

Questions of UPSC Mains 2025 GS 1 Paper

1. Discuss the salient features of the Harappan architecture. (Answer in 150 words) 10
2. Examine the main aspects of Akbar's religious syncretism. (Answer in 150 words) 10
3. 'The sculptors filled the Chandella artform with resilient vigor and breadth of life.' Elucidate. (Answer in 150 words) 10
4. How are climate change and the sea level rise affecting the very existence of many island nations? Discuss with examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10
5. What are non-farm primary activities? How are these activities related to physiographic features in India? Discuss with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10
6. Explain briefly the ecological and economic benefits of solar energy generation in India with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10
7. What are Tsunamis? How and where are they formed? What are their consequences? Explain with examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10
8. How does smart city in India, address the issues of urban poverty and distributive justice? (Answer in 150 words) 10
9. The ethos of civil service in India stand for the combination of professionalism with nationalistic consciousness – Elucidate. (Answer in 150 words) 10
10. Do you think that globalization results in only an aggressive consumer culture? Justify your answer. (Answer in 150 words) 10
11. Mahatma Jotirao Phule's writings and efforts of social reforms touched issues of almost all subaltern classes. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words) 15
12. Trace India's consolidation process during early phase of independence in terms of polity, economy, education and international relations. (Answer in 250 words) 15
13. The French Revolution has enduring relevance to the contemporary world. Explain. (Answer in 250 words) 15
14. 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? (Answer in 250 words) 15
15. How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) and drones be effectively used along with GIS and RS techniques in locational and areal planning? (Answer in 250 words) 15
16. 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. (Answer in 250 words) 15
17. Discuss the distribution and density of population in the Ganga River Basin with special reference to land, soil and water resources. (Answer in 250 words) 15
18. 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. (Answer in 250 words) 15
19. Achieving sustainable growth with emphasis on environmental protection could come into conflict with poor people's needs in a country like India – Comment. (Answer in 250 words) 15
20. Does tribal development in India centre around two axes, those of displacement and of rehabilitation? Give your opinion. (Answer in 250 words) 15

Questions of UPSC Mains 2025 GS 2 Paper

1. 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.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
2. 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.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
3. 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 'pre-emptive pardons'?
(Answer in 150 words) 10
4. 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.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
5. "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.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
6. Women's social capital complements in advancing empowerment and gender equity. Explain.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
7. e-governance projects have a built-in bias towards technology and back-end integration than user-centric designs. Examine.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
8. Civil Society Organizations are often perceived as being anti-State actors than non-State actors. Do you agree? Justify.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
9. India-Africa digital partnership is achieving mutual respect, co-development and long-term institutional partnerships. Elaborate.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
10. "With the waning of globalization, post-Cold War world is becoming a site of sovereign nationalism." Elucidate.
(Answer in 150 words) 10
11. "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.
(Answer in 250 words) 15
12. 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.
(Answer in 250 words) 15

13. 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.
(Answer in 250 words) 15
14. 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?
(Answer in 250 words) 15
15. What are environmental pressure groups? Discuss their role in raising awareness, influencing policies and advocating for environmental protection in India.
(Answer in 250 words) 15
16. Inequality in the ownership pattern of resources is one of the major causes of poverty. Discuss in the context of 'paradox of poverty'.
(Answer in 250 words) 15
17. "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.
(Answer in 250 words) 15
18. 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.
(Answer in 250 words) 15
19. "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?
(Answer in 250 words) 15
20. "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.
(Answer in 250 words) 15



Questions of UPSC Mains 2025 GS 3 Paper

- 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? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- 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? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- Q3.** Explain the factors influencing the decision of the farmers on the selection of high value crops in India. *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- Q4.** Elaborate the scope and significance of supply chain management of agricultural commodities in India. *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- 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? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- Q6.** How can India achieve energy independence through clean technology by 2047? How can biotechnology play a crucial role in this endeavour? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- Q7.** What is Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS)? What is the potential role of CCUS in tackling climate change? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- 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? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- 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. *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- 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? *(Answer in 150 words)* 10
- 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? *(Answer in 250 words)* 15
- 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? *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

Q13. Examine the factors responsible for depleting groundwater in India. What are the steps taken by the government to mitigate such depletion of groundwater? *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

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. *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

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? *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

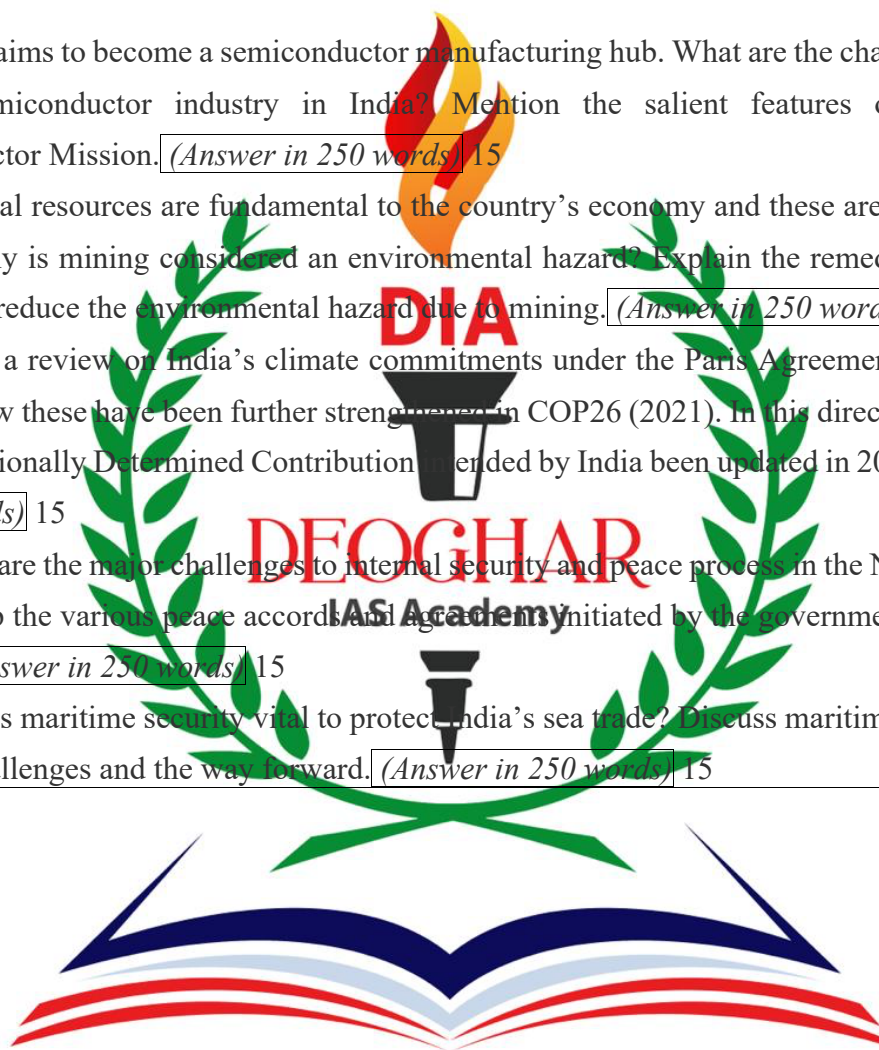
Q16. India aims to become a semiconductor manufacturing hub. What are the challenges faced by the semiconductor industry in India? Mention the salient features of the India Semiconductor Mission. *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

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. *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

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 pledged by India been updated in 2022? *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

Q19. What are the major challenges to internal security and peace process in the North-Eastern States? Map the various peace accord and agreements initiated by the government in the past decade. *(Answer in 250 words)* 15

Q20. Why is maritime security vital to protect India's sea trade? Discuss maritime and coastal security challenges and the way forward. *(Answer in 250 words)* 15



Questions of UPSC Mains 2025 GS 4 Paper

SECTION 'A'

1(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. (Answer in 150 words) 10

1(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. (Answer in 150 words) 10

2(a). Carl von Clausewitz once said, "War is a diplomacy by other means." Critically analyse the above statement in the present context of contemporary geo-political conflict. (Answer in 150 words) 10

2(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. (Answer in 150 words) 10

3. Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context?

3(a). "Those who in trouble untroubled are, Will trouble trouble itself." – Thiruvalluvar (Answer in 150 words) 10

3(b). "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes." – William James (Answer in 150 words) 10

3(c). "The strength of a society is not in its laws, but in the morality of its people." – Swami Vivekananda (Answer in 150 words) 10

4(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. (Answer in 150 words) 10

4(b). What are the major teachings of Mahavir? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world. (Answer in 150 words) 10

5(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. (Answer in 150 words) 10

5(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? (Answer in 150 words) 10

6(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? (Answer in 150 words) 10

6(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? (Answer in 150 words)

10

SECTION 'B'

7. Case Study

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? (Answer in 250 words) 20

8. Case Study

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 would provide housing to human rights as a critical welfare priority. Besides it, 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?

(Answer in 250 words) 20

9. Case Study

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 at the proposed location. 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 discreetly 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?

(Answer in 250 words) 20

10. Case Study

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?

(Answer in 250 words) 20

11. Case Study

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?

(Answer in 250 words) 20

12. Case Study

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?

(Answer in 250 words) 20

