

**Jnanpith Award:**

- **59th Jnanpith award Vinod Kumar Shukla**, Raipur-based poet-writer, He is 12th Hindi writer and **first from Chhattisgarh to receive Jnanpith award.**
- Jnanpith Award, instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith, is oldest and most prestigious literary accolade in India.
- It honours authors for their exceptional contributions to literature in **Indian languages listed in Eighth Schedule** of Constitution, with **English being included from 49th award onwards.**
- It is **not given posthumously.**
- It carries a **cash reward of ₹11 lakh**, a **bronze statue** of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning, and a **citation.**

**Jackfruit (Artocarpus heterophyllus):**

- It is an **evergreen tree native to India**, with its origin from Western Ghats.
- Also known as **'kathal' in Hindi, 'palaa' in Tamil, 'kanthal' in Bengali, and 'chakka' in Malayalam.**
- Fruit does not hang down from branches but **grows directly from trunk and limbs.** This helps it to grow to enormous sizes, record being 42 kg specimen from Kerala.
- **Ripe fruit is sweet and tasty. Unripe jackfruit has many culinary uses.** It is even used as a substitute for meat, since it **has lower fat and cholesterol levels**, and tastes just as good as meat.
- **Southeast Asian monks wear robes dyed with jackfruit bark for a radiant, sunlit yellow that is reminiscent of honey.** This colour also imbibes a pleasing texture to furniture made from jackfruit wood, which is **hardy and termite resistant.**
- Jackfruit is **rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals** and plant-based chemicals, and elements such as **potassium, magnesium, and phosphorus.**
- It is **particularly useful for diabetic patients.** Fruit controls blood sugar levels, reduces fat deposited from liver to other organs, and carotenoids in it reduce risk of type 2 diabetes and heart diseases.

**Form 17C under Conduct of Election Rules, 1961:**

- Demand from opposition parties and ADR for **publication of first part of Form 17C, which includes booth-wise voter turnout data.**
- Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 mandates that a two-part form, recording voter turnout and vote count, is filled for every polling station.
- **Part 1 of Form 17C is Account of Votes Recorded and is filled in by presiding officer of each polling station, with a true copy to be furnished to every polling agent present at close of poll.**
- **Presiding officer, as well as every polling agent present are required to sign and validate this form,** before it is placed in a sealed cover and transported to returning officer, along with the EVM, to be held until day of counting.
- **On counting day, Part 2 of Form 17C, titled Result of Counting, is filled in by returning officer.** It includes names of each candidate, and number of votes recorded in favour of each of them, as seen when "result" button is pressed on EVM.
- Returning officer must also state "whether total number of votes shown above tallies with total number of votes

shown against item 5 of Part 1 [which is number of votes cast as per EVM on day of polling] or any discrepancy noticed between the two totals."

- **Part 2 is signed by returning officer, counting supervisor, and each candidate or their counting agents.**

**How does extended spaceflight affect humans?**

- Microgravity affects body in many ways, including allowing fluids to flow more easily towards brain, reducing muscle tension, and lowering bone density.
- **Astronauts thus maintain a strict routine of exercises and dieting** onboard ISS to help work body and engage brain.

**Nowruz, or the Persian New Year:**

- **Celebrated on day of vernal equinox, Nowruz** heralds arrival of spring, considered by many cultures as rebirth of nature.
- **People following Zoroastrianism celebrate this festival.** Celebrations also symbolise aspirations of **Kurdish people in Syria, Turkiye, Iran, and Iraq.**
- **Popular feature of festival, especially in Iran, is Haft Sin table.** People aesthetically arrange a table with seven items symbolising different attributes of life: sabzeh (sprouted grains) symbolises rebirth and renewal; saman (sweet pudding) for affluence and fertility; senjed (dried fruit) for love; seer (garlic) for health; seeb (apple) for beauty; somāq (sumac berries) denotes triumph of good over evil, and finally, serkeh (vinegar) represents age and wisdom.
- Apart from food, **fire forms another key feature of festival.**
- **UN has recognised March 21 as the International Day of Nowruz** while **UNESCO has inscribed Nowruz on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** to acknowledge cultural significance of tradition.
- **An agiary is a 'fire temple', a place of worship for Zoroastrians,** where a consecrated fire is kept burning eternally as a symbol of purity and reverence.

**Lapis lazuli rock:**

- It is a **vividly blue rock, sometimes with streaks of gold,** that has been known for millennia for its eye-popping colour and use as a semi-precious gemstone.
- The rock gets its name from two languages: **lapis is Latin for 'stone' whereas 'lazuli' comes from Persian word lazward, meaning 'blue.'**
- It **gets its colour from presence of an unusual mineral called lazurite (25-40%).** Its **blueness depends on amount and structure of sulphur in this mineral.**
- Presence of calcite can reduce the blueness while **golden sparkle comes from the presence of pyrites.**
- It has been found in many countries so far, including Chile, Russia, and the US, but **highest quality rock comes from Afghanistan's Badakhshan province,** where people have been mining it for more than 6,000 years.
- Archaeologists have also found ornamental lapis lazuli ornaments **in remains of Indus Civilisation sites including Mohenjo-daro and Harappa.**
- In Renaissance period, artistes in Europe ground lapis lazuli down into ultramarine, an expensive pigment they used in their paintings.

**PRACTICE MCQs**

Q1. Consider the following statements about Jnanpith Award:

1. It was instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
2. It honours authors for their exceptional contributions to literature in Indian languages listed in Eighth Schedule of Constitution.
3. It is also given posthumously.
4. It carries a cash reward of ₹11 lakh, a bronze statue of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning, and a citation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) All of them

**Answer: B**

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 mandates that a two-part Form 17C is filled for every polling station.
2. Part 1 of Form 17C is Account of Votes Recorded and is filled and signed by presiding officer of each polling station.
3. Part 2 of Form 17C, titled Result of Counting, is filled and signed by returning officer.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: D**

Q3. Nowruz festival is celebrated on –

- a) the day of vernal equinox.
- b) the day of spring equinox.
- c) the day of summer solstice.
- d) the day of winter solstice.

**Answer: A**

Q4. Consider the following statements about Jackfruit tree:

1. It is a deciduous tree native to India.
2. Fruit does not hang down from branches but grows directly from trunks and limbs.
3. It has many medicinal and culinary uses.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: B**

Q5. Consider the following statements about Lapis lazuli rock:

1. It gets its blue colour from presence of an unusual mineral called lazurite.
2. The golden sparkle in the rock comes from the presence of pyrites.
3. Highest quality rock is found in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: D**

