

WHERE THIS PAPER CAME FROM

Mains 2026 · General Studies III

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

We are not saying that every question could be completely answered from old UPSC papers or from DAW and the Sherlocking Simulators. That is not possible, and we will not pretend it is.

What we are showing is this: most of this paper came from familiar ground. A student who had gone through past-year questions, read the basic books, and practised answer writing had already met most of what this paper asks, only in different words.

This is why we keep repeating the same four things:

- Past-year questions show you what UPSC likes to ask, and how it asks.
- Basic sources give you the material.
- Answer-writing practice, DAW and the Simulators, trains you to brainstorm and structure an answer within time.
- The last piece is mindset. Go in expecting new words on familiar ground. Do not let a new-looking question shake you.

Where a link is only partial, we have said so on that page. Where a topic was simply new, we have said that too. No link here has been stretched.

Every quoted question is word for word from the actual papers and booklets. Compiled on 23 August 2026.

HOW MUCH OF EACH ANSWER WAS WITHIN REACH

These numbers are rough estimates, not measurements. For each question we asked one thing: a student who studied past-year questions, read the basic sources, and practised with DAW and the Simulators, how much of a full answer could that student build? The rest is execution: turning what you know into a written answer, within time, in the exam hall. That too is a skill, and practice builds it.

We have kept every number conservative, and none goes above 80 percent, because even a familiar question still has to be written well in the exam hall.

QUESTION	TOPIC	WITHIN REACH
Q1	Digital Rupee and CBDC	about 65%
Q2	Financial inclusion and the RBI index	about 80%
Q3	Technology Missions in agriculture	about 70%
Q4	Agri marketing and e-commerce	about 80%
Q5	Biotechnology for perishable crops	about 65%
Q6	Fast Breeder Reactor and criticality	about 75%
Q7	Infrastructure versus disaster risk	about 80%
Q8	Kunming-Montreal biodiversity framework	about 65%
Q9	Fake news and the IT Rules 2021	about 70%
Q10	Ladakh, BADP and Sixth Schedule	about 70%
Q11	Energy security	about 80%
Q12	Startups	about 70%
Q13	Food scarcity to surplus, and diversification	about 80%
Q14	Farm subsidies and the WTO	about 75%
Q15	Mission Drishti satellite	about 35%
Q16	Agentic AI	about 65%
Q17	Solid waste, Delhi and Indore	about 75%
Q18	Community participation in disasters	about 80%
Q19	J&K mainstreaming and Article 370	about 70%
Q20	Terror funding and FATF	about 80%

Q1 · 10 MARKS

What do you mean by Digital Rupee? In this context, explain the working and progress of India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT The Digital Rupee is cash in digital form, issued directly by the RBI. The question asks how it works and how far it has reached.

IN SHORT UPSC keeps asking about digital money. We practised the digital payment system the Digital Rupee sits inside.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2023 “What is the status of digitalization in the Indian economy? Examine the problems faced in this regard and suggest improvements.”

HOW IT CONNECTS Both questions are about money and business going digital in India. The Digital Rupee is the newest step of that same story.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCKIAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q2 “India's Digital Public Infrastructure stack is built around UPI, the Open Network for Digital Commerce and the Account Aggregator framework. How does it drive economic growth and financial inclusion?”

HOW IT CONNECTS UPI moves money between bank accounts. The Digital Rupee is the RBI's own digital cash. Both belong to one digital payment system. Our question covered that system. To finish the 2026 answer, add how the e-rupee works: a wallet from your bank, notes in digital form, and pilot runs going on since 2022.

Q2 · 10 MARKS

Examine the view that financial inclusion is an integral part of social and economic inclusion in a country like India. Also throw light on the usefulness of the R.B.I.'s Financial Inclusion Index.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Financial inclusion means every family can use a bank account, credit and insurance. The question asks why this matters for social equality, and about the RBI index that measures it.

IN SHORT UPSC has asked this before, twice.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2016 *“Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is necessary for bringing unbanked to the institutional finance fold. Do you agree with this for financial inclusion of the poorer section of the Indian society?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same subject: bringing poor families into banking. Jan Dhan is the scheme that did it. The words 'financial inclusion' appear in both questions.

2022 *“Is inclusive growth possible under market economy? State the significance of financial inclusion in achieving economic growth in India.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Asked again: what financial inclusion does for growth. The 2026 question adds only the RBI index.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q2 *“India's Digital Public Infrastructure stack is built around UPI, the Open Network for Digital Commerce and the Account Aggregator framework. How does it drive economic growth and financial inclusion? Examine the systemic risks of market concentration, data misuse and digital exclusion it carries.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question asked the same thing with today's tools: how UPI and digital systems bring people into banking, and who still gets left out. The words 'financial inclusion' are in our question too. The RBI's Financial Inclusion Index is one fact to add: a single number that tracks how many people can reach banking, how much they use it, and how good it is.

Q3 · 10 MARKS

Describe the various Technology Missions initiated in Indian agriculture and examine their role in food security.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Technology Missions are government programmes that use science to raise farm output. Examples: the missions on oilseeds, dairy, horticulture, and now digital farming.

IN SHORT An old UPSC theme in new words.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2017 *“Explain various types of revolutions that took place in agriculture after Independence in India. How have these revolutions helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The 'revolutions', green for wheat and rice, white for milk, blue for fish, are the same story as the missions: science lifting farm output. Both questions end at the same place: food security.

2015 *“How can the Digital India program help farmers improve farm productivity and income? What steps has the government taken in this regard?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same idea: government technology reaching farmers.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q14 *“How can AgriStack, the farmer-data registry, and e-NAM strengthen agricultural marketing and improve price realisation for farmers?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question covered the newest technology mission in farming: digital records of farmers and an online market. The older mission names, oilseeds, dairy, horticulture, come from standard book material.

Q4 · 10 MARKS

Explain the factors responsible for inefficiency of agri-produce marketing. How e-commerce helps to reduce inefficiency of agri-produce marketing? Explain.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Why do farmers get poor prices for what they grow, and can selling online fix it?

IN SHORT UPSC has joined three of its own old questions into one.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2020 “What are the main constraints in transport and marketing of agricultural produce in India?”

HOW IT CONNECTS The first half of the 2026 question, in almost the same words. 'Marketing of agricultural produce' appears in both.

2022 “What are the main bottlenecks in the upstream and downstream process of marketing of agricultural products in India?”

HOW IT CONNECTS The same first half, asked again two years later.

2023 “How does e-Technology help farmers in production and marketing of agricultural produce? Explain it.”

HOW IT CONNECTS The second half of the 2026 question. 'e-Technology' there and 'e-commerce' here mean the same thing: selling farm produce online.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q14 “How can AgriStack, the farmer-data registry, and e-NAM strengthen agricultural marketing and improve price realisation for farmers?”

HOW IT CONNECTS e-NAM, in our question, is the government's own online mandi. Writing about it is writing the e-commerce half of this answer. The problems list, too many middlemen, poor storage, small broken markets, is the standard first half.

Q5 · 10 MARKS

Explain by giving two examples, how biotechnology has helped the Indian farmers in processing their perishable crops.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Perishable crops spoil fast: fruit, vegetables, milk. The question asks how biotechnology helps farmers process and save them, with two examples.

IN SHORT Biotechnology comes on this paper again and again.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2019 *“How can biotechnology help to improve the living standards of farmers?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same question, wider. 2026 narrows it to crops that spoil, and asks for two examples.

2021 *“What are the research and developmental achievements in applied biotechnology? How will these achievements help to uplift the poorer sections of society?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Biotechnology for the poor, asked again.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q4 *“Examine how stronger food processing can cut post-harvest losses, raise farm incomes, and create non-farm manufacturing jobs.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question was about processing farm produce so it does not go waste. That is exactly where this 2026 question lives. 'Post-harvest losses' is the formal name for crops spoiling after harvest.

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q3 *“Discuss the potential of gene-edited crops for food and climate security and the biosafety and intellectual property concerns involved.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The biotechnology side, practised on crops. Two examples for the exam: tomatoes bred to stay firm longer, and enzymes used to make juice and cheese.

Q6 · 10 MARKS

Distinguish between a Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) and a thermal nuclear reactor. In the context of first indigenously developed prototype FBR at Kalpakkam, explain the term 'criticality'. What are its implications for clean energy future of our country?

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT A normal reactor burns uranium. A Fast Breeder Reactor makes more fuel than it burns. India built its own at Kalpakkam. 'Criticality' is the point where the reactor's chain reaction keeps itself going.

IN SHORT UPSC asked about the Fast Breeder Reactor in 2017 itself.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2017 *"Give an account of the growth and development of nuclear science and technology in India. What is the advantage of the fast breeder reactor program in India?"*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same reactor, asked directly. 'Fast breeder reactor' appears in both questions.

2018 *"With growing energy needs, should India keep on expanding its nuclear energy program? Discuss the facts and fears associated with nuclear energy."*

HOW IT CONNECTS The clean-energy half: should India grow nuclear power.

2025 *"The fusion energy programme in India has steadily evolved over the past few decades. Mention India's contributions to the international fusion energy project..."*

HOW IT CONNECTS Last year the same slot went to fusion energy. A nuclear question comes almost every other year.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q16 *"India aims for 100 GW nuclear power by 2047 via private investment and SMRs. Can these scale India's baseload clean energy? Examine the hurdles, including those in the fuel cycle."*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question covered nuclear power as clean energy, and named the fuel cycle as a hurdle. The FBR at Kalpakkam is stage two of that very fuel cycle: India's three-stage plan to stretch its small uranium into its huge thorium.

Q7 · 10 MARKS

Discuss how the contradiction between 'rapid infrastructure development' and 'disaster-risk reduction' in ecologically-sensitive areas of India can be managed, with suitable examples.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Roads, dams and hotels are coming up fast in fragile hills and coasts. Building fast invites disasters. Not building slows growth. The question asks how to manage this clash.

IN SHORT We practised this exact clash.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2021 *“Describe the various causes and effects of landslides. Mention the important components of the National Landslide Risk Management Strategy.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Landslides are what happens when fragile slopes are disturbed by construction. The same ground.

2016 *“With reference to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) guidelines, discuss the measures to be adopted to mitigate the impact of the recent incidents of cloudbursts in many places in Uttarakhand.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same setting: sudden disasters in fragile hills.

2019 *“Disaster preparedness is the first step in any disaster management process. Explain how hazard zonation mapping will help disaster mitigation in the case of landslides.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The main solution for the 2026 answer is here: map the risky zones first, then decide where to build.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q17 *“Cloudbursts and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) increasingly cascade into compound Himalayan disasters as unregulated construction pushes settlements past fragile slopes' carrying capacity. Analyse the causes.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question stated the exam's exact clash: construction pushing beyond what fragile slopes can carry.

DAW 2026 · W3 Mon Q2 *“Large Himalayan hydropower cannot be justified until glacial- lake outburst flood risk is mapped and managed. Critically analyse.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same clash, practised on dams: no big project before the flood risk is mapped. Examples ready for the exam: Joshimath's sinking, the Chardham road, Sikkim's dam flood of 2023.

Q8 · 10 MARKS

Discuss the aim and goals of Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework. Mention India's commitments and initiatives to achieve the goals and targets of this framework giving suitable examples.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT The Kunming-Montreal framework is the world's 2022 agreement to save nature. Its most famous promise: protect 30 percent of the world's land and sea by 2030.

IN SHORT A new name on an old theme.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2018 *“How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 helpful in the conservation of flora and fauna?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Biodiversity and India's law for protecting it, asked directly. 2026 adds the new global agreement on top of the same subject.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q7 *“How can Ramsar wetlands and marine protected areas help India meet its 30x30 conservation target, and how can this be reconciled with a sustainable blue economy? Discuss.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS '30x30' in our question is the flagship target of this very framework: 30 percent protected by 2030. Our question asked how India can reach it, through protected wetlands and marine parks. Those are the India examples the 2026 question wants.

DAW 2026 · W3 Wed Q4 *“India counts a monoculture plantation and an old-growth forest in the same tree-cover figure, even as natural forest shrinks.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS A point that lifts the answer: planting rows of one tree is not the same as saving a real forest. Targets can look met on paper while nature still loses.

Q9 · 10 MARKS

Explain how fake news and disinformation pose threat to Internal Security and Public Order in Indian context? In this regard, discuss salient features of amendments in respect of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT False news spreads fast online and can trigger riots, panic and violence. The question asks how this threatens security, and about the 2021 IT Rules that govern online platforms.

IN SHORT UPSC asked this in 2016 and again in 2024.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2016 *“The use of the internet and social media by non-state actors for subversive activities is a major security concern. How have these been misused in the recent past? Suggest effective guidelines to curb the above threat.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same threat and the same ask for rules, ten years earlier. Even the demand for 'guidelines' matches the IT Rules part of 2026.

2024 *“Social media and encrypting messaging services pose a serious security challenge. What measures have been adopted at various levels to address the security implications of social media?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Asked again just two years ago. 'Social media' and 'security' appear in both.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

DAW 2026 · W7 Fri Q2 *“An adversary spreads disinformation, funds proxies and applies economic pressure, all while staying below the threshold that would justify a military response.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question covered disinformation as a weapon: lies spread on purpose to hurt a country.

DAW 2026 · W7 Thu Q2 *“A young man self-radicalises entirely online, joins no organisation and meets no handler, so an apparatus built to watch groups never sees him.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS And what online content can do to one person: a youth turned extremist alone on his phone. The IT Rules amendments are the current-affairs layer to add on top.

Q10 · 10 MARKS

Ladakh is strategically located between China and Pakistan. As a measure to win hearts and minds of locals, discuss the Border Area Development Programmes (BADP) by the Central Government and civic actions by the Army. Also discuss demand of promulgation of provision of the Sixth Schedule of constitution for Ladakh.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Ladakh touches both China and Pakistan. The question asks how development schemes and the Army's welfare work win local support, and covers Ladakh's demand for Sixth Schedule status, special protection for tribal areas.

IN SHORT We practised this ground, and UPSC has asked it before.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2020 *“For effective border area management, discuss the steps required to deny local support to militants and also suggest ways to manage favorable perception among locals.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Almost the same words: keep border people on your side. 'Favorable perception among locals' then, 'hearts and minds' now.

2016 *“Border management is a complex task due to difficult terrain and hostile relations with some countries. Elucidate the challenges and strategies for effective border management.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Border management, asked directly.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q20 *“Compare the people-centric Vibrant Villages Programme with the infrastructure-and-technology approach of border roads, tunnels and surveillance in strengthening border security. How do they together build a holistic border-management strategy?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question compared the two ways to secure a border: care for the people, or build roads and fences. BADP and Army civic action are the 'care for the people' way, under older names.

DAW 2026 · W7 Fri Q4 *“In the light of the view that securing India's frontiers depends as much on keeping its remote border villages alive and connected as on fences and troops, critically analyse how India should weight the two.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same point again: a living border village guards the border better than an empty one. The Sixth Schedule demand is the current-affairs tail: Ladakh's people want constitutional protection for their land and culture.

Q11 · 15 MARKS

Explain the key challenges for India's energy security. What measures do you suggest for ensuring energy security along with economic growth and sustainability?

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT India imports most of its oil. The question asks what threatens our energy supply, and how to secure it while the economy grows and stays clean.

IN SHORT UPSC has asked this before.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2022 “Do you think India will meet 50 percent of its energy needs from renewable energy by 2030? Justify your answer. How will the shift of subsidies from fossil fuels to renewable help achieve the above objective?”

HOW IT CONNECTS The same subject: meeting energy needs while going green.

2025 “How can India achieve energy independence through clean technology by 2047? How can biotechnology play a crucial role in this endeavour?”

HOW IT CONNECTS Energy independence, asked just last year. The theme repeats almost yearly.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q5 “With non-fossil sources now half of India's installed capacity, examine the challenges of integrating variable renewable power into grids, including storage and transmission. How far can green hydrogen address them?”

HOW IT CONNECTS The hardest part of this answer was our full question: sun and wind do not shine and blow all day, so the grid needs storage and strong wires to stay stable.

DAW 2026 · W3 Fri Q1 “India risks trading dependence on imported oil for dependence on imported minerals. Comment.”

HOW IT CONNECTS A key challenge in simple words: solar panels and batteries need imported minerals, so we may swap one dependence for another.

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q16 “India aims for 100 GW nuclear power by 2047 via private investment and SMRs. Can these scale India's baseload clean energy?”

HOW IT CONNECTS The nuclear option for round-the-clock clean power, practised too.

Q12 · 15 MARKS

How are startups in India promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and employment?
Discuss the global and domestic challenges in their working and suggest suitable measures to overcome these challenges.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Startups are young companies built on new ideas. The question asks what they do for jobs and innovation, what troubles them, and the fixes.

IN SHORT Startups appear on this paper for the first time. Their parts, jobs, innovation, funding, were in our practice.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

Said honestly: startups have not been asked directly on this paper before. This is a first-time question. What was old is its parts, jobs, innovation and funding, and those were in our practice.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q12 *“Can the Employment Linked Incentive scheme and gig worker welfare funds turn jobless growth into inclusive, quality employment? Comment.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The jobs half: can new schemes turn growth into employment. Startups are one big hope for those jobs.

DAW 2026 · W4 Sat Q1 *“India's research and development spend is about 0.65% of national income and overwhelmingly state-funded, while innovation leaders had private firms doing the spending.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The innovation half: India spends little on research, and mostly through government. Startups are the private risk-takers who change that.

DAW 2026 · W4 Tue Q1 *“Corporate profits are high, rates have eased and taxes were cut, yet private firms have not invested at scale for a decade.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The money problem: private investors holding back. For startups this has a name, the 'funding winter'.

Q13 · 15 MARKS

How Indian agriculture has been transformed from food scarcity to food surplus level? Explain the various government policies implemented for diversification of Indian agriculture.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT India once imported food. Today its godowns overflow. The question asks how this turnaround happened, and what policies push farmers to grow more than just rice and wheat.

IN SHORT UPSC has asked both halves before.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2017 *“Explain various types of revolutions that took place in agriculture after Independence in India. How have these revolutions helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The first half of 2026 is this old question: the Green Revolution and its siblings took India from scarcity to surplus.

2021 *“What are the present challenges before crop diversification? How do emerging technologies provide opportunities for crop diversification?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The second half, asked directly. 'Crop diversification' appears in both.

2024 *“Elucidate the importance of buffer stocks for stabilizing agricultural prices in India. What are the challenges associated with the storage of buffer stock?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The surplus end of the story: godowns so full that storage itself became the problem.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q13 *“India stays heavily import-dependent for edible oils and pulses despite cereal self-sufficiency. What factors explain this dependence, and how can a cropping-pattern shift towards oilseeds and pulses build self-reliance in these commodities?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question was diversification itself: plenty of rice and wheat, too little oilseed and dal, and the policy push needed to change what farmers grow.

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q14 *“Millets and other nutri-cereals are climate-resilient crops for a warming India. How can mainstreaming them in production and diets strengthen nutrition security?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Diversification again, through millets.

Q14 · 15 MARKS

Discuss the different types of subsidies and supports provided by the Government of India to agricultural sector. Examine the related issues pertaining to Agreement on Agriculture of World Trade Organisation (WTO).

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT The government supports farmers with cheap fertiliser, power, credit and assured prices (MSP). The question asks about these supports, and why world trade rules object to some of them.

IN SHORT Both halves are old UPSC questions.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2013 *“What are the different types of agriculture subsidies given to farmers at the national and at state levels? Critically analyse the agricultural subsidy regime with reference to the distortions created by it.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The first half of 2026, in almost the same words. 'Types of agriculture subsidies' appears in both.

2013 *“Food Security Bill is expected to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in India. Critically discuss various apprehensions in its effective implementation along with the concerns it has generated in WTO.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The WTO half, asked the same year: India's food schemes rubbing against world trade rules.

2017 *“How do subsidies affect the cropping pattern, crop diversity, and economy of farmers? What is the significance of crop insurance, minimum support price, and food processing for small and marginal farmers?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Subsidies and what they do to farming, asked again.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q13 *“Assess how institutional credit and crop insurance, especially KCC, PMFBY and Farmer Producer Organisations, stabilise farmer incomes.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The support system, cheap credit and crop insurance, was our full question.

DAW 2026 · W4 Wed Q3 *“Do you agree that a legally guaranteed Minimum Support Price would serve Indian agriculture? Substantiate.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The biggest support debate, a legal MSP, practised directly. The WTO point to add: buying crops at MSP counts as trade-distorting support under WTO rules, and India defends it using the 'peace clause'.

Q15 · 15 MARKS

Mention salient features of 'Mission Drishti'. Discuss the imaging techniques used in the satellite launched on 3rd May 2026. Why it is being considered world's first satellite of its kind?

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT A satellite launched on 3 May 2026. The question asks about its features and its imaging technology.

IN SHORT The satellite is new. The question type is old.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2015 *"What do you understand by "Standard Positioning System" and "Precision Positioning System" in the GPS era? Discuss the advantages India perceives from its ambitious IRNSS program employing just seven satellites."*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same type of question a decade ago: name a satellite programme, explain its technology, say what India gains.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCKIAS

DAW 2026 · W4 Fri Q1 *"India has a respected space programme but a tiny share of the global space economy. Comment on whether opening the sector to private companies can close that gap."*

HOW IT CONNECTS The space-programme ground, practised again. The mission's own details come from May 2026 current affairs. What practice gave you is the way to answer any named-satellite question: features, technology, and why it matters for India.

Q16 · 15 MARKS

What is agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Explain its working. Describe its applications with suitable examples. Discuss the advantages, risks and challenges associated with agentic AI systems.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Ordinary AI answers your question. Agentic AI goes further: it plans steps and completes tasks on its own, like booking, searching and writing in sequence. The question asks how it works, its uses and its dangers.

IN SHORT The shape of the AI question returns. Agentic AI itself is new content.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2023 *“Introduce the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI). How does AI help clinical diagnosis? Do you perceive any threat to privacy of the individual in the use of AI in healthcare?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same question shape: define AI, give its uses, weigh its risks. 2026 swaps healthcare for 'agentic'.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q5 *“India is pursuing a "sovereign AI" model, controlling its own AI compute, data and models. Examine the case for this approach. How should India regulate frontier technologies and counter the growing menace of deepfakes and AI-generated fake audio and video? Discuss.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS New AI, its dangers, and how to control it: our full question. 'Frontier technologies' there covers systems like agentic AI.

DAW 2026 · W4 Fri Q3 *“Regulate Artificial Intelligence now and risk strangling a young industry; wait, and risk its harms hardening before the law arrives. Which error should India rather make?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The risks-and-challenges half, practised as a debate: act early or wait and watch.

Q17 · 15 MARKS

What are the challenges to solid waste management in India? Discuss the governmental policy framework on solid waste management. Discuss the success/failure cases of Delhi and Indore cities highlighting the salient feature of their solid waste management initiatives.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Indian cities make mountains of garbage. The question asks why managing it is hard, what the rules say, and why Indore succeeds while Delhi struggles.

IN SHORT UPSC asked this in 2018. The two city examples are the new part.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2018 *“What are the impediments in disposing of the huge quantities of discarded solid wastes which are continuously being generated? How do we safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same question, eight years earlier. 'Solid wastes' and their disposal problems, in both.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

DAW 2026 · W3 Wed Q5 *“A circular economy is a more durable answer to plastic than bans. Critically evaluate.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question covered the modern answer to waste: reduce, reuse and recycle, instead of collect and dump. For the city examples: Indore separates waste at every doorstep and tops the cleanliness rankings. Delhi's unsorted waste keeps growing into landfill hills. The policy names: Solid Waste Management Rules 2016, Swachh Bharat Mission.

Q18 · 15 MARKS

“Community participation is the cornerstone of effective disaster management”. Analyse this statement with suitable examples from India. Also discuss the challenges to community participation and measures to strengthen it.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT When disaster strikes, neighbours reach first, long before any government team. The question asks why people's participation matters in disaster management, what weakens it, and how to strengthen it.

IN SHORT Our practice question said the same thing.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2020 “Discuss the recent measures initiated in disaster management by the Government of India departing from the earlier reactive approach.”

HOW IT CONNECTS The background of the 2026 question: India's shift from reacting after disasters to preparing before them. Prepared communities are the heart of that shift.

2013 “How important are vulnerability and risk assessment for pre-disaster management? As an administrator, what are key areas that you would focus on in a Disaster Management System?”

HOW IT CONNECTS Disaster preparation asked from the ground level.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

DAW 2026 · W3 Tue Q2 “A flash flood strikes at 2 a.m. before any agency mobilises; the first responders are neighbours with boats. Does this make the trained community the real first line of defence, or only the unavoidable one until the State arrives?”

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question is the exam's statement in a single scene: a flood at 2 a.m., and neighbours with boats saving lives first. Examples ready: Odisha's village-run cyclone shelters, the Aapda Mitra volunteer scheme.

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q7 “Heat waves increasingly threaten Indian cities and the urban poor. Explain how Heat Action Plans reduce this toll, and examine the gaps that limit their effectiveness on the ground.”

HOW IT CONNECTS Community-level planning and its gaps, practised through heat waves.

Q19 · 15 MARKS

Separatist movements have been one of the major factors contributing to militancy and instability in Jammu & Kashmir (J & K). Bring out actions taken by the Government to bring J & K into national mainstream. Discuss pre and post abrogation status of Articles 370 and 35A. Also bring out positive impacts of abrogation of both articles in mainstreaming the state.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT The question asks what the government did to bring Jammu and Kashmir closer to the rest of India, and what changed after Article 370's special status was removed in 2019.

IN SHORT The theme is old. The Article 370 timeline is standard current affairs.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2019 *"The banning of 'Jamaat-e-Islami' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over-ground workers (OGWs)..."*

HOW IT CONNECTS Militancy in J&K, asked the very year the articles were removed.

2023 *"Winning of 'Hearts and Minds' in terrorism-affected areas is an essential step in restoring the trust of the population. Discuss the measures adopted by the Government in this respect."*

HOW IT CONNECTS The mainstreaming half of 2026: winning back people's trust, asked directly.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set B · Q9 *"India was declared free of Left-Wing Extremism, districts falling from over a hundred to nil. What challenges arise in holding and developing the cleared areas, and how can resurgence be prevented?"*

HOW IT CONNECTS Our question taught the same lesson in another region: when violence ends, the hard part begins, holding the area with development, jobs and trust. The J&K answer runs on exactly this lesson.

Q20 · 15 MARKS

Discuss counterfeit currency and money laundering as major sources of terror funding in India. State the actions being taken at International level to check these menaces. Highlight the role of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and methods of compliance by its member states in preventing terror funding.

WHAT THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT Terrorists need money. Fake currency notes and money laundering, making dirty money look clean, supply it. The question asks how the world checks this, and about FATF, the global watchdog on terror money.

IN SHORT UPSC has asked almost every part of this before.

UPSC ASKED THIS BEFORE

2013 *“Money laundering poses a serious security threat to a country's economic sovereignty. What is its significance for India and what steps are required to be taken to control this menace?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Money laundering as a security threat, asked directly.

2017 *“The scourge of terrorism is a grave challenge to national security. What solutions do you suggest to curb this growing menace? What are the major sources of terrorist funding?”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Sources of terror money, asked directly.

2023 *“Give out the major sources of terror funding in India and the efforts being made to curtail these sources. In this light, also discuss the aim and objective of the No Money for Terror...”*

HOW IT CONNECTS Almost the same question, three years ago.

WE PRACTISED THIS AT UNLOCK IAS

Simulator GS3 · Set A · Q9 *“Crypto-asset-based money laundering and terror financing test India's PMLA-FATF framework. Examine measures needed to strengthen it against these threats.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS FATF itself was in our question, in its newest form: dirty money moving through crypto coins. PMLA is India's anti-laundering law.

DAW 2026 · W7 Fri Q3 *“Cryptocurrencies and virtual digital assets have opened a channel for money laundering and terror financing that India's banking-era controls cannot easily track. Comment.”*

HOW IT CONNECTS The same ground practised again. Fake currency is the older half, from standard material.

FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

Mains is never 'moderate' or 'tough' or 'easy'. Those words belong to next-day reviews, not to this exam.

Year after year, Mains is theme repetition. This year said it loudly. Even then, it is not simple. The marks go to those who have internalised the basic content, practised answer writing enough, and walked in with self-belief.

And remember one thing about the cutoff: it is decided by relative performance. Everyone in that hall faced the same paper you did. If it felt hard, it felt hard to everyone. Your preparation decides where you stand, not the paper's mood. So let no one frighten you about it. Whenever fear spreads, someone appears selling a shortcut. You do not need a shortcut. You need the basics, practice, and patience.

If these three lines settle in early, the road becomes calm:

PYQs are the key.

Answer writing is the art.

Relative performance decides the outcome.

We wish you the very best for your result, and for everything ahead.

FREE GUIDANCE

Every free resource is at unlockias.in.

Stuck somewhere, or need direction? Ask on our Telegram channel [UPSCneil](https://t.me/UPSCneil).

MODULE QUERIES

Ping us directly at [@helpdeskupsc](https://t.me/helpdeskupsc) on Telegram, or call or message [+91 91130 79224](tel:+919113079224).

With best wishes,

Team UnlockIAS