

**HISTORY (Code: 027)**  
**Sample Paper 2 — Class XII**

**Time Allowed: 3 hours**

**Maximum Marks: 80**

**General Instructions**

1. This question paper has five Sections — A, B, C, D and E. There are 34 questions in all; all are compulsory.
2. Section A: Question 1 to 21 are MCQs of 1 mark each.
3. Section B: Question 22 to 27 are Short Answer type questions of 3 marks each. Answers should not exceed 60-80 words.
4. Section C: Question 28 to 30 are Long Answer type questions of 8 marks each. Answers should not exceed 300-350 words.
5. Section D: Question 31 to 33 are Source-based questions, each with three sub-questions, of 4 marks each.
6. Section E: Question 34 is a Map-based question of 5 marks, including identification and location of significant test items. Attach the map with the answer sheet.
7. There is no overall choice. However, an internal choice has been given in a few questions. Only one option is to be attempted in such questions.
8. Separate instructions are given with each section and question, wherever needed.

## SECTION A

### Objective Type Questions

[1 × 21 = 21 Marks]

- Which Harappan site has a well-known dockyard, suggesting its role in maritime and riverine trade?
  - Kalibangan
  - Lothal
  - Banawali
  - Rakhigarhi
- The study of ancient inscriptions to reconstruct history is known as:
  - Numismatics
  - Epigraphy
  - Archaeo-botany
  - Stratigraphy
- Which one of the following is NOT correct about the administration of the mahajanapadas?
  - Some mahajanapadas maintained standing armies.
  - Regular taxes were collected from peasants, traders and artisans.
  - All mahajanapadas were governed strictly by hereditary monarchy.
  - Fortified capitals point to the possibility of warfare between states.

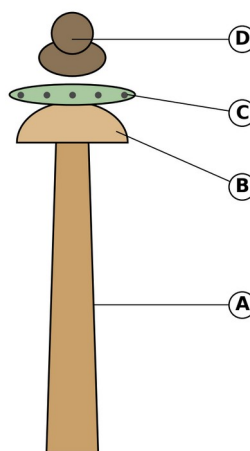
4. Match List I (ashrama) with List II (stage of life) and choose the correct option:

List I	List II
1. Brahmacharya	a. Stage of the forest hermit
2. Grihastha	b. Stage of the student
3. Vanaprastha	c. Stage of the householder
4. Sannyasa	d. Stage of the renouncer

- 1-b, 2-c, 3-a, 4-d
- 1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d
- 1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-d
- 1-d, 2-c, 3-b, 4-a

5. Study the schematic diagram of an Ashokan pillar below and answer the question that follows.

Schematic of an Ashokan Pillar



Identify the part labelled **B** in the diagram.

- The abacus
- The bell-shaped (inverted lotus) capital

- C. The shaft
- D. The capital animal

**NOTE: The following question is only for Visually Impaired candidates, in lieu of Q.5**

Which part of an Ashokan pillar directly supports the capital animal and often carries relief carvings of animals or a wheel?

- A. The shaft
- B. The bell-shaped capital
- C. The abacus
- D. The base

**6.** There are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option.  
Assertion (A): The Prayaga Prashasti, composed by Harishena, is an important source for reconstructing Samudragupta's reign. Reason (R): It is inscribed on the same Ashokan pillar at Allahabad and describes his military campaigns and personal qualities.

- A. Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is correct but (R) is not correct.
- D. (R) is correct but (A) is not correct.

**7.** Which of the following approaches explains some early historic polities as a layered system of political authority, rather than a single, tightly centralised empire?

- A. The unitary state model
- B. The segmentary state model
- C. The feudal model
- D. The city-state model

**8.** Which foreign traveller's account of Vijayanagara describes social customs such as sati that he observed at the city?

- A. Duarte Barbosa
- B. Ibn Battuta
- C. Al-Biruni
- D. Francois Bernier

**9.** There are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option.  
Assertion (A): The Lingayats did not practise elaborate funerary rites such as cremation. Reason (R): They believed that on death the devotee would be united with Shiva and would not return to this world.

- A. Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is correct but (R) is not correct.
- D. (R) is correct but (A) is not correct.

**10.** Which of the following best describes the role of temples in Vijayanagara's economy and society?

- A. Temples served only as places of worship with no economic role.
- B. Temples functioned as centres of learning, redistributed wealth through gifts and endowments, and reinforced royal legitimacy.
- C. Temples were entirely independent of royal patronage.
- D. Temple lands were exempt from all forms of taxation and administration.

**11.** Match List I (Mughal revenue officials) with List II (their role) and choose the correct option:

List I	List II
1. Amil-guzar	a. Revenue collector
2. Qanungo	b. Local record-keeper of revenue rates and customs
3. Patwari	c. Village-level accountant
4. Chaudhuri	d. Head of a pargana, intermediary in revenue collection

- A. 1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d
- B. 1-b, 2-a, 3-d, 4-c
- C. 1-c, 2-d, 3-a, 4-b
- D. 1-d, 2-c, 3-b, 4-a

12. Which term describes non-resident cultivators who migrated seasonally to work land in Mughal villages?
- Khud-kashta
  - Pahi-kashta
  - Muzarian
  - Zamindar
13. Which Mughal chronicle provides detailed quantitative data on revenue rates and administrative arrangements across provinces under Akbar?
- Akbarnama
  - Ain-i-Akbari
  - Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri
  - Padshahnama
14. Bernier compared Mughal towns with European towns and argued that Indian towns were dependent mainly on:
- Independent merchant guilds
  - The presence of the court or camp, and declined once it moved away
  - Agricultural self-sufficiency alone
  - Overseas trade exclusively
15. Arrange the following events in correct chronological order and choose the correct option:
- Formation of the Indian National Congress
  - Non-Cooperation Movement launched
  - Civil Disobedience Movement launched
  - Quit India Movement launched
- 1, 2, 3, 4
  - 2, 1, 3, 4
  - 1, 3, 2, 4
  - 4, 3, 2, 1
16. There are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option.  
Assertion (A): The revenue settlements introduced by the East India Company gradually altered the position of the zamindars. Reason (R): Zamindars increasingly lost direct, personal contact with villagers as they came to rely on hired agents (amlah) for revenue collection.
- Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
  - Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
  - (A) is correct but (R) is not correct.
  - (R) is correct but (A) is not correct.
17. Which Act formally ended East India Company rule and transferred authority in India to the British Crown after 1857?
- Regulating Act, 1773
  - Government of India Act, 1858
  - Indian Councils Act, 1861
  - Charter Act, 1833
18. Who served as the President of the Constituent Assembly?
- Jawaharlal Nehru
  - Dr Rajendra Prasad
  - Dr B. R. Ambedkar
  - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
19. Which of the following was NOT among the immediate demands of the sepoys who revolted at Meerut in May 1857?
- Release of imprisoned sepoys who had refused the new cartridges.
  - Reduction of land revenue across northern India.
  - An end to the perceived threat to their religion and caste.
  - Restoration of Bahadur Shah Zafar as a symbol of authority.
20. Which Congress session, held in December 1929, passed the resolution demanding "Purna Swaraj" (complete independence)?
- Lahore session
  - Karachi session

- C. Madras session
- D. Nagpur session

**21.** Which feature of the Indian Constitution was among the most debated in the Constituent Assembly, concerning the balance of power between the Union and the States?

- A. Fundamental Rights
- B. Centre-State (federal) relations
- C. Directive Principles of State Policy
- D. Citizenship provisions

## SECTION B

### Short Answer Type Questions

[3 × 6 = 18 Marks]

22.A. Explain any three limitations of using inscriptions alone as a source for reconstructing political history.

**OR**

22.B. Describe how historians use coins (numismatic evidence) to reconstruct the political and economic history of a period such as the Kushana or Gupta age.

23. Discuss the significance of the Prayaga Prashasti as a source for reconstructing the reign of Samudragupta.

24. Explain any three features of the layered, segmentary nature of political authority as some historians understand early historic polities.

25. Describe any three features of the temple economy in Vijayanagara.

26. Discuss the system of revenue collection under the Mughals, with reference to the roles of the amil-guzar and the qanungo.

27.A. Examine the reasons for the change in the position of zamindars under British rule in Bengal.

**OR**

27.B. Discuss how the Revolt of 1857 exposed weaknesses in the East India Company's system of administration.

## SECTION C

### *Long Answer Type Questions*

[8 × 3 = 24 Marks]

**28.A.** Discuss the contribution of epigraphic and numismatic evidence in reconstructing the political history of the Gupta period.

**OR**

**28.B.** Examine the debate among historians on whether the Gupta polity should be understood as a centralised empire or a looser, layered political order.

**29.A.** Evaluate the role of temples as centres of economic and cultural life in Vijayanagara.

**OR**

**29.B.** Discuss the system of land revenue administration under Akbar, with reference to the zabt system and the role of local revenue officials.

**30.A.** Examine the reasons for the transformation in the position and authority of zamindars in Bengal under colonial rule.

**OR**

**30.B.** Discuss the immediate and long-term consequences of the Revolt of 1857 for British policy in India.

## SECTION D

### Source-Based Questions

[4 × 3 = 12 Marks]

31. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

*The Prayaga Prashasti, a lengthy eulogy composed by the court poet Harishena, was inscribed on the same stone pillar that already carried Ashokan edicts, at Allahabad. It lists the military campaigns of Samudragupta across the subcontinent and praises his personal qualities as a poet, musician and warrior. Historians treat such court poetry with some caution, since eulogies were composed to glorify the ruler rather than provide neutral record.*

(Adapted for illustrative use)

31.1 On what earlier structure was the Prayaga Prashasti inscribed?

31.2 Name the poet who composed the Prayaga Prashasti.

31.3 Why must historians use court eulogies like this one with some caution?

32. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

*Temples in Vijayanagara were far more than places of worship. Rulers and nobles endowed them with land and treasure, which the temple administration then used to support priests, musicians, dancers and scholars, effectively redistributing wealth through the institution. By associating themselves closely with powerful deities through such endowments, kings also reinforced their own claim to legitimate authority.*

(Adapted for illustrative use)

32.1 What did rulers and nobles typically grant to temples?

32.2 Name any two groups of people who were supported through temple endowments.

32.3 How did royal association with temples strengthen a king's legitimacy?

33. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

*Following the widespread uprising of 1857, the British Parliament passed a new Act transferring the government of India directly to the Crown, ending the East India Company's political role after a century of rule. The Act also promised, through a royal proclamation, non-interference in the religious beliefs of Indian subjects and a degree of representation for Indian princes, though real power remained firmly with British officials.*

(Adapted for illustrative use)

33.1 Name the Act that transferred the government of India to the Crown.

33.2 What did the accompanying royal proclamation promise regarding religion?

33.3 Why do you think real power remained with British officials despite these promises?

## SECTION E

### Map-Based Question

[5 Marks]

34.1 On the given political outline map of India, locate and label the following with appropriate symbols:

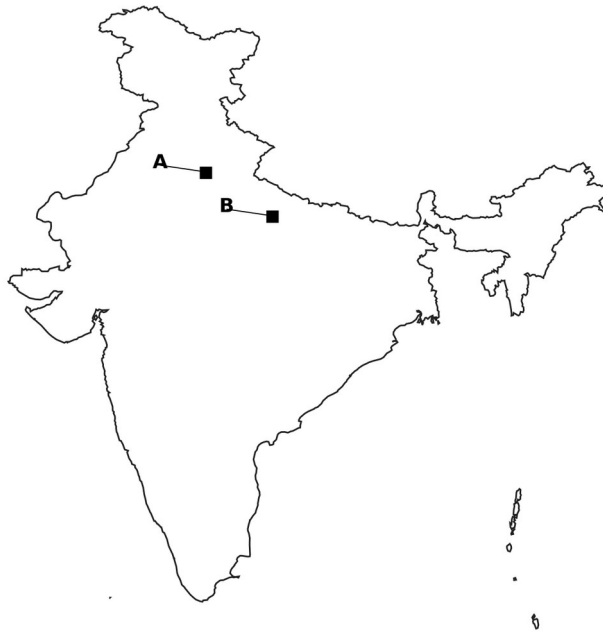
- Lothal — a Harappan site with a dockyard
- Ujjain — a Mahajanapada / early city
- Sanchi — a major Buddhist site

[1 + 1 + 1]

34.2 On the same outline map, two places have been marked as 'A' and 'B', being important centres of the Revolt of 1857. Identify them and write their correct names on the lines drawn near them.

[2]

Political Outline Map of India



**NOTE: The following questions are for Visually Impaired candidates only, in lieu of Q.34**

**34.1** Name the modern Indian state in which the Harappan site of Lothal is located, and state one feature that makes this site distinctive.

[3]

**34.2** Name any two important centres of the Revolt of 1857 in North India.

[2]

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**Sample Paper 2 — Marking Scheme / Solutions**

**SECTION A — Answer Key with Justification**

Q.No	Ans	Answer	Justification
1	B	Lothal	Lothal had a well-planned dockyard, indicating its importance for maritime and riverine trade.
2	B	Epigraphy	Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions; numismatics is the study of coins.
3	C	Statement C is incorrect	Several mahajanapadas were ganas/sanghas — oligarchies where power was shared, not hereditary monarchies.
4	A	1-b, 2-c, 3-a, 4-d	Brahmacharya = student (b); Grihastha = householder (c); Vanaprastha = forest hermit (a); Sannyasa = renouncer (d).
5	B	Bell-shaped (inverted lotus) capital	Part B sits directly above the shaft and below the abacus — the inverted-lotus bell capital.
5 (VI)	C	The abacus	The abacus is the flat disc that directly supports the capital animal and often carries relief carvings.
6	A	Both correct, R explains A	The Prayaga Prashasti was indeed inscribed on the same pillar carrying Ashokan edicts, and its content of campaigns/qualities is exactly why it matters as a source.
7	B	Segmentary state model	This model explains authority as layered across regional and local power centres rather than tightly unified under the centre.
8	A	Duarte Barbosa	The Portuguese traveller Duarte Barbosa recorded social customs, including sati, that he observed at Vijayanagara.
9	A	Both correct, R explains A	The Lingayats' belief in union with Shiva at death is precisely why they rejected conventional funerary rites like cremation.
10	B	Centres of learning/redistribution/legitimacy	Temples redistributed wealth via endowments, supported learning and the arts, and reinforced royal legitimacy through royal association with deities.
11	A	1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d	Amil-guzar = revenue collector (a); Qanungo = local record-keeper (b); Patwari = village accountant (c); Chaudhuri = pargana-level intermediary (d).
12	B	Pahi-kashta	Pahi-kashta were non-resident, migratory cultivators, unlike khud-kashta who were resident landholders.
13	B	Ain-i-Akbari	Abul Fazl's Ain-i-Akbari, part of the Akbarnama, provides detailed administrative and revenue data.
14	B	Presence of the court/camp	Bernier argued Mughal towns were largely 'camp towns' that declined once the court or army moved away, unlike self-sustaining European towns.
15	A	1, 2, 3, 4	The Congress was formed in 1885, followed by the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920), the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930), and the Quit India Movement (1942).

<b>Q.No</b>	<b>Ans</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Justification</b>
16	A	Both correct, R explains A	As zamindars relied on hired agents (amlaah) rather than direct contact with villagers, their traditional position and authority were gradually eroded — this directly explains the change described in (A).
17	B	Government of India Act, 1858	This Act ended Company rule and transferred governance of India directly to the British Crown.
18	B	Dr Rajendra Prasad	Dr Rajendra Prasad presided over the Constituent Assembly as its President.
19	B	Statement B is not correct	Reduction of land revenue was a peasant grievance in some regions, not an immediate demand raised by the sepoys at Meerut.
20	A	Lahore session	The Lahore session of December 1929, under Nehru's presidency, adopted the Purna Swaraj resolution.
21	B	Centre-State (federal) relations	The distribution of powers between the Union and the States was among the most extensively debated issues in the Constituent Assembly.

## SECTION B — Short Answer Type (3 marks each)

22.A. Limitations of inscriptions as a source (any three, 1 mark each):

- Inscriptions often record only what the ruling authority wished to be remembered, so they may omit failures or unpopular actions.
- Damage, erosion or loss of parts of an inscription can leave gaps that make full interpretation uncertain.
- The language and script of inscriptions can change over time, and undeciphered or poorly preserved examples limit what can be reconstructed.

OR

22.B. Use of coins as historical evidence:

- Coins carry the names and images of rulers, helping establish chronology and succession, as with Kushana and Gupta gold coins.
- The metal content of coins (gold, silver, or debased alloys) can indicate the state of the economy and trade in a period.
- Find-spots of coins reveal the geographical extent of trade networks and, sometimes, of political control.

23. Significance of the Prayaga Prashasti (3 marks):

- It provides a detailed (if celebratory) list of Samudragupta's military campaigns across northern and southern India.
- It offers insight into how Gupta kingship was projected — as a warrior, poet and patron of learning — shaping the image the dynasty wished to present.
- Being inscribed on an older Ashokan pillar, it also illustrates how later rulers reused and added to existing monuments to assert continuity with earlier authority.

24. Features of the segmentary/layered model of political authority (any three, 1 mark each):

- Authority was distributed across multiple levels — the centre exercised only symbolic or ritual sovereignty over some regions.
- Local chiefs and regional rulers retained substantial autonomy, sometimes acknowledging the centre only nominally.
- Political power expanded and contracted more fluidly than in a strictly centralised empire, varying with the strength of individual rulers.

25. Features of the temple economy in Vijayanagara (any three, 1 mark each):

- Temples received grants of land and revenue from rulers and nobles, which were used to support priests and temple staff.
- They employed and sustained artisans, musicians and dancers, making them important centres of cultural patronage.
- Temple festivals and rituals drew large numbers of pilgrims and traders, stimulating local markets and commerce around temple towns.

26. Mughal revenue collection system (3 marks):

- The amil-guzar was the official responsible for the actual assessment and collection of revenue in a given area.
- The qanungo maintained local records of customary revenue rates and cropping patterns, providing continuity of local knowledge across changes in personnel.
- These officials worked alongside village-level functionaries, such as the patwari, forming a layered administrative chain linking the imperial centre to individual villages.

27.A. Reasons for change in zamindars' position under British rule (any three, 1 mark each):

- The Permanent Settlement fixed revenue demand at a high and unchanging rate, causing many zamindars to fall into debt and lose their estates through auction.
- Zamindars increasingly relied on hired agents rather than personal ties with villagers, weakening their traditional local authority.
- Colonial courts and new property laws altered how land rights could be bought, sold or inherited, undermining older forms of zamindari control.

OR

27.B. Weaknesses exposed by the Revolt of 1857 (any three, 1 mark each):

- The Company's army was shown to be dangerously dependent on Indian sepoys whose loyalty could not be assumed once religious and social grievances mounted.
- Communication and coordination across garrisons proved slow and inadequate when multiple centres rose in revolt simultaneously.
- The scale of civilian participation—from taluqdars to peasants—revealed how deeply colonial policies had alienated groups beyond the army itself.

## SECTION C — Long Answer Type (8 marks each)

### 28.A. Epigraphic and numismatic evidence for Gupta political history:

- Inscriptions such as the Prayaga Prashasti list military campaigns and help establish the territorial extent of Gupta power under Samudragupta.
- Land-grant inscriptions (copper plates) reveal how kings donated land to Brahmanas and religious institutions, showing the administrative reach of the state into the countryside.
- Gold coins (dinaras) with images of rulers performing various roles — archer, horseman, musician — reflect how Gupta kings wished to be perceived, and their high gold content points to a flourishing economy.
- Comparing coin hoards and inscriptions from different regions allows historians to trace the changing boundaries of Gupta control over time.
- Because such sources are scattered and sometimes damaged, historians must piece together a mosaic picture rather than rely on a single continuous narrative.

OR

### 28.B. Centralised vs segmentary views of the Gupta polity:

- Some historians read Gupta inscriptions as evidence of a fairly centralised empire, given the wide geographical spread of Samudragupta's campaigns described in the Prayaga Prashasti.
- Others argue that many defeated rulers were reinstated as subordinates rather than annexed outright, suggesting a looser structure of overlordship rather than direct centralised administration.
- Land grants to religious beneficiaries in outlying areas may have served to extend royal influence indirectly, through local intermediaries, rather than through a uniform bureaucracy.
- This debate illustrates how the same body of evidence can support different models of state formation, depending on how historians weigh symbolic overlordship against direct administrative control.

### 29.A. Temples as centres of economic and cultural life in Vijayanagara:

- Royal and noble endowments of land and treasure to temples supported large numbers of priests, and financed the upkeep of shrines and festivals.
- Temples employed artisans for construction and maintenance, and patronised musicians, dancers and poets, making them vibrant centres of art and learning.
- Temple festivals attracted pilgrims and traders from far and wide, stimulating markets that grew up around temple complexes.
- By associating themselves with powerful deities through generous endowments, Vijayanagara rulers used temples to reinforce their own legitimacy and authority.

OR

### 29.B. Land revenue administration under Akbar:

- Under the zabt system, revenue was assessed using data on average produce and prices gathered over the preceding decade for each crop, offering a more predictable basis for taxation.
- The amil-guzar was responsible for assessing and collecting revenue in his jurisdiction, working within norms set by the central administration.
- Qanungos maintained detailed local records of customary rates and land-use patterns, providing continuity even when officials were transferred.
- Village-level functionaries such as the patwari kept accounts at the grassroots level, linking imperial policy to everyday agrarian practice.
- This layered system allowed the Mughal state to standardise revenue collection to some extent, while still depending heavily on local knowledge and cooperation.

### 30.A. Transformation in the position of zamindars under colonial rule:

- The Permanent Settlement of 1793 fixed the revenue demand permanently at a high rate, leaving zamindars vulnerable whenever harvests or prices declined.
- Failure to pay revenue on time led to the auction of zamindari estates, and many old zamindar families lost their land to new buyers, including merchants and moneylenders.
- Zamindars increasingly depended on hired agents (amlah) to manage their estates, weakening the direct personal ties they had earlier maintained with peasants.
- Colonial law redefined property rights in land, making zamindari rights more like transferable commodities than hereditary social obligations, altering the character of rural authority.

OR

### 30.B. Consequences of the Revolt of 1857 for British policy:

- The East India Company's political role was ended, and India came under the direct rule of the British Crown through the Government of India Act, 1858.
- The British reorganised and reduced the proportion of Indian soldiers in the army, and altered recruitment to prevent similar coordinated uprisings.

- The colonial government adopted a more cautious policy towards Indian religious and social customs, promising non-interference to avoid provoking further unrest.
- Princely states that had remained loyal during the revolt were treated more favourably, and their existence was guaranteed as part of the new imperial settlement.

## SECTION D — Source-Based Questions (4 marks each)

**31.1** It was inscribed on an Ashokan pillar (already carrying Ashokan edicts) at Allahabad. [1]

**31.2** Harishena, the court poet of Samudragupta. [1]

**31.3** Because eulogies were composed to glorify and praise the ruler, they may exaggerate achievements and omit failures, so historians must corroborate their claims with other sources. [2]

**32.1** They typically granted land and treasure/wealth to temples. [1]

**32.2** Priests and musicians/dancers (any two of: priests, musicians, dancers, scholars). [1]

**32.3** By closely associating themselves with powerful deities through endowments, kings presented their rule as sanctioned by and connected to divine authority, strengthening their claim to legitimate power. [2]

**33.1** The Government of India Act, 1858. [1]

**33.2** It promised non-interference in the religious beliefs of Indian subjects. [1]

**33.3** Because ultimate administrative and military authority remained with British officials and the Crown's representatives, the promises of representation and non-interference did not translate into genuine self-governance for Indians. [2]

## SECTION E — Map Answer Key (5 marks)

34.1 Lothal, Ujjain and Sanchi should be correctly located and labelled as shown on the answer-key map below (1 mark each).

34.2 A = Meerut, B = Lucknow (1 mark each).

Political Outline Map of India — Answer Key



***Visually Impaired candidates (in lieu of Q.34):***

**34.1** Lothal is located in the state of Gujarat. It is distinctive for its well-planned dockyard, which points to its role in maritime trade. [3]

**34.2** Any two of: Meerut, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Delhi. [2]