

## 24 Nov 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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## A. GS 1 Related

### Category: GEOGRAPHY

#### 1. Are El Niño-La Niña weather patterns changing?

*Syllabus: Important Geophysical phenomena*

*Prelims: El Niño, La Niña and El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)*

*Mains: Impact of the changing patterns of El Niño-La Niña conditions*

**Context:** A recent study has revealed that climate change will significantly impact El Niño-La Niña weather patterns by about 2030 which is 10 years before what was projected earlier.

#### El Niño

- El Niño is a Spanish word meaning “Little Boy”.
- El Niño refers to the warming of seawater in the central and the east Equatorial Pacific that occurs every few years.
- During El Niño years, the surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific increase which results in the weakening of trade winds.
- The easterly trade winds that usually blow from the Americas towards Asia falter and change their direction to turn into westerlies due to El Niño thereby bringing warm water from the western Pacific towards the Americas.
- El Niño disrupts the phenomena of upwelling, wherein the nutrient-rich waters rise towards the surface. This affects phytoplankton which adversely impacts fish that feed on phytoplankton which ultimately affects the entire food chain and disrupts multiple ecosystems.
- As the Pacific Ocean accounts for almost 33.33% of the Earth, changes in the temperature and wind patterns in the Pacific impact global weather patterns.
- El Niño usually causes dry, warm winters in the Northern U.S. and Canada and increases the risk of flooding in the U.S. Gulf Coast and southeastern U.S.
- El Niño is also associated with drought in Indonesia and Australia.

#### La Niña

- La Niña in Spanish means “Little Girl”.
- La Niña is the opposite of El Niño.
- La Niña results in cooler than average sea surface temperature (SST) in the equatorial Pacific region and trade winds are stronger than usual thereby pushing warmer water towards Asia.

- La Niña leads to an increase in the upwelling on the American west coast which helps bring nutrient-rich water to the surface.
- La Niña causes drier conditions in the Southern U.S., and heavy rainfall in Canada.
- La Niña is also associated with heavy floods in Australia.
- Two continuous La Niña events in the past two years have resulted in intense flooding in the Australian region.

### **El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**

- The combination of El Niño, La Niña, and the neutral state between the two opposite effects is called the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO).
- Southern oscillations refer to the large-scale changes in sea level pressures in the tropical Pacific region.

### **Key findings of the recent study**

- As per the study published in the Nature Communications journal, the scale of ENSO is significant enough to influence global climate.
- The study has analysed 70 years of data on the ENSO since 1950 and combined it with 58 of the most advanced climate models available.
- The study notes that the increased sea surface temperature variability due to ENSO in the eastern Equatorial Pacific will occur around 2030 (+/- 6 years) which is more than a decade earlier than that of the Central Pacific ENSO.
- If the Central Pacific and Equatorial Pacific are not separated, sea surface temperature variability from ENSO will emerge about 40 years earlier than previously expected.
- The changes in the Equatorial Pacific will be seen first because of a stronger increase in the EP-ENSO rainfall response resulting in increased SST variability.
- Researchers suggest that Australians must prepare for more floods and droughts as climate change disrupts ENSO.

### **Impact on India's monsoons**

- In India, El Niño is associated with weak rainfall and increased heat, whereas La Niña causes intensified rainfall across the South Asia region especially in India's northwest region and Bangladesh during the monsoon.
- Currently, India, like the rest of the world is experiencing an extended "triple dip La Niña".
  - Triple dip La Niña is a phenomenon lasting across three winter seasons in the northern hemisphere.

- This is only the third time since 1950 that a triple dip La Nina has been observed and it is the reason why India is seeing surplus rain in September, a month that usually marks the retreat of the monsoon, for the third year in a row.

***Nut graf:** A new study has revealed that climate change is having a significant impact on global weather phenomena such as El Niño, La Niña and ENSO. The changes in these weather patterns will have severe implications for human health, food security, energy security, and economies across the world. This adds weight to the urgent need to address the issue of climate change.*

## B. GS 2 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. SEBI's plans to tackle market rumours

*Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning and mobilization of resources*

*Prelims: About Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)*

*Mains: SEBI's proposals to address the issue of market rumours*

#### Context

- The [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#) recently published its consultation paper which proposes various measures to effectively tackle market rumours.
- SEBI also reviewed the existing disclosure requirements for material events and information as per the **SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015**.

#### The need for a review of the existing regulations

- The main aim of SEBI's proposals is to ensure timely disclosure of significant events that can impact the price of a scrip (legal tender).
- According to SEBI, regulatory actions against non-disclosure of events will make sure that the listed entities would not withhold the details of material events or information.
- SEBI also aims to ensure that investor confidence is insulated from unverified rumours and that such rumours do not affect decision-making.

- Further, the listed entities have also urged SEBI to bring in a certain amount of uniformity in its guidance for disclosures which helps in determining what amounts to a material event or information.
- SEBI also sought the companies to come up with specific and adequate replies to all rumour verification enquiries. SEBI proposes that entities must confirm or reject such events or information.

### **Proposed disclosure regulations**

- Acknowledging the increasing influence of print, television and digital news media, SEBI has proposed that companies ensure any rumours that may arise are verified or denied.
- SEBI has proposed that the top 250 listed entities, based on market capitalisation at the end of the previous assessment year, are required to provide clarity on the information by either denying or refuting such rumours.
- SEBI has also proposed that companies disclose all information whose expected impact in terms of value
  - Breaches 2% of either its turnover or net worth according to the last audited financial statement. Or
  - Crosses 5% of the three-year average of the absolute value of profit/loss after tax.
- To prevent information asymmetry, SEBI has urged the listed entities to circulate any communication with regard to the company made by its members of management individually and not through the company.
  - Furthermore, the companies are also mandated to disclose any such actions initiated by a regulatory, statutory, or judicial agency against any of its key members of the management or promoters or subsidiaries of the company.
  - Such actions can include investigation, suspension, imposition of penalties, sanctions, search, and seizure among others.
- SEBI also recognises the fact that it is highly difficult for investors to keep a tab on multiple announcements from different media and thus has proposed the companies to inform about any rating actions, even if such rating actions were not requested by the company or if the request was withdrawn.
- SEBI through its latest proposals has recognised the important role played by the key management personnel as they instil confidence in the investors about the functioning and affairs of the company. Thus, SEBI proposed that companies should inform them about the resignation of such personnel within seven days.
  - Also, the entities are mandated to disclose the information if the individuals in the position of MD or CEO are not available to discharge their duties for more than one month.

## Revision of timelines

- There exists a need for faster disclosure of material events or information as such information now has the ability to permeate faster on social media and digital media.
- SEBI has made note of various instances where the disclosures were made after the information had already spread in the media or after SEBI had raised a query to the company.
- To prevent such instances, SEBI has proposed that disclosures related to events or information arising within the entity should be made within 12 hours instead of the existing regulation of 24 hours.
  - The timeline remains 24 hours for events emanating from external occurrences.
- Further, all decisions made in a meeting of the Board of Directors must be disclosed within 30 minutes from its conclusion.
- The entities are also mandated to disclose the scheduled meetings with any of their investors two days prior to the meeting.

***Nut graf:** In recent years, there has been a growing influence of digital and social media in disseminating information regarding the material events and information of listed entities which has resulted in the spread of rumours and misinformation. In this context, SEBI has come up with various proposals aimed at verifying or refuting such rumours in a timely manner that help prevent false market sentiment.*

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### 1. India's malnutrition problem

*Syllabus: Issues Relating to Development & Management of Social Sector/Services–Health*

*Mains: Status of Hunger and Malnutrition in India*

**Context:** India's slip in the 2022 ranking of the Global Hunger Index has brought back the focus on India's malnutrition problem.

**Introduction:**

- India's ranking in Global Hunger Index 2022 is 107 (slipped from the 2021 index of 101) out of 121 countries.
- Barring war-torn Afghanistan, India has performed worse than all the countries in the South Asian region in the Global Hunger Index 2022.
- The index is jointly released by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe every October.
- The Hunger Index measures countries' performance on four component indicators – undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.
- The 2022 Global Hunger Index is the 17th edition of the Hunger Index (since 2006).
- Malnutrition persists due to depressed economic conditions in large parts of the country, the poor state of agriculture in India, persistent levels of unsafe sanitation practices, etc.
- India's National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) from 2019-21 reported that in children below the age of five years, 35.5% were stunted, 19.3% showed wasting, and 32.1% were underweight.

**Gaps in measures to address malnutrition:**

- Experts have suggested several approaches to address the problem of chronic [malnutrition](#), many of which feature in the centrally-sponsored schemes that already exist.
- However, gaps remain in their funding and implementation.
- For example, the budget for the Saksham Anganwadi and Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) 2.0 scheme for FY2022-23 was ₹20,263 crore, which is less than 1% more than the actual spend in FY 2020-21 — an increase of less than 1% over two years.
- The budget for [PM POSHAN](#) for FY 2022-23 at ₹10,233.75 crore was 21% lower than the expenditure in FY 2020-21.
- These allocations do not reflect the funds that are required to improve nutrition in the country.
- An Accountability Initiative called budget brief which analyses trends in allocations, public expenditures, outputs and outcomes of key social sector programmes reports that per capita costs of the Supplementary Nutrition Programme have not increased since 2017 and remain grossly underfunded, catering to only 41% of the funds required.
- It also mentions that over 50% of Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) posts were vacant in Jharkhand, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan, pointing to severe manpower constraints in successfully implementing the scheme of such importance.
- Social audits which facilitate community oversight of the quality of services provided in schools are not carried out routinely.
- Social factors such as 'son preference', also influence household-level decisions regarding nutrition preferences.

### Impact of Cash Transfers:

- Cash transfers seem to be a favoured solution for several social sector interventions in India today. It has the advantage of expanding choice at the household level, as they make decisions on what to put on their plates.
- But the impact of cash transfers on child nutrition in India is limited so far. Evidence suggests that while cash transfers improve household food security, they do not necessarily translate into improved child nutrition outcomes.
- The effect of cash transfers is also limited as food prices are volatile and inflation depletes the value of cash.

### Way Forward:

- Cash transfers must be promoted in regions experiencing acute distress, where household purchasing power is very depressed.
- Cash transfers can also be used to incentivise behavioural change in terms of seeking greater institutional support.
- Food rations through PDS and special supplements for the target group of pregnant and lactating mothers, and infants and young children, are essential.
- Greater involvement of local government and local community groups in the design and delivery of tailored nutrition interventions will be effective.
- A comprehensive programme targeting adolescent girls is required if the intergenerational nature of malnutrition is to be tackled.

***Nut Graf:** The GHI is an important indicator of nutrition, particularly among children, as it looks at stunting, wasting and mortality among children, and at calorific deficiency across the population. Underfunding and underutilisation of key nutrition schemes are among the significant reasons behind India's multi-dimensional nutrition challenge.*

## Category: GOVERNANCE

### 1. Right to Information in India

*Syllabus: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency & Accountability*

*Mains: Underlying issues related to the Right to Information in India*

**Context:** Recent examples from the [Central Information Commission](#) cases show India's declining transparency regime.

### Introduction:



- The primary duty of the Central Information Commission (CIC) is to decide the disclosure or the non-disclosure of information.
- Indian citizens can file applications under the Right to Information Act with any public body and are guaranteed a reply from the public information officer of that public body within 30 days.
- In case of no reply or dissatisfaction with the response, the citizen can file an appeal at the departmental level and then a second and final appeal with the Information Commission.
- Each State has its own State Information Commission to deal with second appeals concerning State bodies.
- The CIC had passed orders seeking transparency in many cases of public importance.
  - It pronounced that political parties were under the RTI Act's ambit, and hence accountable to the public.
  - It ordered the disclosure of the current Prime Minister's educational qualifications.
  - CIC also ordered the disclosure of Reserve Bank of India's list of willful defaulters of loans.

#### **Recent hurdles for RTI in India:**

- ***Against the Principle of Natural Justice:*** The RTI Act (Amendment) Act, 2019 gave the Union government the power to fix the terms and the service conditions of the Information Commissioners both at the central and state levels. By vesting excessive powers with the central government, this amendment has hampered the autonomy of CIC.
- The Commission has adopted a new way of delegating its mandate to decide cases to the Ministry before it.
  - In most cases, the Ministries reiterate their earlier stand of non-disclosure, most often under vague grounds of national interest after which the CIC refuses to accept any further challenge to such orders, therefore, refusing to do its duty of deciding the cases.
  - For instance, CIC refused to hear the Internet Freedom Foundation's challenge to the fresh non-disclosure order passed by the Home Ministry in the phone tapping case.
- The commission acts against the rules of natural justice which states that "no one should be a judge in their own cause" by allowing the very Ministry that stands accused of violating the RTI Act to act as the judge in their own cause and decide whether a disclosure is necessary.
- ***Backlog and Delay in Disposal of Cases:*** One of the reasons the RTI Act was considered to be revolutionary was that a response had to be provided in a fixed time, failing which the government official concerned would be penalised.

- Unlike court cases, RTI matters do not involve complex legal arguments and are fairly simple to adjudicate.
- However, this time-bound nature of the Act suffers due to various reasons such as insufficient number of Information Commissioners, poor quality, incomplete and inaccurate information and Ineffective record management systems and procedures to collect information from field offices..
- For instance, in a case related to the disclosure of non-performing assets and top defaulters of a cooperative bank, the matter was listed out-of-turn to issue a “stay” order against the bank’s First Appellate Authority’s order for disclosure.
  - A stay order is unheard of and there is no provision in the RTI Act for the same.

**Nut Graf:** *The Information commission in India has acted as a strong proponent of transparency in public life. Recent examples from CIC cases do not instil confidence about India's information regime. RTI is a powerful tool in the hands of the citizens and diluting it will weaken democracy and constitutional values.*

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. Milk Inflation

**Syllabus:** *Food Security; Inflation*

**Mains:** *Impact of Milk inflation on Indian households*

**Context:** Mother Dairy, a leading milk supplier in New Delhi has hiked the price of full cream milk four times in 2022.

#### **Inflation of Milk and Milk Products:**

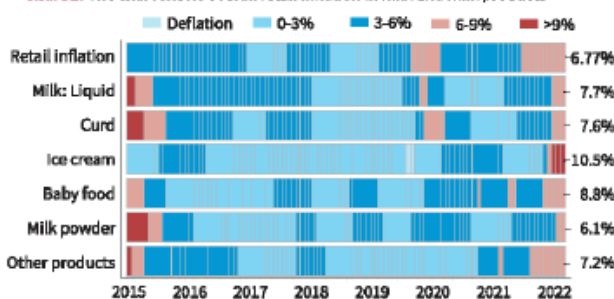
- A litre of milk in New Delhi now costs ₹64 after Mother Dairy hikes the price for the fourth time in 2022.
- Recently, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, which sells milk under the brand Amul, raised the price of full cream milk by ₹2.
- The Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers’ Federation, also raised the price of full cream milk by ₹12 a litre, which makes the price of one litre ₹60.
- Milk inflation accelerated to 7.7% in October 2022, the highest level seen in 7.5 years.
- Inflation of ice cream accelerated to 10.5% whereas curd inflation was 7.6% in October 2022.



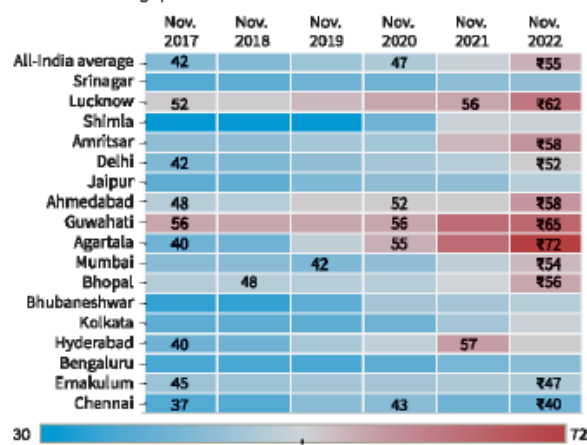
## Milk prices on the boil

The inflation data in Chart 1 are sourced from MoSPI. The data in Chart 2 are from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. Chart 3 and Table 4 are sourced from the NSSO Household Consumer Expenditure survey 2017-18 and NFHS-5, respectively

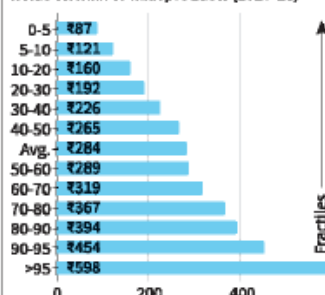
**Chart 1:** The chart shows overall retail inflation in milk and milk products



**Chart 2:** The average price of a litre of milk in select Indian cities in November



**Chart 3:** The average monthly per capita expenditure across fractiles of urban households on milk or milk products (2017-18)



**Table 4:** The % share of men and women who consumed milk or curd in 2019-21 across various wealth quintiles

Gender	Consume milk/ curd daily	At least once a week
All women	48.8%	72.3%
All men	48.8%	79.8%

Wealth quintile	Women	Men
Lowest 20%	52.6%	61.9%
Second	65.9%	73.4%
Middle	74.5%	81.7%
Fourth	80.1%	86.8%
Highest 20%	86.2%	91.4%

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Image Source: The Hindu

- In November 2022, the average price of a litre of milk in India was close to ₹55 against ₹42 in November 2017.

**Uneven Rise:**

- The rise in the price of milk was not uniform across all cities.
- The average prices increased mostly in the northern, western and north-eastern cities of India while there were mild increases in milk prices in eastern cities.
- The average prices did not rise much in the southern cities of Chennai, Bengaluru and Ernakulam except Hyderabad.
  - Hyderabad showed a sharp rise in average milk prices.
- The average price of milk in November 2022 was lowest in Chennai at ₹40 per litre.
  - In Ahmedabad, the price was ₹58 per litre and in Lucknow, it was ₹62 per litre.
  - It crossed the ₹65 per litre-mark in many northeastern cities such as Guwahati and Agartala.

**Reasons behind the rise in milk prices:**

- The cost of operation and production of milk has increased.
- The cost of cattle feed such as maize, cottonseed oil cake, de-oiled rice bran and other feed ingredients has also increased.
- Given the increase in input costs, milk-purchasing member unions boosted farmers' prices by 8 to 9% on average annually.
- Dairies are forced to pass on price hikes to consumers as procurement costs rise in an atmosphere where inflation is already a problem.

**Impact of Milk Inflation:**

- An average urban household spends ₹284 on milk per month.
- The poorest 5% of households spend only ₹86 on milk and milk products in a month, whereas the richest 5% spend ₹598 — a gap of over ₹500.
- Only 52%-62% of members in the poorest 20% households consumed milk or curd, whereas 86%-91% did so in the richest 20% of households.
  - Thus, the price rise will have a greater impact on poorer households, which already have a high share of those who have not been drinking milk.
- There is also a gap in milk consumption between men and women, especially in poorer households. The price rise will disproportionately impact women in poorer households more as they will be the first to give up drinking milk to compensate for the price hike, widening the inequality further.
- Higher milk procurement prices could also hurt companies that make bakery products or food items that use milk or milk solids.

**Nut Graf:** Inflation of milk and milk products has increased to a 7.5 year high even though India's overall retail inflation came down in October 2022. The price rise is varied across regions and disproportionately impacts women and poorer households.

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. ISRO to launch Oceansat-3, 8 nano satellites

- The [Indian Space Research Organisation \(ISRO\)](#) will launch Earth Observation Satellite - 06 (EOS-06) and eight nanosatellites on November 26 through Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C54) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- The EOS-6 is a third-generation satellite in the [Oceansat](#) series of satellites and is being launched to provide continuity to the services of Oceansat-2 spacecraft with improved payload specifications and applications.
- The eight nanosatellites include: ISRO Nano Satellite-2 for Bhutan (INS-2B), Anand, Astrocast (four satellites), and two Thybolt satellites that will be launched into two different Sun-synchronous polar orbits.
- The INS-2B spacecraft will have two payloads namely NanoMx and APRS-Digipeater.
  - NanoMx is a multi-spectral optical imaging payload developed by the Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad.
  - The APRS-Digipeater payload has been jointly developed by the Department of Information Technology and Telecom-Bhutan and the UR Rao Satellite Centre.

### 2. India test fires Agni-3 nuclear capable ballistic missile

- India undertook the successful launch of the Agni-3 Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha recently.
- The test was part of routine user training launches carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command.
- The launch was carried out for a predetermined range and all the operational parameters of the system were examined.
- The Agni series of missiles are considered the backbone of India's nuclear weapons delivery which also includes the Prithvi short-range ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft.

- Further, India has also completed its nuclear triad and operationalised its second strike capability, with the nuclear ballistic missile submarine INS Arihant undertaking deterrence patrols.

### 3. MHA takes up with MEA influx of Kuki-Chins

- Over 270 members of the Kuki-Chin community from Bangladesh who have entered Mizoram recently are being considered “officially displaced persons” in State government records because India does not have a law on refugees.
  - Kuki-Chin community has a population of around 3.5 lakh and the Bangladesh security forces are fighting against the insurgent group Kuki-Chin National Army (KNA).
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has said that the issue was being discussed with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as according to the Ministry of Home Affairs, foreign nationals who enter the country without valid travel documents are considered illegal immigrants.
- The group of Kuki-Chin community members, which included infants and women, approached a Border Security Force (BSF) patrol base on the Bangladesh-Mizoram border and were allowed to enter India on humanitarian grounds.
- According to officials, more such refugees are expected in the coming days and about four schools have been turned into shelters so far following the State government’s order.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. MAARG portal was launched under which of the following initiatives/schemes/projects of the Government of India? (Level – Medium)**

- a. Bharatmala Pariyojana
- b. Startup India
- c. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)
- d. KUSUM Scheme

Answer: b

Explanation:

- MAARG Portal is a National Mentorship Platform by **Startup India** to help and guide new start-ups to grow and flourish.

**Q2. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched? (Level – Medium)**

**Bilateral Military Exercise**

1. Mitra Shakti
2. Garuda Shakti
3. Shakti Exercise
4. Vajra Prahar

**Participant Nations**

- India – Nepal  
India – Indonesia  
India – Sri Lanka  
India – USA

Options:

- a. 2 and 3 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. 2 and 4 only
- d. 2 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is not correct**, Mitra Shakti exercise is a bilateral joint military exercise between armies of **India and Sri Lanka**.
- **Pair 2 is correct**, Garuda Shakti is a bilateral exercise between special forces of armies of India and Indonesia
- **Pair 3 is not correct**, Shakti Exercise is a bilateral exercise between the armies of **India and France**
- **Pair 4 is correct**, Vajra Prahar is a joint military exercise between India and the US.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to the Sikh Guru - Guru Tegh Bahadur: (Level – Difficult)**

1. He composed the Japji Sahib.
2. He helped Raja Ram Singh to broker a truce with the Ahom king.
3. He founded langar or the system of community meals.
4. He was also called Tyag Mal.

How many of the given statements is/are **INCORRECT**?

- a. One statement only
- b. Two statements only
- c. Three statements only
- d. All four statements

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, Japji Sahib was composed by **Guru Nanak**.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, In 1668 in Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur was able to preach a treaty between the King of Ahom and Raja Ram Singh of Amber who was sent there by Aurangzeb.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, "Langar" refers to the community kitchen in a Gurdwara where food is served to all the visitors without any distinction
  - The institution of Langar was first started by **Guru Nanak**.
- **Statement 4 is correct**, Guru Tegh Bahadur was named Tyaga Mal at birth.

**Q4. The terms 'Telstar', 'Azteca', 'Al Rihla' were seen in News in the context of? (Level – Medium)**

- a. Winter Olympics
- b. FIFA World Cup
- c. ICC Cricket World Cup
- d. Hockey World Cup

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Telstar, Azteca and Al Rihla are all names of the official footballs used in different FIFA World Cups.

**Q5. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the World? (Level – Medium) PYQ-2017**

- a. World Economic Forum
- b. UN Human Rights Council
- c. UN Women
- d. World Health Organization

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Global Gender Gap Index ranking is published by **World Economic Forum (WEF)**

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Nothing empowers the citizens like the free flow of information. Elaborate.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Polity)
2. [How do El Nino and La Nina impact the Indian monsoon patterns?](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-1; Geography)