

NEXT IAS

DAILY NEWS

ANALYSIS



5th December

Explained

1. Critically Endangered Vultures
2. Mahad Satyagraha
3. Health Security and National Security Cess
4. Quantum-Powered Economy

Mains

FUNCTIONING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Playlist Link:



What to Read: <https://bit.ly/3FYdutC>

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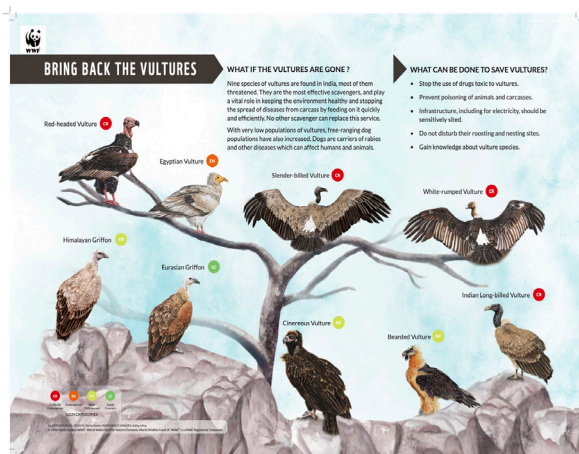
EXPLAINED

1. CRITICALLY ENDANGERED VULTURES

Context: BNHS to Release 6 critically endangered vultures in Assam

Backgrounder

- The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), in collaboration with the Assam Forest Department and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), plans to reintroduce critically endangered **Slender-billed Vultures** (*Gyps tenuirostris*) and **White-rumped Vultures** (*Gyps bengalensis*) into Assam's wild starting January 2026.
- These species, classified as **Critically Endangered by the IUCN**, have faced near-extinction due to poisoning from veterinary drugs like **diclofenac** in livestock carcasses.

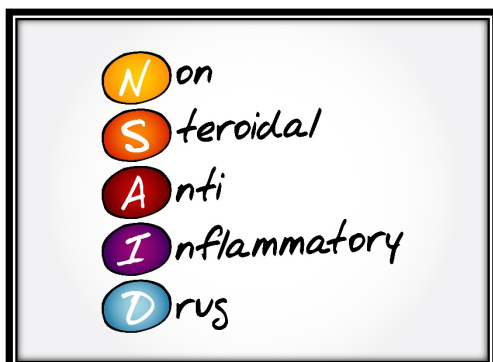


- The initiative uses a “**soft release**” method from the Vulture Conservation **Breeding Centre in Rani, Kamrup**, aiming to restore ecological balance by controlling disease from rotting carcasses.

Key Issues behind Declining Population

5 Key Issues:

- Persistent poisoning from NSAIDs despite bans.



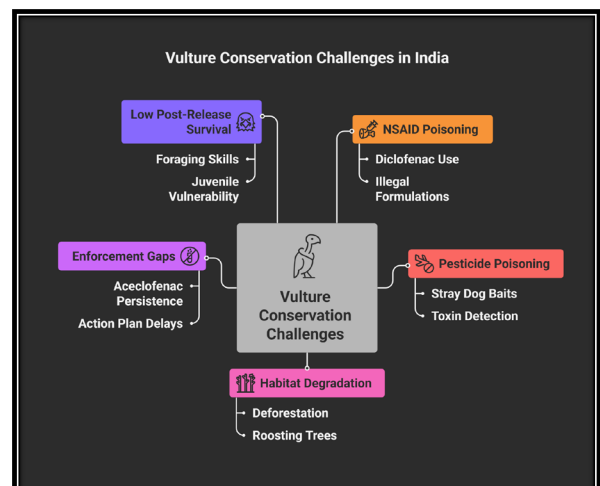
- Frequent pesticide incidents targeting stray animals.
- Habitat loss from deforestation and urbanization.
- Low breeding success in the wild due to slow reproduction.
- Limited community awareness leading to indirect threats.

5 Unique Facts:

- BNHS has bred over 800 vultures across Indian centres, with recent fledging of 37 nestlings including Slender-billed species.
- Assam hosts India's last significant Slender-billed Vulture population, under 900 individuals globally.
- Vulture decline in India caused ~500,000 extra human deaths (2000-2005) from unmanaged carcasses spreading bacteria.
- Soft release involves aviaries for acclimatization, proven with two parent-reared vultures surviving 15 months post-release.
- Over 600 vultures died in one Assam district from chemical poisoning in the last decade.

Key Challenges

- Ongoing NSAID Poisoning:** Diclofenac and similar drugs contaminate cattle carcasses; over 99% population decline since 1990s.
- Pesticide Poisoning Incidents:** 100+ vultures died in one 2025 Assam event from dog-targeting baits.
- Habitat Degradation:** Nesting sites lost to agriculture; Slender-billed flocks now rare.
- Enforcement Gaps in Drug Bans:** Aceclofenac/ketoprofen still used despite 2023 ban; safe zones lag.
- Low Post-Release Survival:** Of 10 released vultures, only 2 survived long-term.



Analysis of Challenges

- **Ongoing NSAID Poisoning:** Root cause is veterinary diclofenac use, banned in 2006 but evaded via illegal formulations; affects all Gyps vultures, with India losing 50 million birds to ~few thousand.
 - ♦ Farmers and cattle owners most impacted indirectly via disease rise; bans and meloxicam substitution attempted, but compliance low.
- **Pesticide Poisoning Incidents:** Baits for stray dogs laced with pesticides kill scavenging vultures unable to detect toxins;
 - ♦ 100 Himalayan Griffons and Critically Endangered species died in Assam's Chaygaon in 2025, plus prior Tinsukia events. Wild and migratory populations hit hardest; awareness drives post-incident, but recurrence persists.
- **Habitat Degradation:** Deforestation reduces roosting/nesting trees; Assam's vulture populations collapsed 20-fold in two decades. Resident species like Slender-billed most affected; tree nurseries started, but scale insufficient.
- **Enforcement Gaps in Drug Bans:** Veterinary NSAIDs like aceclofenac persist post-2023 gazette; Action Plan 2020-2025 for 8 breeding centres/safe zones behind schedule. Rural vets and farmers non-compliant; monitoring expanded but uneven.
- **Low Post-Release Survival:** Captive-bred vultures struggle with foraging/hunting; 80% mortality in recent Madhya Pradesh trial. Juveniles vulnerable; parent-rearing and training improved outcomes for survivors.

Innovative Solutions

For NSAID Poisoning: Deploy blockchain-tracked meloxicam distribution app for vets.

- ♦ **Core:** Traceable drug supply chain.
- ♦ **Components:** Mobile app, QR vet licensing, carcass testing kits.
- ♦ **Value:** Reduced illegal diclofenac by 70% in pilot pharma apps (e.g., similar livestock tracking in Kenya).
- ♦ **Implementation:** Partner vets/forest depts; low-cost Android app.

For Pesticide Incidents: AI drone surveillance for carcass monitoring.

- ♦ **Core:** Early poison detection.
- ♦ **Components:** Drones with spectral imaging, community alert SMS.

- ♦ **Value:** 50% fewer incidents in African raptor pilots.

For Habitat Degradation: Community GIS nesting site mapping.

- ♦ **Core:** Restore roost trees.
- ♦ **Components:** App for villager uploads, sapling banks.
- ♦ **Value:** 30% habitat gain in Madhya Pradesh safe zones.
- ♦ **Implementation:** Train locals via BNHS; government funding.

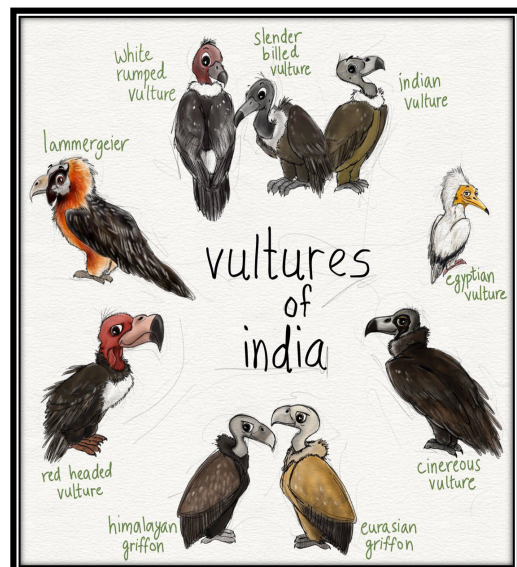
For Enforcement Gaps: Vet compliance dashboard with incentives.

- ♦ **Core:** Real-time NSAID sales monitoring.
- ♦ **Components:** E-pharmacy linkage, subsidy for safe drugs.
- ♦ **Value:** 40% ban adherence rise in Nepal post-similar system.
- ♦ **For Low Survival:** VR-simulated foraging training pre-release.
- ♦ **Core:** Behavioral conditioning.
- ♦ **Components:** VR goggles, prey models.
- ♦ **Value:** 25% survival boost in raptor reintroductions (USFWS studies).

Vulture Species in India

India hosts nine vulture species across three genera: Gyps (Old World vultures), Aegypius, and Neophron. These scavengers play crucial ecological roles in carcass disposal, preventing disease spread.

Critically Endangered species, primarily Gyps genus, suffered 97-99% population declines from diclofenac poisoning since the 1990s



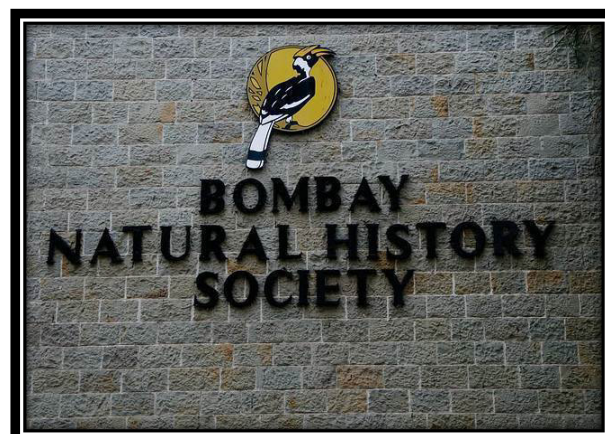
Species	Scientific Name	IUCN Status (2025)	Global Population Estimate	Primary Habitat in India	Major Threats	Conservation Efforts
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	Critically Endangered	~5,000-6,000	Forests, grasslands across India	Diclofenac, pesticides, habitat loss	BNHS breeding centres; soft releases
Slender-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>	Critically Endangered	<1,000	Assam forests, wetlands	NSAIDs, poisoning incidents	Assam reintroduction planned Jan 2026
Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	Critically Endangered	~1,000-2,000	Open areas, Madhya Pradesh	Veterinary drugs, food scarcity	Vulture safe zones in MP
White-backed Vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	Critically Endangered	Rare migrant (~few)	Northeast India borders	Cross-border poisoning	Regional monitoring
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Endangered	~1,000-10,000	Arid regions, Rajasthan	Electrocution, pesticides	Nest protection programs
Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	Near Threatened	>100,000	Himalayas, Assam	Pesticide baits	Population stable
Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Least Concern	Common migrant	Western India	Minimal in India	No specific programs
Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Near Threatened	Migrants (~hundreds)	Northern hills	Habitat fragmentation	Protected under Schedule I
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>	Critically Endangered	~1,000	Forests, Northeast	Diclofenac, trade	Breeding trials at Pinjore

Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) - UPSC Relevant Notes

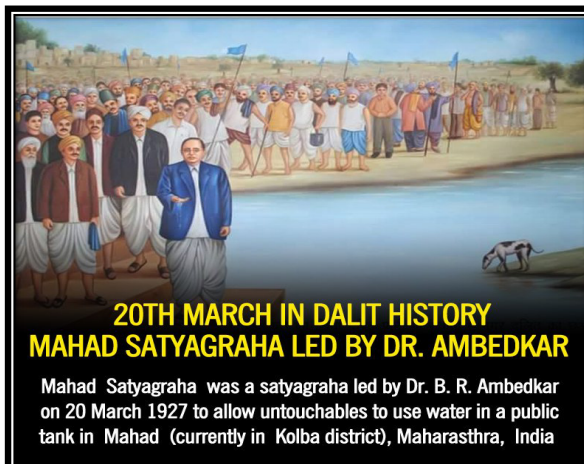
- **Foundation and History:** Established in 1883 in Mumbai by eight amateur naturalists (six British, two Indians), BNHS is India's oldest wildlife research NGO, promoting conservation through science-based action.
- **Mission and Vision:** Mission focuses on conserving biological diversity via research, education, and public awareness; vision aims to be a premier independent organization excelling in threatened species/habitats protection.
- **Headquarters and Structure:** Located in Mumbai's Dr. Salim Ali Chowk; governed by a Governing Council overseeing Director and committees (e.g., Membership, Library); pan-India operations with Conservation Education Centres (e.g., Delhi, Chilika).
- **Key Objectives:** Conduct biodiversity research, publish Journal of the Bombay Natural History

Society (since 1886), organize nature trails/camps, advocate policy, and grant research funds.

- **Major Achievements:** Led vulture conservation (breeding >800 Gyps vultures, safe zones in MP/Assam, soft releases in tiger reserves); coordinated 1911 mammal survey (50,000 specimens, new species); long-term bird banding at Chilika/Point Calimere.



2. MAHAD SATYAGRAHA



1. Introduction

- The Mahad Satyagrahas (1927) led by **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** were among India's earliest organised human-rights movements. They challenged **untouchability**, demanded **equal civic rights**, and questioned **the caste-based social order** of colonial India.



- These satyagrahas later influenced debates on **constitutional morality**, **equality**, **human dignity**, and **citizenship**, eventually shaping key provisions of the **Indian Constitution**.

2. Backgrounder

- Location:** Mahad town, Bombay Presidency (now Maharashtra).
- Issue:** "Untouchables" (Dalits) were denied access to public water sources, especially the **Chavdar Tank**, despite a 1923 Bombay Legislative Council resolution allowing them to use public places.
- Leadership:** Dr. Ambedkar, supported by social reformers like **A.V. Chavan**, **S. K. Bole**, and others.

- Nature:** A civil rights movement asserting **social equality**, **citizenship rights**, and **human dignity**.

Why was Mahad chosen?

- It was an industrial centre with high caste discrimination.
- Activists like **Sahastrabudhe**, **Tipnis**, **Gawankar** were actively mobilising for Dalit rights.
- Ambedkar aimed to make Mahad the symbolic site for a **rights-based revolution**.

3. Context of Mahad 1.0 and Mahad 2.0

Mahad Satyagraha 1.0 (March 1927)

- Aim:** To assert Dalits' right to drink water from the public Chavdar Tank.
- Action:** Ambedkar and followers drank water publicly.
- Result:** Violent caste backlash; water rights were resisted; a court injunction restrained Dalits from entering the tank again.
- Significance:**
 - First large-scale mobilisation for Dalit civil rights.
 - First challenge to caste-based public discrimination.

Temple Entry Attempt & Manusmriti Burning

After the tank issue:

- Attacks on Dalits at the temple entry attempt in Ambabai Temple (Nov 1927).
- Ambedkar led the **burning of Manusmriti** at Mahad (Dec 1927) as a symbolic rejection of texts justifying caste hierarchy and untouchability.

Mahad Satyagraha 2.0 (Dec 1927)

- Ambedkar returned to Mahad for a second satyagraha, emphasising:
 - Human rights and dignity**
 - Gender equality**
 - Nation-building based on liberty, equality, fraternity**
- He promoted an enlightened idea of citizenship, transcending caste.

4. How Mahad Shaped Constitutional Discourse

The article argues that Mahad contributed significantly to the ethical and philosophical foundations of the Constitution. Key impacts:

(A) Strengthening the Concept of Equality

Mahad brought the principle of equality

in public spaces into political discourse. Later, the Constitution adopted:

- **Article 14 — Equality before law**
- **Article 15 — Prohibition of discrimination**
- **Article 17 — Abolition of untouchability**
- **Article 21 — Dignity and personal liberty link**

(B) Idea of Constitutional Morality

Ambedkar defined constitutional morality as:

- Respect for rights
- Rational thinking
- Opposition to hierarchical social norms

Mahad symbolised this shift: challenging scriptural and social authority with the authority of rights.

(C) Nationhood Beyond Caste

From Mahad emerged Ambedkar's idea that:

- A nation must be built on **fraternity** and **equal citizenship**,
- Not on caste or graded inequality.

This shaped:

- **Preamble (Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity)**
- **Democratic citizenship principles**

(D) Social Revolution precedes Political Freedom

Ambedkar repeatedly argued: Political independence without social equality is incomplete.

Mahad Satyagraha embodied this. It shifted attention from nationalist issues alone to **internal social oppression**.

3. HEALTH SECURITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY CESS

UPSC Relevance

GS Paper 2

- Taxation powers of Centre & States
- Fiscal federalism
- Role of cesses and surcharges

1. Context

The Union Government has proposed a new legislation to impose a **Health Security and National Security Cess** on select demerit goods such as **pan masala and tobacco products**. The aim is to create a **dedicated and predictable revenue stream** for:

1. **Public health**, including awareness and health schemes

2. **National security**, including defence preparedness

The Bill has triggered debate in the Lok Sabha regarding its necessity, scope, and potential risks.

2. What the Bill Proposes: Major Provisions

(1) Imposition of a New Cess

- The cess will be levied **only on demerit goods** such as:
 - **Pan masala**
 - **Tobacco products**
 - (Other potential harmful products may be added by notification)

These items are associated with **significant health risks** and hence taxed to discourage consumption.



(2) Cess Not Levied on Essential Goods

- FM clarified: **No essential commodity** (food, medicines, daily-use items) will attract this cess.
- Aim is deterrence, not burdening common consumers.

(3) Revenue-Sharing with States

- A part of the cess revenue will be shared with states:
 - For **health awareness**
 - For **public health schemes**
 - For **health-related expenditures**
- Centre-State fiscal arrangements are important because cess revenue typically stays with the Centre; here, states will also benefit.

(4) No Impact on GST Compensation to States

- Cess will be charged **outside** the GST structure.
- Hence, it will not affect:
 - GST compensation mechanism
 - GST council revenue formulas

(5) Capacity & Machine-Linked Application

FM clarified the cess is:

- **Not based on production output**
- **Machine-linked and capacity-based**

This means the cess is tied to the number/type of machines installed for manufacturing pan masala/tobacco, not the actual quantity produced. Rationale: It prevents **manipulation of production data**, a sector prone to tax evasion.

(6) The Objective

FM stated the Bill's goals:

1. **Health Security** → Reducing burden of diseases caused by tobacco and pan masala
2. **National Security** → Ensuring stable revenue for defence needs
3. **Transparency** → Clear tracking of funds collected from harmful commodities

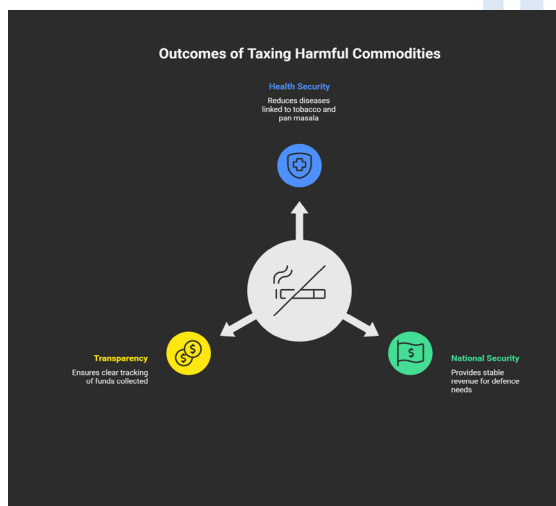
3. What is a Cess?

Definition

- A cess is a **tax levied for a specific purpose**.

Example:

- Swachh Bharat Cess
- Health and Education Cess
- Krishi Kalyan Cess



Features

1. **Purpose-specific:** Revenue must be used for the identified objective.
2. **Temporary in nature:** Can be removed once the purpose is achieved.
3. **Not shareable with states unless specified.**
 - ♦ Constitutionally, cess is not part of the divisible pool under Article 270.
4. Levied under **Article 265 (Taxation Authority)** and specific Acts.

4. Key Related Terms

(A) Demerit Goods

- Goods that are harmful for:
- Health (e.g., tobacco, alcohol, pan masala)
- Society Govts impose high taxes to discourage consumption.

(B) GST Compensation Cess

- A special cess on luxury/sin goods to compensate states for GST revenue loss.
- The new cess is separate from GST compensation cess.

(C) Machine-Based Taxation

A tax method where the levy is based on:

- Number of machines
 - Machine capacity
 - Hours of operation
- Rather than actual production.
Useful to prevent under-reporting of production.

(D) "Inspector Raj" (Criticism)

Opposition parties used this term to describe:

- Excessive inspection
- Harassment by tax officials
- Increased bureaucratic control over MSMEs

They fear machine-based levies may revive such practices.

5. Why is the Government Introducing This Cess?

(As explained by the Finance Minister)

(1) Health Perspective

- Pan masala and tobacco cause high health burden.
- Funds needed for:
 - ♦ Cancer treatment programmes
 - ♦ Health awareness
 - ♦ Public health infrastructure

(2) National Security Funding

- Defence expenditure is rising.
- Need for a **predictable, dedicated fund** insulated from economic fluctuations.

(3) Reduce Tax Evasion

- Pan masala/tobacco sectors are notorious for:
 - ♦ Under-reporting
 - ♦ Fake invoicing
 - ♦ Cash-based transactions

Machine-linked cess is harder to evade.

6. Concerns Raised by Opposition Parties

(1) Impact on MSMEs

- Many small-scale units operate in tobacco & pan masala processing.
- Machine-based taxation may:
- Increase compliance burden
- Reduce profitability
- Trigger closures

(2) Fear of "Inspector Raj"

- Increased inspections of factories and machines may lead to:
 - ♦ Harassment
 - ♦ Corruption
 - ♦ Bureaucratic interference

(3) Question of Governance & Transparency

- RJD MPs argued:
 - ♦ "Cessification of governance" reduces Parliament's oversight.
 - ♦ Too many cesses → States starved of tax revenue.

(4) Mixed Signals

Some MPs pointed out:

- Govt promotes pan masala/tobacco consumerism via advertising restrictions but taxes them for revenue.
- If harmful, they questioned: **Why not ban these goods?**

(5) Burden on Lower Income Groups

Demerit goods are consumed largely by:

- Daily wage earners
- Lower-income sections Hence taxation becomes regressive.

7. Likely Economic and Governance Impacts

Positive Impacts

(1) More resources for health

- Funds can strengthen:
 - ♦ National Health Mission
 - ♦ Cancer hospitals
 - ♦ Preventive health programmes

(2) Boost to national security

A stable, non-borrowed revenue source for defence is beneficial.

(3) Discourages consumption

High tax → reduced affordability → public health benefit.

(4) Higher transparency

FM said this is first time:

- Every rupee collected from a demerit good will have a **legally committed destination**.

Negative Impacts / Risks

(1) Cost escalations

Producers may pass the burden to consumers.

(2) Inflation in sin goods

Demand may shift to:

- Unregulated local products
- Black market alternatives

(3) Centre-State fiscal tensions

States often complain that:

- Cess reduces their share in divisible pool
- This could worsen fiscal strain

(4) Compliance burden on MSMEs

Small manufacturers may struggle to:

- Install required machines
- Maintain records
- Handle inspections

4. QUANTUM-POWERED ECONOMY

Context : NITI Aayog report "Transforming India into a Leading Quantum-Powered Economy"

UPSC Relevance

GS Paper 3 (Science & Tech, Economy, National Security)

- Disruptive/emerging technologies
- Quantum computing, cryptography, AI-quantum convergence
- Atmanirbhar Bharat in tech
- Science research funding & innovation ecosystem
- Strategic technologies & national security

1. Meaning of Quantum Technologies

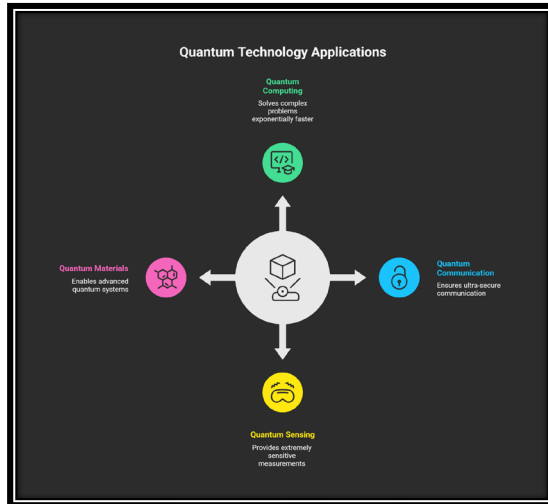
Quantum Technologies = technologies that exploit properties of quantum physics (superposition, entanglement, tunneling). These enable computing, communication, sensing and materials science far beyond classical limits.

Key Sub-Domains

1. Quantum Computing:

- Uses qubits; can solve complex problems exponentially faster.

- ♦ Useful in drug discovery, optimisation, machine learning, breaking current cryptography.
- ♦ Quantum Advantage: when quantum + classical computing outperforms classical computing alone.



2. Quantum Communication:

- ♦ Uses quantum key distribution (QKD) for ultra-secure communication that cannot be intercepted without detection.
- ♦ Important for military, government networks.

3. Quantum Sensing & Metrology:

- ♦ Extremely sensitive measurement tools (atomic clocks, magnetometers).
- ♦ Critical for space, defence, aerospace, resource exploration.

4. Quantum Materials:

- ♦ New materials enabling quantum processors, sensors, and energy-efficient systems.

2. Why India Needs Quantum Leadership

Global Context

- Countries (US, China, Europe) invest USD 10 billion+ annually in quantum R&D.
- Quantum technologies will define future competitiveness, digital sovereignty, and national security.

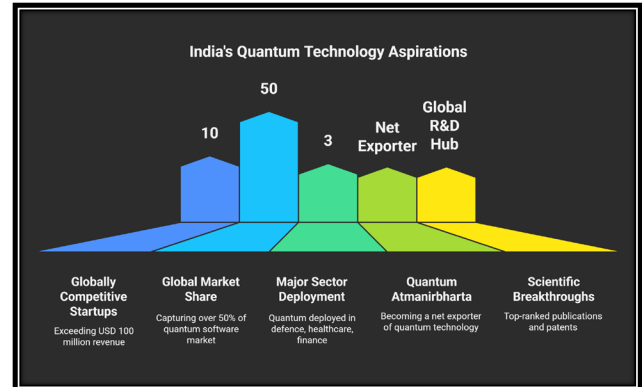
India's National Need

- Quantum can transform healthcare, logistics, energy, materials, finance.
- By 2035, quantum may unlock USD 1–2 trillion globally across industries.
- Without investment, India risks becoming a mere consumer of foreign quantum solutions.

3. India's Vision for 2035 (Targets)

The report defines a measurable national vision:

1. 10+ globally competitive quantum startups each exceeding USD 100 million revenue.
2. India captures >50% of the global quantum software & services market by leveraging its IT strengths.

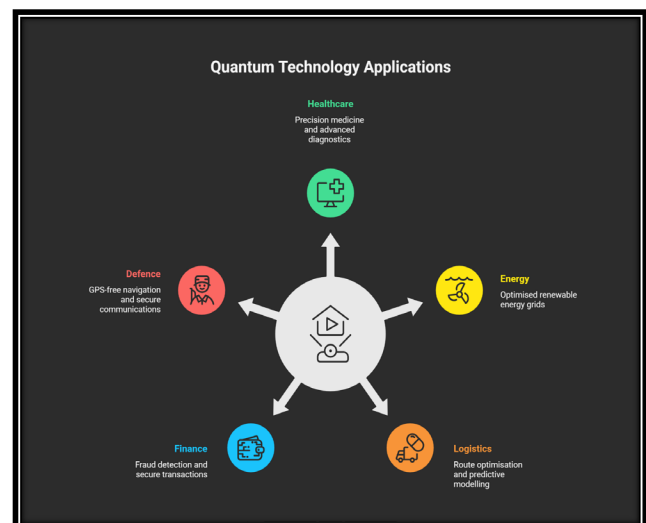


3. Quantum deployed at scale in at least 3 major sectors (defence, healthcare, materials, finance).
4. Quantum Atmanirbharta: India becomes a net exporter of quantum hardware + software; part of global supply chains.
5. India becomes a global R&D hub with top-ranked publications, patents, and scientific breakthroughs.

4. Economic & Sectoral Value of Quantum Technologies

Key Transformations Expected

- **Healthcare:** Precision medicine, drug discovery using quantum simulations; advanced diagnostics.



- **Energy:** Optimising renewable energy grids, forecasting, storage solutions.

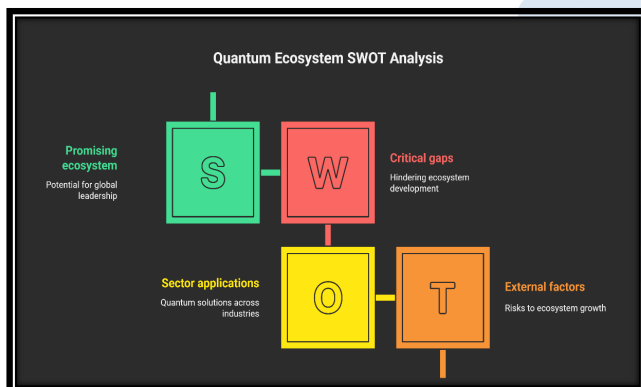
- **Logistics:** Route optimisation, predictive modelling for PM GatiShakti; cost reduction.
- **Finance:** Fraud detection, quantum-secure transactions, portfolio optimisation.
- **Defence:** GPS-free navigation, secure battlefield communications, sensing.

5. Current Challenges for India

India's quantum ecosystem is promising but has critical gaps:

Weaknesses

- Underdeveloped indigenous hardware ecosystem.
- Heavy import dependence for materials & components.
- Low investment in basic science (0.65% of GDP).
- Skill shortages: cryogenics, optics, microwave systems.
- Weak IP protection and slow technology commercialisation.



Threats

- China's dominance in quantum materials + rapid investments.
- Brain drain of quantum talent.
- Risk of India becoming a standards-taker, not a standards-maker.

6. Strategic Priorities (Action Agenda for India)

1. Expand Quantum Workforce

- ♦ Grow talent pool by 10x in next 2–3 years.
- ♦ Train 100,000+ developers in quantum software (Qiskit, Cirq etc.).

2. Drive Industry Adoption & Investment

- ♦ Launch 25+ quantum industry pilots by 2030.
- ♦ Create sandboxes in banking, pharma, energy, manufacturing.

3. Accelerate Lab-to-Market Transition

- ♦ Improve ease of doing science.
- ♦ Faster validation, prototyping, IP creation.

4. Scale Fundamental Research

- ♦ Increase risk-taking in public funding.
- ♦ Create national research hubs & testbeds.

5. Make India Attractive for Quantum Startups

- ♦ 90% of Indian deep-tech startups remain domiciled in India.

6. Lead Global Standards & Quantum Diplomacy

- ♦ Participate in global standards bodies.
- ♦ Build alliances with Quad, EU, ASEAN, African Union, Global South.

7. Strengthen Global Trade & Supply Chains

- ♦ Secure access to rare materials.
- ♦ Develop indigenous manufacturing capability.

7. Risks of Inaction

- Weak cybersecurity due to quantum attacks (RSA breakdown).
- Losing ownership of critical IP.
- Strategic vulnerability in defence communication & sensing.
- Missed opportunity to build high-value jobs and innovation leadership.

MAINS

FUNCTIONING OF THE PARLIAMENT

1. Basic introduction & background (simple language)

- Parliament is the primary forum for law-making, oversight of the executive, and public deliberation in India.
- In recent years, however, sessions have been repeatedly **disrupted**, sittings reduced, and detailed scrutiny (committees, debates, voting) weakened — prompting worry about democratic governance.
- Parliamentary functioning in India refers to the effectiveness of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in debating legislation, holding the executive accountable, and passing bills through deliberation.
- Shashi Tharoor's article (Indian Express, 3 Dec 2025) highlights a "cycle of disruption" where opposition protests stall proceedings, citing 68% time loss in 15th Lok Sabha under UPA due to BJP disruptions

- Manoj Jha's response (Indian Express, 4 Dec 2025) counters that shrinking sessions and rushed bills under NDA reflect executive dominance, with Monsoon Session 2025 at 29% Lok Sabha productivity

Parliamentary Functioning in India

What is parliamentary functioning in India?

It refers to the effectiveness of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in debating legislation, holding the executive accountable, and passing bills through deliberation.

What are the recent concerns about parliamentary functioning?

Sessions have been repeatedly disrupted, sittings reduced, and detailed scrutiny weakened, prompting worry about democratic governance.

What does Shashi Tharoor say about parliamentary disruptions?

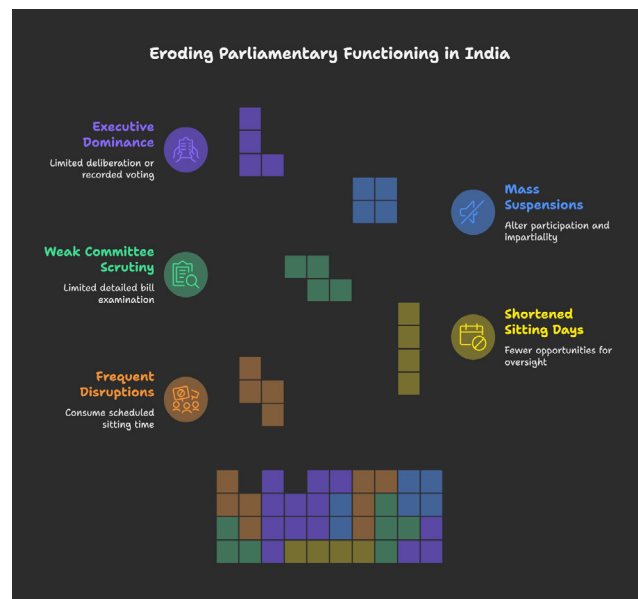
He highlights a "cycle of disruption" where opposition protests stall proceedings, citing 68% time loss in the 15th Lok Sabha under UPA due to BJP disruptions.

What does Manoj Jha say in response?

He counters that shrinking sessions and rushed bills under NDA reflect executive dominance, with the Monsoon Session 2025 at 29% Lok Sabha productivity.

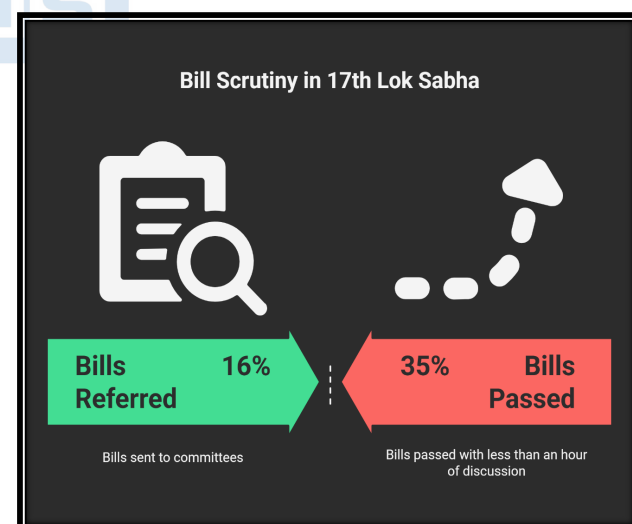
2. key issues

- Frequent disruptions** (adjournments, walkouts, slogan-shouting) that consume scheduled sitting time and curtail debate.
- Shortened/irregular sitting days** — Parliament meets far fewer days now than earlier decades.
- Weak committee scrutiny** — a small proportion of Bills are referred to Committees for detailed examination.
- Mass suspensions & chair actions** that alter participation and perceived impartiality of presiding officers. (4)(5)
- Executive dominance & 'rubber-stamp' accusations** — legislation is often introduced and passed with limited deliberation or recorded voting.

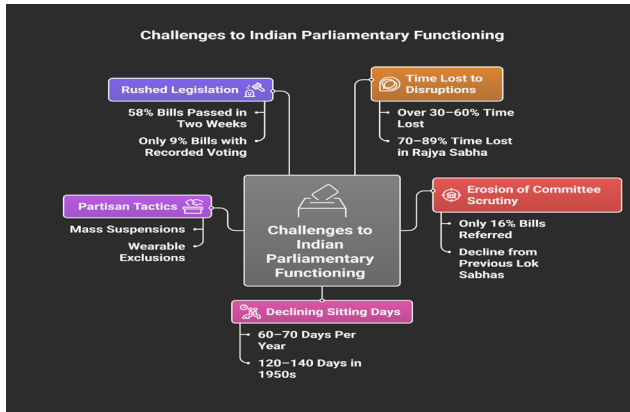


3. unique facts

- During the 17th Lok Sabha, **MPs were suspended on 206 instances** across both Houses — indicating high usage of suspension powers.
- Only 16% of Bills** in the 17th Lok Sabha were referred to Committees for detailed scrutiny — markedly lower than prior Lok Sabhas.
- 35% of Bills were passed with less than an hour of discussion** in the Lok Sabha (17th LS), and 34% in Rajya Sabha — implying rushed legislative processes.



- In some sessions studied by the Vidhi Centre, the **Rajya Sabha lost 70–89% of its scheduled time to interruptions** in certain disrupted sessions.
- The UK House of Commons designates **20 Opposition days** per session (17 for the largest opposition party), a practice often recommended as a mitigation model for India.



4. Major challenges

Challenge 1 — Time lost to disruptions (affects deliberation & legislation)

- **Data:** PRS/other studies document that multiple recent sessions have seen large percentages of scheduled time lost; e.g., some sessions recorded **over 30–60% time lost to disruptions**, and isolated studies reported **70–89% time lost in Rajya Sabha** in highly disrupted sessions.
- **Why it matters:** Lost time reduces debate, scrutiny of Bills, and question hour effectiveness.

Challenge 2 — Erosion of committee scrutiny (weak pre-legislative review)

- **Data:** In the 17th Lok Sabha, **only 16% of Bills were referred to Committees** for detailed scrutiny — a decline compared to previous Lok Sabhas.
- **Why it matters:** Committees are the primary mechanism for technical, stakeholder-oriented review; low referrals reduce legislative quality.

Challenge 3 — Declining sitting days & shorter sessions

- **Data:** India's Parliament now meets roughly **60–70 days per year** on average versus roughly 120–140 days in the 1950s; shorter sessions constrain work time and intensify consequences of disruptions.
- **Why it matters:** Fewer days increase the relative impact of any disruption and reduce opportunities for oversight.

Challenge 4 — Partisan tactics, suspensions & chair impartiality

- **Data:** Instances of mass suspensions and wearable exclusions (e.g., the high number of suspensions in certain sessions) have been documented, and critics argue these actions can change the working composition of Houses.

- **Why it matters:** Perception of biased chairing or punitive suspensions undermines legitimacy and reduces opposition's capacity to hold the executive to account.

Challenge 5 — Rushed legislation and limited recorded voting

- **Data:** In the 17th Lok Sabha, **58% of Bills were passed within two weeks of introduction**, and **only ~9%** of Bills had recorded voting; some Bills were passed within hours or without detailed debate.
- **Why it matters:** Quick passage without detailed debate weakens law quality and reduces public transparency.

5. Detailed analysis of each challenge

Challenge 1 — Time lost to disruptions

- **Root causes:** Tactical use of adjournments/walkouts to press political demands; tit-for-tat behaviour where past disruptors replicate tactics when roles reverse; absence of guaranteed agenda time for Opposition.
- **Most affected:** Citizens (reduced oversight), minority stakeholders dependent on rigorous hearings (e.g., civil society, industry), and MPs who seek legitimate debate time.
- **Existing mitigation attempts:** Proposals for codes of conduct, stronger enforcement of rules by Speakers, and examples from PRS/Vidhi suggesting procedural changes (e.g., guaranteed Opposition time).
- **Evidence:** Analyses by PRS and Vidhi quantify time loss and argue for procedural fixes.

Challenge 2 — Erosion of committee scrutiny

- **Root causes:** Centralised legislative scheduling by the executive; priority on speed (political agendas); reluctance to refer politically sensitive Bills to committees.
- **Most affected:** Policy complexity areas (e.g., data protection, criminal law reform) and long-term policy stability.
- **Existing attempts:** Use of Joint Committees, departmental standing committees, ad hoc select committees — but referral rates are low and uneven.

Challenge 3 — Declining sitting days

- **Root causes:** Political choices (shorter sessions), calendar pressure (state elections), and executive preference to manage parliamentary workload through ordinances/notifications.

- **Most affected:** Overall legislative scrutiny capacity; marginalized topics may never get adequate time.
- **Existing attempts:** Calls by PRS & Vidhi to increase days and rework scheduling (e.g., ring-fenced debate days).

Challenge 4 — Partisan chairing & suspensions

- **Root causes:** Broad discretionary powers in Rules; inadequate independent processes for disciplining members; political incentives to use suspensions as a tool.
- **Most affected:** Opposition voices and the institutional credibility of presiding officers.
- **Existing attempts:** Debates on reforming suspension procedure, calls for independent ethics committees, and cross-party appeals for restraint (documented in opinion pieces and debates).

Challenge 5 — Rushed legislation & limited recorded voting

- **Root causes:** Political urgency, tight legislative calendars, and executive dominance in setting agenda; also political culture that prizes quick passage over deliberation.
- **Most affected:** Quality of law, judicial challenge risk, and stakeholders not consulted.
- **Existing attempts:** PRS/think-tanks push for mandatory recorded votes on major Bills and greater use of standing committees.

6. Innovative solutions

Challenge 1 solution — Guaranteed Opposition Agenda (Opposition Days) + Binding Time-Share

- **What:** Legislate (or adopt by convention) a fixed number of “**Opposition Agenda Days**” per session (e.g., 15–20 days per year), and allocate a guaranteed short weekly slot for urgent Opposition items.
- **Why feasible:** UK House of Commons already uses 20 Opposition days (17 to largest opposition) as a formal, repeatable mechanism to ensure Opposition time.
- **Benefits/evidence:** Guarantees space for Opposition debate reduces incentive to disrupt; comparative parliamentary practice supports effectiveness.
- **Implementation requirements:** Amendment of Rules or an all-party code; whips' agreement for scheduling; operational integration into Business Advisory Committee schedules.

- **Potential obstacles:** Government reluctance to cede agenda time; needs cross-party consensus.

Challenge 2 solution — Automatic Referral Gate for Major Bills

- **What:** A rule that **any Bill with X significance criteria** (e.g., changes to fundamental rights, criminal law, economy > ₹X crores, or those affecting >1 ministry) is **automatically referred to a relevant standing/Joint Committee** for a fixed period (say, 60–90 days) before full debate.
- **Evidence/case study:** Denmark/UK use robust committee systems; PRS/Vidhi recommend boosting committee referrals to improve legislative quality.
- **Core components:** Criteria list, time limits, fast-track for emergencies, stakeholder hearing mandate.
- **Implementation:** Amend Standing Orders; equip committees with secretariat resources & timelines; power to extend in limited cases.

Challenge 3 solution — Statutory Minimum Sitting Days + Fixed Parliamentary Calendar

- **What:** Adopt a statutory or convention-based minimum of **~120 sitting days per year** and fix calendar blocks (Budget, Monsoon, Winter) with minimum durations, resisting curtailment for political convenience.
- **Evidence:** Historical precedent (1950s: 120–140 days); PRS advocates more sitting days to reduce disruption pressure and allow substantive work.
- **Implementation:** Joint resolution of both Houses; constitutional/political negotiation to insulate scheduling from ad hoc curtailment; measure to limit use of ordinances.

Challenge 4 solution — Independent Parliamentary Ethics & Discipline Panel (IPEDP)

- **What:** Create a cross-party **parliamentary ethics panel** with procedural safeguards to review serious disciplinary actions (e.g., long suspensions), providing transparency and appeal.
- **Evidence/case study:** Many legislatures have ethics/standards committees (e.g., UK Committee on Standards, US House Ethics Committee) which provide due process and public reports — such mechanisms reduce arbitrary punishments and improve legitimacy.

- **Key features:** Time-bound inquiries, right to representation, public summary reports, required parliamentary ratification for suspensions >X days.
- **Implementation:** Amend Rules; create secretariat with legal staff; training for chairs on due process.

Challenge 5 solution — Mandatory Recorded Voting & 'Cooling Off' for Critical Bills

- **What:** Require **recorded votes (division)** on Bills flagged as "major" (constitutional, financial, criminal law, major economic policy) and impose a **cooling-off period** (e.g., 48–72 hours) between passage stages for such Bills.
- **Evidence:** Recorded votes improve transparency and accountability and are common in legislative practice; PRS recommends greater recorded voting for accountability.
- **Implementation:** Rule amendment defining "major Bill," automatic division mechanism (electronic voting), and exceptions for emergency legislation with supermajority oversight.

7. Solution Framework

Core functionality & purpose

- Ensure technical scrutiny of significant legislation by expert committees before full House debate; prevent rushed law-making.

Key components / features

- **Threshold Criteria:** Bill qualifies if it (a) affects fundamental rights, (b) modifies criminal justice, (c) has budgetary impact > ₹X, (d) touches multiple ministries.
- **Automatic Referral:** Secretary-General flags qualifying Bills; Chair sends to relevant Standing/Joint Committee.
- **Time Limit:** Committee must present report within 60–90 days; extension only by majority of committee members.
- **Stakeholder Hearings:** Mandatory public hearings/consultations; transcript submitted to House.

Value proposition (with evidence)

- Improves quality of legislation & reduces litigation risk; Vidhi & PRS highlight committee scrutiny as best practice that enhances legislative content and democratic legitimacy.

Implementation requirements

- Amend Standing Orders; recruit additional committee staff (legal researchers, subject experts); budget allocation; timeline enforcement mechanism (e.g., Business Advisory Committee

to allocate subsequent debate time on receipt of committee report).

Feasibility & evidence

- Other democracies use committee pre-scrutiny effectively; PRS notes that where Bills were referred and committees met frequently, outcomes improved.

8. Way Forward

Priority 1 (quick wins, low political cost)

- **All-party code of conduct + routine Business Advisory Committee transparency.**

Action: Convene all-party meeting, adopt formal code setting out prohibited disruptive behaviour, incremental enforcement guidelines, with Speaker facilitating. (Timeline: 1–3 months; actor: Speaker + party whips.)

Priority 2 (procedural change with medium feasibility)

- **Mandate automatic committee referral for major Bills** (see framework above).

Action: Standing Orders amendment, pilot for 2–3 ministries (Home, Finance, Law). (Timeline: 6–12 months; actor: Rules Committee / Parliamentary Affairs Ministry).

Priority 3 (structural change, requires consensus)

- **Statutory/Conventional minimum sitting days & guaranteed Opposition days** (UK model adaptation).

Action: Business Advisory Committee redesign; all-party agreement; explore legislative or joint resolution to fix minimum days. (Timeline: 12–18 months; actor: Speaker, PM, LoP.)

Priority 4 (institutional safeguards)

- **Independent Parliamentary Ethics & Discipline Panel (IPEDP)** for fair, transparent suspension processes.

Action: Draft rules detailing rights of MPs, independent review, and proportionate punishments. (Timeline: 12 months; actor: Rules Committee.)

Priority 5 (transparency & accountability)

- **Mandatory recorded voting on major Bills + public dashboard of parliamentary productivity** (use PRS style data).

Action: Implement electronic division system where absent; publish daily productivity metrics (time used vs scheduled). (Timeline: 6–9 months; actor: Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha secretariats; PRS collaboration.)

===== DNA QUIZ =====

- Q.** Recent Trend on decline in Parliamentary Functioning highlights a vicious cycle of disruptions, shrinking session durations, and executive dominance leading to abysmally low parliamentary productivity. Critically examine the root causes of this decline and suggest comprehensive reforms to restore Parliament's primacy as the temple of democracy."

(250 words, 15 marks)

===== PRACTICE QUESTION =====

- 1.** Consider the following statements regarding critically endangered vulture species in India:
1. Slender-billed Vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*) has the smallest global population among *Gyps* vultures, estimated at less than 1,000 individuals.
 2. White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) is primarily found in Assam forests and wetlands.
 3. Red-headed Vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) is subject to breeding trials at Pinjore Conservation Centre.
 4. Indian Vulture (*Gyps indicus*) benefits from vulture safe zones established in Madhya Pradesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

- 2.** The philosophical roots of which constitutional provisions can be traced to Ambedkar's actions at Mahad?
1. Article 14
 2. Article 17
 3. Preamble's commitment to fraternity
 4. Directive Principles on Panchayati Raj

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

- 3.** Which of the following statements about a "cess" is/are correct?

1. A cess is levied for a specific purpose.
2. All cesses are mandatorily shared with states.
3. Cess revenue is part of the divisible pool.

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

- 4.** Consider the following statements about Quantum Technologies as discussed in NITI Aayog's 2025 Report:

1. Quantum Advantage refers to a situation where quantum computing outperforms classical computing even when classical computing is assisted by quantum resources.
2. Quantum Communication is considered essential for national security because quantum key distribution (QKD) cannot be intercepted without detection.
3. The report projects that India aims to capture more than 50% of the global quantum hardware market by 2035.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer			
1. (c)	2. (b)	3. (a)	4. (a)

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