

UPSC Mains 2025 — All GS Questions

72 Questions across GS Paper I-IV

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GS-I

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q1. Discuss the salient features of the Harappan architecture. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q2. Examine the main aspects of Akbar's religious syncretism. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q3. 'The sculptors filled the Chandella artform with resilient vigor and breadth of life.' Elucidate. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q4. How are climate change and the sea level rise affecting the very existence of many island nations? Discuss with examples. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q5. What are non-primary activities? How are these activities related to physiographic features in India? Discuss with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q6. Explain briefly the ecological and economic benefits of solar energy generation in India with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q7. What are Tsunamis? How and where are they formed? What are their consequences? Explain with examples. (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Q8. How does smart city in India address the issues of urban poverty and distributive justice? (Answer in 150 words)

Easy

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

Q9. The ethos of civil service in India stand for the combination of professionalism with nationalistic consciousness – Elucidate. (Answer in 150 words)

2025 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

Q10. Do you think that globalization results in only an aggressive consumer culture? Justify your answer. (Answer in 150 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q11. Mahatma Jotirao Phule's writings and efforts of social reforms touched issues of almost all subaltern classes. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q12. Trace India's consolidation process during early phase of independence in terms of polity, economy, education and international relations. (Answer in 250 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q13. The French Revolution has enduring relevance to the contemporary world. Explain. (Answer in 250 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

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? (Answer in 250 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q15. 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)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

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. (Answer in 250 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q17. 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)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

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. (Answer in 250 words)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q19. 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)

2025 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

Q20. Does tribal development in India centre around two axes, those of displacement and of rehabilitation? Give your opinion. (Answer in 250 words)

GS-II

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

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.

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

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.

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

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 'pre-emptive pardons'?

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

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.

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

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.

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

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

Easy

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

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

Easy

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

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

Easy

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

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

Easy

2025 GS-II 10M • 150W

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

Easy

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

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.

Medium

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

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.

Medium

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

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.

Medium

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

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?

Medium

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

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

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

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

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

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?

2025 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

GS-III

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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?

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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?

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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?

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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?

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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.

2025 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

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?

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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?

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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?

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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?

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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?

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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.

2025 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

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

2025 GS-IV 20M • 150W

Hard

Q1. 1. Given below are two questions to be answered in 150 words each:

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.

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 a public servant, highlighting its role in promoting good governance and ensuring accountability in public administration.

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2025 GS-IV 20M • 150W

Hard

Q2. 2. Answer the following in about 150 words each:

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.

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.

- (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.
- (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.

2025 GS-IV 30M • 150W

Hard

Q3. 3. Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context? (Answer each in 150 words)

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

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

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

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2025 GS-IV 20M • 150W

Hard

Q4. 4. Answer the following in about 150 words each:

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.

4 (b) What are the major teachings of Mahavira? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world.

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- (b) What are the major teachings of Mahavira? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world.

2025 GS-IV 20M • 150W

Hard

Q5. 5. Answer the following in about 150 words each:

5 (a) "One who is devoted to one's duty attains highest perfection in life." Analyse this statement in reference to the sense of responsibility and personal virtues expected from a civil servant.

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?

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2025 GS-IV 20M • 150W

Hard

Q6. 6. Answer the following in about 150 words each:

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?

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 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?

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2025 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

Q7. Vijay was Deputy Commissioner of a remote district of a Hilly Northern State of the country for the last two years. In the month of August, heavy rains lashed the complete state followed by cloudburst 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 the 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 is a US citizen and staying there for the 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 the 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 the options identified by Vijay.

(d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why?

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-wildlife 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?

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 In-charge of PWD and Programme Implementation. As a part of his job profile, he is responsible for policy formulation and 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.

The Minister of PWD 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 on launching an ambitious road-construction project in the near future.

Subash is in regular touch with the Minister and is working on various modalities of the 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. Subash's only son, Vikas, is in the real-estate business. From his own sources he is aware that a mega road project is on the anvil and that an 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 there would be a quantum jump in prices of land in the vicinity. Buying land at this stage at cheaper prices would pay him rich dividends. He pleads with his father day in and day out to share the location of the proposed project. He assures him that he would handle the matter discreetly, as in the normal course he keeps on buying land as part of his business. Subash feels pressurised because of his son's constant pleadings.

Another significant aspect is the extra/undue interest in the above project being shown by the Minister, PWD. His nephew also has a big infrastructure-project company. In fact, the Minister has introduced his nephew to Subash and hinted that his nephew's business interests in the forthcoming project should be taken care of. The Minister has encouraged him to act fast because early announcement and execution of the project would enhance his own status in public life and within the party.

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?**
- (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?

Q10. Rajesh is a Group-A officer with more than five 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 the office. He also manages office supplies and equipment.

Rajesh is now sufficiently senior and expects his next promotion to the JAG (Junior Administrative Grade) in the next one or two years. He knows that promotion is based on examination of ACRs/Performance Appraisals of the last five years or so by a DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) and that an officer lacking requisite grading of ACRs may not be found fit for promotion. Losing promotion may entail financial and reputational loss and a set-back for career progression. Though he always puts his best effort into his duties, he is unsure of the assessment by his superior and is therefore putting in extra effort so that he gets a thumping report at the end of the financial year.

One day his reporting officer (who writes his ACR) 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 ₹35 lakh covering all stationery items from the same vendor. As per the organisation's GFR-based delegated financial powers, expenditure on office items exceeding ₹30 lakh requires sanction of the next higher authority (his boss in the present case). Rajesh knows his immediate superior would expect all these purchases to be done at his level and may not appreciate such 'lack of initiative'. During discussions with colleagues he also learns of the common (but illegal) practice of splitting expenditure (dividing a large order into several small ones) to avoid obtaining sanction from higher authority. This practice is against the rules and may invite adverse audit comments.

Rajesh is perturbed; he is unsure about what decision to take.

- (a) What are the options available to 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?**
- (a) What are the options available to 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?

Q11. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program (MGNREGA) was earlier known as National Rural Employment Scheme (NREGA). It is an Indian social-welfare programme aimed at fulfilling the 'Right to Work' provisions of the Constitution. MGNREGA was launched in 2006 under the Rural Employment sector by the Ministry of Rural Development.

The main objective of the programme is to give a legal guarantee of wage employment to the adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour for a maximum of 100 days per household per year. Every rural household has the right to register under the scheme and, on registration, a Job Card is issued. A Job-Card holder can seek employment. The State Government shall pay 25 % of the minimum wage for the first 30 days as compensatory daily unemployment allowance to the families and wage for the remaining period of the year. MGNREGA works are undertaken by various Gram Panchayats.

You have been appointed Administrator-in-Charge of the District. You have been given the responsibility of monitoring MGNREGA works undertaken by various Gram Panchayats and the authority to give technical sanctions to all such works.

In one Panchayat in your jurisdiction you notice that your predecessor has mismanaged the programme:

- (i) Money not disbursed to actual job-seekers.**
- (ii) Muster rolls of labourers not properly maintained.**
- (iii) Mismatch between work done and payments made.**
- (iv) Payments made to fictitious persons.**
- (v) Job Cards issued without assessing genuine need.**
- (vi) Mismanagement and siphoning of funds.**
- (vii) Approved works that never existed.**

(a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how would you restore proper functioning of the MGNREGA programme?

(b) What actions would you initiate to solve the various issues listed above?

(c) How would you deal with the above situation?

(a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how would you restore proper functioning of the MGNREGA programme?

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Q12. Ashok is Divisional Commissioner of one of the border districts in a North-East State. A few years back, the military took over the neighbouring country after overthrowing the elected civil government. A civil-war situation has prevailed there, especially in the last two years, and the internal situation has further deteriorated due to rebel groups taking control of populated areas near our border. Intense fighting between the military and rebel groups has sharply increased civilian casualties in recent months.

One night Ashok receives information from the local police guarding the border check-post that about 200–250 people—mainly women and children—are trying to cross over to our side. About ten soldiers in military uniform, carrying weapons, are also among them. Women and children are crying and begging for help; a few are injured, bleeding profusely and need immediate medical care. Ashok tries to contact the State Home Secretary but fails, mainly because inclement weather has disrupted connectivity.

- (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 would be more appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?**
- (d) In the present situation, what extra precautionary measures should the Border-Guarding Police take while dealing with soldiers in uniform?**

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