources to the purchase of real estate and investment in luxury housing
- b. Investment in unproductive activities and purchase of precious stones, jewellery, gold, etc.
- c. Large donations of political parties and growth of regionalism
- d. Loss of revenue to the State Exchequer due to tax evasion

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Black money includes all funds earned through illegal activity and otherwise legal income that is not recorded for tax purposes.
- The increase and spread of black money have a serious impact on the economy as it results in the reduction of government revenues.
- Hence **option d** is correct.

**I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**

1. Proscribing death penalty is an essential feature of a civilized society. Do you agree? Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS IV - Ethics)
2. Freebie culture in Indian politics stems from the idea of making India a welfare state. Elaborate. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - Polity)