

UPSC CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION 2025

Answer Frameworks

Essay and General Studies Papers I to IV

For every question: how to write it, what the question asks, and the answer laid out as introduction, body and conclusion, with sources. Questions are from UPSC's official papers; the frameworks are written by Digitally Learn.

Essay (Paper I)

22 August 2025

Write two essays, one from each section, in about 1,000 to 1,200 words each. 125 marks each.

ESSAY · SECTION A**Q1. Truth knows no color.**

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s ·
Section A

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

Truth 'knows no colour': It does not change with race, religion, caste, party or nationality. The topic asks you to defend truth as universal and impartial, and to examine why people still colour it.

1 OPENING

Open with a scene: Two people watching the same event on two news channels and coming away with opposite 'truths'.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON**Thesis**

- Facts belong to no group; when truth is coloured by identity or interest, justice, science and democracy all suffer.

Dimensions to develop

- Philosophical: Satya as a value in Indian thought; Gandhi's view that

truth is God.

- Justice: Courts must find facts without regard to who the parties are; 'equality before law'.
- Science: Evidence does not care about the scientist's nationality; peer review and replication.
- Media and politics: Post-truth, fake news and selective outrage colour facts by ideology.
- Social: Prejudice makes people believe or disbelieve the same account depending on who tells it.
- Personal: Honesty in relationships and public service.

The counter-view

- Perspective does shape how truth is understood; history is written by many voices, and listening to them enriches truth rather than colouring it.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by arguing that truth itself has no colour, but the courage to see it does: Citizens and institutions must guard it from every side's bias.

ESSAY · SECTION A

Q2. The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s ·
Section A

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

The line from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* says the highest skill is to win without battle. The topic asks how strength, strategy and diplomacy can achieve goals that violence achieves only at great cost.

1 OPENING

Open with an example of a conflict avoided or won without a shot, through deterrence, negotiation or economic leverage.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON Thesis

- True power lies in shaping an opponent's choices so that fighting becomes unnecessary; war is the failure, not the height, of strategy.

Dimensions to develop

- Military: Deterrence, preparedness and alliances that make aggression unattractive.
- Diplomacy and economics: Sanctions, trade, soft power and negotiation as tools of influence.
- History: Freedom movements that defeated empires through mass non-violent resistance.
- Business and sport: Outthinking rivals rather than fighting price wars.
- Personal life: Resolving conflicts through dialogue and patience rather than confrontation.

The counter-view

- Some aggression cannot be deterred or negotiated with; a state that will not fight when needed invites attack.

Subduing without fighting depends on the capacity to fight.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by holding that the wisest power is the one least used: Strength and preparedness that keep the peace, and wisdom that makes war unnecessary.

ESSAY · SECTION A

Q3. Thought finds a world and creates one also.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s ·
Section A

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

Thought 'finds' a world by discovering how things are, and 'creates' one by imagining what could be. The topic asks you to show human thinking as both discovery and creation.

1 OPENING

Open with an idea that first existed only in someone's mind and then changed the world: A scientific theory, a constitution, or a social movement.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON Thesis

- Ideas both reveal reality and remake it; human progress comes from thinking that explores and then builds.

Dimensions to develop

- Science: Thought finds natural laws and then creates technology that reshapes life.
- Politics: Ideas of liberty, equality and self-rule created new nations and constitutions.
- Society: Reformers imagined a society without caste or gender discrimination and moved towards it.
- Art and literature: Imagination creates worlds that influence real

values.

- Personal: How we think shapes how we see our life and what we make of it.

The counter-view

- Thought can also create harmful worlds: Ideologies of hatred and destructive technologies; thinking needs ethics to guide what it creates.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by stressing responsibility: Because thought creates worlds, education must teach people to think freely, critically and ethically.

ESSAY · SECTION A

Q4. Best lessons are learnt through bitter experiences.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s ·
Section A

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

The topic claims that pain and failure teach more deeply than comfort. Explore why bitter experiences instruct, and when they do not.

1 OPENING

Open with a personal or historical failure that became a turning point, such as a lost exam, a failed venture or a national crisis that led to reform.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON

Thesis

- Hardship forces reflection and change; lessons learnt through pain last because they are felt, not just understood.

Dimensions to develop

- Personal: Failure builds resilience, humility and empathy.
- National: Crises that prompted reform, such as economic crises leading to policy change, or disasters leading to better preparedness.

- Institutions: Accidents and scams leading to stronger rules and oversight.
- Science and enterprise: Failed experiments and businesses that taught what works.

The counter-view

- Bitter experiences can also break people, breed cynicism or trauma; and many lessons can be learnt from others' experience, history and education without suffering.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by arguing that bitterness teaches only when met with reflection and support; a wise society learns from history so that every lesson need not be paid for in pain.

ESSAY · SECTION B

Q5. Muddy water is best cleared by leaving it alone.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s ·
Section B

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

Stirring muddy water keeps it cloudy; left still, the mud settles. The topic asks when patience, stillness and restraint solve problems better than hasty action.

1 OPENING

Open with the image itself, then a situation where reacting quickly made matters worse, such as an angry reply or a panicked decision.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON

Thesis

- Many problems, personal and public, clear with calm, time and restraint; constant interference can deepen confusion.

Dimensions to develop

- Mind: Anger and anxiety settle when given space; meditation and reflection bring clarity.
- Relationships: Cooling-off before resolving conflict.
- Governance and policy: Avoiding knee-jerk laws after a crisis; letting markets or ecosystems recover without over-regulation.
- Nature: Fallow land and protected forests regenerate when left alone.
- Diplomacy: Quiet patience rather than public escalation.

The counter-view

- Some problems, such as injustice, disasters or disease, worsen if ignored; inaction can be an excuse for neglect. Wisdom lies in knowing when to wait and when to act.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by distinguishing patience from passivity: Stillness lets clarity emerge, so that action, when it comes, is wise.

ESSAY · SECTION B

Q6. The years teach much which the days never know.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s · Section B

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

Single days are full of events whose meaning is unclear; only over years do patterns and lessons emerge. The topic asks you to reflect on time, experience and long-term perspective.

1 OPENING

Open with a decision that seemed a disaster at the time and a blessing years later, or the reverse.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON

Thesis

- Wisdom grows from the long view; judging life, policy or history by daily events misses the larger truth that time reveals.

Dimensions to develop

- Personal: Maturity and perspective that come only with years.
- History: Events whose significance became clear only decades later.
- Policy: Reforms judged by short-term costs whose benefits appear over years; the need for long-term planning.
- Environment: Climate change, invisible day to day, obvious over decades.
- Media age: Daily news cycles and social media that magnify the moment and lose the trend.

The counter-view

- Days matter too: Present choices and daily discipline make the years; and some lessons, such as a crisis, are learnt in a single day.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by urging patience in judgement and steadiness in effort: Live each day well, but judge by the years.

ESSAY · SECTION B

Q7. It is best to see life as a journey, not as a destination.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s · Section B

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

Seeing life as a journey values growth, learning and experience along the way; seeing it as a destination makes happiness wait for an end point. The topic asks which view leads to a better life.

1 OPENING

Open with someone who reached a long-sought goal and felt empty, or someone who found joy in the work itself.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON

Thesis

- Life is richer when lived as a journey: Goals give direction, but meaning lies in the process, the relationships and the growth.

Dimensions to develop

- Personal: Learning from setbacks; enjoying the present rather than postponing happiness.
- Education and career: Valuing learning over marks and titles reduces stress and builds real skill.
- Philosophy: Indian ideas of karma without attachment to fruits; living in the present.
- Society and nations: Development as a continuous process rather than a finished state.
- Public service: Daily service to people as the reward, not only promotions.

The counter-view

- Without destinations a journey drifts; clear goals give focus and measure progress. The best approach holds both.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by uniting the two: Set goals as guiding stars, but find meaning and joy in the road that leads to them.

ESSAY · SECTION B

Q8. Contentment is natural wealth; luxury is artificial poverty.

125 marks · 1,000 to 1,200 words · 87 min 30 s · Section B

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Write down five dimensions and a counter-view on the rough page before you start.

WHAT THE TOPIC MEANS

The topic says contentment is real wealth because it needs nothing more, while luxury is a kind of poverty because it creates endless new wants. Examine wants, happiness and sustainable living.

1 OPENING

Open with a contrast: A person with little who is at peace, and a wealthy one who always feels short.

2 BODY: DIMENSIONS TO BUILD ON

Thesis

- Happiness depends more on the balance between needs and wants than on possessions; contentment frees people, while luxury enslaves them to rising desires.

Dimensions to develop

- Personal: Gratitude and simplicity reduce anxiety and comparison.
- Economic: Consumerism, debt and the 'hedonic treadmill' of always wanting more.
- Environmental: Luxury consumption drives resource use and climate change; mindful consumption (Mission LiFE) as an answer.
- Social: Conspicuous consumption widens inequality and envy.
- Indian thought: Aparigraha (non-possession) in Jainism; Gandhi's idea that the earth provides for every need but not every greed.

The counter-view

- Contentment must not become complacency or an excuse to accept poverty and injustice; ambition and comfort can be good when they come with responsibility.

3 CONCLUSION

Close by arguing for contentment with effort: Strive to improve, but measure wealth by peace of mind and a light footprint on the earth.

Answer all 20 questions. Three hours, 250 marks.

GS I · ART AND CULTURE

Q1. Discuss the salient features of the Harappan architecture.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Name Mohenjodaro, Lothal and Dholavira and tie one feature to each: Planning, dockyard, reservoirs.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Describe the main features of Harappan architecture: How the cities were planned, how houses and public buildings were built, and what the buildings tell us about the society. 'Salient features' wants the defining traits, each with an example from a site.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Harappan cities of the third millennium BCE are the earliest planned urban centres in the subcontinent. Their architecture is plain and practical: Brick platforms, straight streets and covered drains rather than palaces or temples.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Planned layout of the cities

- Most large cities were divided into a raised, walled Citadel to the west and a larger, walled Lower Town; at Mohenjodaro the Citadel owes its height to buildings set on mud-brick platforms.
- Roads and streets in the Lower Town ran along an approximate grid, crossing at right angles, and the streets with drains were laid out first, with houses built along them afterwards.

Standardised bricks and building methods

- Bricks, whether sun-dried or baked, kept a standard ratio, length four times and breadth twice the height, at every Harappan settlement from the Indus to Gujarat.
- Buildings stood on platforms that served as foundations, a defence against the floods of the river plains.

Drainage and sanitation

- The carefully planned drainage system is the most distinctive feature: Every house had a bathroom paved with bricks whose drain ran through the wall into the street drain.
- Street drains were covered and had inspection holes for cleaning, a level of municipal care not seen again in India for many centuries.

Domestic architecture

- Houses in the Lower Town at Mohenjodaro were centred on a courtyard with rooms on all sides, used for cooking and weaving in hot weather.
- There were no windows in the walls along the ground level and the entrance gave no direct view of the courtyard, which suggests a concern for privacy; many houses had their own wells.

Public buildings and water works

- The Great Bath on the Citadel was a large rectangular tank in a courtyard, reached by two flights of steps and made watertight with a lining of bitumen; it was probably used for ritual bathing.
- The warehouse, a massive structure whose brick base survives, may have stored grain.
- Lothal in Gujarat has a brick basin read as a dockyard, and Dholavira has

large stone-cut water reservoirs, signs of skilled water management in dry regions.

What the architecture suggests

- Uniform bricks, planning and large public works point to an authority able to plan and to command labour, though no palace or temple has been identified with certainty.

3 CONCLUSION

Harappan architecture valued civic order and hygiene over display. Its planning, drainage and water works remain the clearest evidence of a well-organised urban society in the Bronze Age.

Sources : NCERT Themes in Indian History Part I, Chapter 1: Bricks, Beads and Bones; Great Bath, Mohenjo-daro (Wikipedia); Lothal (Wikipedia)

GS I · ART AND CULTURE

Q2. Examine the main aspects of Akbar's religious syncretism.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: Give a date with each measure: Ibadat Khana 1575, jizya ended 1564, Din-i Ilahi about 1582.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine the parts of Akbar's policy that brought different religious traditions together: The ideas behind it, the institutions and the practical measures, and how far it went.

1 INTRODUCTION

Akbar (r. 1556 to 1605) ruled a population of many faiths. Over his reign he moved from an orthodox start to a policy of sulh-i kul, 'peace with all', which shaped Mughal kingship.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

The idea: Sulh-i kul

- Sulh-i kul meant tolerance of all faiths: The ruler stood above sects and

owed justice to every subject, an idea set out by his minister and chronicler Abul Fazl.

Debate in the Ibadat Khana

- From 1575 the Ibadat Khana (House of Worship) at Fatehpur Sikri hosted debates, first among Muslim theologians and later with Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians and Jesuit priests.

Measures in law and administration

- He abolished the pilgrim tax and, in 1564, the jizya on non-Muslims.
- Marriage alliances with Rajput houses and high mansabs for Rajput nobles bound regional elites to the empire.
- The mahzar of 1579 made the emperor the final judge in disputed points of religious law.

Culture and translation

- Sanskrit works such as the Mahabharata were translated into Persian; the Mahabharata became the Razmnama, illustrated by court painters.
- The court observed festivals of several communities, and Fatehpur Sikri's buildings blend Persian and Indian forms.

Din-i Ilahi and its limits

- The Din-i Ilahi (from about 1582) was a small circle of disciples devoted to the emperor rather than a new religion; few nobles joined and it did not outlive him.
- The policy was also statecraft: It widened the base of loyalty in a diverse empire. It coexisted with harsh campaigns such as the siege of Chittor in 1567 to 1568.

3 CONCLUSION

Akbar's syncretism rested less on a new creed than on a policy of equal treatment and open debate. It gave the Mughal state a broad base, and its retreat under later rulers is part of the empire's story.

Sources : NCERT Class VIII Social Science, Chapter 2: Reshaping India's Political Map; Ibadat Khana

GS I · ART AND CULTURE

Q3. 'The sculptors filled the Chandella artform with resilient vigor and breadth of life.' Elucidate.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Elucidate Explain clearly with examples, so the point becomes plain.

Tip for this question: Name the Lakshmana and Kandariya Mahadeo temples, then show "breadth of life" through the range of figures.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain the claim that Chandella sculptors gave their art vigour and a full picture of life. Show it from the temples of Khajuraho: Their form, the range of figures and the skill in carving.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Chandela (Chandella) kings of Bundelkhand built the temples of Khajuraho between the tenth and twelfth centuries. The temples are the finest examples of the nagara style in central India and are covered with sculpture.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Temples as the frame for sculpture

- The Lakshmana temple, dedicated to Vishnu, was built in 954 by the Chandela king Dhanga on a high platform; the Kandariya Mahadeo temple is described as the epitome of temple architecture in central India.
- Rising shikharas, balconies and recessed walls give many bands of space, and every band is filled with figures.

Breadth of life in the figures

- Gods and goddesses stand beside apsaras and surasundaris (celestial women) shown at daily tasks: Applying make-up, writing a letter, playing music or removing a thorn.

- Warriors, musicians, dancers, animals and processions show court and village life; the mithuna (couple) figures celebrate human love as part of a sacred whole.

Vigour in the carving

- Figures twist in the tribhanga (three-bend) pose, with deep carving that catches light and shadow and gives the walls movement.
- The sandstone allowed fine detail in jewellery, hair and dress, while the proportions stay lively rather than stiff.

Significance

- The art joins the spiritual and the worldly in one composition, which is why the group became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986.

3 CONCLUSION

Khajuraho's sculptors turned temple walls into a record of a whole society, divine and human. The statement fits: Their art is energetic, varied and close to life.

Sources : NCERT An Introduction to Indian Art Part I, Chapter 6: Temple Architecture and Sculpture; Khajuraho Group of Monuments (Wikipedia)

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q4. How are climate change and the sea level rise affecting the very existence of many island nations? Discuss with examples.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: One named island state per threat (Kiribati, Tuvalu, Maldives) makes "with examples" visible.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss how climate change and the rise in sea level threaten the survival of island nations, physically, economically and as states. Back each threat with named examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

Many small island states, such as Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and the Maldives, lie only a few metres above sea level. Global sea level is rising because of melting land ice and the thermal expansion of warmer oceans, so for these countries the threat is to their territory itself.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Loss of land and homes

- Coastal erosion and higher storm surges eat into narrow atolls; most of the Maldives lies less than a metre or two above the sea.
- Kiribati bought land in Fiji in 2014 as a hedge for food security and possible relocation.

Water and food security

- Seawater pushes into thin underground freshwater lenses, and salt spoils taro pits and other crops.
- Warmer, more acidic seas bleach coral reefs that protect the shore and support fisheries.

Economy and disasters

- Stronger cyclones damage infrastructure and tourism, which carries much of the economy of states such as the Maldives.
- Rebuilding costs are high relative to small budgets, which is why island states press for loss-and-damage funding.

Statehood and migration

- If territory is lost, questions arise about maritime zones and even statehood; Tuvalu and Australia signed the Falepili Union treaty in 2023, which offers Tuvaluans a pathway to live in Australia.
- In July 2025 the International Court of Justice gave an advisory opinion on the obligations of states in respect of climate change, a case begun by Vanuatu.

3 CONCLUSION

For island nations climate change is a question of survival, not adaptation alone. Their response combines coastal defence, planned migration and diplomacy for deeper emission cuts and finance.

Sources : [Sea level rise \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Effects of climate change on small island countries \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Falepili Union \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q5. What are non-farm primary activities? How are these activities related to physiographic features in India? Discuss with suitable examples.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Define the term first, then pair each activity with a landform and a place.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Define non-farm primary activities, then link each one to India's physiography: Which landforms favour which activity, with examples of places.

1 INTRODUCTION

Primary activities depend directly on the environment and use the earth's resources: Land, water, vegetation, building materials and minerals. Leaving out cultivation, they include gathering, pastoral activities, fishing, forestry, and mining and quarrying.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Mining: The Peninsular plateau

- Most minerals occur in the old metamorphic and igneous rocks of peninsular India; the Chota Nagpur plateau and Odisha hold coal and iron ore, so Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh lead in mining.

- The alluvial plain of north India has almost no minerals of economic use, which is why mining is rare there.
- Petroleum and natural gas occur in the sedimentary basins of Assam, Gujarat and the offshore Mumbai High.

Quarrying: Arid and rocky uplands

- The Aravallis and Rajasthan supply marble, sandstone and granite (Makrana marble), where thin soils and low rainfall limit farming.

Fishing: Coasts and the continental shelf

- Kerala, Gujarat and the Konkan coast fish over a wide continental shelf; lagoons and backwaters such as Chilika and Vembanad support inland fisheries.

Forestry and gathering: Hills and plateaus

- The Himalaya and the Western Ghats yield timber and forest produce; tribal communities in central and north-eastern India gather tendu leaves, honey, lac and bamboo.

Pastoral activities: Mountains and dry lands

- In the Himalaya, Gujjars, Bakarwals, Gaddis and Bhotiyas move with their herds from the plains to mountain pastures in summer and back in winter (transhumance); camel and sheep herding suits the Thar.

3 CONCLUSION

Physiography decides which non-farm primary activity a region can sustain. Planning that respects these links, for example sustainable mining in the plateau and fish stock rules on the coasts, keeps the livelihoods secure.

Sources : NCERT Fundamentals of Human Geography, Chapter 4: Primary Activities; NCERT India: People and Economy, Chapter 5: Mineral and Energy Resources

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q6. Explain briefly the ecological and economic benefits of solar energy generation in India with suitable examples.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Keep two clear blocks, ecological and economic, each with a named project or scheme.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain briefly, with Indian examples, how solar power helps the environment and the economy. Keep the ecological and economic sides separate and give a named project for each point.

1 INTRODUCTION

India has become one of the world's largest producers of solar power: Its installed solar capacity reached 171.05 GW (AC) by September 2026. The growth rests on large solar parks, rooftop programmes and solar pumps on farms.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Ecological benefits

- Solar plants emit no carbon dioxide or air pollutants while generating, so each unit replaces coal power and helps India's net-zero 2070 goal.
- They need very little water compared with thermal plants, which matters in dry States such as Rajasthan, home to the Bhadla Solar Park.
- Floating plants on reservoirs, such as NTPC's at Simhadri, save land and cut evaporation from the water below.

Economic benefits

- Lower import bills: Every unit of solar power reduces dependence on imported coal, oil and gas, improving energy security.
- Cheap power for households: PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (2024) supports rooftop solar for one crore

households, with up to 300 units of free electricity a month.

- Farm incomes: PM-KUSUM solar pumps replace diesel pumps, and farmers can sell surplus power to the grid.
- Large parks such as Bhadla (Rajasthan), Pavagada (Karnataka) and Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) attract investment and create construction and maintenance jobs.

Limits to keep in view

- Large parks need land and can clash with grazing and wildlife; storage is needed for the evening peak; most solar cells are still imported.

3 CONCLUSION

Solar energy serves both climate and economy, and India's mix of parks, rooftops and farm pumps spreads the gains. Storage, domestic manufacturing and fair land use decide how far the gains go.

Sources : Solar power in India (Wikipedia); PIB: Cabinet approves PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (29 February 2024)

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q7. What are Tsunamis? How and where are they formed? What are their consequences? Explain with examples.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: A sketch of a wave growing taller as it reaches the coast answers "how" in one look.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Define a tsunami, explain how and where tsunamis form, and describe their consequences, each with an example. A small sketch of a tsunami wave reaching the coast earns marks.

1 INTRODUCTION

A tsunami (Japanese for 'harbour wave') is a series of very long ocean waves caused when the sea floor or a large body of water is suddenly displaced. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that move the sea floor abruptly are the usual causes.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

How a tsunami forms

- A large undersea earthquake at a subduction zone lifts or drops the sea floor; the water column above is pushed up and spreads out as waves (seismic sea waves).
- Undersea volcanic eruptions, submarine landslides and, rarely, meteorite impacts can also set off tsunamis.

Why it is harmless at sea but deadly at the coast

- The wave's speed depends on the depth of the water: In the deep ocean it travels very fast with a height of only about 30 cm, so ships barely notice it.
- As it reaches shallow water it slows and its height grows (shoaling), and it strikes the shore as a rapidly rising wall of water.

Where tsunamis occur

- Most occur along the Pacific Ring of Fire: Alaska, Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia.
- In the Indian Ocean the Sunda subduction zone off Sumatra and the Andaman region are the main sources for India; the Makran coast off Pakistan is another.

Consequences, with examples

- The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, set off by a great earthquake off Sumatra, struck 14 countries, including Tamil Nadu and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The 2011 Tohoku tsunami in Japan caused the Fukushima nuclear accident.

- Other effects include salt-water damage to farmland and wells, destroyed fishing boats and harbours, and erosion of the coast.

Preparedness

- India's Tsunami Early Warning Centre at INCOIS, Hyderabad, set up on 15 October 2007, issues warnings for the Indian Ocean; mangroves and coastal planning reduce damage.

3 CONCLUSION

Tsunamis are rare but among the deadliest hazards. Warning systems, evacuation drills and protected coastal belts turn minutes of warning into lives saved.

Sources : NCERT India: Physical Environment, Chapter 6: Natural Hazards and Disasters; Tsunami (Wikipedia); 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (Wikipedia); Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (Wikipedia)

GS I • INDIAN SOCIETY

Q8. How does smart city in India, address the issues of urban poverty and distributive justice?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Answer both halves: What helps the poor, then what limits fairness, with a way forward.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Assess how far the Smart Cities Mission tackles urban poverty and fairness in sharing the benefits of urban growth (distributive justice). Give its pro-poor features and its gaps.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Smart Cities Mission was launched on 25 June 2015 for 100 cities. It combined area-based development (retrofitting, redevelopment or greenfield projects in a chosen zone) with pan-city solutions such as Integrated Command and Control Centres, now working in all 100 cities.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Where it helps the urban poor

- Better basic services in chosen areas: Water supply, sanitation, solid-waste management and street lighting.
- Public spaces, non-motorised transport and public transport improve mobility for those without private vehicles.
- Integrated Command and Control Centres monitor water, waste and safety in real time, which can speed up service delivery in poorer wards.
- Convergence with PMAY-Urban, AMRUT and the Swachh Bharat Mission brings housing and sanitation into the same plan.

Gaps from the angle of distributive justice

- Area-based development covered only a small part of each city, so benefits concentrated in already better-off zones.
- Many projects favoured visible infrastructure and technology over slums, informal work and affordable rental housing.
- Redevelopment can push out street vendors and slum dwellers when it ignores laws such as the Street Vendors Act, 2014.
- Special Purpose Vehicles run projects with limited say for elected ward bodies, which weakens the voice of the poor.

What would make it fairer

- Pro-poor targets in every proposal, in-situ slum upgrading, protected vending zones and ward-level participation in planning.

3 CONCLUSION

The mission improved services and city management, but its benefits reached the poor only where it deliberately planned for them. A smart city is fair only if it is inclusive by design.

Sources : Smart Cities Mission (Wikipedia); PIB: Role of Integrated Command and Control Centres in Smart Cities (23 July 2026)

GS I · INDIAN SOCIETY

Q9. The ethos of civil service in India stand for the combination of professionalism with nationalistic consciousness – Elucidate.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Elucidate Explain clearly with examples, so the point becomes plain.

Tip for this question: Open with Patel at Metcalfe House in 1947 and the "steel frame", then link professionalism to nation-building.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain the claim that the civil service in India combines professional skill with a commitment to the nation. Show where the idea comes from, how each part shows in practice, and how the two fit together.

1 INTRODUCTION

In 1947, at Metcalfe House in Delhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the probationers of independent India's administrative service; 21 April is kept as Civil Services Day in memory of that address. He saw the services as a 'steel frame' holding the new nation together.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Professionalism

- Recruitment on merit through an open, competitive examination, with training and specialist knowledge.
- Political neutrality and impartiality: Advice is given frankly and decisions are carried out whatever the party in power.
- Integrity and accountability under conduct rules, audit and the courts; Mission Karmayogi (2020) supports a shift from 'rules based' to 'roles based' HR management, matching each officer's competencies to the post.

Nationalistic consciousness

- Loyalty to the Constitution and its values, not to a person or party: Unity, the rule of law and the welfare of the weakest.

- The All India Services under Article 312 serve both the Union and the States, which ties the country together administratively.
- Service in remote, border and disturbed areas and in disasters reflects a sense of national duty.

How the two combine

- Nationalism gives the purpose (nation-building and development) and professionalism gives the means (competence, neutrality, fair procedure).
- Examples: Conduct of elections, the census and disaster relief, where national service is delivered through professional, rule-bound work.

Tensions to admit

- Pressure to be 'committed' to a government rather than to the Constitution, and red tape that hides behind rules, weaken the ethos.

3 CONCLUSION

The civil service ethos is service of the nation through professional, impartial work. Patel's steel frame still holds when both halves are kept together.

Sources : PIB: Civil Services Day 2025 (21 April); PIB: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, The Man Who United the Nation; All India Services (Wikipedia); PIB: Cabinet approves Mission Karmayogi (2 September 2020)

GS I · INDIAN SOCIETY

Q10. Do you think that globalization results in only an aggressive consumer culture? Justify your answer.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Your view Take a clear position in the first line, then support it.

Justify Give reasons and evidence that support the position asked for.

Tip for this question: Say "No" in the first line and justify: Consumerism is one effect among several.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Judge whether globalisation only spreads an aggressive culture of buying, or whether it has other effects too. Take a clear position and support it with Indian examples on both sides.

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is the growing integration of economies and societies through trade, investment, technology, media and migration. In India it gathered pace after the economic reforms of 1991.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Where it does breed consumerism

- Global brands and advertising, easy credit and e-commerce sales encourage buying for status; fast fashion and fast food spread quickly.
- Rising household debt and waste (packaging, e-waste) are side effects.

Why it is not only consumer culture

- Jobs and skills: IT and business services, start-ups and remittances created a new middle class.
- Ideas and rights: Exposure to global norms on gender, environment and human rights strengthened civil society.
- Cultural flow both ways: Yoga, Indian food, films and music reached the world; glocalisation adapted global products to local tastes.
- Local producers reach global markets: Handloom and handicraft sellers use online platforms; Geographical Indications protect regional goods.

Answer

- Globalisation does push consumerism, but it also brings jobs, knowledge, rights and cultural exchange; the outcome depends on policy and on social choices about consumption.

3 CONCLUSION

Globalisation is not only an engine of consumption. India's task is to keep its gains in jobs and ideas while promoting mindful consumption, as the Mission

LiFE idea of a sustainable lifestyle urges.

Sources : [Globalization \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Glocalization \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Consumerism \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS I · MODERN HISTORY

Q11. Mahatma Jotirao Phule's writings and efforts of social reforms touched issues of almost all subaltern classes. Discuss.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Cover each subaltern group by name (lower castes, women, peasants) with one work or institution for each.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss how Jotirao Phule's writings and reform work reached almost every subaltern group: Lower castes, women, peasants and the poor. Name the works and institutions, then judge the claim.

1 INTRODUCTION

Jotirao Phule (1827 to 1890) of Pune was one of the first Indian reformers to attack caste hierarchy at its root. With Savitribai Phule he joined writing to direct action, and his work spoke for several groups at once.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Lower castes and untouchables

- His book *Gulamgiri* (1873) described caste as a form of slavery imposed on the Shudras and Ati-Shudras and drew comparisons with slavery in America.
- On 24 September 1873 he founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society of Truth Seekers) to win equal rights for lower castes; it rejected priestly mediation in rites.

Women

- With Savitribai he opened his first school for girls in 1848 at Bhidewada

in Pune, at a time when educating girls was opposed.

- In 1863 he set up a home where widows could give birth safely, to prevent infanticide, and he supported widow remarriage.

Peasants and labourers

- His Shetkarayacha Aasud (Cultivator's Whipcord, 1881) exposed how moneylenders, priests and colonial officials together exploited the peasant.

Education as the common remedy

- He saw education as the key to freedom for every oppressed group and pressed the colonial government for primary education for the masses.

Assessment

- His reach across caste, gender and class makes the statement fair; the title Mahatma was given to him in 1888.
- Limits: His movement was strongest in Maharashtra, and his praise of colonial rule as a release from Brahmin dominance drew criticism from nationalists. His ideas shaped later anti-caste movements, including Ambedkar's.

3 CONCLUSION

Phule linked the fight against caste with the education of women and the cause of the peasant. That breadth makes him a founder of subaltern social reform in India.

Sources : Jyotirao Phule (Wikipedia); NCERT Class VIII Social Science, Chapter 2: India's Long Road to Independence

GS I · POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

Q12. Trace India's consolidation process during early phase of independence in terms of polity, economy, education and international relations.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Use four headings (polity, economy, education, foreign relations) with a date in each.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Trace, in order, how India consolidated itself in the first years after 1947 in four fields: Polity, economy, education and foreign relations. Give the key steps and dates in each.

1 INTRODUCTION

Independence in 1947 came with Partition, about 565 princely states whose future was open, a poor economy and a world dividing into two blocs. The first fifteen years were spent building the nation in every field.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Polity

- Integration of the princely states: Sardar Patel, as Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, persuaded almost all rulers to accede, with Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir needing special handling.
- The Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950, and the first general elections, held from October 1951 to February 1952, confirmed democracy on adult franchise.
- Linguistic states: After agitations, the States Reorganisation Commission (1953) led to the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, creating 14 states and six union territories.

Economy

- The Planning Commission was set up in March 1950 by a government resolution, and the First Five Year Plan document was released in December 1951, with emphasis on agriculture and irrigation.
- A mixed economy: The public sector held the commanding heights while private enterprise continued; zamindari abolition and land reform began in the States.

Education

- The University Grants Commission was inaugurated in 1953 and given statutory form by the UGC Act of 1956.
- IIT Kharagpur, the first IIT, was founded in 1951, beginning a network of technical institutions.

International relations

- Non-alignment kept India out of both Cold War blocs while it supported decolonisation and opposed apartheid.
- Panchsheel, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, was set out with China on 29 April 1954, and the Bandung Conference of 1955 marked India's engagement with Asia and Africa and later led to the NAM.

3 CONCLUSION

In about a decade India secured its territory, set up democratic institutions, began planned development and took an independent place in world affairs. The foundations laid then still frame the Indian state.

Sources : NCERT Politics in India since Independence, Chapter 1: Challenges of Nation Building; NCERT Politics in India since Independence, Chapter 3: Politics of Planned Development; NCERT Politics in India since Independence, Chapter 4: India's External Relations; NCERT Politics in India since Independence, Chapter 2: Era of One-party Dominance; Constitution of India (Wikipedia); University Grants Commission (India) (Wikipedia); IIT Kharagpur (Wikipedia)

GS I • WORLD HISTORY

Q13. The French Revolution has enduring relevance to the contemporary world. Explain.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Link each ideal to today, and to the Preamble's liberty, equality and fraternity for India.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain why the French Revolution of 1789 still matters today. Link its ideas to present-day politics, law and society, including India.

1 INTRODUCTION

The French Revolution of 1789 overthrew an absolute monarchy and a society of privileges based on birth. Its ideas travelled far beyond France and remain part of modern political life.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Liberty, equality, fraternity and rights

- The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) set out rights belonging to every person, the base of later bills of rights and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- India's Preamble adopted the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, which came to it through France's constitution from the Revolution.

Popular sovereignty and the nation

- Sovereignty moved from the king to the people; the first clear expression of nationalism came with the Revolution, which built a common identity through a uniform administration, laws and language.

Equality before the law

- The Civil Code of 1804 (Napoleonic Code) abolished privileges based on birth, established equality before the law and secured the right to property; it spread across Europe and beyond.

Secularism and the modern state

- The Assembly abolished feudalism and brought the Catholic Church under state control, an early step towards the secular state.
- A uniform system of weights and measures (the metric system) and rational administration became the norm for modern states.

Lessons and limits

- The Reign of Terror, in which about 16,000 people were executed after trials by the Revolutionary Tribunal,

showed how revolutions can turn on their own ideals.

3 CONCLUSION

The Revolution gave the world the language of rights, citizenship and the nation. Its relevance lies in those ideals, and its excesses remain a warning about defending them by violent means.

Sources : [NCERT India and the Contemporary World II, Chapter 1: The Rise of Nationalism in Europe](#); [NCERT Class VII Social Science, Chapter 10: The Constitution of India, An Introduction](#); [Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen \(Wikipedia\)](#); [French Revolution \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q14. Give a geographical explanation of the distribution of off-shore oil reserves of the world. How are they different from the on-shore occurrences of oil reserves?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: A world sketch map of the main offshore basins, then a short offshore-onshore comparison table.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain, geographically, where the world's offshore oil reserves lie and why; then compare offshore and onshore occurrences of oil (geology, depth, technology, cost and risk).

1 INTRODUCTION

Oil forms from organic matter buried in thick marine sediments, then moves up into porous reservoir rock until it is held by a trap under a sealing rock. Offshore reserves lie where such sediments thickened on continental shelves and slopes.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why offshore oil is where it is

- Continental shelves and margins receive thick sediments from rivers; where organic-rich layers were buried and heated, oil formed.
- Passive margins formed when Gondwana broke up, such as off Brazil

and West Africa, hold oil below thick salt layers (the pre-salt).

- Shallow inland and marginal seas, such as the Persian Gulf, the North Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, have deep sedimentary basins with folds and salt domes that trap oil.

Main offshore regions

- Persian Gulf (home to Safaniya, the world's largest offshore oilfield), the North Sea (Ekofisk, found in 1969), the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of Guinea off Nigeria and Angola, the pre-salt basins off Brazil, and the Caspian Sea.
- India: Mumbai High, an offshore field 160 km off Mumbai, with the first offshore well sunk in 1974; new finds in the Krishna-Godavari and Kaveri basins.

Offshore against onshore

- Geology is similar: Both need source rock, reservoir rock, a cap rock and a trap; onshore fields lie in old marine basins now on land, such as Assam (Digboi) and Gujarat in India.
- Depth and access: Offshore wells pass through water as well as rock, from shallow shelves to ultra-deep water, and need platforms, rigs and undersea pipelines.
- Cost and risk: Offshore output costs more and spills spread at sea, as the Deepwater Horizon blowout in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 showed; onshore fields are cheaper to develop but compete with land use.

3 CONCLUSION

Offshore oil follows the world's sedimentary basins on continental margins. Technology has opened deeper waters, but cost and spill risk make its development very different from the older onshore fields.

Sources : [Mumbai High Field \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Pre-salt layer \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Persian Gulf \(Wikipedia\)](#); [North Sea oil \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Petroleum reservoir \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Deepwater Horizon oil spill \(Wikipedia\)](#); [NCERT India: People and Economy, Chapter 5: Mineral and Energy Resources](#)

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q15. How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) and drones be effectively used along with GIS and RS techniques in locational and areal planning?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Explain each tool in one line, then show them working together in SVAMITVA and Gati Shakti.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Show how artificial intelligence and drones can work with GIS (geographic information systems) and RS (remote sensing) to plan the location of facilities and the use of areas. Give Indian examples and the limits.

1 INTRODUCTION

Remote sensing supplies images of the earth, GIS stores and overlays them with other data in map layers, drones capture very detailed local images, and AI finds patterns in this mass of data. Together they make planning faster and more exact.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

What each tool adds

- Remote sensing: Regular, wide-area images of land use, crops, water and settlements; ISRO's Bhuvan portal shares thematic maps and satellite data.
- GIS: Overlays layers such as roads, utilities, land records and hazard zones to test where a facility fits best (locational planning).
- Drones: Centimetre-level images of villages, mines or construction sites where satellite detail is not enough.
- AI: Classifies land cover automatically, predicts urban growth or traffic, and flags encroachments or damage from the images.

Indian examples

- SVAMITVA, launched in 2020, uses drone surveys and GIS mapping to give households in inhabited village areas legal property cards.

- PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (launched 13 October 2021) is a GIS platform that puts infrastructure, utilities and administrative layers in one place to plan roads, railways and industrial corridors.
- Crop assessment, flood mapping and disaster damage surveys combine satellite data with AI models and drone checks.

Areal planning uses

- Zoning of cities, choosing sites for schools and hospitals by population coverage, watershed planning and protecting forests and wetlands.

Limits

- Data privacy and security, drone rules, the cost of skills and equipment, and the risk that models trained on poor data give biased results; ground checks remain essential.

3 CONCLUSION

AI and drones turn GIS and remote sensing from map stores into planning tools. Used with good data and local verification, they make locational and areal planning more precise and transparent.

Sources : [Bhuvan \(Wikipedia\)](#); [PIB: 5 Years of SVAMITVA Scheme](#); [Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q16. Discuss how the changes in shape and sizes of continents and ocean basins of the planet take place due to tectonic movements of the crustal masses.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Draw the three plate boundaries side by side; each shows one way basins change.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain how the movement of the earth's crustal plates changes the shape and size of continents and ocean basins: Through spreading, collision, subduction and sliding, with examples of each and of past changes such as Pangaea.

1 INTRODUCTION

Plate tectonics holds that the lithosphere is broken into rigid plates that move over the softer layer beneath. It is not the continent that moves on its own, as Wegener thought: Continents are part of plates, and the plates move.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

From Pangaea to today

- Wegener's supercontinent Pangaea, surrounded by the mega-ocean Panthalassa, began to split about 200 million years ago into Laurasia and Gondwanaland, which broke further into today's continents.

Divergent boundaries: Oceans widen

- Where plates pull apart, new crust forms at mid-ocean ridges (sea floor spreading, Hess, 1961); the Mid-Atlantic Ridge separates the American plates from the Eurasian and African plates, so the Atlantic keeps widening.
- On land, rifting splits continents, as in the East African Rift, which may one day open a new ocean basin.

Convergent boundaries: Oceans shrink and mountains rise

- Where one plate dives under another at a subduction zone, crust is destroyed: The Pacific is ringed by trenches and the ocean is slowly shrinking.
- Continent-continent collision crumples crust into fold mountains: The Indian plate's collision with the Eurasian plate raised the Himalaya and closed the Tethys Sea.

Transform boundaries

- Plates slide past each other along transform faults, which offset ridges without creating or destroying crust;

the San Andreas Fault is the best-known example on land.

Rates of change

- Plates move at different speeds: The Arctic Ridge spreads at less than 2.5 cm a year and the East Pacific Rise at more than 15 cm a year, so ocean basins change size at different rates.

3 CONCLUSION

Spreading, subduction and collision constantly redraw the map: The Atlantic is opening, the Pacific closing and Asia still rising. Today's continents and oceans are one frame in a moving picture.

Sources : NCERT Fundamentals of Physical Geography, Chapter 4: Distribution of Oceans and Continents

GS I · GEOGRAPHY

Q17. Discuss the distribution and density of population in the Ganga River Basin with special reference to land, soil and water resources.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Explain density through land, soil and water in turn, and mark the east-west rise in density.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Describe where people live in the Ganga basin and how densely, and explain the pattern through land (relief), soil and water. Point out the differences between the upper, middle and lower parts of the basin.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Ganga basin is the most populated river basin in the world, with more than 500 million people. The Indo-Gangetic plain, built of river deposits, is one of the most densely populated and intensely farmed regions on earth; India's average density was 382 persons per sq km in 2011.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Land: A flat, continuous plain

- Level land made settlement, roads and farming easy; density falls in the Himalayan foothills (the Bhabar and Tarai belts) and the Vindhyan and Chota Nagpur uplands on the basin's southern edge.

Soil: Alluvium renewed by floods

- The plain is the world's largest stretch of continuous alluvium; the newer khadar of the floodplains and the older bhangar terraces support rice, wheat and sugarcane on small farms that feed dense villages.

Water: Perennial rivers, canals and groundwater

- Snow-fed Himalayan rivers and high groundwater allow irrigation by canals and tubewells; the basin holds 29.5 per cent of India's cultivable area.

Pattern within the basin

- Density rises from the upper to the lower basin as rainfall increases: Bihar was India's most densely populated State in 2011 at 1,106 persons per sq km, and West Bengal and eastern Uttar Pradesh are close behind.
- Great cities stand on the rivers: Delhi on the Yamuna, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Patna and Kolkata on the Ganga and the Hugli.

Pressures from high density

- Small holdings, floods in north Bihar, falling water tables in the west and river pollution show the strain on land and water.

3 CONCLUSION

Fertile alluvium, level land and assured water explain why the Ganga basin carries so many people. Keeping it productive now depends on water management, flood control and a cleaner river.

Sources : [Ganges Basin \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Indo-Gangetic Plain \(Wikipedia\)](#); [NCERT India: People and Economy, Chapter 1: Population](#); [NCERT India: Physical](#)

[Environment, Chapter 2: Structure and Physiography; Bihar \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS I · INDIAN SOCIETY

Q18. How do you account for the growing fast food industries given that there are increased health concerns in modern society? Illustrate your answer with the Indian experience.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Illustrate Make each point concrete with a named example.

Tip for this question: Balance causes of growth with the NFHS-5 health data, and end with labelling and Eat Right India.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain why fast food keeps growing in India even as people worry more about health. Give the social and economic causes, the health evidence and the response, with Indian examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

Fast food (ready-to-eat, often fried or processed food high in salt, sugar and fat) has spread from city outlets to small towns and to phones through delivery apps. Its growth sits uneasily with rising concern about lifestyle diseases.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why it keeps growing

- Urbanisation, long working hours and more women in paid work leave less time for home cooking.
- Rising incomes, a young population and aspiration: Global chains signal modern lifestyles, and Indian chains adapt menus to local taste.
- Food delivery apps, cheap mobile data and digital payments make ordering effortless; advertising and offers aim at children and students.
- Convenience and price: Packaged snacks and quick meals are sold everywhere, while fresh food takes time to buy and prepare.

The health concern

- NFHS-5 (2019 to 2021) found overweight or obesity rising from 21 to 24 per cent among women and from 19 to 23 per cent among men.
- Diets high in salt, sugar and trans fats feed diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, now leading causes of death in India.

Why concern does not stop consumption

- Habit and taste, low awareness of nutrition labels, the low price of processed food and the lack of time outweigh health worries for many buyers.

The Indian response

- FSSAI's Eat Right India movement promotes safe, healthy and sustainable food; FSSAI has approved showing total sugar, salt and saturated fat in bold on labels.
- Fit India and school nutrition rules discourage junk food; home-style and millet-based fast food shows that the market can change.

3 CONCLUSION

Fast food grows because it fits the pace of modern life, not because people ignore health. Clear labelling, food education and healthier affordable options can let convenience and health coexist.

Sources : PIB: Union Health Minister releases NFHS-5 report; PIB: FSSAI approves bold display of total sugar, salt and saturated fat; PIB: Eat Right India, Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Food for All (8 July 2025)

GS I • INDIAN SOCIETY

Q19. Achieving sustainable growth with emphasis on environmental protection could come into conflict with poor people's needs in a country like India – Comment.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Comment Give your opinion on the statement, backed by reasons and evidence.

Tip for this question: Give real clashes first, then show where protection helps the poor, and close with reconciliation.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Comment on the claim that growth which protects the environment can clash with the needs of the poor in India. Show where the clash is real, where it is not, and how the two can be reconciled.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable growth means development that meets present needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In India many poor households depend directly on forests, land, water and cheap fuel, so environmental rules touch their livelihoods first.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Where the clash is real

- Forest and wildlife protection can restrict grazing, firewood and minor forest produce for forest dwellers.
- A rapid exit from coal threatens jobs and royalty-funded welfare in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- Fishing bans, pollution controls on small industries and higher costs of clean fuel fall heavily on the poor.
- Large dams and mines displace communities for power and minerals, as the Narmada Bachao Andolan against the Sardar Sarovar Dam showed.

Where protection serves the poor

- The poor suffer most from polluted air and water, floods, droughts and heat, so environmental protection is also welfare.
- Clean cooking gas under Ujjwala (launched 1 May 2016) cut indoor smoke for poor women; solar pumps lower farmers' costs.

Reconciling the two

- Rights-based conservation: The Forest Rights Act, 2006 lets gram sabhas recommend whose rights over forest land and resources are recognised; PESA gives tribal gram sabhas a say in Scheduled Areas.
- Just transition plans for coal regions, green jobs, payment for ecosystem services and fair compensation under the land acquisition law of 2013.

3 CONCLUSION

The conflict is real where the poor bear the cost of protection without a say or a share. When they hold rights and gain from conservation, protecting the environment becomes part of fighting poverty.

Sources : Forest Rights Act (India) (Wikipedia); Sardar Sarovar Dam (Wikipedia); Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (Wikipedia); Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (Wikipedia)

GS I • INDIAN SOCIETY

Q20. Does tribal development in India centre around two axes, those of displacement and of rehabilitation? Give your opinion.

15 marks • 250 words • 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Give your opinion directly: Displacement is central but not the only axis, then list the others.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Give your opinion on whether tribal development in India revolves mainly around displacement and rehabilitation. Show why these two dominate the debate and what else tribal development involves.

1 INTRODUCTION

Scheduled Tribes form a large share of the people living in India's forest and mineral belts. Dams, mines and industry have displaced many of them, so displacement and rehabilitation

dominate the debate, but development is wider than that.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why displacement and rehabilitation dominate

- Tribal regions hold most of India's coal, iron ore and bauxite and many dam sites, so projects and tribal land overlap.
- The Sardar Sarovar Dam was stalled by the Supreme Court in 1995 over displacement, and the project was revived later at a lower height.
- At Niyamgiri in Odisha, the Supreme Court in 2013 left the decision on bauxite mining to the tribal village councils, which rejected it.
- The land acquisition law of 2013 added rehabilitation and resettlement and, for private projects, the consent of most land owners.

Other axes of tribal development

- Rights and self-rule: The Fifth Schedule, PESA (1996) and the Forest Rights Act, 2006 give gram sabhas a say over land and resources.
- Livelihoods: Minor forest produce, value addition and markets for forest products.
- Education and health: Residential schools for tribal children and the fight against diseases such as sickle cell anaemia.
- The most vulnerable: PM-JANMAN (2023) targets Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups with housing, roads, water and health.
- Culture and identity: Protecting languages, customary law and the right to choose the pace of change.

Opinion

- Displacement and rehabilitation are the most visible axes because they decide whether development harms tribal people, but lasting development rests on rights, livelihoods, education and health, delivered with tribal consent.

3 CONCLUSION

Tribal development has been framed by displacement because it has so often come at tribal expense. The aim should be development with tribal people rather than around them.

Sources : Sardar Sarovar Dam (Wikipedia); Niyamgiri (Wikipedia); Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Wikipedia); PIB: Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan; Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (Wikipedia)

General Studies Paper II

23 August 2025

Answer all 20 questions. Three hours, 250 marks.

GS II · POLITY

Q1. Discuss the 'corrupt practices' for the purpose of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Analyze whether the increase in the assets of the legislators and/or their associates, disproportionate to their known sources of income, would constitute 'undue influence' and consequently a corrupt practice.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Analyse Break the topic into its parts and explain how they connect.

Tip for this question: Quote section 123(2) on undue influence, then bring in Lok Prahari (2018) for the second half.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain what the Representation of the People Act, 1951 treats as corrupt practices, then analyse whether a legislator's unexplained growth in assets (or that of associates) can count as 'undue influence' and so as a corrupt practice.

1 INTRODUCTION

Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 lists the corrupt

practices that can make an election void when proved in an election petition under section 100. They are acts that corrupt the free choice of the voter.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Corrupt practices under section 123

- Bribery (123(1)): Any gift, offer or promise of gratification to induce a person to stand or not stand, or an elector to vote or not vote; gratification is not limited to money.
- Undue influence (123(2)): Any direct or indirect interference, or attempt to interfere, with the free exercise of any electoral right, including threats of injury or social ostracism and the use of divine displeasure.
- Others include appeals on the ground of religion, race, caste, community or language (123(3)), promoting enmity between classes (123(3A)), false statements about a candidate's personal character (123(4)), hired vehicles to carry voters, excess election expenditure, help from government servants, and booth capturing.

The case for treating unexplained assets as undue influence

- In Lok Prahari v. Union of India (16 February 2018) the Supreme Court

held that non-disclosure of the assets and sources of income of candidates and their associates is a corrupt practice under the head 'undue influence' in section 123(2).

- The Court also said that assets of legislators and their associates growing out of proportion to their known incomes is constitutionally impermissible and may eventually amount both to offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act and to undue influence under section 123.
- Reason: Voters cannot exercise a free and informed choice if a candidate hides wealth that may come from abuse of office; and wealth gained this way can be used to sway voters.

Limits of that view

- Section 123 speaks of interference with an electoral right during an election; assets gathered between elections are not, by themselves, an act of interference.
- The Court left it to the legislature to declare undue accretion of assets a ground of disqualification and to set up a permanent mechanism to monitor legislators' assets; it said no writ can compel Parliament to make a law.

3 CONCLUSION

Unexplained wealth undermines the voter's informed choice, and the Supreme Court has brought its concealment within undue influence. A clear statutory rule and a standing mechanism to watch legislators' assets would make the principle enforceable.

Sources : The Representation of the People Act, 1951 (India Code), section 123; Supreme Court of India: Lok Prahari v. Union of India, W.P.(C) 784 of 2015, judgment of 16 February 2018

GS II · POLITY

Q2. Comment on the need of administrative tribunals as compared to the court system. Assess the impact of the recent tribunal reforms through rationalization of tribunals made in 2021.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Comment Give your opinion on the statement, backed by reasons and evidence.

Tip for this question: Split the answer: Why tribunals (speed, expertise), then the 2021 reform and what the courts and the 2026 Act did next.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Comment on why administrative tribunals are needed beside the regular courts, then assess what the 2021 reforms that rationalised tribunals achieved, including what followed them.

1 INTRODUCTION

Articles 323A and 323B, added by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, let Parliament and the State Legislatures set up tribunals for service matters, taxation, labour, land reforms and other subjects. Tribunals were meant to give faster, specialised justice than the overloaded courts.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why tribunals are needed

- Speed and specialisation: Members with technical or administrative expertise decide disputes on taxes, telecom, environment or service conditions.
- Lower cost and flexible procedure: They are not bound by the full rules of civil procedure.
- Relief to the courts: Large categories of cases leave the High Courts.

Concerns compared with courts

- Independence: The government, often a party to the dispute, controlled

appointments, tenure and service conditions.

- Vacancies and delays defeated the purpose of speed, and appeals often went straight to the Supreme Court.

The 2021 rationalisation

- The Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 (after an ordinance) abolished several appellate bodies, among them the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal, and moved their work to the High Courts and other forums.
- It made the designations of chairpersons uniform and put appointments in the hands of a Search-cum-Selection Committee.

Impact and the aftermath

- Positive: Fewer bodies with overlapping roles and a uniform framework.
- Negative: More load on High Courts; short terms and executive control raised doubts about independence.
- In Madras Bar Association v. Union of India the Supreme Court struck down provisions of the 2021 Act and directed an independent National Tribunals Commission; the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2026 repealed the 2021 Act and set up that Commission.

3 CONCLUSION

Tribunals remain necessary for specialised and speedy justice, but only if they are independent of the government that appears before them. The 2021 reform cut numbers; the 2026 law is the attempt to secure independence.

Sources : [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\)](#), Articles 323A and 323B; [PIB: Reforming India's Tribunal System, Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026 \(backgrounder, 12 August 2026\)](#); [Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Film Certification Appellate Tribunal \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · POLITY

Q3. Compare and contrast the President's power to pardon in India and in the USA. Are there any limits to it in both the countries? What are 'preemptive pardons'?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Compare Set out similarities and differences on the same heads.

Tip for this question: A two-column table (India, USA) for source, scope, decider and limits saves words.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Compare the President's pardoning power in India and in the USA (source, scope, who really decides), set out the limits in each country, and explain what a pre-emptive pardon is.

1 INTRODUCTION

Both constitutions give the head of state a power of mercy: Article 72 in India and Article II, Section 2 in the United States. The power is the same in spirit but differs sharply in scope and control.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

India: Article 72

- The President may grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions, or suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of an offence against a Union law, by a court martial, or sentenced to death.
- The President acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers, not on personal discretion; the Governor has a parallel power under Article 161.

USA: Article II

- The President may grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, that is, federal offences only; State crimes are outside it.
- The President decides alone; the power is treated as plenary and Congress cannot restrict it.

Limits in each country

- India: The power is subject to limited judicial review; courts have examined whether it was exercised without advice, mala fide or on extraneous grounds (Kehar Singh, 1989; Epuru Sudhakar, 2006), and unexplained delay in deciding mercy petitions has been a ground for commuting death sentences (Shatrughan Chauhan, 2014).
- USA: No pardon in cases of impeachment, and none for State offences; otherwise courts rarely interfere.

Pre-emptive pardons

- A pre-emptive pardon is granted before any charge or conviction, for offences that may have been committed.
- Gerald Ford pardoned Richard Nixon on 8 September 1974 for any crimes he might have committed as President; on 1 December 2024 Joe Biden pardoned his son for federal offences committed between 2014 and 2024, including any not yet discovered.
- Indian practice and Article 72's wording ('any person convicted') tie the power to convicted persons, so a pre-emptive pardon is not a feature of Indian law.

3 CONCLUSION

India's pardon power is collective, advised and reviewable; the American power is personal and nearly unlimited. The pre-emptive pardon shows how far the American version can stretch.

Sources : [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\)](#), [Article 72](#); [Supreme Court of India: Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India](#), 21 January 2014; [Federal pardons in the United States \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Pardon of Richard Nixon \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Hunter Biden \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · POLITY

Q4. Discuss the nature of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019. Briefly describe the powers and functions of the Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Describe Give the main features in an orderly account.

Tip for this question: Name section 32 and its two exclusions, public order and police; they define the Assembly's limits.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Describe what kind of legislature the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, and briefly set out its powers and functions as the Assembly of a Union Territory.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 split the State into two Union Territories from 31 October 2019: Jammu and Kashmir with a legislature, and Ladakh without one. The new Assembly rests on Article 239A, which lets Parliament create a legislature for certain Union Territories.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Nature of the Assembly

- A Union Territory legislature created by an Act of Parliament, not a State legislature: Parliament can change its powers by ordinary law.
- Composition: After the 2022 delimitation it has 90 elected seats; 24 seats for areas under Pakistan's occupation stay vacant, and the Lieutenant Governor may nominate members, including up to two Kashmiri migrants (one a woman) under the 2023 amendment.

- The first election to the Union Territory Assembly was held in September and October 2024.

Legislative powers

- Under section 32 it may make laws on any matter in the State List except 'Public Order' and 'Police', and on the Concurrent List as far as it applies to Union Territories.
- Parliament keeps full power to legislate for the territory, and a Union law prevails over an Assembly law on the same matter.

Executive and financial role

- The Council of Ministers, not more than ten per cent of the Assembly's total strength, is headed by a Chief Minister and aids and advises the Lieutenant Governor in matters within the Assembly's powers.
- The Lieutenant Governor acts in his discretion in matters outside the Assembly's powers, including police and public order, and his recommendation is needed for financial Bills.
- The Assembly passes the budget, questions ministers and holds the government to account.

Assessment

- It is a representative body with real but limited powers; the restoration of statehood remains awaited.

3 CONCLUSION

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is elected and accountable but works within the narrower frame of a Union Territory. Its powers will widen only when statehood returns.

Sources : [The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 \(gazette text\)](#); [Gazette of India: The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation \(Amendment\) Act, 2023](#); [Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly \(Wikipedia\)](#); [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\), Article 239A](#)

GS II · POLITY

Q5. "The Attorney General of India plays a crucial role in guiding the legal framework of the Union Government and ensuring sound governance through legal counsel." Discuss his responsibilities, rights and limitations in this regard.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Use three headings exactly as asked: Responsibilities, rights, limitations, each with its Article.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss the Attorney General's role as the Union's chief legal adviser: Duties, rights, and the limitations on the office.

1 INTRODUCTION

Article 76 creates the office of the Attorney General for India, the highest law officer. The President appoints a person qualified to be a Supreme Court judge, who holds office during the pleasure of the President.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Responsibilities

- To give advice to the Government of India on legal matters referred by the President.
- To perform other duties of a legal character assigned by the President, such as appearing for the Union in the Supreme Court and in Presidential references under Article 143.
- To discharge functions conferred on him by the Constitution or any other law.

Rights

- Right of audience in all courts in the territory of India (Article 76(3)).
- Right to speak in, and take part in the proceedings of, either House of Parliament and its committees, without a vote (Article 88), with the

privileges of a member of Parliament (Article 105(4)).

Limitations

- Holds office at the pleasure of the President, with no fixed tenure or security of tenure.
- Not a member of the Cabinet and has no vote in Parliament.
- Must not advise or hold a brief against the Government of India, must not defend an accused person in a criminal case, and must not take a company directorship without the government's consent; he is not a government servant and is not barred from private practice.

Role in sound governance

- Frank, independent legal advice keeps executive action within the Constitution; the convention of independence, not the law, protects the office.

3 CONCLUSION

The Attorney General is both the government's lawyer and an officer of the Constitution. The office serves good governance best when its advice is independent, even when unwelcome.

Sources : [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\)](#), Articles 76 and 88; [Attorney General for India \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · SOCIAL JUSTICE

Q6. Women's social capital complements in advancing empowerment and gender equity. Explain.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Define social capital in one line, then show SHGs, SEWA and Kudumbashree doing what laws alone cannot.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain how women's social capital (their networks, trust and shared norms) supports their empowerment and gender equity, alongside economic and legal measures. Give Indian examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

Social capital means the networks of relationships, shared norms, trust and reciprocity that help people act together. For women, who often lack assets and formal power, collective networks turn individual weakness into shared strength.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Economic empowerment through collectives

- Self-help groups pool savings, give each other loans and stand as guarantors for bank credit; under DAY-NRLM, 10.05 crore rural households have been organised into about 90.90 lakh SHGs.
- The Lakhpati Didi initiative aims for SHG women to earn at least one lakh rupees a year on a sustainable basis.
- SEWA, founded in 1972 by Ela Bhatt, organised informal women workers into a union and cooperatives.

Voice and social change

- Kerala's Kudumbashree, inaugurated on 17 May 1998, links women's neighbourhood groups to local government planning.
- Women's groups have campaigned on liquor, dowry and domestic violence and used networks to report problems in schemes.

Political participation

- Collective experience in SHGs prepares women to contest and work in panchayats, where not less than one-third of seats are reserved for women under Article 243D.

How it complements other measures

- Laws, reservations and schemes give rights and resources; social capital gives women the confidence, information and support to use them.

- Limits: Groups can reproduce caste and class divides, and some become credit channels only; capacity building and links to markets keep them effective.

3 CONCLUSION

Women's social capital turns rights on paper into choices in practice. Strengthening collectives is therefore a direct route to gender equity, not a side benefit.

Sources : Social capital (Wikipedia); PIB: Lakhpati Didi Scheme (22 July 2025); Self Employed Women's Association (Wikipedia); Kudumbashree (Wikipedia); The Constitution of India (Legislative Department), Article 243D

GS II · GOVERNANCE

Q7. e-governance projects have a built-in bias towards technology and back-end integration than user-centric designs. Examine.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: Give one example of each bias (exclusion, app-only access) and one of good design (CSCs, UMANG).

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine the claim that Indian e-governance projects focus on technology and back-end integration more than on the citizen's experience. Give examples on both sides and suggest what user-centred design needs.

1 INTRODUCTION

E-governance uses digital tools to deliver services and run government. Digital India, launched on 1 July 2015, built large platforms, but a service is judged by how easily a citizen can use it.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Where the bias to technology shows

- Projects are measured by integration, digitisation and transactions rather than by whether people actually receive the service.

- Mandatory online authentication has excluded some beneficiaries when fingerprints fail or networks drop; exclusion from welfare benefits was among the grounds argued before the Supreme Court in the Aadhaar case.
- Interfaces often assume literacy, English, smartphones and good connectivity; departments build separate apps and portals.

Where user focus has improved

- Common Service Centres give assisted, in-person access to digital services in villages.
- UMANG, launched in November 2017, brings many services into one app; DigiLocker and UPI were designed for ease of use and spread fast.

What user-centred design needs

- Design with users: Research, testing in local languages and with persons with disabilities.
- Offline and assisted fallbacks, and grievance redress built into each service.
- Measure outcomes (service received, time and cost to the citizen), not only back-end integration.

3 CONCLUSION

India's digital backbone is strong, but its value lies in the citizen's front end. Putting the user first, especially the poor and the less literate, is what makes e-governance good governance.

Sources : Digital India (Wikipedia); Aadhaar (Wikipedia); Common Service Centres (Wikipedia); UMANG (Wikipedia)

GS II · GOVERNANCE

Q8. Civil Society Organizations are often perceived as being anti-State actors than non-State actors. Do you agree? Justify.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Justify Give reasons and evidence that support the position asked for.

Tip for this question: Distinguish "anti-State" from "non-State" at the start; the whole answer turns on it.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Say whether you agree that civil society organisations (CSOs) are seen as working against the State rather than simply outside it, and justify your answer with Indian examples on both sides.

1 INTRODUCTION

Civil society organisations are voluntary groups outside the State and the market: NGOs, community groups, trade unions and movements. Being non-State means independent of government; being anti-State would mean opposed to it.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why they are sometimes seen as anti-State

- Many CSOs criticise policy, file public interest litigation or lead protests against projects, as the Narmada Bachao Andolan did over displacement.
- Foreign funding is regulated under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, amended in 2020; the licences of some NGOs have been cancelled, and critics allege that dissent is treated as hostility.

Why they are better described as non-State partners

- The Right to Information Act, 2005 grew out of a campaign led by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan; it strengthened, not weakened, the State.
- CSOs run schools, health camps and disaster relief, help deliver government schemes, and carry out social audits.
- Women's groups such as SEWA and SHG networks work with government programmes.

Answer

- Disagreement with a government is not opposition to the State: Criticism, accountability and service delivery are all part of democracy; foreign-funding rules should target misuse, not dissent.

3 CONCLUSION

Most CSOs are non-State actors that both partner and question the government. A confident democracy treats their criticism as a check that improves the State.

Sources : Foreign Contribution (Regulation) legislation in India (Wikipedia); Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (Wikipedia); Right to Information Act, 2005 (Wikipedia); Sardar Sarovar Dam (Wikipedia)

GS II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q9. India-Africa digital partnership is achieving mutual respect, co-development and long-term institutional partnerships.

Elaborate.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Pair each value (respect, co-development, institutions) with one programme or country.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Elaborate how India-Africa digital cooperation reflects mutual respect, co-development and lasting institutional ties. Use named programmes and country examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

India's digital cooperation with Africa grew from a tele-education and tele-medicine network into the sharing of digital public infrastructure such as payments and identity systems. It is built on partnership and capacity rather than aid alone.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Mutual respect: Demand-driven, no conditions

- Programmes are taken up on African countries' requests, through MoUs with each government, and leave ownership with the partner.

Co-development: Tele-education, tele-medicine and payments

- The Pan-African e-Network was succeeded by e-VidyaBharti and e-ArogyaBharti (e-VBAB), under which countries such as Ghana signed MoUs with TCIL for online courses and medical training.
- NPCI International and the Bank of Namibia signed an agreement on 2 May 2024 to build a UPI-like instant payment system for Namibia; UPI also works for payments in Mauritius.
- Modular open-source platforms let partners own and adapt the systems instead of buying closed products.

Long-term institutional partnership

- Training under ITEC and scholarships build skills that stay in Africa, and centres of excellence in IT are set up with African institutions.

Challenges

- Uneven internet access, data protection rules and competition from China's larger financing call for steady funding and local partnerships.

3 CONCLUSION

India's digital ties with Africa offer shared, adaptable public infrastructure and skills. Their strength is that partners own what is built, which makes the partnership durable.

Sources : [Ministry of External Affairs: India-Ghana Bilateral Relations \(2025\)](#); [Unified Payments Interface \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q10. "With the waning of globalization, post-Cold War world is becoming a site of sovereign nationalism." Elucidate.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Elucidate Explain clearly with examples, so the point becomes plain.

Tip for this question: Four dated examples (Brexit 2016, the WTO Appellate Body 2019, Ukraine 2022, tariffs 2025) make the trend concrete.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Elucidate the claim that, as globalisation weakens, the post-Cold War world is turning towards sovereign nationalism. Explain the trend, give examples, and note its limits and India's position.

1 INTRODUCTION

After 1991 the world moved towards open trade, global institutions and interdependence. In the 2010s that trend slowed (deglobalisation), and states increasingly put national control over borders, trade and technology first.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Signs of sovereign nationalism

- Brexit (2016): The United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, rejecting deeper economic integration.
- Trade: The US-China trade war from 2018 and, on 2 April 2025, the US 'Liberation Day' tariffs on goods from nearly all countries.
- Institutions: The WTO's Appellate Body lost its ability to rule in December 2019 because members were not appointed.
- Security: Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and sanctions in reply split the world into blocs.

Drivers

- Job losses blamed on trade, inequality, migration fears, the COVID-19 supply shocks and rivalry over technology.

Limits of the trend

- Trade, finance and digital flows remain deep; climate change, pandemics and terrorism still require cooperation; regional and plurilateral deals continue.

India's approach

- Strategic autonomy and self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) combined with trade agreements and membership of many groupings: Engagement without dependence.

3 CONCLUSION

Globalisation is being reshaped rather than reversed, with states asserting control over what they see as strategic. Sovereign nationalism is now a strong force, but interdependence still sets its limits.

Sources : [Deglobalization \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Tariffs in the second Trump administration \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Appellate Body \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Russo-Ukrainian war \(2022 to present\) \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · POLITY

Q11. "Constitutional morality is the fulcrum which acts as an essential check upon the high functionaries and citizens alike...." In view of the above observation of the Supreme Court, explain the concept of constitutional morality and its application to ensure balance between judicial independence and judicial accountability in India.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Open with the 2018 "fulcrum" line, then give independence and accountability a block each.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain the idea of constitutional morality, using the Supreme Court's 'fulcrum' observation, and show how it helps balance judicial independence with judicial accountability in India.

1 INTRODUCTION

In *Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India* (4 July 2018) the Supreme Court said that constitutional morality is the fulcrum which acts as an essential check upon high functionaries and citizens alike, because unbridled power without checks and balances turns despotic. The Court drew on B. R. Ambedkar's warning that constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment and has to be cultivated.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

What constitutional morality means

- Loyalty to the Constitution's values and spirit, not only its text: Liberty, equality, dignity, the rule of law and restraint in the use of power.
- Every functionary, including judges, must exercise power for the purposes the Constitution intends and accept checks on it.

Judicial independence

- Security of tenure: A Supreme Court judge can be removed only by an order of the President after an address by each House of Parliament, on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity (Article 124(4)), under the procedure of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
- Appointments: The collegium system, from the Three Judges Cases (1981, 1993 and 1998), keeps the judiciary's voice in appointments; on 16 October 2015 the Court struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission to protect independence.

Judicial accountability

- Impeachment is rare and slow; the in-house procedure for complaints against judges lacks transparency; delays and the collegium's opacity are frequent criticisms.
- Constitutional morality asks judges to be transparent about appointments and assets, to give reasons, and to avoid conflicts of interest, without

making them answerable to the executive.

How constitutional morality strikes the balance

- It protects independence as a means to impartial justice, not a privilege, and it demands accountability that comes from within: Transparency, a code of conduct and peer scrutiny.

3 CONCLUSION

Constitutional morality binds judges as it binds every other authority. An independent judiciary keeps its legitimacy only by being open and accountable in how it uses its power.

Sources : [Supreme Court of India: Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India, 4 July 2018](#); [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\), Article 124\(4\)](#); [Collegium system \(Wikipedia\)](#); [National Judicial Appointments Commission \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · POLITY

Q12. Indian Constitution has conferred the amending power on the ordinary legislative institutions with a few procedural hurdles. In view of this statement, examine the procedural and substantive limitations on the amending power of the Parliament to change the Constitution.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: List the procedural hurdles of Article 368, then the basic structure cases in order of date.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine the statement that the Constitution gives the power to amend to ordinary legislative bodies with only a few procedural hurdles; set out the procedural and the substantive limits on Parliament's amending power.

1 INTRODUCTION

Article 368 gives Parliament the power to amend the Constitution by addition,

variation or repeal. Unlike the United States, India uses its regular legislature for amendments, which is why the procedural safeguards are few and the judiciary has added substantive ones.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Procedural limits

- A Bill can be introduced only in Parliament, not in a State Legislature.
- It must pass each House by a majority of the total membership and not less than two-thirds of members present and voting; there is no joint sitting for amendment Bills.
- Amendments touching federal provisions (such as the election of the President, the Union and State executive powers, the judiciary, the Seventh Schedule and representation in Parliament) must also be ratified by the Legislatures of not less than one-half of the States.
- The President must give assent to a duly passed amendment Bill.

Substantive limits: The basic structure

- Golaknath (1967) held that Parliament could not amend Fundamental Rights; Parliament replied with the 24th Amendment.
- Kesavananda Bharati (24 April 1973), by a 7:6 majority, held that Parliament can amend any part of the Constitution but not destroy its basic structure.
- Minerva Mills (1980) held that Parliament has only a limited amending power and cannot turn it into an absolute power; clauses (4) and (5) of Article 368 added by the 42nd Amendment were struck down.
- Elements of the basic structure include the supremacy of the Constitution, judicial review, federalism, secularism, free and fair elections and the balance between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.

Assessment

- Flexible procedure lets the Constitution adapt, while the basic structure doctrine ensures that its identity cannot be changed by a temporary majority.

3 CONCLUSION

Easy procedure is balanced by a firm substantive limit. Parliament may amend the Constitution widely, but not rewrite its basic structure.

Sources : [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\)](#), Article 368; [Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Minerva Mills v. Union of India \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Golaknath v. State of Punjab \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · POLITY

Q13. Discuss the evolution of collegium system in India. Critically examine the advantages and disadvantages of the system of appointment of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India and that of the USA.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Critically examine Look at both sides with evidence, then give a reasoned judgement.

Tip for this question: Trace the three Judges Cases and the NJAC, then compare India and the USA in a table.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss how the collegium system evolved, then critically compare the advantages and disadvantages of appointing Supreme Court judges in India and in the USA.

1 INTRODUCTION

Article 124 says the President appoints Supreme Court judges after consultation with the Chief Justice and other judges. How much weight that consultation carries was settled by the courts, not by the text.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Evolution of the collegium

- First Judges Case (1981): 'Consultation' did not mean concurrence; the executive had primacy.
- Second Judges Case (1993): The Chief Justice's opinion, formed with senior judges, has primacy; the collegium was born.
- Third Judges Case (1998): The collegium became the Chief Justice and the four senior-most judges.
- The 99th Amendment and the NJAC Act (in force from 13 April 2015) set up a National Judicial Appointments Commission, but the Court struck both down on 16 October 2015 by a 4:1 majority and restored the collegium.

India: Advantages and disadvantages

- Advantages: Insulates appointments from political pressure, keeps judges' expert judgement of merit.
- Disadvantages: Opaque, no written criteria or public reasons, charges of nepotism, and delays in finalising the Memorandum of Procedure with the government.

USA: Advantages and disadvantages

- The President nominates and the Senate gives advice and consent after public hearings; judges serve for life.
- Advantages: Transparent, democratic and accountable, with public scrutiny of nominees.
- Disadvantages: Highly political confirmations along party lines and a court seen as divided by ideology.

Way forward for India

- Written criteria, published reasons, a secretariat for the collegium and a time-bound Memorandum of Procedure would add transparency without political control.

3 CONCLUSION

India chose judicial primacy to protect independence; the US chose political accountability. A reformed, transparent

collegium would combine the strengths of both.

Sources : Collegium system (Wikipedia); National Judicial Appointments Commission (Wikipedia); Nomination and confirmation to the Supreme Court of the United States (Wikipedia)

GS II · POLITY

Q14. Examine the evolving pattern of Centre-State financial relations in the context of planned development in India. How far have the recent reforms impacted the fiscal federalism in India?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

How far Answer with a measured extent: To a large extent, partly, or little, with reasons.

Tip for this question: Contrast the planning era with today: Plan grants then, NITI Aayog, GST and the 41 per cent share now.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine how financial relations between the Centre and the States changed during planned development and after the end of planning, and judge how far recent reforms (NITI Aayog, GST, Finance Commission awards) have affected fiscal federalism.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Constitution gives the Union the more elastic taxes and the States heavier spending duties, so transfers are central to Indian federalism. Under the Constitution these flow mainly through the Finance Commission set up every five years under Article 280.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

The planning era

- Besides Finance Commission devolution, the Planning Commission gave plan grants to States, and Centrally Sponsored Schemes with conditions grew, which gave the Centre a large say in State spending.

Recent reforms

- NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission in 2015, ending plan grants; its council includes all Chief Ministers.
- The Fourteenth Finance Commission raised the States' share of central taxes to 42 per cent, the largest increase ever recommended; the Sixteenth retained 41 per cent for 2026-31, which the Union accepted.
- GST (2017) pooled indirect taxes; the GST Council under Article 279A takes decisions with weighted voting of Centre and States.

Impact on fiscal federalism

- Gains: More untied funds, cooperative decision-making in the GST Council and a single national market.
- Concerns: States gave up independent taxing power under GST; cesses and surcharges outside the divisible pool reduce what is shared; borrowing limits and conditional schemes still constrain States.

3 CONCLUSION

Fiscal federalism has moved from plan-based control towards rule-based sharing and joint decisions. Keeping the divisible pool large and the GST Council genuinely cooperative will decide whether States gain real autonomy.

Sources : The Constitution of India (Legislative Department), Articles 279A and 280; PIB: Government accepts 16th Finance Commission's recommendation to retain vertical share of devolution at 41 percent; Fourteenth Finance Commission (Wikipedia); NITI Aayog (Wikipedia)

GS II · GOVERNANCE

Q15. What are environmental pressure groups? Discuss their role in raising awareness, influencing policies and advocating for environmental protection in India.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Define pressure groups, then take awareness, policy and advocacy in turn with one example each.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Define environmental pressure groups and discuss their role in India in spreading awareness, shaping policy and advocating protection, with examples of each.

1 INTRODUCTION

Environmental pressure groups are organised groups that try to influence public opinion and government policy on the environment without seeking political power themselves. They range from local movements to research and advocacy bodies.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Raising awareness

- The Chipko movement, which began in 1973 in the Himalayan forests of Uttarakhand, drew national attention to commercial logging and local livelihoods.
- The Centre for Science and Environment (established 1980) publishes research and reports that inform the public and the media.

Influencing policy

- Research and lobbying have shaped rules on vehicle emissions, pesticides and air quality, and inputs to laws such as the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- The Bombay Natural History Society (founded 15 September 1883) supplies the science behind wildlife and bird conservation.

Advocacy and litigation

- Public interest litigation has driven major environmental judgments on industrial pollution and the protection of forests and rivers.
- Movements such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan pressed for rehabilitation and environmental safeguards in big projects.

Limits

- Charges of blocking development, dependence on funding and, at times, restrictions on foreign contributions.

3 CONCLUSION

Environmental pressure groups give a voice to nature and to the communities that depend on it. Their research, mobilisation and litigation have made environmental protection part of mainstream policy in India.

Sources : [Chipko movement \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Centre for Science and Environment \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Bombay Natural History Society \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Sardar Sarovar Dam \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · SOCIAL JUSTICE

Q16. Inequality in the ownership pattern of resources is one of the major causes of poverty. Discuss in the context of 'paradox of poverty'.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Explain "paradox of poverty" as poverty amid plenty, and back it with the 86 per cent smallholder figure.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss how unequal ownership of resources (land, capital, education and natural wealth) causes poverty, and relate it to the 'paradox of poverty': Poverty that persists amid resources and growth.

1 INTRODUCTION

The paradox of poverty is the persistence of poverty where resources or growth are plentiful. In development writing the same idea appears as the resource curse, also called the paradox of plenty, where regions rich in natural resources stay poor.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Unequal ownership as a cause of poverty

- Land: According to the Agriculture Census 2015-16, small and marginal

operational holders make up about 86 per cent of all holders, and many rural households own little or no land.

- Capital and credit: Those without assets cannot offer collateral, so they borrow at high cost or not at all.
- Human capital: Unequal access to good schooling and health keeps the poor in low-paid work across generations.

The paradox in India

- Mineral-rich States such as Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh have high poverty: Mining income goes to firms and the State, while local and tribal communities lose land and forests.
- Fast growth with weak redistribution concentrates gains among those who already own capital and skills.

Breaking the link

- Land reforms, secure tenancy and forest rights; shares of mining income for affected people through District Mineral Foundations; universal education and health; credit through self-help groups and the Jan Dhan accounts.

3 CONCLUSION

Poverty amid plenty is mostly a problem of who owns and controls resources. Wider ownership and fair sharing of resource income are the way to resolve the paradox.

Sources : [Resource curse \(Wikipedia\)](#); [PIB: Agriculture Census 2015-16 \(Lok Sabha reply\)](#)

GS II • GOVERNANCE

Q17. "In contemporary development models, decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities are not located close to the source of information and execution defeating the objectives of development." Critically evaluate.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Critically evaluate Weigh merits and demerits, then state your verdict and why.

Tip for this question: Name the principle (subsidiarity) and give evidence on both sides before the way forward.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Critically evaluate the claim that today's development models place decisions far from where information lies and work is done, defeating development goals. Give evidence for and against, and the way forward.

1 INTRODUCTION

Good development needs decisions to be taken close to the people who hold local knowledge and carry out the work, an idea known as subsidiarity. India's planning was long centralised, and the question is how far it still is.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Evidence for the claim

- Centrally Sponsored Schemes are designed in New Delhi with uniform norms that do not fit every district.
- Panchayats and municipalities have the constitutional role but often lack the funds, functions and functionaries (the 3Fs) to plan for themselves.
- Technology platforms collect data centrally while the local official who implements the scheme has little discretion.

Evidence against

- The 73rd and 74th Amendments gave panchayats and municipalities constitutional status, with the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules listing matters they may plan for.
- The Aspirational Districts Programme, launched in January 2018 for 112 districts and anchored by NITI Aayog, uses local data and district-level decisions.
- Kerala's People's Plan Campaign and Gram Panchayat Development Plans show that local planning works when funds follow.

Way forward

- Devolve funds, functions and functionaries to local bodies; give flexible funds within schemes; build local capacity and data; involve citizens through gram sabhas and ward committees.

3 CONCLUSION

The claim is largely true, though recent reforms point the other way. Development succeeds when those who know the problem have the authority and the money to solve it.

Sources : [The Constitution of India \(Legislative Department\)](#), [Article 243G](#) and the [Eleventh Schedule](#); [Aspirational Districts Programme \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · SOCIAL JUSTICE

Q18. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has to address the challenges faced by children in the digital era. Examine the existing policies and suggest measures the Commission can initiate to tackle the issue.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Suggest End with practical, specific measures, not general wishes.

Tip for this question: Group the challenges, list the laws, then give NCPCR-specific measures, not general ones.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine the challenges children face in the digital era and the policies that exist, then suggest steps the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) can take.

1 INTRODUCTION

The NCPCR is a statutory body set up under section 3 of the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 to protect, promote and defend child rights and to monitor laws for children. Children now spend much of their lives online, which brings new risks.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Challenges in the digital era

- Online sexual abuse and child sexual abuse material, grooming and sextortion.
- Cyberbullying, harmful content, gaming addiction and effects on mental health and sleep.
- Collection of children's personal data and targeted advertising; misinformation.
- The digital divide: Many children lack devices or connectivity for learning.

Existing policies

- The POCSO Act, 2012 covers sexual offences against children, including the use of children in pornographic material; the IT Act and IT Rules require platforms to remove such content.
- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 has special provisions for the personal data of children under 18.
- The NCPCR monitors implementation of these laws and can inquire into violations.

Measures the NCPCR can initiate

- Guidelines for platforms on age-appropriate design, default privacy settings and quick takedown; regular audits of compliance.
- Easy online complaint channels for children and parents, and coordination with the police cyber cells.
- Digital literacy and online safety training in schools with State commissions and education departments.
- Research and data on children's online harms to inform policy.

3 CONCLUSION

The digital world is now part of childhood. The NCPCR can protect children best by pressing platforms for safe design while helping children and parents use technology wisely.

Sources : [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q19. "Energy security constitutes the dominant kingpin of India's foreign policy, and is linked with India's overarching influence in Middle Eastern countries." How would you integrate energy security with India's foreign policy trajectories in the coming years?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Link energy security to the Gulf, then give four forward-looking strands for policy.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss how energy security shapes India's foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, and set out how India should build energy security into its foreign policy in the coming years.

1 INTRODUCTION

India depends on imports for most of the crude oil and much of the gas it uses, and a large share comes from the Gulf. Energy security, meaning affordable and reliable supplies, is therefore a constant concern of Indian diplomacy.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why the Middle East matters

- Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the UAE are major suppliers of crude oil, and Qatar of LNG; millions of Indians work in the Gulf and send remittances home.
- Chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz make supplies vulnerable to conflict.

Tools already in use

- Strategic petroleum reserves at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru and Padur hold 5.33 million tonnes of crude.
- Diversifying suppliers, including larger purchases from Russia after

2022 and from the Americas and Africa.

- Connectivity: The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, announced at the G20 Summit in New Delhi in 2023; the Chabahar port in Iran.
- Clean energy diplomacy: The International Solar Alliance, proposed by India in 2015, and green hydrogen partnerships.

Integrating energy security into future foreign policy

- Balanced ties with rival Gulf powers and with Iran, Israel and the US, so that supplies survive regional conflict.
- Long-term contracts and Indian equity stakes in oil and gas fields abroad.
- Energy transition partnerships for critical minerals, solar manufacturing, nuclear fuel and storage, which reduce dependence over time.
- Naval presence and cooperation to keep sea lanes open.

3 CONCLUSION

Energy security will stay central to India's foreign policy until the energy transition matures. A diversified, balanced and increasingly green energy diplomacy serves both security and influence.

Sources : [Strategic Petroleum Reserve \(India\) \(Wikipedia\)](#); [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor \(Wikipedia\)](#); [International Solar Alliance \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q20. "The reform process in the United Nations remains unresolved, because of the delicate imbalance of East and West and entanglement of the USA vs. Russo-Chinese alliance." Examine and critically evaluate the East-West policy confrontations in this regard.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Critically evaluate Weigh merits and demerits, then state your verdict and why.

Tip for this question: Agree in part: Show East-West vetoes, then the regional rivalries (G4 against Uniting for Consensus).

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine why reform of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, remains stuck, and critically evaluate the claim that East-West confrontation between the US and a Russia-China alignment is the main reason.

1 INTRODUCTION

The UN Security Council still reflects the world of 1945: Five permanent members with a veto. Reform talks on its size, membership and the veto have continued in the General Assembly for decades without agreement.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

How East-West rivalry blocks reform

- The Council itself is paralysed on major crises: A draft resolution deploring Russia's invasion of Ukraine was vetoed in February 2022, and the United States vetoed several draft resolutions on the Gaza war in 2023 and 2024.
- Each side resists any change that might dilute its veto or add members it sees as aligned with rivals.

Divisions that are not East-West

- The G4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) seek permanent seats, but their regional rivals in the Uniting for Consensus group (including Italy, Pakistan, Mexico and Egypt) oppose new permanent members.
- The African Group demands two permanent seats with veto power, citing historical injustice.
- The P5 are themselves divided: China opposes Japan and is cool towards India, while the US is wary of a larger Council.

Evaluation

- The East-West clash explains the Council's paralysis but not fully the deadlock on reform, which is also a contest among regions and middle powers.

India's approach

- Pressing for text-based negotiations, a permanent seat with the G4 and fairer representation of Africa and the Global South.

3 CONCLUSION

UN reform is blocked by rivalry among the great powers and among aspiring members alike. Without it, the Council's authority will keep shrinking as crises are handled elsewhere.

Sources : [United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1 \(Wikipedia\)](#); [United Nations Security Council veto power \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Reform of the United Nations Security Council \(Wikipedia\)](#); [G4 nations \(Wikipedia\)](#)

Answer all 20 questions. Three hours, 250 marks.

GS III · ECONOMY

Q1. Distinguish between the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) with special reference to India. Why is the IHDI considered a better indicator of inclusive growth?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Distinguish Set out the differences point by point, ideally in a table.

Tip for this question: Quote the 2025 report figures: HDI 0.685, IHDI 0.475, a 30.7 per cent loss; the gap is the answer.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Distinguish the Human Development Index (HDI) from the Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), using India's figures, and explain why the IHDI is a better measure of inclusive growth.

1 INTRODUCTION

UNDP's Human Development Index combines life expectancy, education (mean and expected years of schooling) and income per head into one number, the geometric mean of the three. The Inequality-adjusted HDI, introduced in the 2010 Human Development Report, discounts each dimension for how unequally it is shared.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

How they differ

- HDI measures average achievement; the IHDI reduces it by the inequality within each dimension (using the Atkinson measure), so it shows the level of human development the typical person actually enjoys.
- If everyone were equal the two would match; the gap between them is the loss due to inequality.

India's figures (Human Development Report 2025, data for 2023)

- India ranks 130 of 193 countries with an HDI of 0.685, in the medium human development group.
- Its IHDI is 0.475: Inequality reduces India's HDI by 30.7 per cent, one of the largest losses in the region, driven by gaps in income, education and health.

Why the IHDI is the better measure of inclusive growth

- Inclusive growth means gains shared across groups; the HDI can rise while the poor fall behind, but the IHDI falls when gaps widen.
- It shows which dimension holds a country back, guiding policy on schooling quality, health access or income support.
- Limits: It does not capture gaps between social groups (caste, gender, region) directly; the Gender Development Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index complement it.

3 CONCLUSION

India's rising HDI shows progress; its IHDI shows how unevenly that progress is shared. Narrowing the 30.7 per cent loss is the real test of inclusive growth.

Sources : [Human Development Index \(Wikipedia\)](#); [UNDP Human Development Report 2025, Statistical Annex: Inequality-adjusted HDI](#); [List of countries by inequality-adjusted Human Development Index \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS III · ECONOMY

Q2. What are the challenges before the Indian economy when the world is moving away from free trade and multilateralism to protectionism and bilateralism? How can these challenges be met?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Two clear parts: Challenges, then responses; name the EFTA, UK and EU agreements with their dates.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Identify the challenges the Indian economy faces as the world turns from free trade and multilateralism to protectionism and bilateral deals, and suggest how India can meet them.

1 INTRODUCTION

The rules-based trading order built around the WTO has weakened: Its Appellate Body cannot rule, large economies raise tariffs, and trade is increasingly governed by bilateral and regional agreements.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Challenges for India

- Market access: Higher tariffs in major markets hurt labour-intensive exports like textiles, gems and leather; in August 2025 the United States added a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods over India's purchases of Russian oil.
- Outside regional blocs: India stayed out of RCEP, the large Asian trade agreement signed in November 2020, which can divert trade to member countries.
- Non-tariff barriers: Carbon border taxes and stricter standards in rich markets.
- Weaker dispute settlement leaves India with less protection against unilateral measures.
- Supply-chain shifts and pressure on the rupee and current account.

How India is responding

- Bilateral and plurilateral deals: The India-EFTA agreement entered into force on 1 October 2025 with a pledge of 100 billion dollars of investment over 15 years; the India-UK agreement came into effect on 15 July 2026; an India-EU agreement was concluded on 27 January 2026.
- Domestic competitiveness: Production Linked Incentive schemes, logistics reform under PM Gati Shakti and easier compliance.

What more is needed

- Diversify markets and products, raise standards and quality, protect sensitive farm and dairy sectors in deals, and keep pressing for WTO reform with like-minded countries.

3 CONCLUSION

Protectionism raises the cost of trade but also rewards countries that are competitive and well connected. India can turn the shift to its advantage with good deals abroad and reform at home.

Sources : Appellate Body (Wikipedia); Tariffs in the second Trump administration (Wikipedia); Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (Wikipedia); India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (Wikipedia); India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (Wikipedia); India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (Wikipedia)

GS III · AGRICULTURE

Q3. Explain the factors influencing the decision of the farmers on the selection of high value crops in India.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Group the factors as economic, physical, market and institutional, with one Indian example each.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain the factors that decide whether Indian farmers choose high-value crops (fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices and other commercial crops) over staple grains.

1 INTRODUCTION

High-value crops earn more per hectare than cereals, and India's horticulture output (369.1 million tonnes in 2024-25) now exceeds its foodgrain output (357.7 million tonnes). Yet many farmers still grow grains, because the choice depends on more than price.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Economic factors

- Expected price and demand: Urban incomes and exports raise demand for fruit, vegetables and dairy-linked fodder.
- Price risk: Perishable crops have volatile prices and, unlike wheat and rice, little assured procurement at the Minimum Support Price.
- Higher costs of seed, labour, inputs and investment (orchards take years to bear fruit), so credit access matters.

Physical factors

- Assured irrigation, suitable soil and climate (apples in the hills, grapes and pomegranates in Maharashtra).
- Small and fragmented holdings: About 86 per cent of holdings are small or marginal, which limits risk-taking.

Market and infrastructure

- Nearness to markets and roads, cold storage and processing; online trading through e-NAM and Farmer Producer Organisations widen access.

Institutional and social factors

- Knowledge and extension support, crop insurance, contract farming, government missions such as the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture, and peer examples in the village.

3 CONCLUSION

Farmers shift to high-value crops when markets, water and risk cover are in

place. Building those, not just advising diversification, is what changes cropping patterns.

Sources : PIB: Record Food and Horticulture output amid Declining Average Landholdings (27 March 2026); PIB: Agriculture Census 2015-16 (Lok Sabha reply); e-NAM (Wikipedia)

GS III · AGRICULTURE

Q4. Elaborate the scope and significance of supply chain management of agricultural commodities in India.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Draw the chain as a simple flowchart from farm gate to consumer, then give its significance.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Elaborate the scope (the stages and players) of supply chain management for farm commodities in India and its significance for farmers, consumers and the economy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Supply chain management covers everything from the farm gate to the consumer: Aggregation, grading, storage, transport, processing, wholesale and retail. In farming, where produce is perishable and farms are small, how the chain works decides both farmer income and consumer prices.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Scope

- Pre-harvest: Inputs, credit and crop planning to match market demand.
- Post-harvest: Aggregation through Farmer Producer Organisations, grading, packaging, warehousing and cold chains.
- Marketing: Mandis under State APMC laws, the online e-NAM platform launched on 14 April 2016, and direct sales to processors and retailers.
- Processing and exports, with traceability and quality standards.

Significance

- Farmers: Fewer intermediaries and lower losses raise the share of the consumer's price that reaches the grower.
- Consumers: Steadier supply and prices, as Operation Greens aims for tomato, onion and potato.
- Economy: Less waste, more food processing jobs, exports and food security.

Gaps to close

- Shortage of cold storage near farms, fragmented mandis, poor rural roads and weak price information.
- Steps: Infrastructure funds for storage and processing, digital platforms, FPO aggregation and warehouse-based credit.

3 CONCLUSION

An efficient farm supply chain links small farmers to large markets. Investing in it raises farm incomes and holds down food prices at the same time.

Sources : [Supply chain management \(Wikipedia\)](#); [e-NAM \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Operation Greens \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS III · SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Q5. The fusion energy programme in India has steadily evolved over the past few decades. Mention India's contributions to the international fusion energy project – International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). What will be the implications of the success of this project for the future of global energy?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Three parts as asked: India's programme, India's ITER deliverables, and implications for global energy.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Trace how India's fusion energy programme developed, state India's contributions to ITER, and explain what ITER's success would mean for the world's future energy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nuclear fusion joins light nuclei (isotopes of hydrogen) to release energy, the process that powers the Sun. ITER, being built near Cadarache in southern France by seven partners, aims to show that fusion can work at power-plant scale.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

India's fusion programme

- The Institute for Plasma Research, Gandhinagar, began tokamak experiments with ADITYA in 1989.
- A decision of 1995 led to SST-1, a superconducting steady-state tokamak, and the institute came under the Department of Atomic Energy.

India and ITER

- India is one of seven ITER members (with China, the European Union, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States); the partners formally agreed to fund the project on 21 November 2006.
- India's share is about 10 per cent, delivered mostly 'in kind' as components built by Indian industry.
- Larsen & Toubro built and installed the cryostat, the huge vacuum vessel that encloses the reactor, completed on 9 June 2020; India's other deliverables include cryolines, in-vessel shielding and the cooling water systems.

Implications of success

- Almost limitless fuel: Deuterium from sea water and tritium bred from lithium.
- No carbon emissions while running and far less long-lived radioactive waste than fission; no chain reaction that can run away.
- Energy security for importers like India and a route to deep

decarbonisation, though power plants would come only after ITER's research phase from about 2034.

3 CONCLUSION

India is a full technical partner in the world's largest fusion experiment. If ITER succeeds, fusion could become a clean, secure source of power in the second half of the century.

Sources : [ITER \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Institute for Plasma Research \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS III · SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Q6. How can India achieve energy independence through clean technology by 2047? How can biotechnology can play a crucial role in this endeavour?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Pair each clean technology with a target, then give biotechnology its own block (biofuels, biogas, BioE3).

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain how India can become energy independent by 2047 through clean technologies, and show the specific role biotechnology can play.

1 INTRODUCTION

Energy independence means meeting India's energy needs mainly from domestic, clean sources rather than imported oil, gas and coal. India has already reached 50 per cent of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources, five years ahead of its 2030 target under the Paris Agreement.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Clean-technology pathway

- Electricity: Solar, wind, hydro and nuclear power with grid storage (batteries, pumped hydro) to replace coal.
- Transport: Electric vehicles, flex-fuel vehicles and green hydrogen for heavy transport.

- Industry: Green hydrogen for steel, fertiliser and refining; energy efficiency across sectors.
- Domestic manufacturing of solar modules, batteries and electrolyzers, and secure supplies of critical minerals.

Role of biotechnology

- Biofuels: The 20 per cent ethanol blending target (E20), first set for 2030, was advanced to 2025 and achieved; second-generation ethanol from crop residue avoids using food crops.
- Compressed biogas from agricultural, dairy and municipal waste can replace imported gas in transport and cooking.
- Engineered microbes and enzymes for cheaper biomass conversion, algal fuels and biological routes to hydrogen.
- The BioE3 policy, approved by the Cabinet in August 2024, supports biomanufacturing hubs and biofoundries across six thematic sectors.

Conditions for success

- Storage and grid investment, stable policy, finance, skills and care for food security and land use.

3 CONCLUSION

Clean power, electric mobility and green hydrogen can cut imports, while biotechnology turns India's farm and urban waste into fuel. Together they can make energy independence by 2047 realistic.

Sources : [PIB: India's Renewable Rise, non-fossil sources now power half the nation's grid \(14 July 2025\)](#); [PIB: India's ethanol journey is unstoppable](#); [PIB: Parliament question, BioE3 policy \(23 July 2025\)](#)

GS III · ENVIRONMENT

Q7. What is Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS)? What is the potential role of CCUS in tackling climate change?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Define Open with a precise definition before anything else.

Tip for this question: A small capture, use, store diagram plus one real project (Sleipner) makes the definition concrete.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Define Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) and assess its potential role in tackling climate change, with examples and limits.

1 INTRODUCTION

CCUS captures carbon dioxide from large point sources, such as power plants, cement works or gas processing, and either uses it in products or stores it permanently, usually deep underground. It addresses emissions that are hard to remove by switching fuels alone.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

How it works

- Capture: CO₂ is separated from flue gases or industrial processes.
- Utilisation: Captured CO₂ can be turned into methanol, urea, polymers and building materials.
- Storage: CO₂ is injected into deep geological formations such as depleted oil and gas fields or saline aquifers; the first large dedicated project began at the Sleipner gas field in Norway in 1996.

Potential role

- Cutting emissions from cement, steel, chemicals and fertiliser, where process emissions remain even with clean electricity.
- Enabling low-carbon hydrogen from gas or coal, and negative emissions when combined with bioenergy.

- For India, coal will remain part of the energy mix for years, so CCUS can support the net-zero goal for 2070.

Limits

- High cost and energy penalty; most captured CO₂ today is used for enhanced oil recovery, which yields more oil; storage needs monitoring for leaks; it can delay the shift away from fossil fuels if used as an excuse.

3 CONCLUSION

CCUS is not a substitute for renewable energy, but a tool for the hardest emissions. With falling costs and clear policy, it can be an important part of India's path to net zero.

Sources : [Carbon capture and storage \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS III · ENVIRONMENT

Q8. Seawater intrusion in the coastal aquifers is a major concern in India. What are the causes of seawater intrusion and the remedial measures to combat this hazard?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Sketch the freshwater lens over seawater and show the wedge moving inland as pumping rises.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain why seawater is entering the coastal aquifers of India, and set out the measures that can control this hazard, with Indian examples.

1 INTRODUCTION

In coastal aquifers, fresh groundwater normally floats on and holds back denser seawater. When fresh water is pumped out faster than it is replaced, or sea level rises, the saltwater wedge moves inland and wells turn salty, a process known as seawater (or saltwater) intrusion.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Causes

- Over-extraction of groundwater for farms, industries and cities lowers the water table, letting seawater flow in, as in coastal Gujarat (Saurashtra and Kutch) and around Chennai.
- Sea level rise caused by climate change pushes the boundary landward.
- Less recharge because of paved surfaces, deforestation and failed monsoons.
- Canals, navigation channels and sand mining in rivers let tides carry salt further inland.

Consequences

- Salty drinking water, loss of farmland, damage to crops and industries, and costly treatment.

Remedial measures

- Regulating groundwater use and drilling in notified coastal zones.
- Artificial recharge: Check dams, recharge wells and ponds, and tidal regulators that hold fresh water in estuaries, used along Gujarat's coast.
- Managed aquifer recharge with treated wastewater and rainwater harvesting.
- Protecting mangroves and coastal wetlands, and monitoring salinity with observation wells.

3 CONCLUSION

Seawater intrusion is mostly a groundwater management problem made worse by rising seas. Recharge and regulation together can hold the line and protect coastal water supplies.

Sources : [Saltwater intrusion](#) (Wikipedia)

GS III · INTERNAL SECURITY

Q9. Terrorism is a global scourge. How has it manifested in India? Elaborate with contemporary examples. What are the counter measures adopted by the State? Explain.

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Give dated examples (Pahalgam 2025, Mumbai 2008) and match each with a counter-measure.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Describe how terrorism has shown itself in India, with recent examples, and explain the counter-measures the State has adopted.

1 INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is the use of violence against civilians to spread fear for political ends. India has faced it in several forms for decades, much of it supported from across the border.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Manifestations in India

- Cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir: On 22 April 2025, militants killed 26 civilians, most of them tourists, near Pahalgam.
- Attacks on cities: The Mumbai attacks of November 2008 showed sea-borne infiltration and urban siege tactics.
- Insurgency and extremism: Left Wing Extremism in central India and armed groups in parts of the North-East, though both have declined sharply.
- New forms: Online radicalisation, terror funding through crypto and hawala, and drones dropping weapons across the border.

Counter-measures

- Laws: The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, amended in 2019 to let the Union designate individuals as terrorists.

- Institutions: The National Investigation Agency, set up under the NIA Act, 2008 after the Mumbai attacks, with nationwide jurisdiction; intelligence sharing through the Multi Agency Centre.
- Military response: Operation Sindoor, begun on 7 May 2025, struck terrorist infrastructure across the border after Pahalgam.
- Diplomacy: Pressing for FATF action against terror financing and for a UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.
- Coastal security, border fencing and technology, and de-radicalisation and development in affected areas.

3 CONCLUSION

India's response has shifted from defence to deterrence, backed by stronger laws and agencies. Lasting success needs equal attention to intelligence, rights-respecting policing and international cooperation.

Sources : 2025 Pahalgam attack (Wikipedia); National Investigation Agency (Wikipedia); Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (Wikipedia); 2025 India-Pakistan conflict (Wikipedia)

GS III · INTERNAL SECURITY

Q10. The Government of India recently stated that Left Wing Extremism (LWE) will be eliminated by 2026. What do you understand by LWE and how are the people affected by it? What measures have been taken by the government to eliminate LWE?

10 marks · 150 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Define LWE, show its human cost, then strategy and the official 2026 outcome, attributed to the government.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain what Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is, how it affects people, and what the government has done to end it, given the stated aim of eliminating it by 2026.

1 INTRODUCTION

Left Wing Extremism, or Naxalism, is an armed movement inspired by Maoist ideology that seeks to overthrow the State through violence. It took root in the forested tribal belt of central and eastern India, the so-called Red Corridor.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

How people are affected

- Violence: Killings of civilians and security personnel, extortion and destruction of roads, schools and mobile towers.
- Development stalls: Schools, health centres, roads and banking cannot reach affected villages, deepening tribal poverty.
- Tribal communities are caught between the insurgents and security operations, and suffer displacement and loss of livelihoods.

Government strategy

- On 24 August 2024 the Union set a target of making the country free of Naxalism by 31 March 2026.
- Security: More camps in core areas, coordinated operations by central and State forces and choking of funds and arms.
- Development: Roads, mobile towers, banks, schools and welfare schemes pushed into affected districts.
- Surrender and rehabilitation policies, and rights such as those under the Forest Rights Act to address grievances.

Outcome so far

- The government states that LWE-affected districts fell from 126 in 2014 to zero by March-April 2026, and that India became effectively free from Naxalism on 31 March 2026.
- Sustaining peace now depends on development, good governance and trust in the formerly affected areas.

3 CONCLUSION

Combined security and development pressure has broken the LWE movement. The lasting test is whether governance and opportunity fill the space it leaves.

Sources : PIB: Naxal-free India, results of a decade of transformation (2026)

GS III · ECONOMY

Q11. Explain how the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) can be used as a tool for assessing the fiscal performance of states in India. In what way would it encourage the states to adopt prudent and sustainable fiscal policies?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Name the five sub-indices; they are the heart of how the FHI works as a tool.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain how NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index (FHI) works as a tool to assess the fiscal performance of States, and how it can encourage them to follow prudent and sustainable fiscal policies.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Fiscal Health Index, first released by NITI Aayog in January 2025, ranks 18 major States on a composite score built from five sub-indices: Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index and Debt Sustainability. A second edition followed for 2023-24.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

What it measures

- Quality of Expenditure: How much spending goes to capital assets and development rather than committed items.
- Revenue Mobilisation: The State's own tax and non-tax revenue.

- Fiscal Prudence: Control of fiscal and revenue deficits.
- Debt Index and Debt Sustainability: Interest burden and whether debt grows faster than the economy.

As an assessment tool

- One composite score allows comparison across States and over time; Odisha topped the first edition with a score of 67.8.
- Sub-index scores show where each State is weak, guiding targeted reform; the second edition ranks North-Eastern and Himalayan States separately.

How it encourages prudent policy

- Competitive federalism: Public rankings create peer pressure and reputational incentives.
- Signals to lenders and investors about creditworthiness.
- A common evidence base for the Union, the Finance Commission and State legislatures.

Limits

- Based on past data; does not capture off-budget borrowing fully; States differ in needs, so rankings must be read with context.

3 CONCLUSION

The FHI turns State finances into comparable, public information. Used well, it rewards fiscal discipline without ignoring the development spending States must undertake.

Sources : PIB: NITI Aayog launches the Fiscal Health Index 2025; PIB: NITI Aayog launches second annual edition of the Fiscal Health Index

GS III · ECONOMY

Q12. Discuss the rationale of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. What are its achievements? In what way can the functioning and outcomes of the scheme be improved?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Rationale, achievements with the March 2026 figures, then specific reforms such as value addition.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Discuss why the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme was introduced, what it has achieved, and how its working and results can be improved.

1 INTRODUCTION

PLI schemes, launched from 2020, give companies incentives linked to the increase in their domestic production and sales over a base year. They cover 14 sectors, from mobile phones and electronics to pharmaceuticals, food processing, textiles, solar modules and specialty steel.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Rationale

- Make Indian manufacturing competitive and reduce dependence on imports in strategic sectors.
- Attract global firms seeking to diversify supply chains, build scale and integrate India into global value chains.
- Create jobs and raise exports.

Achievements

- As on 31 March 2026, PLI schemes had led to actual investment of over ₹2.40 lakh crore and employment of over 14.15 lakh, direct and indirect, with cumulative exports above ₹15.2 lakh crore.
- Mobile phones are the clearest success: India has become a major exporter instead of an importer.

Problems seen

- Uneven results: Some sectors have attracted little investment and disbursement is slow.
- Much value in electronics is still imported components with low domestic value addition.

- Incentives favour large firms; job numbers are reported by beneficiaries.

Improvements

- Tie incentives to domestic value addition and component ecosystems; faster, simpler disbursement; independent evaluation; support for MSMEs in the supply chain; and pairing PLI with reforms in logistics, power and skills.

3 CONCLUSION

PLI has shown that targeted incentives can attract manufacturing at scale. Deepening local value addition will decide whether it builds lasting industrial capacity.

Sources : PIB: PLI schemes attract over ₹2.40 lakh crore investment, generate more than 14.15 lakh jobs (21 July 2026)

GS III · ENVIRONMENT

Q13. Examine the factors responsible for depleting groundwater in India. What are the steps taken by the government to mitigate such depletion of groundwater?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: Use the 2025 assessment numbers (730 of 6,762 units over-exploited) before listing causes and steps.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine why groundwater is being depleted in India and set out the steps the government has taken to slow and reverse the depletion.

1 INTRODUCTION

India is the world's largest user of groundwater, which supplies most of its irrigation and drinking water. The 2025 assessment puts total annual extraction at 247.22 billion cubic metres and classifies 730 of 6,762 assessment units (10.8 per cent) as over-exploited.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Causes of depletion

- Irrigation: Water-intensive crops such as paddy and sugarcane in dry regions like Punjab, Haryana and parts of Maharashtra.
- Free or cheap electricity for farm pumps, which encourages over-pumping.
- Rapid urbanisation and industry; paved surfaces reduce recharge.
- Weak regulation: Landowners own the groundwater under their land, and there is little metering.
- Climate variability and erratic monsoons.

Steps taken

- Atal Bhujal Yojana for community-led groundwater management in water-stressed States.
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan, 'Catch the Rain' and Mission Amrit Sarovar for recharge structures and water bodies.
- Since September 2025, at least 65 per cent of rural employment guarantee funds must go to water conservation works in over-exploited and critical blocks.
- Micro-irrigation under PMKSY ('Per Drop More Crop'), and Central Ground Water Authority rules on extraction.

What more is needed

- Crop diversification away from water-intensive crops, power and pricing reform, aquifer mapping and community monitoring.

3 CONCLUSION

Groundwater is being used faster than it is replaced in many blocks. Recharge, efficient irrigation and smarter incentives must work together to restore the balance.

Sources : PIB: [Dynamic Groundwater Resources Assessment, 2025](#); PIB: [Findings of Dynamic Groundwater Resources Assessment](#)

GS III · AGRICULTURE

Q14. Examine the scope of the food processing industries in India. Elaborate the measures taken by the government in the food processing industries for generating employment opportunities.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: Show scope with the 12.83 per cent employment share, then the schemes that create jobs.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine the scope of food processing industries in India and describe the government's measures in this sector aimed at creating jobs.

1 INTRODUCTION

Food processing turns farm, dairy, fisheries and meat produce into higher-value products. It links farmers to markets and is the largest employer in India's registered manufacturing, with 12.83 per cent of its employment.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Scope

- India's large output of grains, fruit, vegetables, milk and fish, with high post-harvest losses, offers raw material and room for value addition.
- Growing urban demand for packaged and ready-to-eat food, and export markets.
- The sector grew by an average 6.55 per cent a year over nine years, faster than manufacturing as a whole.
- Its rural location and small units make it labour-intensive and suited to women and self-help groups.

Government measures for employment

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana: Mega food parks, cold chains and processing units.

- PLI Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI): Incentives for scale and Indian brands abroad.
- PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME): Credit-linked subsidies and seed capital for micro units and SHG members.
- Operation Greens for perishable crops, FDI allowed through the automatic route, and the World Food India platform.

Challenges

- Gaps in cold chains and logistics, small scale of most units, quality standards and credit access.

3 CONCLUSION

Food processing can raise farm incomes, cut waste and create rural jobs at the same time. Scaling up micro units and infrastructure is the key to realising that scope.

Sources : [PIB: Status and progress of the food processing sector](#); [Operation Greens \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS III · SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Q15. How does nanotechnology offer significant advancements in the field of agriculture? How can this technology help to uplift the socio-economic status of farmers?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Give each application a farmer benefit, and end with the need for trials and regulation.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain how nanotechnology is advancing agriculture and how it can improve the social and economic condition of farmers, with examples and cautions.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nanotechnology works with materials at the scale of billionths of a metre, where particles behave differently because of their large surface area. In farming, it

allows inputs to be delivered precisely and in smaller amounts.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Advances in agriculture

- Nano fertilisers: Liquid nano urea and nano DAP, sprayed on leaves, aim to cut the use of bulk granular fertiliser; the Government notified Nano DAP under the Fertilizer Control Order, 1985 on the basis of bio-efficacy and toxicology trials.
- Nano pesticides and controlled-release formulations that reduce the quantity applied and run-off.
- Nano sensors for soil moisture, nutrients and disease, supporting precision farming.
- Nano-coatings and packaging that extend shelf life and cut post-harvest losses.

Socio-economic benefits for farmers

- Lower input and transport costs (a small bottle replaces a heavy bag), and possible yield gains.
- Less soil and water pollution, protecting long-term productivity.
- Better prices from reduced losses and better quality produce.

Cautions

- Field results vary and need independent, long-term trials; the effects of nanoparticles on soil life and health need study; farmers need training and affordable access.

3 CONCLUSION

Nanotechnology can make Indian farming more precise, cheaper and cleaner. Its benefits will reach farmers only with rigorous testing, regulation and extension support.

Sources : [PIB: Government of India notifies Nano DAP under the Fertilizer Control Order \(6 August 2024\)](#)

GS III · SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Q16. India aims to become a semiconductor manufacturing hub. What are the challenges faced by the semiconductor industry in India? Mention the salient features of the India Semiconductor Mission.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Challenges, then the mission's features in two phases (Rs 76,000 crore, then Semicon 2.0).

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Identify the challenges facing semiconductor manufacturing in India and set out the salient features of the India Semiconductor Mission, including its second phase.

1 INTRODUCTION

Semiconductors (chips) power phones, cars, defence systems and data centres, and their production is concentrated in a few countries. India launched the India Semiconductor Mission with an outlay of ₹76,000 crore in 2021 and approved Semicon 2.0 on 15 July 2026 with ₹1,27,500 crore.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Challenges

- Very high capital cost and long gestation: A modern fab costs tens of thousands of crores and years to build.
- Ecosystem gaps: Few domestic suppliers of chemicals, gases, wafers and equipment; reliance on imported tools.
- Infrastructure: Uninterrupted power and very large volumes of ultra-pure water.
- Skills: Shortage of process engineers despite a strong chip-design workforce.
- Technology: Leading-edge nodes are controlled by a few firms and subject to export controls.

Salient features of the mission

- Fiscal support for fabs, display fabs, and assembly, testing and packaging (ATMP/OSAT) units, with a 2022 change allowing capital subsidy of up to 50 per cent for large projects.
- Projects: The Tata Electronics and Powerchip fab at Dholera, Gujarat (28 nm technology, 50,000 wafer starts a month), and packaging plants such as Micron's and Kaynes Semicon's in Sanand; twelve units were approved under the first phase.
- Design Linked Incentive scheme for chip-design start-ups, and talent programmes with universities.
- Semicon 2.0 widens support to the whole chain: Design, machines and materials, fabs, packaging, research and talent.

Way forward

- Stable long-term policy, State-level infrastructure, partnerships with trusted countries and a focus on mature nodes and packaging where India can compete.

3 CONCLUSION

India has moved from ambition to its first fabs and packaging plants. Building the supporting ecosystem and skills will decide whether it becomes a lasting semiconductor hub.

Sources : [PMIndia: Cabinet approves Semicon 2.0 \(15 July 2026\)](#); [Semiconductor industry in India \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS III · ENVIRONMENT

Q17. Mineral resources are fundamental to the country's economy and these are exploited by mining. Why is mining considered an environmental hazard? Explain the remedial measures required to reduce the environmental hazard due to mining.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: Take hazards by medium (land, water, air, people), then remedies in the same order.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain why mining is an environmental hazard and set out the remedial measures that can reduce its harm.

1 INTRODUCTION

Minerals such as coal, iron ore and bauxite feed India's industry and power, and most lie in the forested, tribal regions of the peninsular plateau. Extracting them, especially by open-cast mining, changes land, water and air over large areas.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why mining is hazardous

- Land: Loss of forests and topsoil, dumps of overburden, and abandoned pits; underground mines can cause land subsidence and mine fires, as at Jharia.
- Water: Acid mine drainage from sulphide-bearing rocks, contamination by heavy metals, silting of rivers and falling water tables.
- Air: Dust and particulate pollution from blasting, crushing and transport, causing lung disease.
- Biodiversity and people: Fragmentation of habitats and corridors, and displacement of tribal communities.

Remedial measures

- Prior environmental impact assessment, forest clearance and public hearings, with compensatory afforestation.
- Progressive mine closure and reclamation: Backfilling, topsoil replacement and replanting during operations, not after.
- Pollution control: Dust suppression, covered transport, treatment of mine water and safe tailings dams.

- District Mineral Foundations, funded by mining companies, to spend on the welfare and environment of affected areas.
- Better technology: Underground and less-polluting methods, satellite and drone monitoring of mining leases.

3 CONCLUSION

Mining will remain essential, but its costs fall on land, water and local communities. Enforcing reclamation and sharing benefits with affected people make it sustainable.

Sources : [Environmental impact of mining \(Wikipedia\)](#); [NCERT India: People and Economy, Chapter 5: Mineral and Energy Resources](#)

GS III · ENVIRONMENT

Q18. Write a review on India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement (2015) and mention how these have been further strengthened in COP26 (2021). In this direction, how has the first Nationally Determined Contribution intended by India been updated in 2022?

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: A table of targets (2015, COP26, 2022 update, 2035 NDC) answers the review part quickly.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Review India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement (2015), explain how they were strengthened at COP26 (2021), and show how the first NDC was updated in 2022 (and what has followed).

1 INTRODUCTION

Under the Paris Agreement each country sets its own Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). India submitted its first NDC in October 2015 and has raised its targets twice since.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Paris commitments (2015)

- Reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels.
- About 40 per cent of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030.
- An additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through forests and tree cover.

COP26, Glasgow (2021): The Panchamrit

- 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030; 50 per cent of energy needs from renewables by 2030.
- Cut projected emissions by one billion tonnes up to 2030; reduce carbon intensity by 45 per cent by 2030.
- Net zero by 2070.

The updated NDC of August 2022

- Emissions intensity target raised to 45 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels.
- About 50 per cent of installed electric power capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030.
- LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) added as a mass movement for sustainable lifestyles.

Progress and the next step

- India reached 50 per cent non-fossil installed capacity in 2025, five years early.
- A new NDC for 2031 to 2035 commits to a 47 per cent cut in emissions intensity by 2035 and about 60 per cent non-fossil capacity.

3 CONCLUSION

India's targets have risen at every step while respecting common but differentiated responsibilities. Meeting them depends on finance, technology and a just transition for coal regions.

Sources : Nationally determined contribution (Wikipedia); PIB: National Statement by the Prime Minister at COP26, Glasgow; PIB: India stands committed to reduce emissions intensity of its GDP by 45 percent by 2030; PIB: Cabinet approves India's

Nationally Determined Contribution (2031-2035); PIB: India's Renewable Rise (14 July 2025)

GS III · INTERNAL SECURITY

Q19. What are the major challenges to internal security and peace process in the North-Eastern States? Map the various peace accords and agreements initiated by the government in the past decade.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Challenges first, then a dated list of accords; a small map of the States helps.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Set out the main challenges to internal security and the peace process in the North-Eastern States, and map the peace accords and agreements the government has reached in the past decade.

1 INTRODUCTION

The North-East has seen insurgencies rooted in ethnic identity, land and autonomy since the 1950s. Violence has fallen sharply in the last decade through a series of agreements, but new and old challenges remain.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Challenges

- Ethnic conflict: Since 3 May 2023, violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities in Manipur has killed many and displaced thousands.
- Unresolved Naga issue: Talks under the Framework Agreement of 3 August 2015 with the NSCN(IM) remain unfinished over a separate flag and constitution.
- Porous borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan; arms and drug trafficking; inter-State boundary disputes.
- Groups outside the process and the law-and-order burden of disarmament and rehabilitation.

Peace accords and agreements of the past decade

- NLFT(SD), Tripura (August 2019), with the surrender of 88 cadres.
- Bru-Reang agreement (16 January 2020), settling displaced Bru families in Tripura, and the Bodo Accord, Assam (27 January 2020).
- Karbi Anglong Agreement, Assam (September 2021).
- UNLF (Pambei faction), Manipur, ceasefire agreement (29 November 2023), and the pro-talks ULFA, which disbanded after its peace treaty of 2023.
- NLFT and ATTF, Tripura (4 September 2024).
- An agreement with the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation and the Nagaland government (February 2026).

Way forward

- Settle the Naga talks and Manipur's ethnic divide through dialogue, implement accords with development funds, secure the borders and build trust through good governance.

3 CONCLUSION

Accords have brought thousands of cadres into the mainstream and transformed security in much of the North-East. Lasting peace now depends on implementing them and resolving Manipur and the Naga question.

Sources : PIB: A New Era of Peace and Prosperity in the North East; United National Liberation Front (Wikipedia); United Liberation Front of Asom (Wikipedia); National Liberation Front of Tripura (Wikipedia); Naga Peace Accord (Wikipedia); Manipur conflict (2023 to present) (Wikipedia); PIB: Agreement with the ENPO and the Government of Nagaland (February 2026)

GS III · INTERNAL SECURITY

Q20. Why is maritime security vital to protect India's sea trade? Discuss maritime and coastal security challenges and the way forward.

15 marks · 250 words · 8 min 45 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Tip for this question: Open with the 95 and 70 per cent trade figures, then challenges and a way forward.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain why maritime security is vital for India's sea trade, discuss the maritime and coastal security challenges, and suggest a way forward.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nearly 95 per cent of India's trade by volume and about 70 per cent by value moves by sea. India's long coastline, island territories and position astride Indian Ocean shipping lanes make maritime security an economic as well as a strategic necessity.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why it is vital

- Energy imports and exports pass through chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb and Malacca.
- Ports, offshore oil fields such as Mumbai High, undersea cables and the Exclusive Economic Zone hold economic value.

Challenges

- Piracy and attacks on shipping, such as those in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden; the Indian Navy has escorted and rescued ships in the region.
- Terrorism from the sea, as in the Mumbai attacks of November 2008.
- Smuggling of drugs and arms, illegal fishing and human trafficking.
- Growing presence of extra-regional navies and dual-use port projects in the Indian Ocean.
- Coastal gaps: Many agencies, small fishing boats that are hard to track, and uneven State marine police capacity.

What India is doing

- Coastal security reorganised after 2008, with the Coast Guard, Navy and marine police working together and coastal radar chains.
- Regional outlook: SAGAR, now widened as MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), and an information fusion centre for shipping in the Indian Ocean.

Way forward

- Better maritime domain awareness with satellites and drones, unified command for coastal security, a stronger navy and shipbuilding base, and partnerships with Indian Ocean states.

3 CONCLUSION

Secure seas are the lifeline of India's trade and energy. Investing in awareness, capability and partnerships keeps that lifeline open.

Sources : PIB: Maritime India (95 per cent of trade by volume, 70 per cent by value); PIB: Home Minister inaugurates India Maritime Week 2025; National Investigation Agency (Wikipedia)

General Studies Paper IV (Ethics)

24 August 2025

Answer all questions. Three hours, 250 marks.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q1(a). In the present digital age, social media has revolutionised our way of communication and interaction. However, it has raised several ethical issues and challenges. Describe the key ethical dilemmas in this regard.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Describe Give the main features in an orderly account.

Tip for this question: Frame each dilemma as two values in conflict (free speech against harm, privacy against convenience).

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Describe the main ethical dilemmas that social media has created in the digital age, for individuals, platforms and the State.

1 INTRODUCTION

Social media lets anyone speak to millions instantly, which has widened free expression and participation. The same reach and anonymity create clashes between values that were easier to balance offline.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Key ethical dilemmas

- Free speech against harm: Hate speech, misinformation and incitement spread faster than

corrections; removing them risks censorship.

- Privacy against convenience: Free services are paid for with personal data, often without informed consent.
- Anonymity against accountability: Anonymity protects whistle-blowers but also trolls and fraudsters.
- Engagement against well-being: Algorithms that maximise attention can feed addiction, polarisation and harm to children's mental health.
- Truth against virality: Deepfakes and manipulated media blur what is real.
- Public servants: Personal expression against the duty of neutrality and confidentiality.

Ethical way forward

- Platforms: Transparency in algorithms, quick grievance redress, safety by design.
- Users: Digital literacy, empathy and responsibility before sharing.
- State: Proportionate, rights-respecting regulation rather than blanket bans.

3 CONCLUSION

Social media magnifies both the best and worst of human conduct. Its ethics rest on shared responsibility among platforms, users and the State.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q1(b). "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment but a product of civil education and adherence of the rule of law." Examine the significance of constitutional morality for public servant highlighting the role in promoting good governance and ensuring accountability in public administration.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: Open with Ambedkar's 'cultivated' line, then link it to governance and to accountability separately.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine why constitutional morality matters for public servants, and how it promotes good governance and accountability in public administration.

1 INTRODUCTION

B. R. Ambedkar warned that constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment and has to be cultivated. The Supreme Court in 2018 called it the fulcrum which acts as an essential check upon high functionaries and citizens alike.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Meaning for a public servant

- Loyalty to the Constitution's values (justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, the rule of law) above personal, political or group loyalties.
- Using discretion for the purposes the law intends, and respecting the limits of one's authority.

Role in good governance

- Impartial service to all citizens, especially the weak, which builds trust in the State.
- Respect for due process, reasons for decisions and fairness in implementation.

Role in accountability

- Accepting scrutiny by courts, legislatures, audit, RTI and citizens as part of the job.
- Refusing illegal orders and reporting wrongdoing through proper channels.

How it is cultivated

- Civic education, training in constitutional values, codes of conduct and leaders who model the behaviour.

3 CONCLUSION

Laws set the minimum; constitutional morality supplies the spirit in which public servants apply them. It is the inner check that makes accountability real.

Sources : [Supreme Court of India: Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India, 4 July 2018](#)

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q2(a). Carl von Clausewitz once said, "War is a diplomacy by other means." Critically analyse the above statement in the present context of contemporary geopolitical conflict.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Critically analyse Break the issue into parts, test each, and conclude with your view.

Tip for this question: Correct the quote politely (Clausewitz said 'policy'), then test it against today's wars.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Critically analyse the statement, attributed to Clausewitz, that war is diplomacy by other means, in the light of today's geopolitical conflicts; examine what it gets right and its ethical limits.

1 INTRODUCTION

Carl von Clausewitz's best-known aphorism is that war is the continuation of policy by other means: Force serves political aims and remains subordinate to them. The question's wording ('diplomacy') captures the same idea that war and politics are linked.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Where the idea holds today

- States still use force to pursue political goals and then return to negotiation, as in the Russia-Ukraine war since 2022 and conflicts in West Asia.
- Coercion now extends to sanctions, cyber attacks, energy cut-offs and

information warfare, which blur war and diplomacy.

Where it falls short

- Nuclear weapons make total war irrational; deterrence, not use, is their role.
- Non-State actors and terrorism do not fit a model of rational state policy.
- International law (the UN Charter's ban on the use of force, international humanitarian law) treats war as a failure, not a normal tool.

Ethical view

- Just war ideas require a just cause, last resort, proportionality and protection of civilians; seeing war as routine policy can lower the threshold for violence.
- India's stated position, repeated on 12 May 2025, is that this is not an era of war, but it is not an era of terrorism either: Dialogue first, with firmness against terror.

3 CONCLUSION

Clausewitz explains why states fight, but not whether they should. In a nuclear and interdependent world, ethics and law push war back towards being the last resort.

Sources : [Carl von Clausewitz \(Wikipedia\)](#); [PIB: Prime Minister addresses the nation \(12 May 2025\)](#)

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q2(b). Keeping the national security in mind, examine the ethical dilemmas related to controversies over environmental clearance of development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas in the country.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Examine Probe the issue in depth: Causes, evidence and consequences.

Tip for this question: Name the competing values (security, ecology, transparency) and propose safeguards, not a choice of one.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Examine the ethical dilemmas that arise when development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas need environmental clearance, with national security as a key consideration.

1 INTRODUCTION

Roads, tunnels, airfields and other infrastructure in the Himalaya and island territories serve defence and connectivity, but these areas are also fragile and biodiverse. In 2023 the forest conservation law was amended to exempt strategic projects concerning national security within 100 km of the international borders, the Line of Actual Control and the Line of Control.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

The ethical dilemmas

- National security against ecological integrity: Speed of construction against landslides, glacier and river damage and habitat loss.
- Utilitarian benefit to the nation against harm to local communities and future generations (intergenerational equity).
- Secrecy against transparency: Security can limit public consultation and scrutiny of environmental impact.
- Rule of law: Exemptions can be seen as bypassing safeguards that apply to everyone else.

Balancing the claims

- Security is a legitimate public good, but sustainable design (slope stabilisation, tunnels instead of cuts, waste disposal) reduces harm.
- Independent expert review, even if confidential, and monitoring after construction.
- Involving local communities and compensating losses.

3 CONCLUSION

National security and environmental protection both serve the nation's long-term interest. Ethical governance seeks

the least harmful way to build what security truly requires.

Sources : PIB: Lok Sabha passes the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill 2023

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q3(a). Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context? "Those who in trouble untroubled are, Will trouble trouble itself." – Thiruvalluvar

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Explain the quote in one line, then give a civil-service example of calm in a crisis.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain what Thiruvalluvar's line, that those who remain untroubled in trouble will trouble trouble itself, conveys today.

1 INTRODUCTION

The couplet from the Tirukkural says that a calm mind defeats adversity: Equanimity in difficulty turns the tables on the difficulty.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

What it conveys

- Resilience and emotional stability: Staying composed allows clear thinking when crises strike.
- Courage and optimism: Problems lose their power over those who face them calmly.

In the present context

- For a civil servant handling a disaster or a law-and-order crisis, calm leadership steadies the whole team and the public.
- For students and workers under pressure, equanimity guards against anxiety and burnout.
- Emotional intelligence, the ability to manage one's own emotions, is now seen as central to leadership.

3 CONCLUSION

Thiruvalluvar's lesson is that composure is a strength, not indifference. It remains a core value for anyone who must act under pressure.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q3(b). Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context? "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes." – William James

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Pair the idea of attitude with one public example and one personal example.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain what William James means by saying that a person can change their life by changing their attitudes, and its relevance today.

1 INTRODUCTION

The psychologist William James saw attitude, the way we interpret and respond to events, as within our control. Changing it changes behaviour, and behaviour shapes outcomes.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

What it conveys

- Agency: People are not prisoners of circumstance; outlook shapes effort and persistence.
- Growth mindset: Seeing failure as learning rather than defeat.

In the present context

- Public service: A service-oriented, citizen-first attitude transforms how schemes reach people.
- Social change: Campaigns such as Swachh Bharat show that changed attitudes change public behaviour.
- Personal well-being: Gratitude and optimism improve mental health and

relationships.

A caution

- Attitude matters, but structural barriers such as poverty and discrimination also need policy, not only personal effort.

3 CONCLUSION

Attitude is the lever an individual always holds. Changing it is often the first step to changing one's life and one's institution.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q3(c). Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context? "The strength of a society is not in its laws, but in the morality of its people." – Swami Vivekananda

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Agree, but add that laws remain needed to protect the weak.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Explain Swami Vivekananda's view that a society's strength lies in the morality of its people rather than in its laws, and its relevance today.

1 INTRODUCTION

Laws set rules and penalties, but they work only when most people obey them willingly. Vivekananda's point is that character, not compulsion, holds a society together.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

What it conveys

- Laws are external controls; morality is internal and works even when no one is watching.
- Too many laws with weak morality breed evasion and corruption.

In the present context

- Strong anti-corruption laws exist, yet integrity in public life depends on individual conduct.

- Social reform (against dowry or untouchability) succeeds when attitudes change, not only when laws are passed.
- Civic sense, honesty in tax, and respect for others' rights reduce the need for enforcement.

Balance

- Laws remain necessary to protect the weak and set standards; ideally they codify the community's morality.

3 CONCLUSION

Laws are the frame, but morality is the foundation. Building character through education and example is the surest way to a strong society.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q4(a). "For any kind of social re-engineering by successfully implementing welfare schemes, a civil servant must use reason and critical thinking in an ethical framework." Justify this statement with suitable examples.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Justify Give reasons and evidence that support the position asked for.

Tip for this question: Give one example where reason fixed a scheme and one where ethics prevented exclusion.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Justify, with examples, why a civil servant needs reason and critical thinking within an ethical framework to bring about social change through welfare schemes.

1 INTRODUCTION

Welfare schemes aim to change social conditions: Health, education, sanitation, gender roles. Good intentions are not enough; schemes succeed when officials think critically about design and delivery and keep ethical aims in view.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Why reason and critical thinking

- To identify the right beneficiaries and causes of failure using data, not assumptions.
- To adapt schemes to local conditions and spot unintended effects (exclusion errors, leakages).
- Example: Using evidence on why households did not use toilets led to behaviour-change campaigns, not just construction.

Why an ethical framework

- Reason without ethics can treat people as numbers; ethics keeps dignity, fairness and compassion central.
- Example: Insisting on biometric authentication without fallbacks can exclude the elderly and disabled; ethical judgement provides alternatives.

How the two combine

- Evidence-based targeting, transparency (social audits), grievance redress and empathy towards the marginalised.

3 CONCLUSION

Social re-engineering needs both a clear head and a good heart. Reasoned, ethical administration turns schemes into real change.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q4(b). What are the major teachings of Mahavir? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Explain Say what it is and why or how it happens, step by step.

Tip for this question: List the five vows and anekantavada, then give each a present-day use.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

State the main teachings of Mahavira and explain their relevance in today's world.

1 INTRODUCTION

Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, taught that liberation comes through right conduct and self-discipline.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Major teachings

- Five vows: Ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (chastity) and aparigraha (non-attachment).
- Anekantavada, the doctrine of many-sidedness: Reality is complex and every view captures only part of the truth.
- Right faith, right knowledge and right conduct as the path to liberation.

Relevance today

- Ahimsa: Non-violence in conflict resolution, compassion for animals and the environment.
- Aparigraha: Limiting possessions counters consumerism and supports sustainable living.
- Anekantavada: Tolerance and dialogue in a polarised world; seeing an issue from many sides.
- Satya and asteya: Honesty and integrity in public life and business.

3 CONCLUSION

Mahavira's ethics of restraint, truth and many-sided thinking speak directly to today's conflicts, consumerism and intolerance.

Sources : [Mahavira \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Anekantavada \(Wikipedia\)](#)

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q5(a). "One who is devoted to one's duty attains highest perfection in life." Analyse this statement with reference to sense of responsibility and personal fulfilment as a civil servant.

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Analyse Break the topic into its parts and explain how they connect.

Tip for this question: Link duty to responsibility and to fulfilment, and add the caution against blind obedience.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Analyse the idea that devotion to one's duty leads to the highest perfection, with reference to a civil servant's sense of responsibility and personal fulfilment.

1 INTRODUCTION

The thought echoes the Bhagavad Gita's teaching that a person attains perfection by being devoted to one's own duty, performed without attachment to its fruits (nishkama karma).

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Duty and responsibility

- A civil servant's duty is defined by law and the Constitution; devotion means doing it fully, fairly and on time, even when unseen.
- Responsibility includes owning outcomes, not just following procedure.

Duty and personal fulfilment

- Meaning comes from service: Seeing a scheme reach a family or a crisis handled well gives deep satisfaction.
- Detachment from rewards and recognition reduces frustration and temptation.

Cautions

- Devotion to duty must stay within ethics; blind obedience to illegal orders is not duty.
- Balance with family and health prevents burnout.

3 CONCLUSION

For a civil servant, duty done with devotion and integrity is both public service and personal fulfilment. The two are not opposed but grow together.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q5(b).To achieve holistic development goal, a civil servant acts as an enabler and active facilitator of growth rather than a regulator. What specific measures will you suggest to achieve this goal?

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Suggest End with practical, specific measures, not general wishes.

Tip for this question: Give specific, practical measures (single window, outreach, partnerships), not general virtues.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Suggest specific measures by which a civil servant can act as an enabler and facilitator of holistic development rather than as a regulator.

1 INTRODUCTION

Holistic development covers economic growth, social inclusion and environmental care. The old model of the civil servant as gatekeeper and controller is giving way to that of a facilitator who removes obstacles and builds capacity.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Specific measures

- Simplify: Single-window clearances, self-certification and time-bound services.
- Use technology: Online services, dashboards and data-driven monitoring.
- Partner: Work with self-help groups, NGOs, entrepreneurs and local bodies; convergence of schemes.
- Listen: Regular public hearings, grievance redress and feedback loops.
- Build capacity: Training for local officials, start-up and MSME support, skill programmes.
- Be proactive: Reach out to excluded groups rather than wait for applications.

Values needed

- Empathy, accountability, openness to new ideas and integrity, so facilitation does not become favouritism.

3 CONCLUSION

An enabling civil servant measures success by what citizens and enterprises can achieve, not by permissions granted or withheld.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q6(a).It is said that for an ethical work culture, there must be code of ethics in place in every organisation. To ensure value-based and compliance-based work culture, what suitable measures would you adopt in your work place?

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Separate compliance measures from value measures; examiners look for both.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Describe the measures you would adopt in your workplace to build both a value-based and a compliance-based ethical work culture, with a code of ethics at the centre.

1 INTRODUCTION

A code of conduct lists what is forbidden; a code of ethics states the values an organisation stands for. An ethical culture needs both: Rules that are enforced and values that are lived.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Compliance-based measures

- Clear written rules, a code of conduct and procedures for conflicts of interest, gifts and procurement.
- Regular audits, vigilance and consequences for violations applied without favour.
- Protected channels for reporting misconduct.

Value-based measures

- A code of ethics drafted with staff participation so values are owned.
- Leaders who model integrity; recognising ethical conduct, not only output.
- Training through real dilemmas and case discussions.
- Open, respectful communication and fair treatment that builds trust.

3 CONCLUSION

Compliance sets the floor and values raise the ceiling. A workplace that combines firm rules with shared values sustains ethical behaviour even under pressure.

GS IV · CONCEPTS AND THINKERS

Q6(b). India is an emerging economic power of the world as it has recently secured the status of fourth largest economy of the world as per IMF projection. However, it has been observed that in some sectors, allocated funds remain either under-utilised or misutilised. What specific measures would you recommend for ensuring accountability in this regard to stop leakages and gaining the status of third largest economy of the world in near future?

10 marks · 150 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Use concrete tools (outcome budgets, PFMS, DBT, social audit) and end on stewardship of public money.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Recommend specific measures to ensure accountability for under-utilised and misused funds in some sectors, to stop leakages as India aims to become the world's third largest economy.

1 INTRODUCTION

The question notes India's rise to fourth place among economies in IMF

projections. Growth depends not only on how much is spent but on how well: Unspent or misused funds delay development and erode trust.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

Causes of under-utilisation and misuse

- Poor planning, delayed releases and year-end rush to spend; weak monitoring; corruption and collusion.

Measures for accountability

- Outcome budgeting: Link funds to measurable results, not only expenditure.
- Just-in-time release of funds and real-time tracking through the Public Financial Management System.
- Direct Benefit Transfer to cut intermediaries.
- Social audits, third-party evaluation and geo-tagged evidence of works.
- Fix responsibility: Time-bound action on audit findings and on officials responsible for lapses.
- Transparency: Publish budgets, releases and progress online for public scrutiny.

Ethical dimension

- Public money is held in trust; stewardship and integrity must be valued alongside speed.

3 CONCLUSION

Plugging leakages is as important as raising spending. Accountable use of public funds is what turns economic size into development.

GS IV · CASE STUDIES

Q7. Vijay was Deputy Commissioner of remote district of Hilly Northern State of the country for the last two years. In the month of August heavy rains lashed the complete state followed by cloud burst in the upper reaches of the said district. The damage was very heavy in the complete state especially in the affected district. The complete road network and telecommunication were disrupted and the buildings were damaged extensively. People's houses have been destroyed and they were forced to stay in open. More than 200 people have been killed and about 5000 were badly injured. The Civil Administration under Vijay got activated and started conducting rescue and relief operations. Temporary shelter camps and hospitals were established to provide shelter and medical facilities to the homeless and injured people. Helicopter services were pressed in, for evacuating sick and old people from remote areas. Vijay got a message from his hometown in Kerala that his mother was seriously sick. After two days Vijay received the unfortunate message that his mother has expired. Vijay has no close relative except one elder sister who was US citizen and staying there for last several years. In the meantime, the situation in the affected district deteriorated further due to resumption of heavy rains after a gap of five days. At the same time, continuous messages were coming on his mobile from his hometown to reach at the earliest for performing last rites of his mother.

- (a) What are the options available with Vijay?

- (b) What are the ethical dilemma being faced by Vijay?
- (c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Vijay.
- (d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why?

20 marks · 250 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Critically evaluate Weigh merits and demerits, then state your verdict and why.

Your view Take a clear position in the first line, then support it.

Tip for this question: Answer each part (a) to (d) under its own label; recommend a planned short absence with handover.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Case: A Deputy Commissioner leading disaster relief learns his mother has died far away; identify his options and dilemmas, evaluate each option and recommend the most appropriate one.

1 INTRODUCTION

Vijay heads the district's response to a cloudburst that has killed over 200 people, while his family duty calls him to perform his mother's last rites. As Deputy Commissioner he also chairs the District Disaster Management Authority, which places the district's response on him.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

(a) Options

- Leave at once for the last rites and hand over charge.
- Stay until the situation stabilises and skip or delay the last rites.
- Hand over operations to a competent officer with clear instructions, travel briefly for the rites, stay connected, and return quickly.
- Ask a relative or community member to perform the rites, and hold a memorial later.

(b) Ethical dilemmas

- Duty to the public against duty to family; professional responsibility against personal grief.
- Leadership presence at a critical time against the human need to mourn.

(c) Evaluation of options

- Leaving at once honours family duty but could weaken coordination when rains resume.
- Staying throughout puts public duty first but ignores his emotional needs and cultural obligations, and can affect judgement.
- A structured handover keeps the response running and respects his duty to his mother; it depends on a capable deputy and connectivity.
- Rites by others relieve the conflict but may leave lasting personal regret.

(d) Most appropriate option

- First stabilise the immediate response, brief the senior-most officer and inform the State government; then take short leave for the last rites, stay reachable, and return as soon as possible. This balances public duty with compassion for himself, and shows that institutions, not one individual, carry the response.

3 CONCLUSION

Good administrators build teams that can carry on in their absence. Vijay can serve both his district and his mother by planning his short absence responsibly.

Sources : [Disaster Management Act, 2005](#)
([Wikipedia](#))

GS IV · CASE STUDIES

- Q8. In line with the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the government has a constitutional obligation to ensure basic needs – "Roti, Kapda aur Makan (Food, Clothes and Shelter)" – for the under-privileged. Pursuing this mandate, the district administration proposed clearing a portion of forest land to develop housing for the homeless and economically weaker sections of the society. The proposed land, however, is an ecologically sensitive zone densely populated with age-old trees, medicinal plants and vital biodiversity. Besides, these forests help to regulate micro-climate and rainfalls; provide habitat for wildlife, support soil fertility and prevent land/soil erosion and sustain livelihoods of tribal and nomadic communities. In spite of the ecological and social costs, the administration argues in favour of the said proposal by highlighting that this very initiative addresses fundamental human rights as a critical welfare priority. Besides, it fulfils the government's duty to uplift and empower the poor through inclusive housing development. Further, these forest areas have become unsafe due to wild-animal threats and recurring human-wild life conflicts. Lastly, clearing forest-zones may help to curb anti-social elements allegedly using these areas as hideouts, thereby enhancing law and order.**
- (a) Can deforestation be ethically justified in the pursuit of social welfare objectives like, housing for the homeless?
 - (b) What are the socio-economic, administrative and ethical challenges in balancing

environmental conservation with human development?

- (c) What substantial alternatives or policy interventions can be proposed to ensure that both environmental integrity and human dignity are protected?

20 marks · 250 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Accept the goal, reject the means, and give alternatives that protect both housing and forest.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Case: A district plans to clear ecologically sensitive forest to build housing for the homeless; judge whether this can be ethically justified, identify the challenges in balancing conservation with development, and propose alternatives that protect both.

1 INTRODUCTION

The administration's aim, shelter for the poor, is a constitutional and moral duty. The chosen means, clearing a biodiverse forest that supports climate, soil and tribal livelihoods, imposes heavy costs on others and on the future.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

(a) Can deforestation be justified?

- Utilitarian view: Housing benefits are real, but the forest's services (rainfall, soil, biodiversity, livelihoods) affect many more people over a longer time.
- Rights view: The homeless have a right to shelter, but tribal and forest communities also have rights over the forest, including under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- Intergenerational justice: Old-growth forest cannot be replaced in a lifetime.
- Conclusion: Clearing such a forest is not justified when alternative sites exist; the goal is right, the means are not.

(b) Challenges

- Socio-economic: Scarcity of urban land, cost of alternatives, and livelihood loss for forest dwellers.

- Administrative: Coordinating housing, forest and revenue departments; forest clearance rules; pressure to show quick results.
- Ethical: Pitting one vulnerable group against another; using law-and-order and wildlife conflict as arguments for clearance.

(c) Alternatives and policy interventions

- Use degraded, government or vacant urban land; vertical and affordable rental housing; in-situ slum upgrading.
- Manage human-wildlife conflict through barriers and early warning, and anti-social activity through policing, not clearing.
- Involve gram sabhas and forest communities; if any diversion is unavoidable, follow due process and ensure compensatory afforestation.

3 CONCLUSION

Human dignity and environmental integrity are not opposites. A careful choice of land and design can house the poor without destroying the forest that sustains them and others.

Sources : [Forest Rights Act \(India\)](#) (Wikipedia)

GS IV · CASE STUDIES

Q9. Subash is Secretary, PWD in the State Government. He is a senior officer, known for his competence, integrity and dedication to work. He enjoys the trust and confidence of Minister Incharge of PWD and Programme Implementation. As a part of his job profile, he is responsible for policy formulation, execution of projects relating to infrastructure initiatives in the State. Besides, he oversees the technical and administrative aspects relating to planning, designing and construction etc. Subash's Minister is an important Minister in the state and significant growth in urban infrastructure development and road network has been registered during his tenure. He is very keen for launching of ambitious road construction project in the near future. Subash is in regular touch with the Minister and is working various modalities of road construction project. Regular meetings, interactions and presentations are made by him to the Minister before a formal public announcement of the project is made by the Minister. Subash's only son Vikas is in real estate business. His son from his own sources is aware that a mega road project is on the anvil and announcement in this regard is expected anytime. He is very keen to know from his father the exact location of the upcoming project. He knows that there would be quantum jump in the prices of land in the vicinity. Buying land at this stage at cheaper prices would pay him rich dividends. He is pleading with him (his father) day in and day out to share him location of the proposed project. He assured him that he would handle the matter

discretely as it would not attract any adverse notice as he in the normal course, keeps on buying land as a part of his business. He feels pressurised because of constant pleadings by his son. Another significant aspect of the matter pertained to the extra/undue interest in the above project by the Minister PWD. His nephew was also having big infrastructure project company. In fact, the Minister has also introduced his nephew to him and indicated to him to take care of his nephew's business interest in the forthcoming project. The Minister encouraged him to act fast in the matter as early announcement and execution of mega road project would enhance his status in the party and public life. In the above backdrop, Subash is in a fix as to the future course of action.

- (a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case.
- (b) Critically examine the options available to Subash in the above situation.
- (c) Which of the above would be most appropriate and why?

20 marks · 250 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Discuss Cover the main aspects, with arguments on more than one side.

Critically examine Look at both sides with evidence, then give a reasoned judgement.

Tip for this question: Name the issues (conflict of interest, insider information, nepotism) before weighing options.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Case: A PWD Secretary is pressed by his son for inside information on a road project and by his Minister to favour the Minister's nephew; discuss the ethical issues, examine his options, and choose the most appropriate.

1 INTRODUCTION

Subash holds confidential information about a mega road project. Both his son

and his Minister want to use that information or his office for private gain.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

(a) Ethical issues

- Conflict of interest and misuse of confidential information (insider dealing in land).
- Nepotism and favouritism in award of contracts.
- Integrity and impartiality against loyalty to family and to a powerful Minister.
- Public trust in fair procurement and land markets.

(b) Options

- Share the location with his son: Personal gain, a breach of trust and possibly a criminal offence; unacceptable.
- Help the Minister's nephew: Corrupt favouritism and a violation of procurement rules; unacceptable.
- Refuse both quietly: Ethical, but may leave the Minister's pressure unchecked.
- Refuse both, record the Minister's oral instruction, follow transparent competitive bidding, and if pressure continues, inform the Chief Secretary or seek a transfer: Ethical and protective, though it may cost him the Minister's goodwill.

(c) Most appropriate option

- The last: Firmly decline his son and explain why; insist on a fair, transparent tender open to all; put instructions in writing and escalate if pressured. Integrity and neutrality are non-negotiable for a civil servant.

3 CONCLUSION

Subash's competence is valuable only because of his integrity. Protecting confidential information and fair competition protects both the public interest and his own conscience.

GS IV · CASE STUDIES

Q10. Rajesh is a Group A officer with nine years of service. He is posted as Administrative Officer in an Oil Public Sector undertaking. As an Administrative Officer he is responsible for managing and coordinating various administrative tasks to ensure smooth functioning of office. He also manages office supplies, equipment etc. Rajesh is now sufficient senior and is expecting his next promotion in JAG (Junior Administrative Grade) in the next one or two years. He knows that promotion is based on examination of ACRs/Performance Appraisal of last few years (5 years or so) of an officer by a DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) and an officer lacking requisite grading of ACRs may not be found fit for promotion. Consequences of losing promotion may entail financial and reputational loss and set-back for career progression. Though he also puts his best efforts in official discharge of his duties, yet he is unsure of assessment by his superior officer. He is now putting extra efforts so that he gets thumping report at the end of financial year. As Administrative Officer, Rajesh is regularly interacting with his immediate boss, who is his reporting officer for writing his ACR. One day he calls Rajesh and wants him to buy computer-related stationery on priority from a particular vendor. Rajesh instructs his office to initiate action for procuring these items. During the day, the dealing Assistant brings an estimate of Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs covering all stationery items from the same vendor. It is noticed that as per delegated financial powers, as provided in the GFR (General

Financial Rules) as applicable in that Organisation, expenditure for office items exceeding Rupees Thirty Lakhs requires sanction of the next higher authority (boss in the present case). Rajesh knows that immediate superior would expect all these purchases should be done at his level and may not appreciate such lack of initiative on his part. During discussions with office, he learns that common practice of splitting of expenditure (where large order is divided into a series of smaller ones) is followed to avoid obtaining sanction from higher authority. This practice is against the rules and may come to the adverse notice of Audit. Rajesh is perturbed. He is unsure of taking decision in the matter.

- (a) What are the options available with Rajesh in the above situation?
- (b) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
- (c) Which would be the most appropriate option for Rajesh and why?

20 marks · 250 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Tip for this question: Cite Rule 157 of the GFR against splitting orders; it settles the legal side at once.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Case: An officer awaiting promotion is asked by his reporting officer to buy stationery from a favoured vendor, and staff suggest splitting a ₹35 lakh order to avoid higher sanction; list his options and the ethical issues, and recommend the right course.

1 INTRODUCTION

The order exceeds the ₹30 lakh limit of Rajesh's delegated powers, so it needs the next higher authority's sanction. Splitting it would breach the General Financial Rules, which forbid dividing a demand into small purchases to avoid the sanction of higher authority.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

(a) Options

- Split the order to avoid seeking sanction and please the boss.
- Place the full order at his level, ignoring the limit.
- Refer the full proposal to the competent authority for sanction, with a note on the delegated limit and proper procurement procedure (competitive bids rather than a single named vendor).
- Delay or avoid the decision.

(b) Ethical issues

- Integrity and rule of law against career self-interest (ACR and promotion).
- Possible favouritism to a vendor and loss to public money.
- Courage to say no to a superior; the 'common practice' of splitting is no defence.

(c) Most appropriate option

- Refer the full ₹35 lakh demand for sanction under the rules, recommend open competitive procurement, and politely explain to his boss that this protects both of them from audit objections. Short-term displeasure is better than a record of irregularity.

3 CONCLUSION

A civil servant's long-term reputation rests on integrity, not on pleasing a superior. Following the rules here is also the safest path for Rajesh's career.

Sources : Department of Expenditure: General Financial Rules, 2017 (updated up to 31 January 2026), Rule 157

GS IV · CASE STUDIES

Q11. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, MGNREGA was earlier known as National Rural Employment Scheme, NREGA. It is an Indian Social Welfare Program that aimed at fulfilling the 'Right to Work' provisions made in the Constitution. MGNREGA was launched in 2006 under Rural Employment Sector by the Ministry of Rural Development. Main objective of the program is to give legal guarantee of wage employment to the adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour work subject to a maximum of 100 days per year for every household. Every rural household has the right to register under the scheme, job card is issued to the registered, Job Card holder can seek employment; State Government shall pay 25% of minimum wage for the first 30 days as compensatory daily unemployment allowance to the families and of wage for remaining period of the year. MGNREGA work was undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You have been appointed as an Administrator Incharge of the District. You have been given the responsibility of monitoring MGNREGA work undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You are also given the authority to give technical sanctions to all MGNREGA works. In one of the Panchayats in your jurisdiction, you notice that your predecessor has mismanaged the Program in terms of: (i) Money not disbursed to actual job-seekers. (ii) Muster Rolls of the Labourers not properly maintained. (iii) Mismatch between the work done and payments made. (iv) Payments

made to fictitious persons. (v) Job Cards were given without looking into the need of person. (vi) Mismanagement of funds and to the extent of siphoning of funds. (vii) Approved works that never existed.

- (a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how do you restore the proper functioning of MGNREGA Program in this regard?
- (b) What actions would you initiate to solve the various issues listed above?
- (c) How would you deal with the above situation?

20 marks · 250 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Your view Take a clear position in the first line, then support it.

Tip for this question: Note that VB-G RAM G replaced MGNREGA from 1 July 2026, then match each irregularity to a remedy.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Case: As district administrator you find serious mismanagement of the rural employment guarantee in a panchayat (fake beneficiaries, missing works, siphoned funds); state your response, the actions on each problem, and how you would handle the situation.

1 INTRODUCTION

The case describes MGNREGA. Note that from 1 July 2026 the VB-G RAM G Act replaced it with a guarantee of 125 days of wage employment, but the problems and remedies described carry over to the new scheme.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

(a) Reaction and restoring the programme

- Treat it as a violation of workers' legal right to work and a misuse of public funds; act firmly but fairly.
- Order an immediate verification of job cards, muster rolls and works, and suspend payments to doubtful entries.

(b) Actions on each problem

- Payments not reaching workers and fictitious persons: Direct transfer to verified bank accounts linked to identity, and deletion of fake job cards.
- Muster rolls and mismatch between work and payment: Digital muster rolls, measurement by technical staff and geo-tagged photographs of works.
- Non-existent works and siphoning: Physical inspection, recovery of funds and criminal cases where warranted.
- Job cards without need: Re-verification through gram sabhas.

(c) Handling the situation

- Social audit through the gram sabha, a statutory feature of the scheme, to bring facts into the open.
- Fix responsibility on officials and intermediaries, including the predecessor's team, through due process.
- Strengthen grievance redress, publish work and payment details, and train panchayat staff.

3 CONCLUSION

A rights-based programme fails when its records are false. Transparency, social audit and swift accountability can restore both the programme and the people's trust.

Sources : PIB: VB-G RAM G Act to come into force from July 1, 2026; Social audit (Wikipedia)

GS IV · CASE STUDIES

Q12. Ashok is Divisional Commissioner of one of the border districts of the North East State. A few years back, Military has taken over the neighbouring country after overthrowing the elected civil government. Civil war situation is prevailing in the country especially in last two years. However, internal situation further deteriorated due to rebel groups taking over control of certain populated areas near own border. Due to intense fight between military and rebel groups, civilian casualties has increased manifold in recent past. In the meantime, in one night Ashok got information from the local police guarding the border check post that there are about 200-250 people mainly women and children trying to cross over to our side of the border. There are also about 10 soldiers with their weapons in military uniform part of this group who wants to cross over. Women and Children are also crying and begging for help. A few of them are injured and bleeding profusely need immediate medical care. Ashok tried to contact Home Secretary of the State but failed to do so due to poor connectivity mainly due to inclement weather.

- (a) What are the options available with Ashok to cope with the situation?
- (b) What are the ethical and legal dilemmas being faced by Ashok?
- (c) Which of the options, do you think would be more appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?
- (d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the Border Guarding Police in dealing with soldiers in uniform?

20 marks · 250 words · 9 min 13 s

HOW TO WRITE IT

Your view Take a clear position in the first line, then support it.

Tip for this question: Save lives first under security control; disarm and segregate the soldiers; report up the chain.

WHAT THE QUESTION ASKS

Case: Civilians, including injured women and children and about 10 armed soldiers, seek to cross into India from a neighbouring country in civil war; list Ashok's options, his ethical and legal dilemmas, the best course, and precautions for handling the soldiers.

1 INTRODUCTION

Ashok faces a humanitarian emergency at night with no contact with the State capital. India is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, but the principle of non-refoulement, not returning people to danger, is widely seen as customary international law.

2 BODY: POINTS TO COVER

(a) Options

- Refuse entry to everyone and secure the border.
- Allow everyone in without checks.
- Admit women, children and the injured for immediate medical care and shelter under supervision, while separating and disarming the soldiers, and report to the State and Union governments as soon as possible.

(b) Ethical and legal dilemmas

- Compassion and the right to life against border security and national interest.
- Acting without orders against the duty to act in an emergency.
- India's lack of a refugee law and the end of the Free Movement Regime on the Myanmar border in 2024, against humanitarian obligations.
- Treatment of armed foreign soldiers: Security risk and diplomatic implications.

(c) Most appropriate option

- The third: Save lives first, as the Constitution's protection of life and dignity and humanitarian norms demand, under strict security control; document everyone, and seek orders from the government at the earliest. This balances humanity with security.

(d) Precautions with soldiers

- Disarm them and keep weapons in safe custody; separate them from civilians; verify identity and record statements; inform the army, intelligence agencies and the Ministry of External Affairs; treat them humanely and avoid any public statement that could become a diplomatic issue.

3 CONCLUSION

Ashok can uphold both humanity and security by acting quickly, carefully and on record. Saving the injured now and seeking policy direction next is the ethical course.

Sources : [Refugees in India \(Wikipedia\)](#); [Non-refoulement \(Wikipedia\)](#); [PIB: MHA decides to scrap the Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar](#)