

2026 Edition

UPSC-CSE PRELIMS

PREVIOUS

YEAR

QUESTIONS

Part 2/2

Answers & Detailed Explanations

Best PYQ Classification Ever!



Compiled & Written by

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1] Art and Culture

A) Art and Craft in India

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| d | c | b | b | d | b | a | b | a | b | d | c | b | a | b | a | a | d | c | a |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
| c | b | a | c | a | c | a | c | a | a | c | a | c | c | d |

A 1] d) Lahore - Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872–1931) was a Hindustani classical musician and also a social reformer. He founded Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in 1901 in Lahore, making music education accessible beyond hereditary families (Gharanas). Eventually as the work-load increased, he shifted the school from Lahore to Bombay. Unfortunately, his school was auctioned by his creditors in 1924 to settle the debt Paluskar had taken for the school.

A 2] c) Garba dance - The latest inclusion (In May 2024) in the Intangible Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO is Garba dance. It was added to the list in December 2023. || Durga Puja was added in 2021, Kumbh mela in 2017 and Chhau dance in 2010.

A 3] b) Only two - Shantiniketan and Sacred Ensembles of Hoyasalas were included in year 2023 in UNESCO World Heritage List. || Rani-ki-Vav was added in year 2014 and Mahabodhi temple complex in year 2002

A 4] b) 1 and 2 – Pair 1 correct: Chapchar Kut is a traditional harvest festival celebrated in Mizoram. || Pair 2 correct: Khongjom Parba is a ballad (poem/traditional story in song format) that commemorates the Battle of Khongjom, a historic event in Manipur. || Pair 3 incorrect: Thang-Ta is a traditional martial art form associated with Manipur, not Sikkim.

A 5] d) Kishangarh School - “Bani Thani” is a famous painting associated with the Kishangarh School of art.

The Kishangarh School flourished under the patronage of the rulers of Kishangarh, a princely state in Rajasthan, India. The painting is renowned for its distinctive style and often depicts idealized and ethereal representations of love and beauty. || The Kishangarh School is known for its unique features, including elongated eyes and slender necks of the figures in the paintings. || Bundi School is known for dramatic scenes, lush vegetation, hunting themes and court life. Bundi paintings often have strong Mughal influence. || Jaipur School flourished under the Kachwaha rulers. Strong emphasis on court portraits, processions, religious themes and detailed architectural backgrounds. || Kangra School is part of the Pahari tradition. Known for naturalistic landscapes, soft colours and lyrical romantic themes—especially Krishna–Radha and Bhagavata stories.

A 6] b) 2 and 4 only – Statement 1 incorrect: Most of Tyagaraja’s compositions (krits) are devotional songs dedicated to Lord Rama, not Lord Krishna. || Statement 2 correct: Tyagaraja is known for his contributions to Carnatic music, and he is credited with creating several new ragas. || Statement 3 incorrect: Annamacharya and Tyagaraja were not contemporaries. Annamacharya lived in the 15th and early 16th centuries, while Tyagaraja lived in the 18th and 19th centuries. || Statement 4 correct: Annamacharya’s compositions, known as kirtanas, are indeed devotional songs, and many of them are dedicated to Lord Venkateshwara, a form of Lord Vishnu.

A 7] a) 1 only – Pair 1 correct: Puthukkuli Shawls are traditional handwoven shawls from Tamil Nadu. || Pair 2 incorrect: Sujni Embroidery is actually associated with the state of Bihar, not Maharashtra. || Pair 3 incorrect: Uppada Jamdani Saris are known for their origin in Uppada, Andhra Pradesh, not Karnataka.

A 8] b) 1 and 3 only - Statement 1 correct: Manipuri Sankirtana is indeed a traditional song and dance performance. || Statement 2 incorrect: While cymbals, specifically small brass cymbals known as “Manjira,” are an essential and prominent musical instrument in Manipuri Sankirtana, they are not the only instruments used. There is also the use of other instruments, such as the drum called “Pung.” || Statement 3 correct: Manipuri Sankirtana is a devotional performance that narrates the life and deeds of Lord Krishna.

A 9] a) A hand-painted cotton textile in South India- Kalamkari is a traditional Indian art form that involves hand-painting or block-printing on cotton fabric. It is particularly associated with regions in South India, such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The term “Kalamkari” is derived from the Persian words “kalam” (pen) and “kari” (craftsmanship), reflecting the use of a pen-like tool for freehand drawing or painting on fabric. The artists use natural dyes to create vibrant and intricate designs, often depicting historical and religious themes. Kalamkari textiles are known for their intricate detailing and are used for various purposes, including clothing and wall hangings.

A 10] b) 1 and 2 only – Statement 1 correct: Sattriya is indeed a classical dance form that encompasses music, dance, and drama. || Statement 2 correct: Sattriya dance has its roots in the Vaishnavite monasteries (sattras) of Assam and has been practiced for centuries as part of their cultural and religious traditions. || Statement 3 incorrect: Sattriya is primarily based on classical Ragas and Talas, but it is not specifically associated with the devotional songs composed by Tulsidas, Kabir, and Mirabai.

Instead, it draws inspiration from the traditional Assamese music and devotional compositions known as “Borgeets.”

A 11] d) It is an ancient martial art and a living tradition in some parts of South India- Kalaripayattu is an ancient Indian martial art form that originated in the southern part of India, particularly in the state of Kerala. It is considered one of the oldest fighting systems in existence. Kalaripayattu includes strikes, kicks, grappling, and weaponry, and it incorporates elements of physical conditioning, self-defense, and traditional medicine.

A 12] c) 1 and 3 only – Pair 1 correct: Garba is a traditional dance form associated with the state of Gujarat, especially performed during the festival of Navratri. || Pair 2 incorrect: Mohiniattam is a classical dance form that originated in the state of Kerala, not Odisha. || Pair 3 correct: Yakshagana is a traditional dance-drama form that is popular in Karnataka.

A 13] b) 2 and 3 only - Bhadrachalam is not particularly famous for the production of traditional sarees/fabric. It is known for its historic Sri Sitaramachandra Swamy Temple, situated on the banks of the Godavari River. || Chanderi is renowned for its traditional handwoven sarees and fabrics. Chanderi sarees are known for their fine texture, sheer texture, and zari work. || Kancheepuram is famous for its silk sarees. Kancheepuram sarees are well-known for their rich silk fabric and vibrant colors, often featuring intricately woven zari work. || Karnal is not particularly known for the production of traditional sarees/fabric. It is a city in the state of Haryana, known for its agricultural significance.

A 14] a) One leg is bent and the body is slightly but oppositely curved at waist and neck - The Tribhanga pose literally means “three bends” - at the neck, waist, and knee — creating an elegant S-shaped curve of the body. This posture has been a favourite in Indian sculpture, painting, dance, and temple art. It is most famously associated with Lord Krishna, who is often depicted standing in Tribhanga

while playing the flute, giving the figure a graceful and rhythmic appearance.

A 15] b) 2 & 3 Only – Statement 1 incorrect: Dhrupad has ancient roots and predates the Rajput Kingdom period. It evolved in the medieval period, and its roots can be traced back to the ancient sacred music tradition of Samaveda. || Statement 2 correct: Dhrupad is a genre of Hindustani classical music that is deeply rooted in devotional and spiritual themes. It often involves singing hymns, praises, and compositions that express a spiritual or devotional mood. || Statement 3 correct: Dhrupad Alap, the initial and improvisatory section of a Dhrupad performance, often involves the use of Sanskrit syllables from Mantras. The use of these syllables adds a spiritual and meditative dimension to the music.

A 16] a) Only 1 – Kuchipudi is classical Indian dance form, originating in Andhra Pradesh, integrates storytelling through spoken dialogues and even singing. It allows dancers to express emotions and narrate stories alongside their movements. || Bharatanatyam, originating in Tamil Nadu, relies solely on body language and facial expressions (abhinaya) to convey narratives and emotions. Spoken dialogues are not typically used in Bharatanatyam performances. || The famous act of dancing on a brass plate (tarangam) with the feet placed on its edges is a signature feature of Kuchipudi, not Bharatanatyam.

A 17] a) Dhrupad vocalists- The Gundecha Brothers, Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha, are renowned Dhrupad vocalists. Dhrupad is one of the oldest forms of classical music in the Indian tradition, and the Gundecha Brothers have contributed significantly to the promotion and preservation of this ancient musical style.

A 18] d) 1, 2, 3 and 4 - Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941): A prominent Indian painter known for her unique blend of Western and Indian art styles. || Bikash Bhattacharjee (1940-2018): A renowned Indian

sculptor and installation artist known for his thought-provoking and often political works. || N. S. Bendre (1890-1962): A significant Indian painter and art teacher known for his abstract and expressionist works. || Subodh Gupta (born 1964): A celebrated contemporary Indian artist known for his large-scale installations and sculptures often exploring themes of globalization and consumerism.

A 19] c) Both 1 and 2 - Statement 1 correct: The National School of Drama (NSD) was indeed established by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1959. || Statement 2 correct: The highest honor bestowed by the Sahitya Akademi is indeed the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship.

A 20] a) 2 1 4 3- Mandakini Amte (A): Known for social service and community leadership, particularly in the field of healthcare and social work. || Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry (B): Well-known for theatre direction. She is a renowned Indian theatre director and has contributed significantly to the world of performing arts. || Romila Thapar (C): A distinguished historian known for her work in history writing. || Vanashree Rao (D): Known for dance. Vanashree Rao is a renowned Indian classical dancer.

A 21] c) 2 and 3 only – Pair 1 incorrect: Gatka is a martial art form traditionally practiced in Punjab, not Kerala. Pair 2 correct: Madhubani painting is an iconic folk art form originating from the Mithila region of Bihar. Pair 3 correct: The Sindhu Darshan Festival, known for its traditional food like Singhey Khababs, is celebrated in Jammu and Kashmir.

A 22] b) 2 4 1 3- Amrita Sher-Gil (a): Well-known as a painter. She was an iconic Indian painter (2), often considered one of the pioneers of modern Indian art. || Bhimsen Joshi (b): Well-known as a singer. He was one of the most celebrated Hindustani classical vocalists (4) in India. || Rukmini Devi Arundale (c): Well-known as a dancer (1). She was a renowned dancer and the founder of Kalakshetra, an academy of dance and music. || Suryakant Tripathi Nirala (d): Well-known as a poet (3). He was an

influential Hindi poet, novelist, essayist, and story writer.

A 23] a) Manipuri - Bimbavati Devi is a renowned Manipuri dancer. Manipuri is one of the classical dance forms of India, and it originates from the northeastern state of Manipur. Bimbavati Devi has contributed significantly to the promotion and preservation of Manipuri dance, showcasing its unique movements, costumes, and storytelling elements.

A 24] c) 2 4 1 3 - Bhajan Sopori (A): Known as an exponent of Santoor (2), which is a musical instrument. || Birju Maharaj (B): Known as a Kathak dancer (4), one of the foremost exponents of the Kathak dance form. || Priyadarsini Govind (C): Known as a Bharatnatyam dancer (1), excelling in the South Indian classical dance form of Bharatnatyam. || T.V. Gopalakrishnan (D): Known as a Mridangam maestro (3), an expert in playing the Mridangam, a percussion instrument.

A 25] a) 4 2 1 3 - A. Mon – 4 (Nagaland): Mon is a district in Nagaland known for its traditional handicrafts. || B. Nalbari – 2 (Assam): Nalbari is a district in Assam known for its handloom and handicraft products. || C. Pasighat – 1 (Arunachal Pradesh): Pasighat is a town in Arunachal Pradesh where various traditional handicrafts are practiced. || D. Tura – 3 (Meghalaya): Tura is a town in Meghalaya known for its unique handicrafts made by the local artisans.

A 26] c) Gangubai Hangal - Gangubai Hangal was a renowned Hindustani classical singer. She was a prominent figure in the field of Indian classical music, specializing in the Khyal genre. Her contributions to the world of music earned her recognition and accolades in the Hindustani classical music tradition. || Other options are not so relevant in current context.

A 27] d) Yamini Krishnamurthy - Yamini Krishnamurthy, the renowned Indian classical dancer,

was presented with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Ratna Award in 2005 for her lifetime achievement in dance. She is celebrated for her contributions to Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, two major classical dance forms of India. || Other options are not so relevant in current context.

A 28] c) Ronu Mazumdar - Ronu Majumdar is well known as an exponent of the flute. He is an accomplished Indian classical flautist who has made significant contributions to the world of music, particularly in the field of Hindustani classical music.

A 29] a) Todi- Todi (often called *Miyan ki Todi*) is one of the well-known morning ragas in Hindustani classical music. Darbari is sung late at night, Bhimpalasi in the afternoon, and Bhopali is generally performed in the evening.

A 30] a) I, III and IV - Statement I correct: Chakiarkoothu is indeed performed by the Chakiar community in Kerala. || Statement II incorrect: Chakiarkoothu performances were traditionally performed in the temple premises and could be witnessed by people, including higher caste Hindus. || Statement III correct: Mizhavu is indeed one of the main accompanying instruments used in Chakiarkoothu performances. || Statement IV correct: The theater form specifically associated with Chakiarkoothu is called Koothambalam. It is a structure or a special theater space where traditional performing arts like Chakiarkoothu are staged.

A 31] c) Revivalistic - Abanindranath Tagore was a key figure in the Bengal School of Art and played a significant role in the revival of traditional Indian art forms. His paintings were characterized by a revivalistic approach, emphasizing the use of traditional Indian styles, themes, and techniques. Abanindranath Tagore sought to break away from Western influences and revive the richness of Indian artistic traditions in his work.

A 32] a) Korku: Maharashtra - Pair 1 incorrect: Korku is a tribal community primarily found in central India, including the states of Madhya Pradesh and parts of Chhattisgarh, not Maharashtra || Pairs 2, 3 & 4 correct: || Jhummar is a traditional dance form popular in the Punjab region, which includes Haryana. || Thali is a folk dance form from Himachal Pradesh. || Mukna is a traditional martial art form from Manipur.

A 33] c) Mohiniattam - Mohiniattam is a classical dance form of Kerala traditionally performed as a solo dance by a woman. Its very identity is built around a single performer expressing lasya (grace, softness), making the solo format central to the style. || Bharatanatyam and Odissi also can be performed solo, but they have long-established group formats as well. Kuchipudi strongly evolved from a dance-drama tradition involving multiple performers.

A 34] c) Ankia Nat – Assam - Pair a) incorrect: Naqqaal is a traditional form of theatre in Punjab, not

Bihar. || Pair b) incorrect: Tamasha is a traditional form of theatre in Maharashtra. || Pair c) correct: Ankia Nat is a traditional form of Assamese one-act plays associated with the medieval saint and cultural icon, Srimanta Sankardeva. || Pair d) incorrect: Baha is a spring festival celebrated by the Ho, Santhal, Munda and other tribal communities in eastern India region.

A 35] d) Kalighata - Pahari, Rajasthani, and Kangra painting styles originated from regions directly or indirectly influenced by the Mughal Empire. They adopted and adapted elements from the Mughal style, incorporating them into their own unique forms. || Kalighata painting style emerged in the 19th century in West Bengal, particularly around the Kalighat Kali Temple in Kolkata. It developed as a distinct school and was not significantly influenced by the Mughal style, which had declined by that time.

B) Indian Culture and Heritage

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| c | d | d | b | a | b | b | a | b | c | c | d | a | c | d | b | a | c | d | c |

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|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| b | a | a | a | c | d | c | a | c | d | d |

A 1] c) II, III and IV - The Gandhi Peace Prize is awarded for making a positive impact in society through the path of non-violence. || The winner is chosen by a Jury of five members. 1) Prime Minister of India. 2) Chief Justice of India, the 3) Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in that House), and 4,5) Two other eminent persons. || The award was last given in 2021 to Gita Press, Gorakhpur and to Daughter Of Sheikh (as of Nov 2025)

A 2] d) Tribal languages - Halbi, Ho, and Kui are all tribal languages spoken in central and eastern India. They are associated with communities in

Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand and neighbouring regions.

A 3] d) 1, 2 and 3 - Statement 1 incorrect – Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are not “titles” under Article 18(1). The Supreme Court has clarified that these awards are merely decorations and do not amount to titles that are prohibited by the Constitution. || Statement 2 incorrect – Padma Awards were instituted in 1954, but they were suspended three times: 1977–1980 (Janata Government), 1992–1995 (due to litigation on criteria), 1997 (brief administrative suspension) So they were not suspended only once. || Statement 3

incorrect – Bharat Ratna is restricted to a maximum of three recipients in a year, not five.

A 4] b) 2 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The International Mother Language Day is not declared by UNICEF. It is a worldwide observance initiated by the UNESCO to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. || Statement 2 correct: The demand for recognizing Bangla as one of the national languages of Pakistan was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. The linguistic and cultural rights of the Bengali-speaking population played a significant role in the events leading up to the independence of Bangladesh.

A 5] a) 1 only – Pair 1 correct: The Chaliha Sahib is a 40-day fasting festival observed by the Sindhi community in honor of their patron deity, Lord Jhulelal. || Pair 2 incorrect: The Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra is a pilgrimage associated with the Nanda Devi temple in Uttarakhand, primarily observed by the Garhwali and Kumaoni communities. || Pair 3 incorrect: Wari is a pilgrimage undertaken by Warkaris, a devotional sect within Hinduism, primarily from Maharashtra, to the temple town of Pandharpur. Santhals are an indigenous tribe residing primarily in eastern India, not associated with Wari tradition.

A 6] b) Gond and Korku - The Gond and Korku communities in central India participate in a month-long ecological campaign/festival known as “Van Mahotsav” or “Tree Plantation Week.” During this event, communities plant saplings of fruit-bearing trees and other plants to promote afforestation and environmental conservation.

A 7] b) 2 and 3 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The Changpa community primarily resides in the Ladakh region, not Uttarakhand. || Statement 2 correct: The Changpa community is known for rearing Pashmina goats, which produce the fine wool known as Pashmina wool. || Statement 3 correct: The Changpa community is recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in India.

A 8] a) 22nd March (or 21st March)- The National Calendar of India is based on the Saka Era, which uses a solar year with 365 days, similar to the Gregorian calendar in normal years (not leap years). Chaitra 1 is the first day of the first month in the National Calendar. Therefore, Chaitra 1 in the National Calendar corresponds to the same day as March 21st in the Gregorian calendar in a normal year. However, due to the slight difference in the starting points of both calendars, in a leap year of the Gregorian calendar, Chaitra 1 would fall on March 22nd.

A 9] b) Musical tradition in North-West India- The Manganiyars are a community of musicians and singers hailing from the Thar Desert region, particularly in the state of Rajasthan in North-West India. They are known for their rich musical tradition, and their repertoire includes various traditional folk songs and classical compositions.

A 10] c) 2 and 3 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is not under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. It is an independent non-governmental organization (NGO) that operates as a registered charity. || Statement 2 correct: This statement is correct. The primary objective of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is to conserve nature through action-based research, education, and public awareness programs. It is involved in various conservation projects and initiatives aimed at protecting wildlife and their habitats. || Statement 3 correct: This statement is correct. The BNHS organizes and conducts nature trails, camps, workshops, and other educational programs for the general public, aimed at fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature and wildlife.

A 11] c) 2 and 3 only- As of October 2025, a total of 11 Indian languages hold the status of Classical Language. || The Government of India conferred the ‘Classical Language’ status to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali languages on October 03, 2024 || Six Indian languages —Tamil, Sanskrit,

Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia—were earlier accorded the status of classical languages between 2004 to 2024. || Gujarati language is not included in classical languages.

A 12] d) Mundaka Upanishad - The national motto “Satyameva Jayate” is derived from the Mundaka Upanishad. The phrase translates to “Truth alone triumphs” in English.

A 13] a) 1 and 3 only – Pair 1 correct: The Limbu tribe is indeed associated with the state of Sikkim || Pair 2 incorrect: The Karbi tribe is not associated with Himachal Pradesh. They are primarily found in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. || Pair 3 correct: The Dongria Kondh tribe is indeed associated with the state of Odisha. || Pair 4 correct: The Bonda tribe is not associated with Tamil Nadu. They are mainly found in the Malkangiri district of Odisha.

A 14] c) 1,3 & 4 only - Statement 1 correct: From Ancient India, the Susruta Samhita, a medical text, describes different surgical instruments & techniques used for surgeries. || Statement 2 incorrect: There is no conclusive proof to suggest that transplanting of organ were performed in ancient India. || Statement 3 correct: The concept was first established by the Indian mathematician Aryabhata in his work Aryabhatiya, that was written in the 5th century AD. || Statement 4 correct: The concept was first discussed by the Indian mathematician Bhaskara in his work Lilavati, which was written in the 7th century AD.

A 15] d) Traditional salt pan workers community of Gujarat - The Agaria community is traditionally associated with salt production, and they are known as traditional salt pan workers. They have been historically involved in salt extraction and production in the salt pans of Gujarat.

A 16] b) Nicobar Islands - The Shompens are one of the indigenous tribes residing in the Nicobar Islands. They have their distinct culture, language, and are concentrated in certain parts of the Nicobar Islands.

A 17] a) Lengths of sides of a right-angled triangle -

The Baudhayan theorem, attributed to the ancient Indian mathematician Baudhayana, is a geometric principle that provides a method for constructing a right-angled triangle with its sides in a specific ratio. The theorem is essentially a geometric representation of the Pythagorean theorem.

A 18] c) Bengali – Bengali / Bangla, is spoken by a significant number of people globally. It is the second most spoken language in India as well, after Hindi. The large population of Bangladesh contributes to the widespread usage of Bengali, making it one of the most spoken languages in the world.

A 19] d) 24 - The Dharma Chakra, which appears in the center of the National Flag of India, has 24 spokes. These spokes represent the Ashoka Chakra, a symbol associated with the Maurya Emperor Ashoka.

A 20] c) Sun Temple, Konark - The redesigned logo of Indian Airlines (now Indian) is inspired by the famous Sun Temple in Konark, Odisha. The wheel motif from the temple has been incorporated into the airline’s logo design. || The logo was changed again in 2023.

A 21] b) 2 3 1 4 – Bhaskaracharya: The famous Hindu mathematician, in his treatise Surya Siddhanta, calculated the time taken for the earth to orbit the sun to 9 decimal places. He rightly calculated the time taken by the earth to orbit the sun hundreds of years before the astronomer Smart. His calculations was – Time taken by earth to orbit the sun (5th century): 365.258756484 days. || Budhayana first calculated the value of Pi, and he explained the concept of what is known as the Pythagorean Theorem. || Aryabhata: Zero as a numeral and the place-value system emerged in India, but no single inventor is known. Aryabhata used zero implicitly, but he did not invent the symbol. Varahamihira and Bhaskara I also used it later. Thus the invention of zero is often attributed to an unknown Indian mathematician. However, among given options, Aryabhata is closest. || The game of

snakes and ladders is most popular in almost all houses and across all countries of the world. The credit for the game goes to the 13th century Marathi saint poet composer Gyanadev, also known as Dnyaneshwar. When the saint invented the game, it was called Mokshapat.

A 22] a) Raja Rao: Telugu - Raja Rao is not a Telugu writer. He was born in a Kannada-speaking Brahmin family and wrote almost entirely in English, becoming one of the leading figures of Indo-Anglian literature. || Gobind Trimbuk Deshpande wrote in Marathi, Subramania Bharati in Tamil, and Tara Shankar Joshi in Gujarati—all correctly matched.

A 23] a) Andaman and Nicobar Islands - The Onge tribe is one of the indigenous tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Notably, islands are home to various other tribes as well.

A 24] a) The National Song Vande Mataram was composed by Bankimchandra Chatterji originally in Bengali – Statement a) incorrect: Vande Mataram was composed by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, but originally in Sanskrit, not Bengali. || Statement b), c) and d) are all correct in their given format.

A 25] c) Mizoram - Chapchar Kut is a festival celebrated in the state of Mizoram. It is an important traditional festival, usually celebrated in the month of March after completion of the Jhum cultivation, and it marks the arrival of spring.

A 26] d) Korba: Kodagu – The first three pairs are correctly matched. The incorrect pair is d). Korba are a tribal group found mainly in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and parts of Odisha — not in Kodagu (Coorg), which is in Karnataka.

A 27] c) Khasi - Khasi belongs to the Austro-Asiatic (Austic) language family. It is spoken mainly in Meghalaya. || India's languages belong to four major families. || 1) The Indo-Aryan group, a branch of the larger Indo-European family, dominates northern, western and central India. Languages such as Hindi,

Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati and Punjabi evolved from Sanskrit. || 2) The Dravidian languages are native to South India and represent one of the world's oldest linguistic traditions. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam belong to this family. These languages did not originate from Sanskrit, and their earliest forms can be traced back to at least the early centuries BCE. || 3) The Austro-Asiatic (Austic) family includes some of the oldest tribal languages of central and eastern India. Khasi, Santhali, Munda and Ho fall in this category. || 4) The Tibeto-Burman languages are spoken across the Himalayan belt and the Northeast. Ladakhi, Bodo, Meitei (Manipuri), Nishi and Lepcha are major examples.

A 28] a) 601 - In 78 AD, the Saka Era started and Vikram era started from 58 BC. So if we want to convert Badami rock inscription of Pulakesin I to Vikram era, it will be $465 + 78 + 58 = 601$ Vikram Samvat.

A 29] c) I B, II C, III A, IV D- Visakhadatta: B) Drama - Visakhadatta was an ancient Indian playwright known for his Sanskrit drama. He is most famous for his play "Mudrarakshasa." || II. Varahamihira: C) Astronomy - Varahamihira was an ancient Indian astronomer, mathematician, and astrologer. He is renowned for his contributions to astronomy, as seen in his works like "Pancha-Siddhantika." || III. Charaka: A) Medicine - Charaka was an ancient Indian physician and one of the principal contributors to Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine. His work "Charaka Samhita" is a foundational text in Ayurvedic medicine. || IV. Brahmagupta: D) Mathematics - Brahmagupta was an ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer. He made significant contributions to mathematics, especially in the field of algebra. His work "Brahmasphutasiddhanta" is a key mathematical text.

A 30] d) ID, IIC, IIIB, IVA – Vikram era – 58 BC: In 57 BC, Indian calendar starting which was The Vikram Era. Half a century before the Gregorian calendar. || Saka era – 78 AD: The Shaka era is the vernal / March equinox of the year AD 78. The year of the official

Shaka Calendar is tied to the Gregorian date of 22 March every year, except in Gregorian leap years when it starts on 21 March. || Gupta era – 320 AD: The Gupta Empire was an ancient Indian empire existing from the mid-to-late 3rd century CE to 543 CE. At its zenith, from approximately 319 to 543 CE, it covered much of the Indian subcontinent. This period is considered as the Golden Age of India by some historians. || Kali era – 3102 BC: According to the traditional Surya Siddhanta and the Puranic chronology, Kali Yuga began at 00:00 hours on 18 February 3102 BCE. This moment is considered the departure of Krishna from the Earth, which marks the end of Dvapara Yuga and the start of Kali Yuga.

A 31] d) An unknown Indian- The concept of zero was not invented by a single person, but rather developed gradually by mathematicians in ancient India. || Aryabhata (5th century AD) is credited with being one of the first to use zero as a placeholder in his mathematical work. || Brahmagupta (7th century AD): He is regarded as the first to define zero as a number and establish its mathematical properties, including using it in calculations and equations.

2] Ancient Indian History

A) Politics and Society

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| b | d | d | c | c | b | c | b | a | c | c | c | c | c | c | b | a | c | c | a |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| c | d | c | c | b | b | a | d | a | a | a | c | a | c | a | d | d | a | a | a |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 |
| c | d | b | a | a | d | b | b | b | c | c | a | d | c | c | c | c | a | d | b |

| | | |
|----|----|----|
| 61 | 62 | 63 |
| c | c | b |

1) Prehistoric Age

A 1] b) Ports - Korkai (Pandya kingdom), Poompuhar (Chola kingdom), and Muchiri (Chera kingdom) were famous ancient port towns in South India. While Korkai & Poompuhar were situated in Tamil Nadu, Muchiri was situated in Kerala.

A 2] d) None - The Hoysala Empire was a Kannadiga power (Karnataka) between the 10th and the 14th centuries. || The Gahadavala (in Uttar Pradesh) ruled from the 11th to the 13th century. || The Kakatiya ruled most of the eastern Deccan region during the 12th-14th centuries. || Around the middle of the 12th century, the Yadava ruled the North Maharashtra region. || Thus, none of the dynasties existed / established a kingdom in the early eight century AD.

A 3] d) 2 and 3 - Pair 1 incorrect: Burzahom site (Jammu and Kashmir) is a Neolithic site. Rock-cut shrines were not found in the Neolithic period. || Pair 2 correct: Chandraketugarh is famous for being a major ancient trading port and urban center in West Bengal. The site is particularly well-known for its exquisite terracotta artifacts, including plaques and figurines. || Pair 3 correct: Ganeshwar is a famous

site in Khetri belt in Rajasthan. Ganeshwar complex sites have yielded more than 5000 copper objects, with some typical Harappan types like thin blades, arrow-heads etc.

2) Indus Valley Civilization

A 4] c) Bronze - The Dancing Girl is a bronze statue created over 4,500 years ago and is a rare and unique masterpiece. It was found in the ancient Mohenjo-Daro site in 1926.

A 5] c) Sohgauna - Of the given options, Sohgauna is not a harappan site. It is a village on the banks of the Rapti River, in the Gorakhpur District, Uttar Pradesh. The earliest known copper-plate, known as the Sohgauna copper-plate, is a Mauryan record that mentions famine relief efforts. || On the other hand, Chanhu-daro is an archaeological site belonging to; the Indus Valley Civilization. The site is located south of Mohenjo-daro, in Sindh, Pakistan. || The ancient site at Kot Diji was also part of the Indus Civilization. || Desalpur, a small settlement in Kutch, is known for a stone and rubble wall and is considered a port in the Indus Valley civilization.

A 6] b) 2 only - Statement 1 incorrect: No building has been discovered at any Harappan site that can be

positively identified as a temple, but the Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro may have been used for ritual purposes. || Statement 2 correct: A seal with male figure sitting in a yogic posture with a trident-like headgear, surrounded by animals, has been found. Further, figurines resembling a female deity have also been found. Thus, Indus civilization worshipped both male and female deities. || Statement 3 incorrect: There is no concrete proof to conclude that people of Indus Valley Civilization employed horses.

A 7] c) Both 1 and 2 - Statement 1 is correct: Indus Valley Civilization is often described as having a secular character. While some religious symbols and figures (like the "proto-Shiva" or "Pashupati" seal) have been found, there is no strong evidence of grand temples or organized religion dominating society. || Statement 2 is correct: Farmers in Indus valley civilization were the first to weave cotton textiles.

A 8] b) 2 1 4 3 - Pair A-2: The excavated site of Lothal is the port-town of the Indus Valley Civilization. It has been identified as a tidal dockyard || Pair B-1: A ploughed field was found at Kalibangan excavations in present western Rajasthan || Pair C-4: One of the most exciting discoveries at Dholavira is a large wooden "signboard", the longest known Indus inscription. || Pair D-3: A clay (terracotta) model of plough has been found from Banawali, an archaeological site in Haryana.

A 9] a) Cow - The Harappan seal-tablets depict a number of animals, but eight are most common. Four of these are wild animals of the grasslands: tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo (TERB acronym). These are in a minority within the entire sample of seal-tablets. The other four animals are domestic ones : goat, zebu, shorthorn bullock, and the so-called unicorn bull. Cow, camel, horse and lion were not depicted on seals. Cow's appearance is first noted in Vedic texts.

3) Vedic Age

A 10] c) 1 and 3 only - Statement 1 is correct: The Rig Vedic charioteers did use a coat of mail (a jacket covered with or composed of metal rings or plates, serving as armour), it was called *varma*. They also made use of helmets, known as *sipra/sironastra*. Additionally, they were also equipped with *asi* (swords), *hanas* (arrows) and *ilhianus* (bows). But in Indus Valley civilization there is no proof of this. || Statement 2 is incorrect: Harappan men and women wore ornaments made of gold, silver, copper, bronze and semiprecious stones. However, Harappans did not know iron. || Statement 3 is correct: There are many prayers in the Rigveda for cattle, children (especially sons), and horses. Whereas there is no concrete evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of a horse.

A 11] c) Worship of Nature and Yajnas - According to prevalent text and theories, Vedic Aryans worshipped the forces of nature such as the Sun, the Fire, the Wind, the Dawn, the Water, the Rain God Indra and Earth. Performing Yajnas was an integral part of Vedic tradition. Thus, Nature Worship and Yajnas is the correct answer.

A 12] c) Both 1 and 2 - Statement 1 correct: Often the word dharma is translated to mean religion, but this interpretation is not correct. In Hinduism, Dharma represents duty / obligation. Each varna and ashrama had its own prescribed duties, which is called 'dharma' of that particular class e.g. grihastha-dharma - duties of a householder || Statement 2 correct: The word Rta denotes cosmic order. The Vedas hold that behind the various forms in this world, there exists a law that governs them. In the solar activity, lunar activity, and the seasonal changes, there are well-defined principles. Similarly, there exists governing principles behind living beings. Every element has its own nature and assigned duty. Thus, the order present and observed in the universe is called rta (rita).

A 13] c) A speech group - The term *Aryan* (from Sanskrit *ārya*) was originally a self-designation by

early Indo-Iranian speakers and came to denote those who spoke the so-called “Aryan” (i.e. Indo-Iranian / Indo-Aryan) languages.

A 14] c) Kosa- Kula: In ancient Indian society, “Kula” refers to a family or lineage. It represents a larger kinship group comprising extended family members. || Vamsa: “Vamsa” refers to a dynasty or a lineage, often associated with a ruling family or a royal lineage. It implies a succession of rulers within a particular family. || Gotra: “Gotra” refers to a clan or a lineage, often associated with a specific ancestor. People belonging to the same gotra are considered to be descendants of a common ancestor. || Kosa: The term “Kosa” generally refers to a treasure or a covering. || Thus, in the context of the given options “Kosa” is not directly associated with family, lineage, or clan etc.

A 15] c) India- According to prevalent theories, the original home of the Romani people, often known as "Gypsies," was northern India. Their migration from South Asia to Europe began in the Middle Ages.

4) Age of Mahajanpadas

A 16] b) Only two - Pair I correct: The Mahajanapada of Asmaka (also spelled Assaka) was located in the Deccan region on the banks of the Godavari River. || Pair II incorrect: Kamboja was located in the north-western region (modern Afghanistan region), not near the Vipas (Beas) River. || Pair III incorrect: Avanti was situated around the Malwa region (modern Ujjain area) on the banks of the Narmada River, not Mahanadi. || Pair IV correct: The Kosala kingdom was located in the Awadh region of what is now Uttar Pradesh. Its capital, Ayodhya, was situated on the banks of the Sarayu river. || Only pairs I and IV are correctly matched.

A 17] a) 1 and 3 only - Pair 1 is correct: Bhilsa is the ancient city of Vidisha, the centre of the Sunga dynasty). It was located in current Madhya Pradesh || Pair 2 is incorrect: Dwarasamudra was the capital of the Hoysala Empire located in Karnataka, not Maharashtra || Pair 3 is correct: Girinagar, also

known as the “city-on-the-hills” is located in Junagadh district in Gujarat. || Pair 4 is incorrect: Sthanesvara is currently situated in Haryana, not UP.

A 18] c) 2 and 5 only - Pair 1 is incorrect: Bodhgaya is in Bihar and Baghelkhand is a region shared by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. || Pair 2 is correct: Khajuraho was built by the Chandela dynasty in Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. || Pair 3 is incorrect: Shirdi is in Ahilyanagar (formerly Ahmednagar) district of western Maharashtra not in Vidharba region (eastern Maharashtra). || Pair 4 is incorrect: Malwa, is a region of Madhya Pradesh state whereas Nasik is in Maharashtra || Pair 5 is correct: Tirupati is a major city and a district located within the Rayalaseema region, one of the three main regions of Andhra Pradesh.

A 19] c) 3 and 4 only || Buddha was born in Lumbini, in Kosala kingdom and attained Mahaparinirvana (left body) in Kusinara, in Magadha kingdom. Gandhara and Avanti was not directly associated with the life of Buddha. It was expansion of Maurya empire that Gandhara received much Buddhist influence during the reign of Ashoka.

A 20] a) Indus and Jhelum - The ancient town of Takshasila (also known as Taxila) was a prominent city in ancient India, known for its university and as a centre of learning. Geographically, it was located between Indus and Jhelum rivers, in what is now modern-day Pakistan, near the city of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

A 21] c) Milinda - Bimbisara (c. 558 – 491 BCE) , King of Magadha (Haryanka dynasty) was a contemporary and patron of Gautama Buddha. || Gautama Buddha (c. 563 – 483 BCE), Founder of Buddhism lived during the same period as Bimbisara and Prasenjit. || Prasenjit (Pasenadi) , King of Kosala was a contemporary and follower of Gautama Buddha. || Milinda (Menander I) Indo-Greek king, ruled c. 165–130 BCE, more than 300 years after the time of Buddha. He is well known for the Buddhist text

"Milinda Panha", a dialogue between him and Buddhist monk Nagasena

A 22] d) Magadh - During 6th century BCE, Magadh emerged as the most powerful Mahajanapada (city-state) in India. Its rise was due to several factors including fertile land, strategic location of its capitals like Rajagriha and Pataliputra, rich iron ore deposits which were crucial for making strong weapons and agricultural tools, and ambitious rulers. || Gandhar: Gandhara was located in the northwest, known for trade and culture. || Kamboj: Kamboj was also in the northwest (present day Afghanistan, Pakistan area) || Kashi: Located in present-day Varanasi, it was a prosperous Mahajanapada known for its vibrant trade and religious significance.

A 23] c) I, II and IV - || Pair 1 correct: Lothal was located in present-day Gujarat, Lothal was a prominent Indus Valley Civilization site and a dockyard. || Pair 2 correct: After attaining enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya, Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon at Sarnath, near Varanasi. This event is known as *Dharmachakra Pravartana* (Turning of the Wheel of Dharma). || Pair 3 incorrect: The Lion Capital of Ashoka is located at Sarnath, not Rajgir. || Pair 4 correct: Nalanda, in Bihar, was one of the world's first residential universities and a major Buddhist learning centre from the 5th to 12th centuries CE.

A 24] c) Matsya, Avanti, Vatsa, Anga – Matsya was located in modern-day Jaipur-Alwar region of Rajasthan (location A in map). It is also said to be the refuge of the Pandavas during their exile. || Avanti was located in present-day Malwa region, Madhya Pradesh (Location B in map) || Vatsa was located near modern-day Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh (location C in map) || Anga was located east of Magadha, covering parts of modern-day Bihar and West Bengal. (location D in map).

5) Mauryan Period

A 25] b) district-level administration - As found in Ashokan inscriptions, Pradeshika functioned as a

district-level officer || Rajuka acted like modern-day district magistrates. He was entrusted with judicial and administrative functions at the district level, including land measurement and law enforcement. || Yukta was typically clerical officers or functionaries, involved in record keeping and assisting other officials.

A 26] b) 2 and 3 only - Note: As per UPSC answer key, the answer is option (b). But as per historian's text, the correct answer is option (d) || Kautilya's Arthashastra contains a separate chapter titled 'Rules regarding slaves'. According to the book, Statement 1 correct: Kautilya mentions that a person could become a slave as a result of judicial punishment. This could happen on failure to pay the debt or some other offence. || Statement 2 correct: Kautilya also says that if a female slave bore her master a child, both the child and its mother shall at once be recognized as free. || Statement 3 correct: It is mentioned that if a son born to a female slave was fathered by her master, the son was entitled to the legal status of the master's son.

A 27] a) Ashoka – The given statement is from Emperor Ashoka's 12th Rock Edict. The Mauryan emperor (reigned c. 268–232 BCE), embraced Buddhism after the Kalinga War. His policy, known as Dhamma, promoted ethical living, non-violence, and respect for all religious traditions.

A28] d) 1, 2 and 3 – Statement 1 correct: Brihadratha Maurya was the last Mauryan emperor. He was assassinated around 185 BCE by his commander-in-chief Pushyamitra Sunga, who then established the Sunga dynasty. || Statement 2 correct: Devabhuti was the last king of the Sunga dynasty. He was killed by Vasudeva Kanva, his Brahmana minister, who founded the Kanva dynasty around 73 BCE. The Kanva dynasty ended around 28 BCE. || Statement 3 correct: The last Kanva king (probably Susharman) was overthrown by the Satavahanas (Andhras), marking the end of the Kanva line and establishing Andhra control in the region.

A 29] a) Nanda - When Alexander invaded northwestern India in 327–325 BCE, the ruling dynasty in Magadha (North India) was the Nanda dynasty. || The Maurya dynasty was established after Alexander's departure, around 321 BCE, by Chandragupta Maurya with help from Chanakya (Kautilya). Sunga – The Sunga dynasty came later, founded by Pushyamitra Sunga around 185 BCE after the fall of the Mauryas. Kanva dynasty followed Sunga dynasty.

A 30] a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A- Kalinga's location (modern Orissa along coast) was vital for connecting the Mauryan Empire to southern regions and overseas territories via land and sea routes. Kalinga controlled important land and sea trade routes, which could bolster the Mauryan economy and influence. Ashoka sought to expand the Mauryan Empire, and Kalinga's independence represented a hurdle to this goal. Thus, Ashoka annexed Kalinga to Mauryan empire.

A 31] a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A - Ashoka emphasized Dhamma (moral law), which prioritized social ethics, tolerance, compassion, and harmony among all religious sects. His edicts stress unity and peaceful coexistence over strict religious ritualism or dogma. Ashoka's concept of Dhamma was not about promoting Buddhism as a religion, but rather spreading universal values like respect for elders, non-violence, fairness, and kindness. He deliberately avoided sectarian promotion and focused on equity and ethical conduct.

A 32] c) Asoka Towards close of his reign- The map shows the Mauryan Empire at its greatest territorial extent, which occurred during the reign of Emperor Ashoka. The empire stretched from modern-day Afghanistan in the west to Bangladesh in the east and as far south as northern Kerala and Andhra. The empire later disintegrated after Ashoka's reign due to weaker successors.

6) Post Mauryan Period: Greek, Saka, Parthian and Kushan Invasions, Satavahanas in Deccan

A 33] a) Greeks . Sakas . Kushans - The correct chronological order of these invasions in India is: Greeks (Indo-Greeks) → Shakas (Scythians) → Parthians → Kushans || Greeks (Indo-Greeks): Entered northwestern India around 2nd century BCE after Alexander's invasion (326 BCE). || Shakas (Scythians): Invaded India after the Indo-Greeks, around 1st century BCE. || Parthians: Followed the Shakas and ruled parts of northwestern India in the 1st century CE || Kushans: Came last, establishing a large empire in north India during the 1st–3rd centuries CE.

A 34] c) South East Asian trade- After the decline of the Roman Empire in the 3rd century AD (partly due to Hun invasions), Indo-Roman trade declined sharply. This led to the intensification of India's trade with South-East Asia. Notably, Indian cultural influence (including Hinduism and Buddhism) also spread widely in these areas during this period.

A 35] a) Bactria – Bactria civilization was established in modern-day northern Afghanistan in the early 2nd century. It was originally a satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire, later taken over by Alexander. After Alexander's death, it came under the Seleucid Empire, and later, around 250 BCE, it became independent under Diodotus I, founding the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom. From there, the Indo-Greeks expanded into northwestern India, establishing a strong cultural and economic presence.

A 36] d) Buddhism provided easier access to Indian society - Foreign groups like the Greeks, Kushanas, and Shakas sought to integrate in Indian society to gain legitimacy for their rule. They found it easier to do so by adopting Buddhism due to its less restrictive nature.

A 37] d) IV, III, II, I - Urban Culture (IV): The earliest evidence of urban culture in India is associated with

the Indus Valley Civilization, which dates back to around 2500 BCE. Iron Plough (III): The use of iron, including the iron plough, became common in the later Vedic period, around the early first millennium BCE (roughly 1000 BCE). Punch-marked silver coins (II): These coins emerged around 600 BCE during the Mahajanapada period. Gold coins (I): Gold coins were introduced significantly later, with the first widely circulated ones issued by the Indo-Greeks around the turn of the Christian era or slightly before, followed by the Kushanas.

7) Guptas and Vakatakas

A 38] a) Measurement of land - The terms '*kulyavapa*' and '*dronavapa*' appear in ancient Indian land records and inscriptions, particularly during the Gupta period. These terms were units of land measurement, based on the amount of seed required to sow a particular area. || A *dronavapa* referred to the area of land that required one drona of seeds to be sown. || A *kulyavapa* was a larger unit, approximately eight times the size of a *dronavapa*, representing the area that required one kulya of seeds.

A 39] a) Ports handling foreign trade - During the Gupta period (c. 320–550 CE), trade flourished both within India and internationally. || Ghantasala and Kadura served as significant ports on the eastern coast, involved in trade with Southeast Asia. || Chaul, a port on the western coast in present-day Maharashtra, facilitated trade with regions including the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea.

A 40] a) It was considered a source of income for the State, a sort of tax paid by the people. - Vishti was a form of forced labour where the state could compel people to work for a certain period without pay for public works, such as constructing roads, fortifications, and irrigation systems, or for other state projects. The labour provided served as a non-monetary contribution to the state's resources, similar to a tax paid in kind.

A 41] c) 2 & 3 Only - Guild System in ancient India was an organised association of traders and craftsmen. Statement 1 incorrect: These were largely autonomous and self-governing bodies. While the state recognized guilds, it did not exercise day-to-day administrative control over them. || Statement 2 correct: The functions of these shrenis included fixing fair wages, setting rules for work, maintaining quality standards for goods, and establishing prices etc. || Statement 3 correct: At the same time Guilds functioned as quasi-judicial bodies and had the authority to settle disputes among their members.

A 42] d) Neither 1 nor 2 – Statement 1 incorrect: Fa-Hien, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II (Gupta dynasty) in the early 5th century CE. The Fourth Great Buddhist Council was held much earlier, during the reign of the Kushan emperor Kanishka in the 1st or 2nd century CE. Thus, Fa-Hien could not have attended Kanishka's council. || Statement 2 incorrect: Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang), another Chinese pilgrim, did visit India during the reign of Emperor Harsha in the 7th century CE. However, Xuanzang's accounts portray Harsha as a patron and supporter of Buddhism, not as being antagonistic towards it.

A 43] b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A - While military campaigns contributed to the origin of some aspects of feudalism, the expansion during the Gupta period was driven by broader factors, primarily the proliferation of land grants for various purposes, including religious and administrative, and not solely by military campaigns.

A 44] a) Tamralipti - The port that handled North Indian trade during the Gupta period was Tamralipti. Located near the mouth of the Ganges River (modern Tamluk in West Bengal), it served as a vital port for trade between the Gangetic plains and Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and possibly China. || Broach (Bharuch) and Cambay (Khambhat)[both in Gujrat] were on the west coast and primarily facilitated trade

with the Roman Empire, Persia, and Arabia. || Kalyan (Maharashtra) was also a west coast port.

A 45] a) Rupaka- During the Gupta period, the silver coins issued by the rulers were known as Rupaka. These coins were often inspired by the silver coinage of the Western Satraps, whom the Guptas had defeated. They typically depicted the king's bust on the obverse and an eagle or a peacock on the reverse. || Dinara was the name given to the gold coins issued by the Guptas. || Karshapana was a term for ancient Indian coins, usually silver or copper, that predated and continued into early historical periods, but it wasn't the specific name for Gupta silver coins. || Pana was a term used for silver coins in ancient India, particularly during the Mauryan period.

A 46] d) Susruta- Susruta (*Sushruta*) was an ancient Indian physician and surgeon who is widely regarded as the "Father of Surgery." His work, the *Sushruta Samhita*, is a foundational text of Ayurveda that details numerous surgical procedures, instruments, and medical treatments. The exact date of *Sushruta* remains unclear, however given that none of the other options are physicians, d) is correct answer. || Saumilla was a literary figure of the Gupta era. || Sudraka was a playwright, author of the famous Sanskrit drama *Mricchakatika* (The Little Clay Cart). || Shaunaka was an ancient sage known for his contributions to Vedic literature and grammar.

A 47 b) Prakrit- During the Gupta period, Sanskrit drama was a highly structured art form with clear conventions, including the use of language based on social hierarchy. || Characters belonging to higher social classes, such as kings, noblemen, and Brahmins, spoke Sanskrit. However, characters of lower social status, including women and Sudras, spoke Prakrit, which was a group of vernacular languages. || Prakrit was the common spoken language, while Sanskrit was considered a more refined literary language.

8) Era of King Harsha

A 48] b) 1, 3, 4 and 6- 1) The Guptas of Magadha: A later line of Guptas, distinct from the Imperial Guptas, ruled Magadha and Malwa region around 6th to 8th century CE. || **3) The Pushyabhutis of Thanesar:** This dynasty, based in Thanesar (present-day Haryana) also ruled during 6th and 7th century CE || **4) Maukharis of Kanauj:** This dynasty ruled from Kanauj (Uttar Pradesh) during 6th century CE || **6) The Maitrakas of Valabhi:** Saurashtra (modern Gujarat) ruled during 5th to 8th century CE. || Thus, all these mentioned kingdoms were holding power in Northern India from the decline of Guptas until the rise of Harshavardhana in the early seventh century. || Further, **2) The Paramaras of Malwa** were a prominent Rajput dynasty that ruled the Malwa region in central India from the 9th to the 14th century CE, after the era of Harsha. Similarly, **5) the Yadavas of Devagiri** were a powerful Deccan-based dynasty that ruled from the late 12th to the early 14th century, (after Harsha) with their capital at Devagiri (modern-day Daulatabad – Ch. Sambhajinagar).

A 49] b) Pulakesin II- Emperor Harsha's southward march was stopped on the Narmada river by Pulakesin II, the most powerful ruler of the Chalukya dynasty of Vatapi. This significant event is recorded in the Aihole inscription, a key source for this period of ancient Indian history. || Pulakesin I (reign c. 543–566 CE) was the founder of the Chalukya dynasty, with his capital at Vatapi (Badami). || Vikramaditya I (reign 655–680 CE) was the son of Pulakesin II. || Vikramaditya II (reign c. 733–744 CE) was known for his military campaigns against the Pallavas of Kanchipuram.

A 50] c) A is true, but R is false- Historical sources, including accounts by Xuanzang, indicate that Harshavardhana held regular religious assemblies at Prayag. These events, known as the Maha Moksha Parishad, involved significant charitable donations. However, Harshavardhana did not want to popularize only the Mahayana form of Buddhism: While Harshavardhana supported Buddhism, particularly

the Mahayana school, his Prayag assemblies were inclusive. Xuanzang's writings describe distributions to and veneration of images of Buddha, Surya, and Shiva, with gifts given to followers of various religions including Buddhists (Hinayana and Mahayana), Brahmanas, and Jains. This demonstrates that his policy was one of religious tolerance rather than promoting only one faith.

9) History of South India

A 51] c) Rajendra I (Chola)- Chola Emperor Rajendra I launched a major overseas naval expedition against the Srivijaya empire around 1025 CE. || Amoghavarsha-I was a Rashtrakuta ruler focused on consolidating power in the Deccan. || Prataparudra was a ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty in the South India || Vishnuvardhana was a Hoysala ruler whose military activities were concentrated within South India

A 52] a) Mahendravarman I- Mahendravarman I was a king of the Pallava dynasty who ruled in the early 7th century CE. He is known for his versatile personality and extensive patronage of the arts, literature, and architecture, reflected in these titles he assumed. || Simhavishnu is known for revival of the Pallava dynasty in the 6th century, expanded the kingdom, and conquered territories from the Cholas and Pandyas. || Narasimhavarman I is considered as the greatest Pallava ruler, he defeated Pulakesin II, captured Vatapi, and founded the city of Mahabalipuram. || Simhavarman: Multiple early Pallava rulers were named Simhavarman.

A 53] d) 1 and 3 – Pair 1 correct: Eripatti was the land, the revenue generated from which was explicitly used for the upkeep and repair of the village irrigation tank. || Pair 2 incorrect: Taniyurs were large, autonomous villages or single revenue units that were granted a special administrative status, often functioning as independent entities within a larger nadu (district). The term for villages donated to Brahmins was Brahmadeya. || Pair 3 correct: Ghatikas (also known as Ghatikasthanas) were centers of higher learning in ancient and early medieval South

India. They were often associated with temples and specialized in Vedic and other scholarly subjects. A well-known example was the Ghatika at Kanchipuram.

A 54] c) Monsoon winds across the bay of Bengal facilitated sea voyages- While superior technology such as Ship Building and royal patronage played important roles, the predictable, seasonal monsoon winds were the natural and essential condition that made continuous, long-distance voyages across the Bay of Bengal feasible for millennia. || India cannot said to have had better ship building technology than Europeans in medieval times, making option a) incorrect. || While the rules did patronized traders, Brahmins, monks etc. the word ALWAYS isn't true. There were some exceptions to this. This makes option b) incorrect.

A 55] c) Both 1 and 2 - The Cholas, particularly during the reigns of kings like Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, repeatedly defeated the Pandya and Chera rulers, integrating their territories into the Chola Empire. || Rajendra I, a prominent Chola king, led a major naval expedition against the Srivijaya Empire (present day Malaysia, Indonesia) in Southeast Asia in 1025 CE. This campaign successfully targeted and conquered some of its areas, significantly weakening Srivijaya's maritime power.

A 56] c) Rajendra - Rajaraja-I initiated the Chola conquest of Ceylon (also known as Ila-mandalam or Singhal) in 993 CE by invading and annexing the northern half, including the Anuradhapura Kingdom. || Rajendra I completed this conquest by invading the entire island around 1017-1018 CE, defeating the Sinhalese king Mahinda V, taking him prisoner, and incorporating the entire territory, including the southern province of Ruhuna, into the Chola Empire. || Vijayalaya was the founder of the Imperial Chola dynasty, a Pallava feudatory who captured Thanjavur and established the Chola kingdom in the 9th century CE. || Aditya I was the Son of Vijayalaya.

A 57] c) The absence of vast areas of fertile land -

Unlike the Gangetic plains in North India which supported large empires due to abundant resources, South Indian kingdoms were primarily located in river valleys, making a contiguous large territory difficult to administer. Apart from this geographical factors like tough terrain etc led to small regional kingdoms rather than large empires. || Other factors mentioned in options i.e. absence of minerals, social divisions or lack of manpower are not equally applicable.

A 58] a) ID, IIC, IIIA, IVB – ID:

The Dashavatara Temple in Deogarh is a prominent example of Gupta architecture, known for its intricate carvings and early Nagara style. || **IIC:** The Khajuraho temples, famous for their architectural grandeur and sculptures, were built by the Chandella dynasty. || **IIIA:** The Badami Cave Temples, including both Hindu and Jain shrines carved out of sandstone, are associated with the Chalukya dynasty. || **IVB:** The Talagirisvara temple in Panamalai is a Shiva temple built by Pallava king Rajasimha (Narasimhavarman II), notable for its early structural architecture.

A 59] d) Manigrama -

Manigrama was an influential corporation or guild of merchants in ancient and medieval South India. || Chaturvedimangala refers to a specific type of village or settlement, usually inhabited by followers of the four Vedas. || Parishad refers to a council or assembly, often associated with governance or decision-making. ||

Ashtadikgaja refers to the eight eminent poets in Krishnadevaraya's court.

10) Post Harsha Period**A 60] b) Only two pairs –**

Pair 1 correct: Nannuka was the founder of the Chandela dynasty in the 9th century CE. || Pair 2 incorrect: Jayashakti was a ruler of the Chandela dynasty || Pair 3 correct: Nagabhata II was a significant ruler of the Gurjara-Pratihara

dynasty, known for his conquests and for making Kannauj his capital. || Pair 4 incorrect: Bhoja was a king of the Paramara dynasty. Another famous king with the same name, Mihira Bhoja, belonged to the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty.

A 61] c) 2 – 4 – 1 – 3 -

Mahendravarman I ruled the Pallava dynasty from approximately 600–630 CE. || Gopala founded the Pala dynasty around 750 CE. || King Bhoja (Mihira Bhoja) of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty ruled from approximately 836–885 CE. || Parantaka I ruled the Chola dynasty from approximately 907–953 CE.

A 62] c) A bill of exchange-

A bill of exchange is a written order used in trade and finance. It tells one person to pay a fixed amount of money to another person either immediately or on a future date. It is a written promise to pay money. || Hundis were indigenous bills of exchange used in ancient India. They were widely used after the post-Harsha period when long-distance trade expanded. Merchants needed a safe way to move money without physically carrying cash because of theft, political instability etc. Hundi functioned as a form of credit, allowing the transfer of money without physical movement.

A 63] b) 2 only –

Statement 1 incorrect: While the Ikshvaku rulers (Andhra Pradesh) around 225-340 AD, were primarily followers of Hinduism (Shaivism), Buddhism flourished under their rule, and they patronized it as well. Numerous Buddhist stupas and viharas were built during their reign. || Statement 2 correct: The Pala rulers (West Bengal) during 8th to the 12th century CE were strong patrons of Buddhism, particularly Mahayana Buddhism. They established and supported numerous Buddhist monasteries (viharas) and educational centers, including the famous Nalanda and Vikramshila Universities.

B) Architecture

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| b | b | a | b | b | a | a | c | a | a | a | a | b | b | b | c | c | c | b | c |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| b | c | a | c | b | a | a | c | c | d | d | b | d | d | a | a | a | b | b | c |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 |
| a | c | d | d | c | d | c | c |

A 1] b) 2 and 3 – Pair 1 incorrect: Chandraketugarh is located in West Bengal, not Odisha. While it was an ancient trading port town || Pair 2 correct: Inamgaon is a significant archaeological site located in Maharashtra, and it is known for providing insights into the Chalcolithic (Copper Age) period, particularly the Jorwe culture. || Pair 3 correct: Mangadu is an archaeological site in Kerala with megalithic structures, which are large stone monuments. || Pair 4 incorrect: Salihundam is an ancient Buddhist site in Andhra Pradesh known for its stupas, chaityas, and monasteries.

A 2] b) Only two – Pair 1 Incorrect: Besnagar, the ancient name for Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh, is famous for the Heliodorus Pillar, which was erected by a Greek ambassador dedicated to Vasudeva (Vishnu). || Pair 2 Correct: The Bhaja Caves are a group of 22 rock-cut caves located in Maharashtra, which are among the earliest examples of Buddhist rock-cut architecture in India. || Pair 3 Correct: Sittanavasal is a village in Tamil Nadu known for its ancient Jain rock-cut cave shrine, which features frescoes and paintings with Jain religious themes.

A 3] a) Archaeological excavations- All the individuals mentioned Alexander Rea, A.H. Longhurst, Robert Sewell, James Burgess, and Walter Elliot were associated with Archaeological excavations in India. These British scholars and officials were prominent figures in Indian archaeology during the colonial period.

A 4] b) Only two - Statement 1 Incorrect: The practice of building burial mounds, or tumuli, existed in India before the rise of Buddhism. The Sanskrit word "Stupa" means "heap" or "pile" and was used for pre-Buddhist mounds. Buddhism adopted this pre-existing concept and developed it into a specific religious and architectural form. || Statement 2 Correct: A primary function of a stupa in Buddhism is to enshrine relics of the Buddha or other revered monks and saints. These relics could be bodily remains (saririka relics) or objects used by the person (*paribhogika* relics). || Statement 3 correct: Stupas served both as votive (an object offered in fulfilment of a vow) objects of worship and as commemorative (acting as a memorial of an event or person) structures.

A 5] b) Only two pairs – Pair 1 correct: Dhauili, a hill near Bhubaneswar (Odisha), is the site of Major Rock Edicts of Ashoka, including the unique "Kalinga Edicts," which were specially inscribed after the Kalinga War. || Pair 2 correct: Erragudi, located in the Kurnool district (Andhra Pradesh), is a significant site where Major Rock Edicts of Ashoka have been found. || Pair 3 incorrect: Jaugada is another site of Ashoka's Major Rock Edicts, but it is located in the Ganjam district of Odisha || Pair 4 incorrect: The rock edicts at Kalsi are found in the Dehradun district of Uttarakhand.

A 6] a) 1 and 2 only - Statement 1 & 2 correct: Somnath is traditionally considered the first of the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva. The 11th-century Persian scholar Al-Biruni described

the grandeur of the Somnath Temple in his work, Kitab-ul-Hind. His account is a key historical source regarding the temple. || Statement 3 incorrect: The installation ceremony for the present-day temple was performed by the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, on May 11, 1951.

A 7] a) Ajanta Caves lie in the gorge of the Waghora river – Statement a) correct: The Ajanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage site, are carved into a horse shoe-shaped cliff in a gorge created by the Waghora (or Waghur) River in Maharashtra. || Statements b), c) & d) incorrect: The Great Stupa at Sanchi is located on a hilltop in Madhya Pradesh, near the Betwa River. || The Pandu-Lena Caves are located on a hill near Nashik, Maharashtra, which is situated on the banks of the Godavari River. || The Amaravati Stupa is located on the banks of the Krishna River in Andhra Pradesh.

A 8] c) 1 and 4 – Statement 1 & 4 correct: The Chausath Yogini Temple at Mitaoli, near Morena, is known for its circular design. According to an inscription dated to 1323 CE, it was built by Maharaja Devapala of the Kachchhapaghata dynasty. The circular design of the temple bears a striking resemblance to the old Indian Parliament House (Sansad Bhavan), and there is a popular belief that architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker were inspired by the temple. || Statement 2 incorrect: While the Morena temple is a prominent example, it is not the only circular temple in India. Other Chausath Yogini temples, such as the one in Hirapur, Odisha, also have a circular design. || Statement 3 incorrect: The Chausath Yogini temple is dedicated to the 64 Yoginis, female deities representing different aspects of Shakti, and is associated with Shaivism and Tantric traditions, not Vaishnava cult.

A 9] a) Dholavira – Dholavira, located in Gujarat, is an Indus Valley Civilization site, famous for its sophisticated water management system. || Kalibangan: Situated in Rajasthan, this Harappan site is known for its evidence of a ploughed field and fire altars. || Rakhigarhi: As one of the largest Harappan

sites in Haryana, Rakhigarhi shows evidence of urban planning and drainage systems. || Ropar: Located in Punjab, this Indus Valley site is known for showing a sequence of cultures and unique burial practices

A 10] a) Kanganahalli- Excavations at the Kanganahalli Buddhist site in Karnataka unearthed a relief sculpture of a king with his queen and attendants. This sculpture is identified as a portrait of Ashoka because of a Brahmi script inscription below it that reads "Ranyo Asoka" (King Ashoka). This is considered the only known stone portrait of Emperor Ashoka with his name inscribed. || Sanchi is well known for Sanchi Stupa. || Shahbazgarhi, located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan is known for one of Ashoka's Major Rock Edicts, which are inscriptions in the Kharosthi script. || Sohgaura site is known for a pre-Mauryan or early Mauryan copper plate inscription related to famine relief, not a portrait of Ashoka.

A 11] a) Ajanta - The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is at Ajanta. It is located in Cave 1 of the Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra. || The Badami cave temples are a complex of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain cave temples located in Badami, Karnataka. || The Bagh Caves are a group of nine rock-cut monuments, situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhya Range in Bagh town of Madhya Pradesh || The Ellora Caves are primarily known for their magnificent rock-cut sculptures that represent Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism.

A 12] a) 1 only - Arasavalli, located in Andhra Pradesh, is home to the Sri Suryanarayana Swamy Temple, which is one of the most prominent Sun temples in India. || Amarakantak located in Madhya Pradesh is known as a pilgrimage center for Hindus, famous as the origin point of the Narmada and Son rivers, and for its temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and other deities || Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga, located in Madhya Pradesh a shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva, and is one of the twelve Jyotirlinga temples in India.

A 13] b) James Prinsep - James Prinsep was a British antiquary and scholar who, in 1837, successfully deciphered the ancient Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts used in most of the inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka. || Georg Bühler was a German Indologist who contributed to the study of ancient Indian epigraphy later than 1837, the initial decipherment. || Max Müller was a German philologist known for his work on Sanskrit literature and comparative religion, and was not involved in the decipherment of the Ashokan scripts. || William Jones was an English scholar who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal and was a pioneer in studying ancient Indian languages.

A 14] b) 3 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The Ajanta Caves, located in Maharashtra, were created over a long period from the 2nd century BCE to the 5th century CE. The monuments at Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram), in Tamil Nadu, were primarily constructed by the Pallava dynasty in the 7th and 8th centuries CE. || Statement 2 incorrect: The Ajanta Caves are exclusively Buddhist. The monuments at Mahabalipuram are primarily Hindu, dedicated to deities like Shiva and Vishnu. || Statement 3 correct: Both sites contain rock-cut monuments.

A 15] b) Rock-cut Elephant at Dhuli - Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar: The main temple structure was built in the 11th century CE. || Rock-cut Elephant at Dhuli: This is the earliest monument among the choices, dating back to the 3rd century BCE. It was created during the reign of Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire and is one of the earliest examples of rock sculpture in Odisha || Rock-cut Monuments at Mahabalipuram: These were constructed by the Pallava dynasty primarily during the 7th and 8th centuries CE. || Varaha Image at Udayagiri (Madhya Pradesh): This sculpture is associated with the Gupta Empire and is dated to the early 5th century CE.

A 16] c) 1 and 3 only – Pair 1 correct: Cave 26 of the Ajanta Caves features a massive and famous rock-cut sculpture of the reclining Buddha at the moment of his Mahaparinirvana (death), with celestial and mourning figures carved around him. || Pair 2

incorrect: A famous and monumental example of Varaha Avatar is found at the Udayagiri Caves in Madhya Pradesh, dating to the Gupta period. The Mount Abu area is renowned for its Dilwara Jain Temples located in Rajasthan. || Pair 3 correct: Magnificent open-air rock relief, carved on the surface of two huge boulders in Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram), Tamil Nadu, depicts either Arjuna's penance or the descent of the Ganges.

A 17] c) 1 and 3 only - Pair 1 correct: The Tabo Monastery is located in the Tabo village, which is part of the Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh. || Pair 2 incorrect: The Lhotsava Lhakhang temple is located in Nako village in the Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh. Zaskar valley is located in Kargil district of Ladakh || Pair 3 correct: The Alchi Monastery, also known as Alchi Choskor, is a significant Buddhist monastic complex situated in the Leh district of Ladakh.

A 18] c) 1 and 3 only - Panchayatana is style of temple construction and involves a main shrine in the center of a complex, surrounded by four smaller, subsidiary shrines positioned at the four corners. The Dashavatara Temple, at Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh, is the most classic example of this architecture.

A 19] b) Chaitya is a place of worship, while Vihara is the dwelling place of the monks - A chaitya (or chaitya-griha) is a prayer or assembly hall. It is a sacred space designed for congregational worship, containing a stupa at one end, which is the focal point of reverence. || A vihara is a monastery or dwelling place for Buddhist monks and nuns. It typically consists of a central hall or courtyard surrounded by smaller cells where monks lived, studied, and meditated.

A 20] c) 3 only - Statement 1 incorrect: The oldest surviving rock-cut caves in India are the Barabar Caves, which date back to the Mauryan period in the 3rd century BCE. The Badami caves were constructed much later, in the 6th century CE. Statement 2 incorrect: While the caves were indeed made for the

Ajivikas, they were primarily dedicated by Emperor Ashoka and his successor Dasharatha Maurya, not Chandragupta Maurya. Statement 3 correct: The Ellora cave complex is unique because it features rock-cut monuments dedicated to three different religions: Buddhism (caves 1–12), Hinduism (caves 13–29), and Jainism (caves 30–34). The caves were built in close proximity, which showcases the religious harmony that was prevalent during that period in India.

A 21] b) 1 and 2 only- Ajanta Caves (Maharashtra) are famous for their mural paintings and rock-cut sculptures. The paintings primarily depict Jataka tales, which are stories about the previous lives of the Buddha. || Lepakshi Temple (Andhra Pradesh) is known for having some of the most extensive and well-preserved mural paintings from the Vijayanagara period. || Sanchi Stupa is primarily famous for its architecture, particularly the richly carved gateways (toranas) and sculptures that narrate stories from the life of the Buddha and the Jataka tales.

A 22] c) Three main styles of Indian temple architecture - Nagara style: This style of temple architecture flourished in northern India. It is characterized by its tall, curvilinear towers, known as shikharas, and the absence of elaborate boundary walls or gateways. || Dravida style: Prevalent in southern India, this style is known for its pyramid-shaped towers, or vimanas, and elaborate gateway towers, known as gopurams. || Vesara style: Found in central India, this is a hybrid style that combines elements of both Nagara and Dravida styles.

A 23] a) Bagh Caves - The Bagh Caves are located in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh and contain mural paintings dating back to the Gupta period (roughly 4th–6th centuries CE). || Ellora Caves (Maharashtra) are known for their rock-cut temples, but the paintings found there primarily date from periods after the Gupta era. || Lomas Rishi Cave is one of the ancient rock-cut Barabar Caves in Bihar and dates back to the Mauryan period (3rd century BCE), long before the Gupta period. || The Nasik

Caves (also called Pandavleni Caves) (Maharashtra) are a group of Hinayana Buddhist caves whose art largely predates the Gupta period.

A 24] c) Hampi - The Virupaksha temple is one of the oldest and most prominent monuments in Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Karnataka, India. It is dedicated to Lord Virupaksha, a form of Lord Shiva. It predates the Vijayanagara empire, although it was expanded and renovated significantly during that period.

A 25] b) Himachal Pradesh - Tabo Monastery is situated in the Spiti Valley, within the Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh. It is one of the oldest and most important Buddhist monasteries in India and the Himalayas, founded in 996 AD. Due to its exceptional frescoes and murals, it is often referred to as the "Ajanta of the Himalayas."

A 26] a) **2** **4** **3** **1** - A 2 - Vidyashankara Temple: Located in Sringeri, Karnataka. || B 4 - Rajarani Temple: Found in Bhubaneswar, Orissa (now Odisha). || C 3 - Kandariya Mahadeo: Situated in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh. || D 1 - Bhimeswara temple: The most prominent Bhimeswara temples (Draksharama and Samalkota) are in Andhra Pradesh

A 27] a) Bhavnagar - The Palitana Temples are located on Shatrunjaya hill in the city of Palitana, which is a significant pilgrimage center for Jains. Palitana is situated in the Bhavnagar district of Gujarat, India. The city of Bhavnagar is approximately 50-56 kilometers away from Palitana.

A 28] c) Hampi - The Vijaya Vittala temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Hampi, Karnataka. The musical pillars are a prominent feature of the temple's main hall (the Ranga Mantapa). When struck, the pillars produce different musical tones, mimicking the sounds of various musical instruments. The temple is a testament to the architectural brilliance and craftsmanship of the Vijayanagara Empire.

A 29] c) 3 4 1 2 - A 3- Sisupalgarh:

This ancient fortified city is located near Bhubaneswar in Odisha. || **B 4 -** Piprahwa: The archaeological site of Piprahwa, a key Buddhist site, is in the Siddharthnagar district of Uttar Pradesh. || **C 1-** Goalpara: Goalpara is a district in the state of Assam.

|| **D 2-** Bishnupur: This town is a district headquarters in the state of Manipur

A 30] d) Amaravati Buddhist Stupa: Andhra Pradesh –

Pair a) incorrect: Vikramshila Monastery, ancient Buddhist center is located in the Bhagalpur district of Bihar. || **Pair b) incorrect:** Hemkund Gurudwara: This Sikh pilgrimage site is situated in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand || **Pair c) incorrect:** Udayagiri Caves: There are two prominent Udayagiri Caves. One set of rock-cut caves is in Odisha (near Bhubaneswar) and is associated with Jainism. The other set, known for Gupta period art, is in Madhya Pradesh (near Vidisha) || **Pair d) correct:** The Amaravati Buddhist Stupa is a significant archaeological site located in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh

A 31] d) Kye Monastery- Arunachal Pradesh - Kye Monastery, Dhankar Monastery and Tabo Monastery all three are located in the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh. || Rumtek Monastery is a well-known and significant monastery in Sikkim.

A 32] b) Angkor Vat- Angkor Vat located in Cambodia, is the largest religious monument in the world. It was built in the early 12th century by the Khmer king Suryavarman II as his state temple and eventual mausoleum. The temple was originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu and later gradually transformed into a Buddhist temple. || Sri Mariamman Temple in Singapore is unrelated to this period. It was built in the 19th century by Tamil immigrants and follows the Dravidian style. || Batu Caves Temple in Malaysia is also much later. Developed mainly in the late 19th and early 20th century, it houses a large Murugan shrine inside natural limestone caves. || Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati belongs to an entirely different

tradition. It is a major Shaktipeeth and the present structure largely comes from the 17th-century Ahom kings, although the site has older origins.

A 33] d) Samudragupta- The famous Allahabad Pillar inscription, also known as the Prayaga Prashasti, is a eulogy (praise) to the Gupta emperor Samudragupta. The inscription was composed by Samudragupta's court poet, Harisena, and details the king's military conquests and achievements. || While the pillar itself is originally an Ashoka Pillar from the Maurya dynasty, the most historically significant inscription on it is from the Gupta period. || Mahapadma Nanda was the founder of the Nanda dynasty. || Chandragupta Maurya founded the Maurya Empire.

A 34] d) 1, 2, 3 and 4 - Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park: Designated in 2004, this site in Gujarat includes a hill fortress and early Hindu capital, alongside later fortifications, palaces, and mosques built by Sultan Mahmud Begada. || Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST): The former Victoria Terminus was added to the list in 2004. This historic railway station in Mumbai is an excellent example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in India. || Mamallapuram: Also known as Mahabalipuram, this "Group of Monuments" in Tamil Nadu was declared world heritage in 1984. It features sanctuaries and rock carvings built by the Pallava kings in the 7th and 8th centuries. || Sun Temple (Konark Temple): Located in Odisha, this 13th-century temple was also designated as UNESCO world heritage in 1984. It is renowned for its grand scale and intricate stone carvings of a monumental chariot.

A 35] a) Culture- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the premier government agency responsible for archaeological research, and the protection and maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites of national importance in India. It functions as an attached office under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

A 36] a) The statue of Gomateshwara at Sravanabelagola represents the last Tirthankara of

Jains – Statement a) incorrect: The statue of Gomateshwara, also known as Bahubali, represents the son of the first Tirthankara Rishabhanatha and the brother of king Bharata. || Statement b) correct: Tawang Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh is India's largest Buddhist monastery || Statement c) correct: The Khajuraho temples were built by the Chandela dynasty between the 10th–12th centuries CE. The Khajuraho temples are a group of Hindu and Jain temples located in Madhya Pradesh. They are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. || Statement d) correct: the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu is dedicated to lord Shiva

A 37] a) Bhubaneswar - The Lingaraja Temple is located in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, revered as Harihara (a fusion of Shiva and Vishnu), and is a prime example of the Kalinga style of architecture.

A 38] b) Halebid and Belur – Belur is known for the Chennakesava Temple, was the early capital of the Hoysala Empire. Halebid, the later capital of the Hoysalas, is famous for the Hoysaleswara and Kedareshwara temples. || Hampi and Hospet: Hampi is primarily associated with the Vijayanagara Empire. || Sringeri is a prominent pilgrimage center associated with Adi Shankara and the Vidyashankara temple. || Mysore, Bangalore and Dharwar are not known for Hoysala monuments.

A 39] b) The Kushans- Gandhara School of Art – Pair 1 incorrect: Painted Grey Ware is an Iron Age culture from the western Gangetic plain, conventionally dated from around 1200 to 500 BCE. On the other hand, Harappan civilization dates from 3300 to 1300 BCE || Pair 2 correct: The Gandhara School of Art was a style of Buddhist art that flourished in the Gandhara region (present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan) from the 1st to the 5th centuries CE. This school of art was heavily influenced by Greco-Roman styles and was a prominent feature of the Kushan Empire, especially under the reign of Emperor Kanishka. || Pair 3 incorrect: The Ajanta cave paintings are Buddhist artworks created in two periods, with the most

significant work dating from the 5th century CE under the Vakataka dynasty. Mughals came much later. || Pair 4 incorrect: The Pahari School of Painting originated and flourished in the lower Himalayan hill kingdoms of North India from the 17th to the 19th century. The Pahari school was patronized by Rajput rulers of the hill states (not Marathas).

A 40] c) A is true, but R is false – Assertion is true: The Gandhara School of art developed in the Gandhara region (present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan) from the 1st to the 5th centuries CE and is well-documented to show significant Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) influences. This is visible in the realistic depiction of human figures, the wavy hair, and the toga-like drapery of the Buddha sculptures. || Reason is false: The Hinayana form of Buddhism did not influence Gandhara art. Gandhara art was primarily associated with the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which allowed for the depiction of the Buddha in human form (iconic representation).

A 41] a) Sohagaura Copperplate - The Sohagaura Copper-plate is a Mauryan-era record, that is considered the earliest known inscription detailing famine relief efforts in ancient India. The inscription, found in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, explicitly mentions the establishment of grain storage depots (*kosthagaras*) to be used during a crisis. || Rummindei pillar edict of Asoka records Ashoka's visit to the birthplace of the Buddha and his decision to reduce taxes for the village of Lumbini. || The Prayaga Prashasti (Allahabad Pillar inscription) by Harisena praises Samudragupta and lists his conquests. || Mehrauli Pillar inscription of Chandra praises the military accomplishments of a king named Chandra (believed to be Chandragupta II).

A 42] c) II and XIII - Rock Edict II describes the social welfare measures Ashoka undertook and mentions the neighboring kingdoms of South India, including the Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras, and Keralaputras. These kingdoms were contemporary with the Sangam Age. || Rock Edict XIII is famous for detailing the Kalinga War and Ashoka's subsequent remorse

and shift to Dhamma. It also mentions that his influence through Dhamma extended to the Cholas, Pandyas, and others in the South, as far as Tamraparni (Sri Lanka).

A 43] d) These are parts of architectural structures-

The Ashokan pillars were primarily free-standing monuments, often erected to spread Emperor Ashoka's edicts and commemorate religious sites. They were not intended to be supporting elements of a larger architectural structure like a building or temple. Thus, statement d) is incorrect. All other statements are true in this regard.

A 44] d) Maski- The Maski Minor Rock Edict is the first inscription where Emperor Ashoka's personal name, "Ashoka," was discovered. In most of his other inscriptions, he refers to himself by the titles "Devanampriya" (Beloved of the Gods) and "Piyadassi" (He who looks with kindness).

|| Kalsi is a Major Rock Edict site in Uttarakhand that contains a set of 14 edicts, but they use Ashoka's titles, not his personal name. || Rummindei is a pillar edict that records Ashoka's visit to the birthplace of the Buddha and his decision to reduce taxes. || Special Kalinga Edict refers to a set of edicts that were a replacement for the Major Rock Edicts XI-XIII in the Kalinga region.

A 45] c) Bharhut sculptures- The Bharhut School of sculpture in Madhya Pradesh, which flourished during the Shunga period (2nd century BCE), is known for its use of green schist as a medium for its relief carvings. The sculptures, which decorated the railings of the great stupa at Bharhut, often depict Jataka tales and life events of the Buddha. || Maurya sculptures were primarily made from buff-colored

(light brownish yellow) fine-grained sandstone or hard sandstone and were known for their highly polished surfaces. || Mathura sculptures predominantly used locally spotted red sandstone for their carvings. || Gandhara sculptures typically utilized gray and bluish-grey schist stone, as well as stucco, particularly in later periods.

A 46] d) Priyadasi- The name by which Ashoka is generally referred to in his inscriptions is Priyadasi. He is most often called "Devanampiya Piyadasi", which means "Beloved of the Gods (devanampiya), of amiable / friendly disposition (piyadasi)"

A 47] c) The three main styles of Indian temple architecture-

The Nagara style is characterized by a tall, curvilinear tower known as a shikhara. || The Dravida style is prevalent in southern India and is distinguished by its pyramidal towers, or vimanas, and large, ornate gateway towers called gopurams. || The Vesara style is a hybrid form that emerged in the Deccan region, combining elements of both the Nagara and Dravida styles.

A 48] c) Four hands - The deity of Nataraj has four hands. The four hands of Nataraja, as depicted in the iconic Chola bronzes, carry deep symbolic meaning related to the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction. Upper right hand: Holds a damaru, representing creation and the rhythm of the universe. Upper left hand: Holds a flame (agni), symbolizing destruction and transformation. Lower right hand: Is in the abhaya mudra (fearlessness gesture), offering protection and reassurance to the devotees. Lower left hand: Points towards the raised foot, signifying liberation and salvation for the devotee.

C) Literature

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| d | c | a | b | c | a | c | d | a | d |

A 1] b) Chandragupta II- Fa-hien visited India between 399 and 414 CE. The Buddhist monk undertook the journey to acquire Buddhist scriptures and visit significant Buddhist sites in the region. His travelogue, *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, provided valuable insights into the society and culture of the Gupta Empire during this period. Chandragupta II (also known as Vikramaditya), ruled the Gupta empire during Fa-hien's time in India, from approximately 375 to 415 CE.

A 2] c) Madhyama-vyayoga - Madhyama-vyayoga is a Sanskrit play attributed to the ancient Indian playwright Bhasa. It is one of the thirteen plays traditionally ascribed to him. The play is a one-act drama based on an episode from the Mahabharata, specifically focusing on the story of the middle Pandava brother, Bhima. || Kavyalankara is a work on poetics attributed to the scholar Bhamaha. || Natyashastra is an ancient Indian treatise on the performing arts, including drama, dance, and music, attributed to the sage Bharata Muni. || Mahabhashya is a commentary on Pāṇini's grammar, attributed to Patañjali.

A 3] b) 2 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The Upanishads, while primarily philosophical texts, do contain parables (simple, short stories) and allegories (a story, poem etc. that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning,) to explain complex ideas. Examples include the story of Nachiketa and Yama in the Katha Upanishad and the parable of Shvetaketu and the Banyan tree seed in the Chandogya Upanishad. || Statement 2 correct: The Upanishads are generally considered to have been composed much earlier than the Puranas. Scholars date the major Upanishads to the later Vedic period, roughly

between 800 BCE and 400 BCE, while the Puranas are dated much later, from around the 3rd to the 10th centuries CE.

A 4] c) Sarvastivada Vinaya- Sanghabhuti authored a commentary on the Sarvastivada Vinaya, the monastic rules of the Sarvastivada school, after arriving in China around 381–382 AD. || Prajnaparamita Sutra are Mahayana Buddhist texts about the "Perfection of Wisdom," || Visuddhimagga is a Theravada text written by Buddhaghosa in the 5th century CE in Sri Lanka. || Lalitavistara is a Mahayana text detailing the life of the Buddha.

A 5] b) Only two – Pair 1 incorrect: Devichandragupta was a play by Vishakhadatta, where as Bilhana was the author of Vikramankadevacharita. || Pair 2 correct: Hammira-Mahakavya was written by Nayachandra Suri. || Pair 3 incorrect: Milinda-panha is a Buddhist text that records a dialogue between the Indo-Greek king Menander and the monk Nagasena. It was written by Nagasena. || Pair 4 correct: Nitivakyamrita was written by Somadeva Suri.

A 6] d) A king defeated in a battle committing ritual suicide by starving himself to death.- Vattakirutal, also spelled as Vatakkiruttal, was a practice mentioned in Sangam literature. It was a ritual suicide by fasting until death. This act was performed by a defeated or disgraced king or warrior to uphold their honor and avoid the humiliation of capture. The term literally means "sitting facing north".

A 7] b) The social classification of Varna was known to Sangam poets. - Statement a) incorrect: Sangam poems contain many references to material culture — agriculture, trade, ports, horses, pearls, weapons,

forts, etc. || Statement b) correct: Sangam poets were aware of the social classification of Varna, mentioning groups such as the Arashar (kings), Vaishiyar (traders), and Velalar (farmers) in their works. The Brahmanas are also mentioned in association with royal courts. || Statement c) incorrect: Sangam literature, particularly the Puram poems, is deeply imbued with a warrior ethic, glorifying heroism, valor, and the importance of a heroic death in battle. || Statement d) incorrect: Sangam literature reflects a belief in sacred or magical forces called ananku, which were considered to inhabit various objects, and rituals were performed to control them. These forces were not seen as irrational but as an integral part of the worldview.

A 8] b) Playwrights- Bhavabhuti (8th century CE): An eminent Sanskrit poet and playwright. He authored three major plays i.e. Mahaviracharita (the early life of Rama), Malatimadhava (a romantic drama), Uttararamacharita (the later life of Rama) || Hastimalla (13th century CE): A Jain author and playwright known for writing plays in both Kannada and Sanskrit. His works include Vikrantakaurava. || Kshemeshvara (c. 10th century CE): A Sanskrit playwright credited with works such as Chandakaushika and Naishadhananda. He was also the court poet of Mahipala of Kannauj.

A 9] c) 3 only – Statement 1 incorrect: Panini, the renowned Sanskrit grammarian, is believed to have lived around the 5th or 4th century BCE. Pushyamitra Shunga, who founded the Shunga dynasty, ruled in the 2nd century BCE (around 185 BCE). || Statement 2 incorrect: Amarasimha, the author of the Amarakosha, was a Sanskrit lexicographer (person who compiles dictionary) traditionally considered to be one of the "Nine Gems" (Navaratnas) in the court of Chandragupta II (approximately 380 to 415 CE). Harshavardhana ruled during 606-647 CE || Statement 3 correct: Kalidasa, one of the greatest Sanskrit poets and dramatists, is traditionally associated with the court of the Gupta king Chandragupta II (also known as Vikramaditya).

A 10] b) Jean-Baptiste Tavernier - Jean-Baptiste Tavernier was a 17th-century French gem merchant who traveled to India six times. His book, Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, contains detailed descriptions of the Indian diamond mines he visited, particularly the Golconda mines. || Francois Bernier was a French physician and philosopher who traveled to India and served the Mughal court. His work, Travels in the Mughal Empire, focused primarily on the political and social conditions of the empire. || Jean de Thévenot (1633–1667) was a 17th-century French traveler, linguist, and naturalist known for his extensive travels in the Levant, Persia, and India. || Abbe Barthelemy Carre was a French clergyman who visited India later in the 17th century.

A 11] b) Malavikagnimitra - Malavikagnimitra is a Sanskrit play written by the poet Kalidasa. The play's plot revolves around the love story of King Agnimitra and a maiden named Malavika. Agnimitra was the son of Pushyamitra Shunga, who was the founder of the Sunga dynasty. || Swapnavasavadatta: This is a play by Bhasa about the love story of King Udayana || Meghadoota: This is a lyric poem by Kalidasa about a cloud messenger || Ratnavali: This is a Sanskrit play attributed to King Harsha, which also features the story of King Udayana.

A 12] b) 2 and 3 only – Statement 1 incorrect: Yuan Chwang was robbed multiple times during his journey, including by bandits near the Ganges river, which indicates that roads and river-routes were not immune from robbery. || Statement 2 correct: As regards punishment for offences, ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instruments for determining the innocence or guilt of a person. || Statement 3 correct: Yuan Chwang noted that tradesmen had to pay light duties at ferries and barrier stations as a means of revenue collection and trade regulation.

A 13] d) Rig-Veda- The manuscripts of the Rig-Veda, preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, were included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2007. || Recently,

Bhagavad Gita and the Natyashastra were inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in April 2025. Both sets of manuscripts are preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune. With this, India now has a total of 14 inscriptions in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

A 14] c) Atharvaveda - The Atharva-veda is the fourth of the four Vedas and is a collection of spells, prayers, charms, and hymns. The hymns and verses in this Veda are primarily concerned with practical aspects of life, such as healing diseases, warding off evil spirits, and ensuring prosperity. || The Rigveda focuses on hymns to Vedic gods, || the Yajurveda deals with sacrificial formulas, || and the Samaveda contains melodies for rituals.

A 15] a) The love affair of a rich merchant with the daughter of a courtesan- Mrichchhakatika, or The Little Clay Cart, is a Sanskrit play attributed to the playwright Shudraka. The play's central plot revolves around the love story between Charudatta, a virtuous but poor Brahmin merchant, and Vasantasena, a wealthy woman from a courtesan lineage.

A 16] d) The court intrigues at the time of Chandragupta Maurya- Mudrarakshasa is a Sanskrit political drama that details the rise of Chandragupta Maurya to power with the help of his advisor, Chanakya. The play's central plot focuses on the political strategies, diplomacy, and espionage used by Chanakya to outwit the last of the Nanda dynasty's loyalists, particularly the minister Rakshasa, and consolidate the Mauryan Empire.

A 17] a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A- The Aham and Puram poems of the Padinen Kilkanakku (Eighteen Minor Works) are considered a continuation of Sangam literary tradition. This makes the Assertion true. || They are classified as post-Sangam works, roughly dated between 100–500 CE, after the main Sangam corpus (Ettuthogai and Pattuppattu). This classification is what makes the Reason true, and it directly explains

why they are regarded as a continuation rather than part of the original Sangam works proper.

A 18] b) III, I, IV, II- Megasthenes (c. 302–298 BC), this Greek ambassador of Seleucus I Nicator visited the court of Chandragupta Maurya and wrote his observations in the book Indica. || Fa-Hien (c. 405–411 CE): The Chinese Buddhist monk and pilgrim visited India during the reign of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II. || Hiuen Tsang (c. 630–645 CE): The Chinese Buddhist monk visited India during the reign of Emperor Harsha Vardhana. || I-tsing (c. 671–695 CE): Another Chinese Buddhist monk, he visited India following Hiuen Tsang.

A 19] b) I, III and IV – Pair 1 correct: Mrichchhakatikam is a Sanskrit play attributed to the playwright Shudraka || Pair 2 incorrect: The Buddhacharita, an epic poem on the life of Buddha, was written by Ashvaghosha. || Pair 3 correct: Mudrarakshasa is a historical play in Sanskrit written by Vishakhadatta || Pair 4 correct: Harshacharita is the biography of Emperor Harsha, written by his court poet, Banabhatta.

A 20] d) Pampa — Kannada- Pampa was a 10th-century poet known as Adikavi ("First Poet") of the Kannada language. He is famous for his epic poem Vikramarjuna Vijaya, also known as Pampa Bharata, which is an adaptation of the Mahabharata from the perspective of Arjuna. || Sarladasa was an Odia poet who wrote the Odia Mahabharata. || Kasiram Das was a Bengali poet who wrote the Bengali Mahabharata. || Tikkana was a Telugu poet who translated the Mahabharata into Telugu.

A 21] d) Kharoshti- The Kharoshti script was used in the Gandhara region of ancient India (present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan) from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Unlike most other Indian scripts, which are written from left to right, the Kharoshti script was written from right to left. || Brahmi, the ancestor of most modern Indian scripts (including Nandnagari and Sharada), was typically written from left to right. || Nandnagari: This is an

obsolete script that was written from left to right. || Sharada: This script, which evolved from Gupta Brahmi, was also written from left to right.

A 22] c) Kathopanishad- The Kathopanishad, one of the primary Upanishads, recounts the story of Nachiketa, a young boy who seeks knowledge about death and the soul from Yama, the deity of death. Yama, impressed by Nachiketa's unwavering determination, imparts the secret of the nature of the Atman (the soul) and the path to liberation.

A 23] a) Nagasena - The Milindapanho, a Pāli Buddhist text, records a dialogue between the Indo-Greek King Menander (known as Milinda in the text) and the Buddhist monk Nagasena. || Nagarjuna: This was a different Buddhist philosopher who founded the Madhyamaka school of Mahayana Buddhism, living several centuries after Nagasena || Nagbhata: Nagabhata-I was the founder of the imperial Pratihara dynasty in northern India. || Kumarilabhatta: This was an 8th-century Hindu philosopher of the Mimamsa school

A 24] b) IC, IID, IIIB, IVE – IC- Varahamihira is the author of Brhat-Samhita. || IID- Visakhadatta(after 6th century) is the author of Devi Chandragupta. || IIIB- Sudraka is the author of Mrchchhakatikam. || IVE - Bilhana(11th century) is the author of Vikramankadevacharita.

A 25] c) Raskhan - Raskhan was a 16th-century Sufi Muslim poet who became a devotee of Krishna. His work, written in Braj Bhasha, is known for its intense devotion to Lord Krishna and its vivid portrayal of his life and lilas (divine pastimes) in Vrindavan. Prem Vatika, one of his most notable compositions, is a collection of devotional poems focused on the life of Krishna.

A 26] a) Sindhu- The Sindhu river (the modern Indus) is the river most frequently mentioned in the early Vedic text, the Rig-Veda. While the Sarasvati river is highly revered and praised as a divine river in the Rig-Veda, the Sindhu is mentioned more often, appearing

around 30-35 times. || The Sutudri (modern Sutlej) is also mentioned in Vedic texts. || The Ganga river is mentioned only a few times in the Rig-Veda.

A 27] c) Early forms of some of the modern Indian languages- Apabhramsa literally means "corrupt" or "non-grammatical language" in Sanskrit, as it was considered a deviation from the norms of classical Sanskrit grammar. In Indology, it refers to the dialects that formed the crucial transitional phase between the late Middle Indo-Aryan languages and the early modern Indo-Aryan languages, spanning roughly the 6th to 13th centuries.

A 28] d) Arthashastra- The Arthashastra, a treatise on statecraft and economic policy attributed to Kautilya (Chanakya), includes provisions for divorce (moksha). It explicitly states that a wife who has been deserted by her husband, among other reasons like mutual enmity or bad character, could seek a divorce. This stood in contrast to some other ancient texts, like the Manusmriti, which generally viewed marriage as an indissoluble bond.

A 29] a) Lopamudra - Lopamudra was a philosopher and scholar mentioned in ancient Indian Vedic literature. She is specifically credited with composing hymns in the Rigveda. (A Brahmadhini was a woman who pursued and attained high philosophical knowledge of Brahman) || Gargi was a renowned female philosopher who engaged in debates during the Upanishadic period. || Leelavati and Savitri are not known for composing Vedic hymns.

A 30] d) Pepper- The term Yavanapriya is a compound Sanskrit word: Yavana: Referred to foreigners from the West, particularly Greeks and Romans. Priya: Means "dear" or "favorite". The high demand for Indian black pepper in the Greco-Roman world, particularly the Roman Empire, led to it being called "dear to the Yavanas" or Yavanapriya. Ancient texts and trade records confirm that pepper was a prized commodity in this trade.

D) Religion and Philosophy

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A 1] b) 2 and 3 only – epithets denotes adjective / byname. Statement 1 incorrect: Nayaputta epithet is used for Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism. The name "Nayaputta" means "son of the Naya clan," which refers to Mahavira's lineage. || Statement 2 correct: Shakyamuni is a very common and well-known epithet for Gautama Buddha. It translates to "Sage of the Shakya clan," as Gautama Buddha was born into the Shakya clan. || Statement 3 correct: Tathagata is a significant epithet that was used for Gautama Buddha after his enlightenment. The term is interpreted as "one who has thus come" or "one who has thus gone," signifying his attainment of ultimate truth and liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

A 2] b) Jainism- In Jainism, the concept that souls are present in everything is a core belief. This idea, known as pan-psychism, is a fundamental principle of Jain cosmology and ethics.

A 3] a) Andhra- Dhanyakataka is identified with the ancient site of Amaravati, located in present-day Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The Mahasanghikas were a major early Buddhist school that had a strong presence in this region. The Dhanyakataka site is famous for the Amaravati Stupa and was an important center for Buddhist learning and art, particularly during the Satavahana period.

A 4] a) The best means of salvation was devotion. - Ramanuja(c. 1017–1137 CE) was a key philosopher of the Bhakti (devotion) movement, is known for his teachings on Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism).

He taught that intense devotion (bhakti) to a personal god (Vishnu) is the most effective path to liberation (moksha).

A 5] b) 2 and 4 only - Statement 1 incorrect: Nettipakarana is a Buddhist text, part of the Pali Canon of Theravada Buddhism. It is a guide to the methods of interpreting the Buddha's teachings. || Statement 2 correct: Parishishtaparvan is a Jaina text. It is a 12th-century epic poem by the scholar Hemachandra, which provides a detailed history of the early Jaina teachers. || Statement 3 incorrect: Avadanashataka is a Buddhist text, consisting of a collection of one hundred legends or narratives that illustrate the workings of karma. It is part of Sanskrit Buddhist literature. || Statement 4 correct: Trishashtilakshana Mahapurana is a major Jaina text. Composed in the 9th century, it is a grand epic that details the lives of 63 prominent figures of Jainism, including the Tirthankaras.

A 6] c) Only two pairs- Pair 1 incorrect: Aryadeva was a significant Mahayana Buddhist monk and philosopher, a disciple of Nagarjuna. || Pair 2 correct: Dignaga was an influential Buddhist scholar and logician who is regarded as one of the founders of Indian logic (hetu vidya). || Pair 3 correct: Nathamuni was a revered Vaishnava scholar and theologian. He is considered the first of the Sri Vaishnava acharyas and is credited with compiling the devotional hymns of the Alvars, known as the Nalayira Divya Prabandham.

A 7] b) 2 only- Statement 1 incorrect: The distinction between the Mitakshara and Dayabhaga systems was primarily geographical, not based on caste. The Mitakshara system was prevalent in most of India, while the Dayabhaga system was followed in Bengal and parts of Assam. Both systems were applicable to all Hindus, regardless of caste. || Statement 2 correct, it accurately describes the core difference in inheritance laws between the two. || Statement 3 incorrect: Both systems were traditionally concerned with male inheritance, though women had some limited rights. While the Dayabhaga system is considered more liberal in its approach to women's property rights.

A 8] c) Perfections whose attainment led to the Bodhisattva path- Paramitas (Sanskrit) or *pāramīs* (Pali) are Buddhist terms meaning "perfections" or "transcendent virtues". In Mahayana Buddhism, these are the virtues that a Bodhisattva must cultivate to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. The attainment of these perfections, such as generosity (dāna), morality (śīla), and wisdom (prajñā), is essential for progressing along the Bodhisattva path.

A 9] b) 2 and 3 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The Sthaviravada school was one of the two main early Buddhist schools that emerged after the Second Buddhist Council, along with the Mahasanghika school. The Sthaviravada lineage is considered the precursor to Theravada Buddhism, which is distinct from Mahayana Buddhism. || Statement 2 correct: Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism. || Statement 3 correct: Mahasanghika, meaning "Great Assembly," was a more liberal group and embraced a broader interpretation of the monastic code. It promoted the deification of Buddha (regarding Buddha as God).

A 10] b) 1 and 3 only – Pair 1 correct: A Parivrajaka was a renunciant or wandering ascetic in ancient India who had left worldly life to pursue spiritual knowledge. The term literally means "one who wanders about completely". || Pair 2 incorrect: A

Shramana was an ascetic, renunciant, or a religious seeker who practiced self-discipline and austerity to achieve liberation. This was a movement distinct from the Vedic tradition and its priests (Brahmins) who held high status and performed rituals. || Pair 3 correct: An Upasaka was a lay follower of Buddhism.

A 11] d) 1, 2 and 3 – Statement 1 correct: Unlike earlier Buddhist schools that viewed the Buddha primarily as a human teacher, Mahayana Buddhism considers the Buddha to be a transcendent, divine being who can be worshiped and invoked for assistance i.e. deification of Buddha. || Statement 2 correct: The Bodhisattva ideal is central to Mahayana Buddhism. || Statement 3 correct: Mahayana Buddhism widely incorporates the worship of images and statues of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, as well as elaborate rituals, as a means of devotion and spiritual practice.

A 12] b) Jainism- The Sthanakvasi sect is a sub-sect of the Svetambara tradition within Jainism. They are known for their rejection of idol worship, a core difference from other Svetambara and Digambara Jains. Instead of worshiping in temples, they conduct their religious activities in assembly halls known as Sthanaks (hence their name, "dwellers in halls"). Their spiritual practices emphasize meditation, asceticism, and the study of scriptures.

A 13] c) Maitreya - According to Buddhist tradition, Maitreya is a Bodhisattva who will appear on Earth in the future, achieve complete enlightenment, and become the next Buddha to teach the dharma. He is often referred to as the "Future Buddha". || Avalokiteshvara is a Bodhisattva who embodies the compassion of all Buddhas. In Mahayana Buddhism, he is the current protector of the world, helping sentient beings reach enlightenment. || Lokesvara is another name for Avalokiteshvara, meaning "Lord of the World". || Padmapani is an epithet (adjective) for Avalokiteshvara, meaning "Lotus-bearer," and is one of his many forms.

A 14] b) 2 only – Statement 1 incorrect: The Sautrantika and Sammitiya were schools of