

the region. The framework is structured around four pillars relating to (Pillar I); Supply Chain Resilience (Pillar II); Clean Economy (Pillar III); and Fair Economy (Pillar IV)

- (a) 2022, 14 Countries, Business
- (b) 2021, 15 Countries, Industry
- (c) 2023, 14 Countries, Commerce
- (d) 2022, 14 Countries, Trade
- (e) 2021, 16 Countries, Trade

Finance and Management

2 Markers

I.1-4) Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow –

To streamline the application process for public issues of debt securities, non-convertible redeemable preference shares, municipal debt securities, and securitized debt instruments, regulatory bodies have aligned it with the process for public issues of equity shares and convertible securities. Recently, a circular has been released according to which it has been decided to allow individual investors to apply for these public issues using a block fund facility through new payment instrument. This facility can also be accessed via intermediaries such as syndicate members, registered stock brokers, and depository participants.

The public issue application process for debt securities now mirrors the mechanism for equity public issues. Once a company receives approval from the requisite regulatory body, it can open the subscription window, enabling investors to subscribe to the issue in a manner similar to IPOs or FPOs. This streamlined approach is expected to enhance ease of access and participation for retail investors.

The new facility will be fully operational in the market, while investors retain the flexibility to use traditional modes such as Self-Certified Syndicate Banks (SCSBs) and stock exchange platforms. Individual investors can utilize the block fund payment instrument for subscriptions, subject to prescribed limits. This change aims to simplify the process and encourage broader participation in public issues of debt securities.

Q.1)

As per the circular, what is the maximum amount that can be blocked in a single transaction for an IPO application?

- (a) Rs. 1 lakh
- (b) Rs. 2 lakhs
- (c) Rs. 3 lakhs
- (d) Rs. 4 lakhs
- (e) Rs. 5 lakhs

Q.2)

The facility of blocking a specific amount for an IPO application is done through which new payment instrument mentioned in the passage?

- (a) UPI
- (b) Credit card
- (c) Cheque
- (d) ASBA
- (e) Debit card

Q.3)

Which regulatory body recently released the above-mentioned circular introducing a new facility for investors to block amounts for IPO applications?

- (a) SEBI (d) IRDAI
(b) RBI (e) IFSCA
(c) NPCI

Q.4)

From which date will the circular mandating the use of new payment instrument for IPO applications become mandatory?

- (a) 1st January 2024 (d) 1st April 2024
(b) 1st November 2024 (e) 1st May 2024
(c) 1st March 2024

I.5-7) Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow –

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, are a set of 17 global objectives aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable future by 2030. These goals address pressing challenges such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water, affordable energy, and climate action. They serve as a universal call to action to protect the planet, ensure human rights, and promote prosperity for all.

The SDGs aim to leave no one behind, fostering a sustainable and equitable world for current and future generations. They represent a shared vision for humanity, urging collective action for a balanced relationship between economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion.

The SDGs emphasize inclusivity and sustainability. To achieve the SDGs, collaboration between governments, businesses, and civil society is essential. Efforts include mobilizing resources, encouraging innovation, and strengthening partnerships. Tracking progress is crucial, and indicators are used to measure success at local, national, and global levels.

Q.5)

What initiative did the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeed, which initially targeted poverty reduction and other essential development challenges?

- (a) Paris Climate Agreement
(b) Universal Declaration of Human Rights
(c) Millennium Development Goals
(d) Global Goals for Sustainable Development
(e) Rio+20 Summit Outcomes

Q.6)

Which concept represents an economic model that strives to reduce ecological harm and environmental risks while promoting sustainable development?

- (a) Circular Economy (d) Low-Carbon Economy
(b) Green Economy (e) Resilient Economy
(c) Sustainable Economy

Q.7)

The SDGs is built upon the success of the previous 15 years' framework which was in force from 2000 to 2015. This framework had set of eight goals that UN member states agreed to achieve by 2015. The goals set forth by the previous 15 years' framework included a range of targets, from reversing the HIV/AIDS to _____.

- (a) Universal higher education
(b) Halving extreme poverty
(c) Eliminating extreme poverty
(d) Ensuring clean energy
(e) Promoting urban sustainability

(I.8-11) Read the following and answer the questions that follow –

In India, this innovative banking model was introduced in 2014 to foster financial inclusion by establishing niche banks designed to provide essential banking services, such as deposit acceptance and credit facilities, particularly in underserved and rural areas. This initiative aimed to bridge the gap in access to formal financial systems, ensuring that marginalized communities, small businesses, and low-income households have access to banking.

These institutions operate under a robust regulatory framework to maintain financial stability while fulfilling their mission of catering to rural and semi-urban regions. A significant portion of their lending is directed toward priority sectors, including agriculture, small businesses, and micro-entrepreneurs, thereby supporting inclusive economic growth. By focusing on small-ticket loans, they have empowered individuals and small enterprises, contributing to the transformation of India's predominantly agrarian economy into a more inclusive one. The conceptualization of this model was influenced by a Committee Report, headed by a prominent Indian Banker which emphasized the importance of financial inclusion. Alongside Payment Banks, these niche institutions target sectors traditionally overlooked by mainstream banks, including migrant workers, daily wage earners, and economically weaker sections. Their tailored approach and innovative use of technology have made them a vital tool in enhancing financial literacy, improving savings habits, and driving grassroots-level development in India.

Q.8)

Which of the following banks mentioned in the above passage were created as part of the financial inclusion drive in 2013-14?

- (a) Small Finance Banks (d) Regional Rural Banks
(b) Universal Banks (e) Payment Banks
(c) Cooperative Banks

Q.9)

The bank mentioned in the passage have helped India's economy transition from an agrarian focus to a/an _____ economy.

- (a) Service-led (d) Industrialized
(b) Infrastructure-focused (e) Diversified
(c) Technology-driven

Q.10)

The idea of was introduced to promote the establishment of specialized banks catering to specific financial needs of underserved sectors.

- (a) Universal Banking (d) Differentiated Banking
(b) Cooperative Banking (e) Digital Banking
(c) Niche Banking

Q.11)

The above banking model was introduced and influenced by a Committee Report, headed by a prominent Indian Banker which emphasized the importance of financial inclusion. Identify the Committee Report.

- (a) Nachiket mor Committee Report
(b) Raghuram Rajan Committee Report
(c) Suresh Tendulkar Committee Report
(d) Urjit Patel Committee Report
(e) Deepak Mohanty Committee Report

I.12) Read the following passage and answer the question that follows –

A recent study updating the planetary boundary framework highlights the increasing impact of human activities on Earth's stability and liveability. The framework defines nine critical planetary boundaries that help regulate essential Earth systems, creating a "safe operating space" for humanity. The study reports that multiple boundaries have now been breached due to human-driven changes, with degradation continuing across most boundaries. However, some boundaries remain unaffected, maintaining their resilience against human impact.

Q.12)

Out of the nine planetary boundaries identified, earlier studies indicated that humans had crossed only a few.

Recent findings, however, reveal that additional boundaries have now been crossed due to human impact. Which of the following planetary boundaries have been recently crossed according to the new study?

- (a) Novel Entities and Freshwater Change
(b) Atmospheric Aerosol Loading and Land-System Change
(c) Ocean Acidification and Biogeochemical Flows
(d) Novel Entities and Biosphere Integrity
(e) Stratospheric Ozone Depletion and Ocean Acidification

I.13-16) Read the following passage carefully and answer the given questions.

TechSolutions Inc., a software company, recently initiated a digital transformation to stay competitive. This change involved introducing AI tools, automating manual tasks, and shifting certain employees to new roles. When the transformation was first announced, many employees disregarded it, continuing with their usual routines. However, as implementation began, frustrations emerged—some employees voiced concerns over job security, while others felt burdened by the need to acquire new skills.

In response, management introduced training sessions, Q&A forums, and one-on-one discussions to address these concerns and support employees. Over time, as employees grew more accustomed to the changes, they began adapting and accepting the new systems, with many ultimately viewing the transformation positively.

Q.13)

When TechSolutions initially announced its transformation, some employees continued with their routines as usual, disregarding the upcoming changes. According to the Kübler-Ross Change Curve, which stage does this behavior represent?

- (a) Bargaining (d) Depression
(b) Anger (e) Acceptance
(c) Denial

Q.14)

Which management intervention at TechSolutions best addresses the Depression stage of the Kübler-Ross Change Curve?

- (a) Open Q&A forums to allow employees to voice concerns
(b) Additional task assignments to encourage productivity
(c) Team meetings focused on the change's benefits
(d) Training and one-on-one support sessions
(e) Announcing further restructuring plans

Q.15) After adapting to the new AI-based tools, most employees at TechSolutions Inc. began to feel positive about

the transformation. What does this response indicate about their progression on the Kübler-Ross Change Curve?

- (a) They have moved into the Bargaining stage and are negotiating their roles.
- (b) They have reached the Acceptance stage, where they embrace the new processes.
- (c) They are in the Anger stage but are expressing it positively.
- (d) They are still in the Depression stage but are beginning to understand the change.
- (e) They are moving back to Denial, as they are not fully aligned with the changes.

Q.16)

If some employees at TechSolutions Inc. started proposing ways to adjust their roles to better align with the transformation, which stage of the Kübler-Ross Change Curve does this behavior reflect?

- (a) Denial
- (b) Anger
- (c) Bargaining
- (d) Depression
- (e) Acceptance

I.17-20) Read the following passage carefully and answer the given questions.

GlobalTech Corp., a multinational technology company, recently acquired a smaller firm, InnovateNow, based in another country with a distinctly different work culture. GlobalTech has a formal, hierarchical structure, values punctuality, and has a focus on individual achievement and accountability. In contrast, InnovateNow has a more relaxed, flexible work environment where team-based decision-making and collaborative problem-solving are emphasized.

Following the acquisition, GlobalTech decided to integrate InnovateNow's employees into its existing operations. However, the cultural differences soon became apparent. InnovateNow's employees were initially uneasy about the rigid reporting structure and found the emphasis on individual performance challenging, as they were accustomed to a more collaborative approach. This led to tension, as GlobalTech's managers perceived InnovateNow employees as less committed or unwilling to adapt.

To bridge the gap, GlobalTech's leadership began hosting cultural sensitivity workshops, encouraging cross-team projects, and offering team-building sessions to foster understanding between the groups. Over time, employees from both sides began to appreciate each other's strengths, leading to a more cohesive and productive work environment. However, the experience highlighted the significant impact that organizational and national cultures can have on behavior, teamwork, and individual development.

Q.17)

What challenge did InnovateNow employees primarily face after being integrated into GlobalTech's operations?

- (a) A lack of necessary technical skills
- (b) Difficulty adapting to a hierarchical structure and individual performance focus
- (c) Communication barriers due to language differences
- (d) Unfamiliarity with team-based decision-making
- (e) Lack of familiarity with the company's products

Q.18)

Suppose after several months of integration, a GlobalTech manager notices that InnovateNow employees remain disengaged and uncomfortable in meetings where individual performance is publicly reviewed. Which approach would most likely support better engagement from these employees without compromising GlobalTech's accountability practices?

- (a) Moving to a team-based performance evaluation system across the entire company
- (b) Implementing anonymous feedback channels specifically for InnovateNow employees
- (c) Allowing InnovateNow employees to submit self-assessments as part of the review process
- (d) Adjusting the format of performance reviews to include a mix of team and individual accomplishments
- (e) Introducing a monthly report exclusively for InnovateNow's team performance

Q.19)

In the initial stages, GlobalTech managers perceived InnovateNow employees as less committed or adaptable. This perception was likely influenced by which of the following?

- (a) The managers' own cultural expectations and biases
- (b) InnovateNow employees' lack of technical skills
- (c) InnovateNow employees' refusal to participate in team-building sessions
- (d) A language barrier between the two groups
- (e) The new employees' misunderstanding of GlobalTech's product offerings

Q.20)

If GlobalTech were to measure the effectiveness of its cultural sensitivity workshops, which of the following metrics would best indicate that employees are developing cross-cultural competencies?

- (a) A decrease in the time taken to complete projects
- (b) An increase in the frequency of conflicts between teams
- (c) A higher rate of innovation and team-based solutions
- (d) A significant reduction in training and development costs
- (e) Increased turnover in the InnovateNow employee group

1 Markers

Q.21)

UPI has introduced a feature called UPI Circles, where a primary user can manage payments and delegate responsibilities within a group. Regarding the addition of secondary users in such circles, how many secondary users can a primary user add to a single UPI Circle as per NPCI guidelines?

- (a) One
- (b) Two
- (c) Three
- (d) Four
- (e) Five

Q.22)

Commercial banks primarily manage risks such as credit risk, market risk, and operational risk to maintain financial stability. Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), however, face a unique set of risk factors when calculating their Capital Risk-weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR). Which of the following risks are relevant for NBFCs when assessing CRAR?

- (a) Credit Risk
- (b) Liquidity Risk
- (c) Market Risk
- (d) Operational Risk
- (e) All of the above

Q.23)

Recently, SEBI introduced new norms for non-convertible debentures (NCDs) aimed at simplifying the public issue process and reducing compliance burdens. The listing timeline for debt securities, including Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs), has been shortened to _____ working days from T+6. This reduced timeline will initially be optional for 1 year and mandatory thereafter. Select the correct Option to fill the blank.

- (a) T+1
- (b) T+2
- (c) T+3
- (d) T+4
- (e) T+5

Q.24)

What is the limit of ways and means advances for the second half of FY 2024-25?

- (a) 10, 000 Crore
- (b) 40, 000 Crore
- (c) 50, 000 Crore
- (d) 60, 000 Crore
- (e) 70, 000 Crore

Q.25)

In the latest SEBI guidelines for Small and Medium Real Estate Investment Trusts (SM-REITs) in India, a minimum asset value is specified to encourage investment in real estate projects. What is the minimum asset value requirement for SM-REITs under this new framework?

- (a) Rs. 50 crore
- (b) Rs. 25 crore

- (c) Rs. 100 crore
- (d) Rs.75 crore
- (e) Rs. 20 crore

Q.26)

Which communication network topology allows people to communicate only with those on their immediate left and right?

- (a) Chain Network
- (b) Star Network
- (c) Wheel Network
- (d) Circle Network
- (e) All-Channel Network

Q.27)

In the Johari Window, which quadrant represents information that is known to oneself but not known to others?

- (a) Open Quadrant
- (b) Blind Quadrant
- (c) Hidden Quadrant
- (d) Unknown Quadrant
- (e) Public Quadrant

Q.28)

Imagine a scenario in which a project team at a financial institution is undergoing a significant structural change. The team has mixed relationships with their leader, the tasks are unstructured and lack clear guidelines, and the leader has minimal formal authority within the organization. Under these circumstances, the leader is trying to decide if they should adopt a task-oriented or a relationship-oriented approach to maximize the team's productivity and navigate through the changes effectively.

Based on Fiedler's Contingency Model, which of the following would be the best course of action for the leader to take?

- (a) Use a highly task-oriented approach, as the leader's primary focus should be on providing clear guidelines to navigate unstructured tasks.
- (b) Adopt a relationship-oriented style, focusing on improving leader-member relations to offset the lack of structured tasks and limited positional authority.
- (c) Alternate between task-oriented and relationship-oriented styles, depending on the specific task requirements, as Fiedler's model emphasizes flexibility in leadership style.
- (d) Attempt to increase their positional power within the organization to allow for a more effective task-oriented approach, since task structure is lacking.
- (e) Focus primarily on building relationships within the team to gradually shift towards a task-oriented style as the team's cohesion improves.

Q.29)

In the context of leadership, who among the following developed the Managerial Grid?

- (a) Peter Drucker
- (b) Kurt Lewin

- (c) Robert Blake and Jane Mouton
- (d) Fiedler
- (e) Henry Mintzberg

Q.30)

In Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which component refers to the belief that one's effort will lead to the desired performance?

- (a) Valence
- (b) Instrumentality
- (c) Expectancy
- (d) Motivation
- (e) Achievement

=====ANSWER=====

Economics & Social Issues

Q.1) (b)

Explanation:

The report mentioned in the above paragraph is the 'World Development Report 2024' released by the World Bank. It examines how middle-income countries can break into the ranks of the wealthiest economies.

Somik V. Lall, the Senior Adviser to the Chief Economist of the World Bank Group has directed the report.

Q.2) (c)

Explanation:

The World Development Report 2024 proposes a "3i strategy" for countries to reach high-income status. Depending on their stage of development, all countries need to adopt a sequenced and progressively more sophisticated mix of policies.

Low-income countries can focus solely on policies designed to increase investment—the 1i phase. But once they attain lower-middle-income status, they need to shift gears and expand the policy mix to the 2i phase: investment and infusion, which consists of adopting technologies from abroad and spreading them across the economy.

At the upper-middle-income level, countries should shift gears again to the final 3i phase: investment, infusion, and innovation. In the innovation phase, countries no longer merely borrow ideas from the global frontiers of technology—they push the frontier.

Q.3) (d)

Explanation:

The World Development Report 2024 highlights the "middle-income trap," where developing countries face challenges in transitioning from middle-income to high-income status. This occurs due to factors like stagnating productivity, lack of innovation, and insufficient investment in advanced industries, hindering sustainable economic growth and progress.

Q.4) (e)

Explanation:

The World Development Report 2024: The Middle-Income Trap has proposed following steps to be taken by India to come out of middle-income trap – focus on enhancing economic diversification, addressing income inequality, and fostering sustained growth.