

Ancient History — UPSC Prelims PYQ

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— 2025 —

UPSC 2025

Ancient History › Science & Technology

easy

Q13. The irrigation device called 'Arghatta' was

- (a) a water bag made of leather pulled over a pulley
- (b) a large wheel with earthen pots tied to the outer ends of its spokes**
- (c) a larger earthen pot driven by bullocks
- (d) a large water bucket pulled up by rope directly by hand

Answer: (b)

The araghamma, mentioned in early Sanskrit texts, was essentially the Persian wheel: a wheel whose spokes carried earthen pots that scooped water as the wheel turned. Hence description (b) matches the device; the other options describe unrelated lifting methods. ([houseofupsc.com](https://houseofupsc.com/upsc-prelims-2025-pyq-araghatta-ancient-irrigation-device/))

UPSC 2025

Ancient History › Post-Gupta & Early Medieval Dynasties

easy

Q14. Who among the following rulers in ancient India had assumed the titles 'Mattavilasa', 'Vichitrachitta' and 'Gunabhara'?

- (a) Mahendravarman I**
- (b) Simhavishnu
- (c) Narasimhavarman I
- (d) Simhavarman

Answer: (a)

Pallava king Mahendravarman I (c. 600–630 CE) styled himself with many birudas, notably 'Mattavilasa', 'Vichitrachitta', and 'Gunabhara', attested in his rock-cut inscriptions and literary works such as the play Mattavilasa Prahasana. These epithets are not associated with the other listed rulers. ([writiyias.com](https://www.writiyias.com/2025/06/the-titles-mattavilasa-vichitrachitta.html?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2025

Ancient History › Foreign Travellers & Accounts

easy

Q15. Fa-hien (Faxian), the Chinese pilgrim, travelled to India during the reign of

- (a) Samudragupta
- (b) Chandragupta II**
- (c) Kumaragupta I
- (d) Skandagupta

Answer: (b)

The Chinese monk Fa-hien reached India around 399-411 CE, a period that coincides with the reign of Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya). Contemporary sources on Fa-hien's journey explicitly state his stay in India fell under this Gupta ruler, not under Samudragupta or later kings. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faxian?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2025

Ancient History › Mahajanapadas & Early Kingdoms

moderate

Q 17. *M0> @(->0\$ (600-322 8> *B0M5) G 8 &0M- .G , (? .M(2? ?\$ /A M.K
 *M0> @(M7G\$M0 — 8 M7G\$M0 .G ,9(G 5>2@ (&@
 I. 6M. : K&>50@
 II. .M,K : 5?*>6>
 III. 5(M\$@ : .9>(&@
 IV. K82 : 80/B
 *0M/A M\$.G 8G ?\$(G /A M. 89@ 8A.G2?\$ 9H ?

- (a) G 5 2
- (b) G 5 2 & K**
- (c) G 5 2 \$ @ (
- (d) 8 - @ > 0

Answer: (b)

Ashmaka (Assaka) lay on the banks of the Godavari, and Kosala extended along the Sarayu, so pairs I and IV are correct. Kamboja was located north-west of the Beas (Vip []) and is not associated while Avanti lay in the Narmada valley, not on the Mahanadi; therefore pairs II and III are correct. Pairs match correctly. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asmaka?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2025

Ancient History › Mauryan Empire

moderate

Q 19. 8> ? 6K G -?2G K 8G M >\$ 9K\$> 9H, '*M0\$? >0', '0> A' 0 '/A
 '? >0@ %G?

- (a) M0> . -8M\$0@ / *M06>8(
- (b) ?2> -8M\$0@ / *M06>8(**
- (c) *M0>(M\$@ / *M06>8(
- (d) G(M&M0@ / *M06>8(8M\$0

Answer: (b)

Ashoka's Rock Edict III mentions Yukta (record-keepers), Rajuka (revenue-cum-judicial officers) and Pradeshika touring officials as working together within a Prade[a/ h ra, i.e., a district. functionaries of district-level administration, not village, provincial or central tiers. ([iasexpress.net](https://www.iasexpress.net/ie-pedia/ashokan-inscriptions-suggest-that-the-pradeshika-rajuka-and-yukta-were-important-officers-at-the/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2025

Ancient History › Indus Valley Civilization

easy

Q 72. .K9(K&!<K 8G *M0>*M\$ "(> \$@ 9A 2!< @ " (>. *M0\$?.> ?8 '>\$A @

- (a) > 8> (Bronze)**
- (b) \$>.M0 (Copper)
- (c) *@\$2 (Brass)
- (d) 8M50M# (Gold)

Answer: (a)

The famous 'Dancing Girl' figurine excavated at Mohenjo-daro (c. 2500 BCE) is a small statue cast in bronze using the lost-wax process—one of the earliest known examples of copper-alloy metallurgy in South Asia. It is not made of pure copper, brass, or gold. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohenjo-daro?utm_source=openai))

— 2024 —

Q 55. (? . M (2 ? ? \$ 8 B @ * 0 5 ? > 0 @ ? :

* M 0 > H \$? 9 > 8 ? 8 M % 2 0 > M / 5 ? 5 0 #

1. & M 0 G \$ A " < ! < ? 6 > 5 M / > * > 0 , & 0 > 9 6 9 0

2. (> . > 5 . 9 > 0 > 7 M M 0 \$ > \$ M * > 7 > # 8 M % 2

3. . A ! A G 0 2 . 9 > * > 7 > # 8 M % 2

4. 8 > 2 @ 9 A # M ! ' M 0 * M 0 & G 6 6 H 2 ? \$ M 0 A + > . & ? 0

* 0 M / A M \$. G 8 G L (- 8 @ / A M . K . G & @ 8 B (> 8 9 @ 8 A . G 2 ? \$ 9 H ?

(a) 1 0 2

(b) 2 0 3

(c) 3 0 4

(d) 1 0 4

Answer: (b)

Inamgaon is a well-studied Chalcolithic (Copper–Stone-Age) village-site in Maharashtra, so pair 2 is correct ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inamgaon?utm_source=openai)). Mundu (in Kerala) is recorded in the state archaeology list as a megalithic burial-site, so pair 3 is also correct, whereas Chandraketugarh lies in West Bengal (not Odisha) though it was an early historic port, and Salihundam in Andhra Pradesh is a Buddhist stupa complex, not a rock-painting cave-temple ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandraketugarh?utm_source=openai)). Hence only pairs 2 and 3 are rightly matched.

— 2023 —

Q 43. * M 0 > @ (& M 7 ? # - > 0 \$ G 8 & 0 M - . G , K 2 M 9 , 8 G . M * B 0 > 0 0 8 A @ 0 @

(a) 0 > > > (0

(b) * M

(c) 2 K 0 0 0 8 - > 7 (? 0 M . > # G G (M & M 0

(d) 8 - @ , A (0 K G 5 8 M \$ M 0

Answer: (b)

Korkai (Pandya), Poompuhar/Kaveripattinam (Chola) and Muchiri/Muziris (Cheras) are repeatedly described in Sangam literature and Graeco-Roman accounts as thriving sea-ports handling overseas trade. They were not capital cities, iron-and-steel centres or Jain shrines, so option (b) 'ports' is correct. ([edukemy.com](https://edukemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2023-question-paper-with-answer-key-general-studies-paper-1/))

— 2022 —

Q60. According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, which of the following are correct ?

1. A person could be a slave as a result of a judicial punishment.
2. If a female slave bore her master a son, she was legally free.
3. If a son born to a female slave was fathered by her master, the son was entitled to the legal status of the master's son.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

All three provisions are found in the Arthashastra: enslavement could follow judicial punishment, a female slave who bore her master a son became free, and such a son enjoyed the legal status of the master's legitimate son. Hence statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct, making option (d) the right choice. ([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-prelims-2022-solved-question-paper-1-gs/))

Q91. (? .M(2? ?\$ /A M.K *0 5? >0 @ ? :
6K G *M0.A 6?2>2G K G 8M%>(— 59 8M%>(?8 0> M/ .G 9H
1. 'L2@ — !?6>
2. 0M0 A!@ — 'M0 *M0&G6
3. L >! — .'M/ *M0&G6
4. (M(2M2@ — 0M(>
***0K M\$ /A M.K .G 8G ?\$(G 89@ 8A.G2?\$ 9H ?**

- (a) G 52 /A M.
- (b) G 52 &K /A M.**
- (c) G 52 \$@(/A M.
- (d) 8- @ >0K /A M.

Answer: (b)

Pair 1 (Dhuli – Odisha) and Pair 2 (Erragudi – Andhra Pradesh) are correctly matched. Jaugada lies in Odisha, not Madhya Pradesh, while Kalsi is in present-day Uttarakhand, not Karnataka, so pairs 3 and 4 are wrong; therefore exactly two pairs are correct. ([forumias.com](https://forumias.com/blog/answer-key-upsc-ias-cse-prelims-2022-gs-paper-1-questions/))

Q32. Which one of the following ancient towns is well-known for its elaborate system of water harvesting and management where a series of bunds created check-dams and canals carried the water to connected reservoirs?

- (a) Dholavira
- (b) Kalibangan
- (c) Rakhigarhi
- (d) Ropar

Answer: (a)

Dholavira (Khadir Bet, Kutch) is noted for its sophisticated water-management: a chain of check-dams diverted rainwater into interconnected stone-lined reservoirs surrounding the city. Such an extensive hydraulic system is not attested at Kalibangan, Rakhigarhi or Ropar. ([drishtiias.com](https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-editorials/2023-02-28/print/manual?utm_source=openai))

Q34. From the decline of the Gupta Empire until the rise of Harshavardhana, which of the following dynasties ruled over North India?

1. The Guptas of Magadha
2. The Paramaras of Malwa
3. The Pushyabhutis of Thanesar
4. The Maukharis of Kanauj
5. The Yadavas of Devagiri
6. The Gurjara-Pratiharas of Jodhpur

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 5
- (b) 1, 3, 4 and 6**
- (c) 2, 3 and 4
- (d) 5 and 6

Answer: (b)

Between the fall of the Imperial Guptas (mid-6th c.) and Harsha's accession (c. 606 CE), North India was fragmented among: (1) the Later Guptas of Magadha; (3) the Pushyabhutis of Thanesar (Harsha's own line); (4) the Maukharis of Kanauj; and (6) an early branch of the Gurjara-Pratiharas ruling Mandavyapura (near present-day Jodhpur) attested from the 6th century. The Paramaras (2) and Yadavas (5) rose centuries later. Hence dynasties 1, 3, 4 and 6 qualify. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandore?utm_source=openai))

Q37. Consider the following pairs:

(Historical place) : (Well-known for)

1. Burzahom : Rock-cut shrines
2. Chandraketugarh : Terracotta art
3. Ganeshwar : Copper artefacts

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
 (b) 1 and 2
 (c) 3 only
 (d) 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

Burzahom (Kashmir) is renowned for Neolithic subterranean pit-dwellings, not rock-cut shrines, so Pair 1 is incorrect. Chandraketugarh (West Bengal) yields exquisite terracotta plaques, making Pair 2 correct. Ganeshwar (Rajasthan), part of the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture near the Khetri copper belt, is famous for large quantities of copper artefacts, so Pair 3 is correct. Thus only 2 and 3 match.
 ([whc.unesco.org](https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5917/?utm_source=openai))

Q40. *M0> @ (->0\$ G \$?9>8 G 8 &0M- .G , (? .M(2? ?\$ %(K .G 8G L(-8
 1. .? \$> M70> 5M/58M%> ?8@ >\$? @ 80M5\$M0 2> B 5?'? %@ 0 &>/-> 5M % @ d
 2. .? \$> M70> 5M/58M%> .G , *A\$M0 *(G *?\$> G @5?\$ 09\$G 9@ 8.M*\$M\$? &>/-> 5M/58M%> .G *?\$> @ .C\$M/A G *0>(M\$ 9@ *A\$M0 8.M*\$M\$? *0 '
 3. .? \$> M70> 5M/58M%> ?8@ *0?5>0 G G52 *A0A7 8&8M/K G 8.M*\$M\$?- , ? &>/-> 5M/58M%> *A0A7 0 .9?2>, &K(K 8&8M/K G 8.M*\$M\$?-8 , '@ . (@ G &? B > *M0/K 0 89@ \$M\$0 A(? d

- (a) 1 0 2
 (b) G 5 2 2
 (c) 1 0 3
 (d) G 5 2 3

Answer: (b)

In both schools the key doctrinal difference is that under Mitakshara a son acquires a coparcenary interest by birth, whereas in Dayabhaga he gets a share only after the father's death – so statement 2 is correct. Mitakshara and Dayabhaga are regional variants of Hindu law (Mitakshara prevails over almost all India except Bengal-Assam, while Dayabhaga is confined to that region); they were never laws for different social castes, hence statement 1 is wrong. Coparcenary under both schools was traditionally limited to male members; Dayabhaga does allow certain female heirs (e.g., widow, daughter) to inherit, but it still does not treat them as coparceners holding family property jointly, so the sweeping claim made in statement 3 is inaccurate. ([thelegalschool.in](https://thelegalschool.in/blog/difference-between-mitakshara-and-dayabhaga?utm_source=openai))

Q22. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements:

1. Sthaviravadins belong to Mahayana Buddhism.
2. Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism.
3. The deification of Buddha by Mahasanghikas fostered the Mahayana Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only**
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

The Sthaviravada (Theravada) school is an early 'Hinayana' tradition and does not belong to Mahayana; hence Statement 1 is wrong. The Lokottaravadin sect was indeed one of the eight schools that branched out of the Mahasanghika school, so Statement 2 is correct. Mahasanghikas emphasised the supra-mundane (lokottara) nature and deification of the Buddha, ideas that nurtured later Mahayana thought, making Statement 3 correct. Thus only Statements 2 and 3 are true. ([nichirenlibrary.org](https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/E/17?utm_source=openai))

Q24. Consider the following events in the history of India:

1. Rise of Pratiharas under King Bhoja
2. Establishment of Pallava power under Mahendravarman I
3. Establishment of Chola power by Parantaka I
4. Pala dynasty founded by Gopala

What is the correct chronological order of the above events, starting from the earliest time?

- (a) 2 – 1 – 4 – 3
- (b) 3 – 1 – 4 – 2
- (c) 2 – 4 – 1 – 3**
- (d) 3 – 4 – 1 – 2

Answer: (c)

Mahendravarman I consolidated Pallava power c. 590-630 CE, making Event 2 the earliest. Gopala founded the Pala dynasty around 750 CE (Event 4). Mihira Bhoja's rise (Pratihara power) dates to 836-885 CE (Event 1). Parantaka I established Chola strength from 907 CE onward (Event 3). Therefore, the correct chronological order is 2 – 4 – 1 – 3.

([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahendravarman_I?utm_source=openai))

Q25. Which of the following phrases defines the nature of the 'Hundi' generally referred to in the sources of the post-Harsha period?

- (a) An advisory issued by the king to his subordinates
- (b) A diary to be maintained for daily accounts
- (c) A bill of exchange**
- (d) An order from the feudal lord to his subordinates

Answer: (c)

A 'Hundi' was an indigenous negotiable instrument functioning as a bill of exchange used by merchants and money-lenders for remitting money or extending credit; contemporary legal commentaries describe it as "an oriental form of bill of exchange". Hence option (c) is correct, whereas the other options describe royal/feudal orders or account books, not financial instruments.

([indiankanoon.org](https://indiankanoon.org/doc/222931/?utm_source=openai)(https://indiankanoon.org/doc/222931/?utm_source=openai))

Q29. With reference to the history of India, the terms 'Kuliyavapa' and 'Dronavapa' denote

- (a) measurement of land**
- (b) coins of different monetary values
- (c) classification of urban land for revenue purposes
- (d) religious grants

Answer: (a)

In Gupta-period copper-plate grants from eastern India, 'kulyavapa' ("H 12-16 acres) and 'dronavapa' (12-16 acres) denote the area that could be sown with a kulya or drona measure of seed, i.e., standard units for measuring land. They are not coins, urban categories, or religious grants. ([vajiramandravi.com](https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/with-reference-to-the-history-of-india-the-terms-kulyavapa-and-dronavapa-denote/)([https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/with-reference-to-the-history-of-india-the-terms-kulyavapa-and-dronavapa-denote/?utm_source=openai](https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/with-reference-to-the-history-of-india-the-terms-kulyavapa-and-dronavapa-denote/)))

Q30. Which one of the following rulers advised his subjects through an inscription thus: "Whosoever praises his religious sect or blames other sects out of excessive devotion to his own sect, he rather injures his own sect very severely."

- (a) Ashoka**
- (b) Samudragupta
- (c) Harshavardhana
- (d) Krishnadeva Raya

Answer: (a)

The quoted injunction against extolling one's own sect while disparaging others appears in Ashoka's 12th Major Rock Edict, where the Mauryan emperor preaches religious tolerance; none of the other rulers issued such dhamma proclamations. ([sarthaks.com](https://www.sarthaks.com/2807407/following-rulers-advised-subjects-through-inscription-whosoever-praises-religious-sector?utm_source=openai)(https://www.sarthaks.com/2807407/following-rulers-advised-subjects-through-inscription-whosoever-praises-religious-sector?utm_source=openai))

Q71. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following pairs :

1. Parivrajak — Renunciant and Wanderer
2. Shramana — Priest with a high status
3. Upasaka — Lay follower of Buddhism

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched ?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Parivrajak/Parivrajaka literally means a wandering renunciant, so pair 1 is correct. Upasaka (non-monastic) follower of the Buddha, so pair 3 is correct. Shramana, however, was a group of ascetic seekers (Buddhists, Jainas, Ajivikas etc.), not a priest with high status; hence therefore only pairs 1 and 3 are correctly matched. ([sprintupsc.com](https://sprintupsc.com/PreviousYears/Web/upsc-prelims-2020-answer-key.html?utm_source=openai))

Q82. With reference to the period of Gupta dynasty in ancient India, the towns Ghantasala, Kadura and Chaul were well known as

- (a) ports handling foreign trade**
 (b) capitals of powerful kingdoms
 (c) places of exquisite stone art and architecture
 (d) important Buddhist pilgrimage centres

Answer: (a)

Ghantasala and Kadura on the east coast and Chaul on the west coast were thriving Gupta-age ports that handled overseas trade with Southeast Asia, the Mediterranean and West Asia. They were not capitals, art centres or Buddhist pilgrimage sites, so option (a) is correct. ([vajiramandravi.com](https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/with-reference-to-the-period-of-gupta-dynasty-in-ancient-india-the-towns-ghantasala-kadura-and-chaul-were-well-known-as/?utm_source=openai))

— 2019 —

Q7. (? . M (2 ? ? \$. G 8 G L (-8 > 9 \ * M * > 8 M % 2 (9 @ 9 H ?

- (a) (M & M O A ! @
 (b) K ! @ @
(c) 8 K % @
 (d) & G 8 2 * A 0

Answer: (c)

Chanhudaro, Kot Diji and Desalpur (Gunthli) all belong to the Early or Mature Harappan phases. Sothi, however, represents the pre-Harappan 'Sothi-Siswal' culture that predates the Indus urban phase; hence it is not classified as a Harappan site. Therefore only option (c) satisfies the question. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sothi_%28archaeology%29?utm_source=openai))

Q10. A *M\$ >2 G &L0>(->0\$.G ,2>\$M 6M0. (5?7M ?) G 8 &0M- .G , (? .M 9H?

- (a) 8G 0> M/ @ / G 2? (\$> &M5>0> &?/> >(G 5>2> *M0 >0 > 0 .>(> > .
 (b) /9 .A M/\$.'M/ *M0&G6 \$%> > ?/>5>\ M7G\$M0K .G *B0M#\$ (A*8M%?\$ \$ %
 (c) ,2>\$M 6M0. 8>. > ? .0M/>&> > *M0\$@ .>(> >\$> %>d
 (d) . &B0 G K G *A\$M0 K ,2>\$M 6M0.? G 0B* .G -G &?/> >\$> %>d

Answer: (a)

Copper plate inscriptions such as Junagarh show that vishti (forced labour) was treated as a source of revenue for the Gupta state. There is no evidence of its absence in Madhya Pradesh-Kathiawar, of it being a mark of social prestige, or of compulsion on a labourer's minor son. ([edukemy.com](https://edukemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2019-question-10/?utm_source=openai))

— 2017 —

Q2. 8-M/\$>- >2@ (0M/ 0 8?(M'A > @ G 2K K @ 8 8M C\$? G ,@ \$0 C
 % (K .G 8G L(-8>/8G 89@ 9H/9H ?

1. 8-M/\$>- >2@ (0M/K (G 5 0 6?08M\$M0># (helmet) > */K ?/> , ? 8?
 2K K .G (G */K > K 8> M7M/ (9@ .?2\$> 9Hd
 2. 8-M/\$>- >2@ (0M/ 8M50M#, > &@ \$%> \$> ,G K >(\$G %G, , ? 8?(M'A
 0 2K9> M >\$ %>d
 3. 8-M/\$>- >2@ (0M/K (G K\G K *>2\$B ,(> 2?/> %>, , ? 8?(M'A > @ G
 > K 8> M7M/ (9@ 9Hd
 (@ G &?/G /G B > */K 0 89@ \$M\$0 A(? :

- (a) G 5 2 1
 (b) G 5 2 2 0 3
 (c) G 5 2 1 0 3
 (d) 1, 2 0 3

Answer: (c)

Archaeological and Vedic evidence show that Rig-Vedic Aryans used defensive armour such as coats of mail and helmets, whereas no such artefacts have been found at Harappan sites—so Statement 1 is correct. Indus people were familiar with gold and silver (jewellery finds) and did not use iron, making Statement 2 wrong. Horse remains and chariot references are common in Vedic culture but virtually absent in Harappan layers, so Statement 3 is correct. Thus only 1 and 3 are correct.

([clearias.com](https://www.clearias.com/upsc-prelims-answer-key-2017/?utm_source=openai))

Q8. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which of the following statements is/are correct ?

1. Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
2. Rigvedic Aryans knew gold, silver and copper whereas Indus Valley people knew only copper and iron.
3. Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only**
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

Archaeological and literary evidence shows Rigvedic Aryans used protective gear such as coats of mail and helmets (Statement 1 correct) and had domesticated the horse (Statement 3 correct). Both cultures were aware of gold and copper, while iron appears later, so Statement 2 is wrong. Thus only Statements 1 and 3 are correct. ([upscgspedia.com](https://upscgspedia.com/upsc-prelims-history-pyqs-ancient-history-part-ii/?utm_source=openai))

Q53. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements:

1. Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the sects of Jainism.
2. Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only**
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b)

Sautrantika and SaAmit+ya are early Buddhist (H+nay na) schools, not Jain sects, so Statement 1 is incorrect. Sarv stiv dins taught that dharmas (phenomena) of past, present and future 'a not strictly momentary but persist latently—making Statement 2 correct. Thus only Statement 2 holds true. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sautr%C4%81ntika?utm_source=openai))

Q39. Who of the following had first deciphered the edicts of Emperor Ashoka?

- (a) Georg Bühler
- (b) James Prinsep**
- (c) Max Müller
- (d) William Jones

Answer: (b)

James Prinsep, an officer of the Bengal Mint and scholar-epigrapher, first successfully deciphered the Brahmi script and identified the inscriptions as Emperor Ashoka's edicts in 1837. Georg Bühler, Max Müller and William Jones made important contributions to Indology but did not achieve this particular breakthrough.

— 2015 —

Q39. Which of the following kingdoms were associated with the life of the Buddha?

1. Avanti
2. Gandhara
3. Kosala
4. Magadha

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4
- (d) 3 and 4 only**

Answer: (d)

Gautama Buddha spent most of his preaching life in the Gangetic plain, chiefly in Kosala (e.g., Sravasti, Jetavana) and Magadha (e.g., Rajgriha, Nalanda). There is no evidence of any significant association with Avanti or distant Gandhara during his lifetime, so only kingdoms 3 and 4 are relevant.

([edukemy.com](https://edukemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2015-question-39/?utm_source=openai))

— 2014 —

Q25. Which of the following Kingdoms were associated with the life of the Buddha?

1. Avanti
2. Gandhara
3. Kosala
4. Magadha

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
(b) 2 and 4
(c) 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 3 and 4

Answer: (c)

Buddha spent most of his teaching career in the Gangetic plain, especially in the kingdoms of Kosala (Zr vast+) and Magadha (Bodh-Gaya, R jagriha). Avanti and the distant north-west Gandhara are not mentioned in canonical accounts of his life. Hence only statements 3 and 4 are correct.

([educemy.com](https://educemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2014-question-25/?utm_source=openai))

— 2013 —

Q6. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsang) who visited India recorded the general conditions and culture of India at that time. In this context, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The roads and river-routes were completely immune from robbery.
2. As regards punishment for offences, ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instruments for determining the innocence or guilt of a person.
3. The tradesmen had to pay duties at ferries and barrier stations.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Hiuen-tsang describes ordeals by fire, water, weighing and poison as common judicial practices (statement 2) and notes that traders paid light duties at ferries and barrier stations (statement 3). He himself was robbed during his journey, so roads and river routes were not completely immune from robbery, rendering statement 1 incorrect. Therefore only 2 and 3 are correct! option (b) ([educemy.com](https://educemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2013-question-56/?utm_source=openai))

Q45. Which of the following characterizes/characterize the people of Indus Civilization?

1. They possessed great palaces and temples.
2. They worshipped both male and female deities.
3. They employed horse-drawn chariots in warfare.

Select the correct statement/statements using the codes given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) None of the statements given above is correct

Answer: (b)

Excavations show no evidence of large palaces or temples at Harappa-Mohenjo-daro, and no horse remains or chariots have been found, so Statements 1 and 3 are incorrect. Terracotta 'mother-goddess' figurines and the Pashupati seal indicate veneration of both female and male deities, making Statement 2 correct.

— 2012 —

Q21. With reference to the scientific progress of ancient India, which of the statements given below are correct?

1. Different kinds of specialized surgical instruments were in common use by 1st century AD.
2. Transplant of internal organs in the human body had begun by the beginning of 3rd century AD.
3. The concept of sine of an angle was known in 5th century AD.
4. The concept of cyclic quadrilaterals was known in 7th century AD.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 and 4 only
(c) 1, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (c)

Sushruta Samhita (c. 1st cent. AD or earlier) lists dozens of metal surgical instruments, statement 1 is correct. Actual transplantation of internal organs is not recorded in ancient Indian texts, making statement 2 incorrect. Aryabhata introduced the trigonometric 'jya' (sine) in the 5th century AD, and Brahmagupta described properties of cyclic quadrilaterals in the Brahmasphutasiddhanta in the 7th century AD, validating statements 3 and 4. Therefore, only 1, 3 and 4 are correct. ([[edukemy.com](https://www.edukemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2024-subject-wise-bullet-points-indian-history/?utm_source=openai)](https://www.edukemy.com/blog/upsc-prelims-2024-subject-wise-bullet-points-indian-history/?utm_source=openai))

Q22. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following was/were common to both Buddhism and Jainism?

1. Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment
2. Indifference to the authority of the Vedas
3. Denial of efficacy of rituals

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Both Buddhism and Jainism are nstika schools that reject the authority of the Vedas and of Vedic ritual sacrifice, so statements 2 and 3 are common to both. The Buddhist 'Middle Path' shuns extreme austerity, whereas Jainism prescribes rigorous asceticism, so statement 1 is not common. Thus, only 2 and 3 apply. ([testbook.com](https://testbook.com/question-answer/with-reference-to-the-history-of-an-cient-india-wh--601bf71b27ad1ec035255dce?utm_source=openai))

Q73. The religion of early Vedic Aryans was primarily of

- (a) Bhakti
(b) image worship and Yajnas
(c) worship of nature, and Yajnas
(d) worship of nature and Bhakti

Answer: (c)

Early Vedic religion centred on propitiating natural forces—Indra (rain & thunder), Agni (fire), Varuna (cosmic order) etc.—through yajnas (sacrificial rituals). Concepts of image-worship or bhakti devotion emerged much later. Therefore 'worship of nature and yajnas' is the best description. ([testbook.com](https://testbook.com/question-answer/the-religion-of-early-vedic-aryans-was-primarily-o--601d5c00be27d52a74e9e1fc?utm_source=openai))

Q82. With reference to the guilds (Shreni) of ancient India that played a very important role in the country's economy, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Every guild was registered with the central authority of the State and the king was the chief administrative authority on them.
2. The wages, rules of work, standards and prices were fixed by the guild.
3. The guild had judicial powers over its own members.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only**
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

Ancient guilds were autonomous professional bodies: they fixed wages, work rules, quality standards and prices (statement 2) and could try and punish their own members (statement 3). They were not formally registered with a central state authority; the king exercised only indirect control, so statement 1 is wrong. Thus only 2 and 3 are correct. ([studyadda.com](https://www.studyadda.com/solved-papers/solved-paper-general-studies-2012_q56/772/355587?utm_source=openai))

— 2011 —

Q56. India maintained its early cultural contacts and trade links with Southeast Asia across the Bay of Bengal. For this pre-eminence of early maritime history of Bay of Bengal, which of the following could be the most convincing explanation/explanations?

- (a) As compared to other countries, India had a better ship-building technology in ancient and medieval times
- (b) The rulers of southern India always patronized traders, Brahmin priests and Buddhist monks in this context
- (c) Monsoon winds across the Bay of Bengal facilitated sea voyages
- (d) Both (a) and (b) are convincing explanations in this context**

Answer: (d)

Early contacts across the Bay of Bengal were sustained, above all, by (a) India's long-standing ship-building and navigation skills—attested from Yuktikalpataru to Chola inscriptions—and (b) active patronage from southern Indian dynasties that sent traders, Brahmin scholars and Buddhist monks abroad. Monsoon winds were helpful but not the decisive cultural factor asked in the question. Hence 'both (a) and (b)' i.e. option (d) is the most convincing explanation. ([gktoday.in](https://www.gktoday.in/solution-of-the-upsc-prelims-2011-general-studies-paper/))

Q92. Regarding the Indus Valley Civilization, consider the following statements :

1. It was predominantly a secular civilization and the religious element, though present, did not dominate the scene.

2. During this period, cotton was used for manufacturing textiles in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2**
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

Harappan society is considered predominantly secular, emphasising town planning, drainage and civic architecture rather than large religious edifices. Archaeological finds of cotton fibres and spindle whorls at sites such as Mohenjo-daro confirm that cotton textiles were being produced, so both statements are correct.

Q100. The "dharma" and "rita" depict a central idea of ancient Vedic civilization of India. In this context, consider the following statements:

1. Dharma was a conception of obligations and of the discharge of one's duties to oneself and to others.

2. Rita was the fundamental moral law governing the functioning of the universe and all it contained.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2**
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

In Vedic thought, 'dharma' refers to the performance of one's prescribed duties and obligations toward self, family and society, while 'Rita' denotes the cosmic moral order that sustains the universe. Both statements are accurate. ([iasexpress.net](https://www.iasexpress.net/mindmap-important-terms-in-indian-history-for-upsc-prelims/?utm_source=openai))

Q141. Why did Buddhism start declining in India in the early medieval times ?

1. Buddha was by that time considered as one of the incarnations of Vishnu and thus became a part of Vaishnavism.
 2. The invading tribes from Central Asia till the time of last Gupta king adopted Hinduism and persecuted Buddhists.
 3. The Kings of Gupta dynasty were strongly opposed to Buddhism.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

(a) 1 only

- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

A major reason for Buddhism's decline was its assimilation into Hinduism when the Buddha came to be regarded as an avatar of Vishnu (statement 1). There is no clear evidence that Central-Asian tribes who invaded up to the last Gupta king adopted Hinduism and systematically persecuted Buddhists, nor were the Gupta rulers 'strongly opposed'—some (e.g., Kumaragupta) even patronised Nalanda. Thus statements 2 and 3 are incorrect. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_Buddhism_in_the_Indian_subcontinent?utm_source=openai))

— 2008 —

Q46. What does Baudhayana theorem (Baudhayana Sulva Sutra) relate to?

(a) Lengths of sides of a right-angled triangle

- (b) Calculation of the value of pi
- (c) Logarithmic calculations
- (d) Normal distribution curve

Answer: (a)

The Baudhayana Sulva Sutra states the relationship of the sides of a right-angled triangle ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$), centuries before Pythagoras; it does not deal with π , logarithms or statistics. Hence (b), (c) and (d) are incorrect. ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/audhayana-framed-right-angled-triangle-theorem-ncert-class-8-textbook-101767035145257.html?utm_source=openai))

— 2006 —

UPSC 2006

Ancient History › Science & Technology

moderate

Q38. Match List – I with List – II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:**List – I (Finding / Invention / Calculation)**

- A. Time taken by the Earth to orbit the Sun
- B. Calculation of the value of 'pi'
- C. Invention of the digit zero
- D. The game of snakes and ladders

List – II (Ancient Indian Scholar)

- 1. Aryabhatta
- 2. Bhaskaracharya
- 3. Budhayana
- 4. Gyandev

Code:

- (a) A 2 B 4 C 1 D 3
- (b) A 2 B 3 C 1 D 4**
- (c) A 1 B 3 C 2 D 4
- (d) A 1 B 4 C 2 D 3

Answer: (b)

Bhaskara II (Bhaskaracharya) computed the precise length of the solar year; Baudh yana early rational approximation of π ; ryabhama popularized the zero symbol; and the board 'Snakes and Ladders' is attributed to the 13-century saint Gyandev. The mapping A-2, B-3 matches option (b). ([studyadda.com](https://www.studyadda.com/question-bank/gupta-and-post-gupta-hunas-varadhanas_q2/3309/275280?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2006

Ancient History › Post-Gupta & Early Medieval Dynasties

easy

Q117. Who among the following laid the foundation of Rashtrakuta Empire?

- (a) Amoghavarsha I
- (b) Dantidurga**
- (c) Dhruva
- (d) Krishna I

Answer: (b)

Dantidurga (also called Dantivarman) overthrew the Chalukyas around 753 CE and is explicitly described in the Ellora inscription as the founder of the Rashtrakuta Empire. Amoghavarsha I, Dhruva and Krishna I were important later rulers, but none of them established the dynasty. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dantidurga?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2006

Ancient History › Archaeology & Epigraphy

easy

Q129. Between which of the following was the ancient town of Takshasila located?

- (a) Indus and Jehelum**
- (b) Jhelum and Chenab
- (c) Chenab and Ravi
- (d) Ravi and Beas

Answer: (a)

Taxila (Takshasila) lay in the Pothohar plateau of Punjab, Pakistan, situated between the Indus River on the west and the Jhelum River on the east; therefore the correct river pair is Indus and Jhelum. ([worldheritagesite.org](https://www.worldheritagesite.org/list/Taxila?utm_source=openai))

Q130. With reference to the invaders in ancient India, which one of the following is the correct chronological order?

- (a) Greeks – Sakas – Kushans
- (b) Greeks – Kushans – Sakas
- (c) Sakas – Greeks – Kushans
- (d) Sakas – Kushans – Greeks

Answer: (a)

The Indo-Greeks entered north-west India c. 200 BCE; they were followed by the Sakas (Indo-Scythians) who established satrapies from the late 1st century BCE; the Kushans arose later (c. 30 CE onwards). Thus the chronological sequence is Greeks! Sakas! Kushans.
([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Greek_Kingdom?utm_source=openai))

Q131. Consider the following statements:

1. The Ikshvaku rulers of southern India were antagonistic towards Buddhism.
2. The Pala rulers of Eastern India were patrons of Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b)

Inscriptions from Nagarjunakonda show that the Andhra Ikshvaku kings and queens financed stupas and monasteries, indicating active patronage—not antagonism—towards Buddhism, so statement 1 is false. The Bengal-Bihar Pala rulers were noted Mahayana Buddhists who founded great monasteries such as Vikramashila and Somapura, so statement 2 is true. Hence only statement 2 is correct.
([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagarjunakonda))

Q144. The Allahabad Pillar inscription is associated with which one of the following?

- (a) Mahapadma Nanda
- (b) Chandragupta Maurya
- (c) Ashoka
- (d) Samudragupta

Answer: (d)

The Allahabad Pillar bears the famous Prayag Prashasti inscription composed by Harisena in praise of the Gupta emperor Samudragupta, detailing his conquests and achievements. It is therefore associated with Samudragupta, not with the rulers listed in the other options.
([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad_Pillar?utm_source=openai))

Q22. Who among the following was not a contemporary of the other three?

- (a) Bimbisara
- (b) Gautama Buddha
- (c) Milinda**
- (d) Prasenjit

Answer: (c)

Bimbisara (king of Magadha), Gautama Buddha and Prasenjit/Pasenadi (king of Kosala) all lived in the 6th–5th century BCE and frequently appear together in early Buddhist sources. Milinda is the Indo-Greek king Menander I who reigned roughly 165–130 BCE—about four centuries later—so he was not their contemporary. ([britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Menander-Indo-Greek-king?utm_source=openai))

— 2004 —

Q24. Consider the following statements:

1. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien attended the fourth Great Buddhist Council held by Kanishka.
2. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang met Harsha and found him to be antagonistic to Buddhism.

Which of these statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2**

Answer: (d)

Fa-Hien visited India during Chandragupta II's reign (c. 405 CE), eight centuries after Kanishka's 4th Buddhist Council, so statement 1 is wrong. Xuanzang (Hiuen-Tsang) became a close friend of Emperor Harsha, whom he praised as a generous Mahayana Buddhist patron—exactly the opposite of being antagonistic—so statement 2 is also wrong. With both statements incorrect, option d is correct. ([britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Faxian?utm_source=openai))

Q26. With reference to ancient Jainism, which one of the following statements is correct?

- (a) Jainism was spread in South India under the leadership of Sthalabahu
- (b) The Jains who remained under the leadership of Bhadrabahu were called Svetambaras after the Council held at Pataliputra
- (c) Jainism enjoyed the patronage of the Kalinga king Kharavela in the first century BC**
- (d) In the initial stage of Jainism, the Jains worshipped images unlike Buddhists

Answer: (c)

The Hathigumpha inscription shows that King Kharavela of Kalinga (1st cent. BC) lavishly patronised Jainism, confirming statement (c). Sthulabhadra, not Sthalabahu, led Jainism in the south; the Bhadrabahu group became Digambaras, not Svetambaras; and image-worship came later in Jainism. Hence statement (c) is correct (option c). ([odisha.gov.in](https://odisha.gov.in/en/about-us/history?utm_source=openai))

— 2003 —

UPSC 2003

Ancient History › Buddhism & Jainism

moderate

Q43. Consider the following statements:

1. Vardhamana Mahavira's mother was the daughter of Lichchhavi chief Chetaka.
2. Gautama Buddha's mother was a princess from the Kosha-lan dynasty.
3. Parshvanatha, the 23rd Tirthankara, belonged to Banaras.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) 2 and 3**
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

1. Mahavira's mother Trishala was the sister—not daughter—of Lichchhavi chief Chetaka, so statement 1 is incorrect. 2. Mahamaya (Maya Devi), Buddha's mother, is traditionally described as a Kshatriya princess of the Kosalan (Sakya-Koliya) lineage; UPSC treats this as correct. 3. Parshvanatha, the 23rd Tirthankara, is accepted to have been born in Varanasi (Banaras). Therefore only statements 2 and 3 are correct. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tri%C5%9Ba%C4%81?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2003

Ancient History › Post-Mauryan & Foreign Invasions

moderate

Q70. Consider the following statements:

1. The last Mauryan ruler, Brihadratha was assassinated by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga.
2. The last Sunga king, Devabhuti was assassinated by his Brahmana minister Vasudeva Kanva who usurped the throne.
3. The last ruler of the Kanva dynasty was deposed by the Andhra's.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Only 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

Pushyamitra Sunga murdered the last Mauryan king Brihadratha in 185 BC; Vasudeva Kanva, a Brahmana minister, killed the last Sunga ruler Devabhuti and founded the Kanva line; and the last Kanva king Susharman was overthrown by the Satavahanas (Andhras). Hence all three statements are correct. ([sorapedia.com](https://www.sorapedia.com/2010/06/02/prelims-upsc-general-studies-solved-paper-2003.html?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2003

Ancient History › Post-Gupta & Early Medieval Dynasties

easy

Q93. Emperor Harsha's southward march was stopped on the Narmada River by

- (a) Pulakesin-I
- (b) Pulakesin-II**
- (c) Vikramaditya-I
- (d) Vikramaditya-II

Answer: (b)

Harsha's attempt to extend his empire southwards was checked at the Narmada by Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II (c. 610-642 CE), as recorded in the Aihole inscription and Xuanzang's account. Pulakesin I and both Vikramadityas ruled either earlier or later and were not involved in this confrontation. ([iasexamportal.com](https://iasexamportal.com/paper/IAS_General_Studies_Prelims_Paper_2003_part-1?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2002

Ancient History › Indus Valley Civilization

moderate

Q15. Match List I (Ancient site) with List II (Archaeological finding) and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists:

List I (Ancient site)

- A. Lothal
- B. Kalibangan
- C. Dholavira
- D. ——— (site with Banawali inscription)

List II (Archaeological finding)

- 1. Ploughed field
- 2. Dockyard
- 3. Terracotta replica of a plough
- 4. An inscription comprising ten large-sized signs of the Banawali Harappan script

Codes:

- (a) A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4
- (b) A-2, B-1, C-2, D-4**
- (c) A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4
- (d) A-2, B-1, C-3, D-4

Answer: (b)

Lothal yielded a brick-lined tidal dockyard (2); Kalibangan produced the earliest excavated ploughed field (1); Dholavira produced the famous ten-symbol 'sign-board' inscription (4); Banawali yielded a terracotta model of a plough (3). The sequence A-2, B-1, C-2, D-4 matches option (b). ([gkseries.com](https://www.gkseries.com/general-knowledge/indian-history/indus-valley-civilization/discussion-68?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2002

Ancient History › Mauryan Empire

easy

Q35. The ancient Indian play Mudrarakshasa of Visakhadutt has its subject on

- (a) a conflict between Gods and Demons of ancient Hindu lore
- (b) a romantic story of an Aryan prince and a tribal woman
- (c) the story of the power struggle between two Aryan tribes
- (d) the court intrigues at the time of Chandragupta Maurya**

Answer: (d)

Vi[khadatta's Sanskrit drama 'Mudr r kcasa' recounts Chanakya's political machinations in the court of Chandragupta Maurya against the minister R kcasa. It is thus set in Maur politics, not mythological battles, tribal romance, or inter-Aryan tribal wars. ([lichavilyceum.com](https://lichavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-2002-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2001

Ancient History › Post-Gupta & Early Medieval Dynasties

easy

Q28. Assertion (A): Harshavardhana convened the Prayag Assembly.

Reason (R): He wanted to popularise only the Mahayana form of Buddhism.

- (a) Both A and R are individually true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are individually true, but R is NOT a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true, but R is false**
- (d) A is false, but R is true

Answer: (c)

Harsha did convene the great quinquennial Prayag (Allahabad) Assembly where he distributed alms to all faiths (Assertion true). His purpose was broad religious charity and statecraft, not the exclusive promotion of Mahayana Buddhism, making the Reason false. Hence A is true but R is false. ([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-2001-solved-question-paper/))

UPSC 2001

Ancient History › Post-Gupta & Early Medieval Dynasties

easy

Q36. Which one of the Chola kings conquered Ceylon?

- (a) Aditya I
- (b) Rajaraja I**
- (c) Rajendra
- (d) Vijayalaya

Answer: (b)

Rajaraja I (985–1014 CE) mounted a naval campaign in 993 CE that seized Anuradhapura and brought northern Ceylon under Chola control, marking the first successful Chola conquest of the island. Aditya I and Vijayalaya ruled earlier without overseas expeditions, while Rajendra's campaigns followed his father's initial annexation. ([britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rajaraja-I?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2001

Ancient History › Buddhism & Jainism

moderate

Q41. Who among the following presided over the Buddhist Council held during the reign of Kanishka at Kashmir?

- (a) Parsva
- (b) Nagarjuna
- (c) Sudraka
- (d) Vasumitra**

Answer: (d)

The Fourth Buddhist Council was convened by Kushana king Kanishka at Kundalvana (Kashmir). It was presided over by the Sarvastivadin scholar-monk Vasumitra, with Ashvaghośa as vice-president. Nagarjuna and Zaskdraka are not recorded as presidents of this council. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_councils?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2001

Ancient History › Indus Valley Civilization

easy

Q47. Which one of the following animals was NOT represented on the seals and terracotta art of the Harappan culture?

- (a) Cow
- (b) Elephant
- (c) Rhinoceros
- (d) Tiger

Answer: (a)

Harappan seals depict animals such as the elephant, rhinoceros and tiger, but the cow is conspicuously absent. Therefore the animal NOT represented is the cow (option a). ([examrobot.com](https://examrobot.com/content/match-list-i-list-ii-and-select-correct-answer-using-codes-given-below-lists-63?utm_source=openai))

— 2000 —

UPSC 2000

Ancient History › Post-Mauryan & Foreign Invasions

easy

Q18. The practice of military governorship was first introduced in India by the

- (a) Greeks
- (b) Shakas
- (c) Parthians
- (d) Mughals

Answer: (a)

The Indo-Greeks introduced the practice of appointing military governors ('strategoi'/satraps) in the north-western parts of India after Alexander's campaigns, a system later adopted by the Parthians; the Mughals came much later. Therefore, the Greeks are credited with introducing military governorship in India. ([gkseries.com](https://www.gkseries.com/general-knowledge/indian-history/sources-of-indian-history/discussion-30?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 2000

Ancient History › Post-Mauryan & Foreign Invasions

easy

Q23. Which one of the following dynasties was ruling over North India at the time of Alexander's invasion?

- (a) Nanda
- (b) Maurya
- (c) Sunga
- (d) Kanva

Answer: (a)

When Alexander invaded north-western India (326 BCE), the Gangetic plain and most of northern India were under the Nanda dynasty—specifically the last Nanda king, variously called Agrammes or Dhana Nanda. The Maurya, Zuega and K Gva dynasties arose later. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanda_Empire?utm_source=openai))

Q90. Assertion (A): The emphasis of Jainism on non-violence (ahimsa) prevented agriculturalists from embracing Jainism.

Reason (R): Cultivation involved killing of insects and pests.

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true, but R is false
- (d) A is false, but R is true

Answer: (a)

Jainism's uncompromising principle of ahimsa extended to the smallest life-forms; tilling the soil inevitably killed insects, so many cultivators found strict Jain practice impracticable. Therefore the Reason (farming kills pests) correctly explains why agriculturalists were generally reluctant to adopt Jainism. Both statements are true and R is the proper explanation of A.

([edurev.in](https://edurev.in/t/233818/UPSC-Prelims-PYQs-Buddhism-Jainism?utm_source=openai))

Q91. Assertion (A): The origin of feudal system in ancient India can be traced to military campaigns.

Reason (R): There was considerable expansion of the feudal system during the Gupta period.

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true, but R is false
- (d) A is false, but R is true

Answer: (b)

Land-grant charters issued to military officers after campaigns sowed the seeds of a feudal order, and such grants multiplied during the Gupta era. Hence both Assertion and Reason are correct; however, the Gupta-period expansion does not, by itself, explain that the very origin lay in earlier war-related grants, so R is not the correct explanation of A. ([sarthaks.com](https://www.sarthaks.com/58901/assertion-the-origin-of-feudal-system-in-ancient-india-can-be-traced-to-military-campaigns))

Q92. Assertion (A): Ashoka annexed Kalinga to the Mauryan Empire.

Reason (R): Kalinga controlled the land and sea routes to South India.

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true, but R is false
- (d) A is false, but R is true

Answer: (a)

Ashoka's conquest of Kalinga (c. 261 BCE) secured the vital coastal land corridor and maritime outlets linking the Gangetic heartland with peninsular India. Control of these land and sea routes was a key strategic motive; therefore both statements are true and the Reason correctly explains the Assertion. ([sarthaks.com](https://www.sarthaks.com/3528738/assertion-a-ashoka-annexed-kalinga-to-the-mauryan-empire?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1999

Ancient History › Post-Gupta & Early Medieval Dynasties

easy

Q1. One consistent feature found in the history of southern India was the growth of small regional kingdoms rather than large empires because of

- (a) the absence of minerals like iron
- (b) too many divisions in the social structure
- (c) the absence of vast areas of fertile land**
- (d) the scarcity of manpower

Answer: (c)

Southern India lacked an extensive, contiguous stretch of alluvial plains like the Indo-Gangetic belt; cultivable areas were broken up by hills and hard-rock plateaux. This limited the surplus needed to sustain very large imperial bureaucracies, so polity tended to fragment into smaller regional kingdoms. Therefore the growth of small kingdoms is linked to “the absence of vast areas of fertile land”, option (c); the other statements are not primary historical factors cited by scholars. ([upscgspedia.com](https://upscgspedia.com/upsc-prelims-pyqs-medieval-india/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1999

Ancient History › Vedic Period

easy

Q11. The term ‘Aryan’ denotes

- (a) an ethnic group
- (b) a nomadic people
- (c) a speech group**
- (d) a superior race

Answer: (c)

In scholarly usage ‘Aryan’ is a linguistic term referring to the Indo-Iranian (Indo-Aryan) speech family; it denotes a speech/ language group, not a distinct ethnic race, nomadic lifestyle, or an idea of racial superiority. ([uttarpradesh.pscnotes.com](https://uttarpradesh.pscnotes.com/uppcs-prelims/the-term-aryan-denotes/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1999

Ancient History › Gupta Empire

easy

Q23. Which one of the following ports handled the north Indian trade during the Gupta period?

- (a) Tamralipti**
- (b) Broach
- (c) Kalyan
- (d) Cambay

Answer: (a)

Tamralipti (modern Tamruk, Bengal) was the principal eastern seaport through which the Gupta heartland's north-Indian trade moved to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, visited by the pilgrim Faxian in the 5th century CE. The western ports such as Broach, Kalyan and Cambay were linked to western India, not the Gupta north. ([scribd.com](https://www.scribd.com/document/465263088/1999-upsc-prelims?utm_source=openai))

Q38. From the third century AD when the Hun invasion ended the Roman Empire, the Indian merchants relied more and more on the

- (a) African trade
- (b) West European trade
- (c) Southeast Asian trade**
- (d) Middle Eastern trade

Answer: (c)

With the collapse of the Roman Empire after the Hun invasions (3rd century AD), Mediterranean demand for Indian goods shrank, and Indian merchants redirected commerce toward the thriving ports of Southeast Asia (Suvarnabhumi), making south-east Asian trade their mainstay.

([doubtnut.com](https://www.doubtnut.com/qna/648094262?utm_source=openai))

Q49. The following persons came to India at one time or another:

- I. Fa-Hien**
- II. I-Tsing**
- III. Megasthenes**
- IV. Hieun-Tsang**

The correct chronological sequence of their visits is:

- (a) III, I, II, IV
- (b) III, I, IV, II**
- (c) I, III, II, IV
- (d) I, III, IV, II

Answer: (b)

Megasthenes visited the court of Chandragupta Maurya (~302 BCE), Fa-Hien travelled during Chandragupta II's reign (405-411 CE), Hiuen-Tsang came in 630-645 CE, and I-Tsing arrived later (671-695 CE). Hence the chronological order is III (Megasthenes), I (Fa-Hien), IV (Hiuen-Tsang), II (I-Tsing). ([licchavi lyceum.com](https://licchaviyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1999-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

Q63. Which one of the following was initially the most powerful city state of India in the 6th century B.C.?

- (a) Gandhar
- (b) Kamboj
- (c) Kashi**
- (d) Magadh

Answer: (c)

Early in the 6th century BCE, K [capital Varanasi] was the most dominant Mahajanapada eclipsed later by Kosala and then Magadha. Gandhara and Kamboja lay on the north-west. Magadha's ascendancy came slightly later; hence Kashi is the correct choice.

([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahajanapadas?utm_source=openai))

Q78. The Indo-Greek kingdom set up in north Afghanistan in the beginning of the second century BC was

- (a) Bactria
- (b) Scythia
- (c) Zedrasia
- (d) Aria

Answer: (a)

The Indo-Greek realm founded in north Afghanistan in the early 2nd century BC was the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, centred on Bactria (capital Bactra/Ai-Khanoum). The other names listed—Scythia, Zedrasia and Aria—refer to different Central-Asian/Iranian regions, not to the Hellenistic Greek polity established there. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Bactrian_Kingdom?utm_source=openai))

— 1998 —

Q28. Assertion (A): According to Asoka's edicts, social harmony among the people was more important than religious devotion.

Reason (R): He spread ideas of equity instead of promotion of religion.

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is NOT a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true, but R is false
- (d) A is false, but R is true

Answer: (a)

Ashoka's rock and pillar edicts repeatedly emphasise promotion of social concord (samhati) and ethical behaviour over sectarian worship, showing that social harmony ranked above mere religious devotion. His policy of Dhamma propagated equitable treatment of all sects rather than the advancement of a single faith, so the Reason correctly explains the Assertion. ([edurev.in](https://edurev.in/t/202739/Ancient-History-Solved-Questions--2021-1995--3?utm_source=openai))

Q41. Which one of the following ancient Indian records is the earliest royal order to preserve food grains to be utilised during the crises in the country?

- (a) Sohagaura Copper-plate
- (b) Rumminidei pillar-edict of Asoka
- (c) Prayaga-Prasasti
- (d) Mehrauli Pillar inscription of Chandra

Answer: (a)

The 3rd-century BCE Sohagaura copper-plate inscription orders the setting up of state granaries (kocmh g ra) for use in times of distress, making it the earliest known royal directive for food grains; the other inscriptions are several centuries later or unrelated. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sohgaura_copper_plate_inscription?utm_source=openai))

Q58. The given map relates to

- (a) Kaniska at the time of his death
- (b) Samudragupta after the close of his South Indian campaign
- (c) Asoka towards the close of his reign**
- (d) Empire of Thanesar on the eve of Harsha's accession

Answer: (c)

The map supplied in the paper shows an empire stretching from Afghanistan in the north-west to almost the whole of the Indian sub-continent except the far south, matching descriptions of the Mauryan Empire under Ashoka late in his reign. It does not fit the more limited domains of Kanicka, Samudragupta or Pushyabhkti kingdom of Th ne[var].

([aspireias.com](https://www.aspireias.com/upsc-general-study-10years-paper/1998?utm_source=openai))

Q66. The Asokan major rock edicts which tell us about the Sangam Kingdom include rock edicts

- (a) I and X
- (b) I and XI
- (c) II and XIII**
- (d) II and XIV

Answer: (c)

Major Rock Edicts II and XIII of Emperor Ashoka explicitly mention the southern polities of the Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras and Keralaputras—information that links the Mauryan realm with the later Sangam age kingdoms. Other edicts listed do not contain these references. ([timesofindia.indiatimes.com](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/etimes/trending/what-do-king-ashokas-18-rock-edicts-reveal-key-messages-and-insights/amp_articleshow/114879974.cms?utm_source=openai))

Q77. What is the correct chronological order in which the following appeared in India?

- I. Gold coins
- II. Punch-marked silver coins
- III. Iron plough
- IV. Urban culture

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) III, IV, I, II
- (b) III, IV, II, I
- (c) IV, III, I, II
- (d) IV, III, II, I**

Answer: (d)

The earliest urban culture in India was the Harappan civilisation (c. 2600 BCE). Iron-technology-based ploughs spread in the later-Vedic age (c. 1000-700 BCE). Punch-marked silver coins appeared with the Mahajanapadas in the 6th century BCE, whereas the first regular gold coinage was introduced by the Indo-Greeks/KucGas (2nd century BCE–1st century CE). Thus the sequence is IV, III, II, I (option d). ([uttarpradesh.pscnotes.com](https://uttarpradesh.pscnotes.com/uppcs-prelims/what-is-the-correct-chronological-order-in-which-the-following-appeared/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1997

Ancient History › Mauryan Empire

easy

Q81. Which one of the following edicts mentions the personal name of Asoka?

- (a) Kalsi
- (b) Rummindei
- (c) Special Kalinga Edict
- (d) Maski**

Answer: (d)

The only Ashokan inscription that explicitly spells out the emperor's personal name is the Minor Rock Edict at Maski, which reads "Devanampiya Asoka." The inscriptions at Kalsi, Rummindei and in the Special Kalinga Edicts use only his titles such as Devanampiya Piyadasi and omit the name Asoka. ([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1997-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1997

Ancient History › Mahajanapadas & Early Kingdoms

moderate

Q85. The following map shows four of the sixteen mahajanapadas that existed in ancient India. The places marked A, B, C and D respectively are

- (a) Matsya, Cedi, Kosala, Anga
- (b) Surasena, Avanti, Vatsa, Magadha
- (c) Matsya, Avanti, Vatsa, Anga**
- (d) Surasena, Cedi, Kosala, Magadha

Answer: (c)

On the UPSC map, location A lies in present-day Rajasthan (Matsya), B in western Madhya Pradesh (Avanti), C near Prayagraj on the Ganga-Yamuna doab (Vatsa), and D in eastern Bihar (Anga). This sequence matches option (c) Matsya–Avanti–Vatsa–Anga; the other options place the mahajanapadas incorrectly. ([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1997-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1997

Ancient History › Gupta Empire

easy

Q90. The silver coins issued by the Guptas were called

- (a) rupaka**
- (b) karshapana
- (c) dinara
- (d) pana

Answer: (a)

Gupta rulers issued silver coins called Rupaka (also termed drammas in some texts). Their gold coins were dinaras; karshapana and pana refer to earlier punch-marked or copper denominations. Hence option (a) is correct. ([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1997-solved-question-paper/))

UPSC 1997

Ancient History › Trade & Economy

moderate

Q98. Which one of the following was a corporation of merchants in ancient India?

- (a) Chaturvedi Mangalam
- (b) Parishad
- (c) Ashtadikgaja
- (d) Manigrama**

Answer: (d)

Manigrama (also spelled Manigramam) was a well-known itinerant corporation of merchants active from the early centuries CE, attested in inscriptions and copper plates across South India and South-East Asia. The other terms listed—Chaturvedi Mangalam (a Brahmin settlement), Parishad (scholarly council) and Ashtadikgaja (court poets of Krishnadevaraya)—were not merchant guilds.

([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manigramam?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1997

Ancient History › Archaeology & Epigraphy

moderate

Q102. The Badami rock inscription of Pulakesin I is dated in the Saka year 465. If the same were to be dated in Vikrama Samvat, the year would be

- (a) 601**
- (b) 300
- (c) 330
- (d) 407

Answer: (a)

Vikrama Samvat began in 57 BCE, whereas the Saka era starts in 78 CE, making Vikrama Samvat exactly 135 years ahead of the Saka era. Therefore Saka 465 + 135 = Vikrama Samvat 601. Option (a) is correct. ([sarthaks.com](https://www.sarthaks.com/3528678/the-badami-rock-inscription-of-pulakesin-i-is-dated-in-the-saka-year-465?utm_source=openai))

— 1996 —

UPSC 1996

Ancient History › Vedic Period

easy

Q28. The river most mentioned in early Vedic literature is

- (a) Sindhu**
- (b) Sutudri
- (c) Sarasvati
- (d) Ganga

Answer: (a)

The Rigveda refers to the Sindhu (Indus) more than any other river—about 170 times—celebrating it as mighty and life-giving; other rivers like Sarasvati or Ganga receive far fewer references.

Therefore Sindhu is the river most frequently mentioned, validating option (a). ([lichavilyceum.com](https://lichavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1996-solved-question-paper/))

Q41. In the context of ancient Indian society, which one of the following terms does not belong to the category of the other three?

- (a) Kula
- (b) Vamsa
- (c) Kosa**
- (d) Gotra

Answer: (c)

Kula (family), Vamsa (lineage/dynasty) and Gotra (clan) are kinship terms used to classify descent groups in Vedic-and-later Indian society. Kosa, by contrast, denotes a treasury or financial reserve and is unrelated to kinship classification, so it is the odd term out. ([civildcracker.com](https://civildcracker.com/upsc-previous-year-questions-ancient-history/?utm_source=openai))

Q47. Who among the following is known for his work on medicine during the Gupta period?

- (a) Saumilla
- (b) Sudraka
- (c) Shaunaka
- (d) Susrutha**

Answer: (d)

Susrutha (author of the Susruta-samhita) is the celebrated physician–surgeon whose Ayurvedic treatise was widely used during the Gupta age; none of the other names is associated with medical literature. ([lichavilyceum.com](https://lichavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1996-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

Q67. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer by using the codes given below the lists:

List I

- I. Visakhadatta**
- II. Varahamihira**
- III. Charaka**
- IV. Brahmagupta**

List II

- A) Medicine**
- B) Drama**
- C) Astronomy**
- D) Mathematics**

- (a) I – A, II – C, III – D, IV – B
- (b) I – B, II – A, III – C, IV – D
- (c) I – B, II – C, III – A, IV – D**
- (d) I – C, II – B, III – A, IV – B

Answer: (c)

Visakhadatta authored the Sanskrit drama 'Mudrarakshasa' (Drama – B); Varahamihira was a renowned astronomer ('B[hat Samhit ', Astronomy – C); Charaka compiled 'Charaka Samhit ' on Ay – A); Brahmagupta wrote 'Br hmasphumasiddh nta' on mathematics (Mathematics – D). T is I-B, II-C, III-A, IV-D – option (c).

([scribd.com](https://www.scribd.com/document/829987262/1996-Solved-PYQ-CSE))

UPSC 1995

Ancient History › Vedic Period

easy

Q6. Who among the following was a Brahmavadini who composed some hymns of the Vedas?

- (a) Lopamudra
- (b) Gargi
- (c) Leelavati
- (d) Savitri

Answer: (a)

Lopamudra is specifically mentioned in the Rig-veda (RV 1.179) as a Brahmavadini and hymn composer, whereas Gargi is known from the Upanishads and the other two names are not Vedic hymn writers. ([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1995-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1995

Ancient History › Archaeology & Epigraphy

moderate

Q10. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer by using the codes given below the lists:

List I (Eras)

- I. Vikrama era
- II. Saka era
- III. Gupta era
- IV. Kali era

List II (Reckoned from)

- A) 3102 B.C.
- B) 320 A.D.
- C) 78 A.D.
- D) 58 B.C.
- E) 248 A.D.

- (a) I-B, II-D, III-E, IV-A
- (b) I-A, II-C, III-B, IV-D
- (c) I-D, II-E, III-B, IV-C
- (d) I-D, II-C, III-B, IV-A

Answer: (d)

The correct pairings are: Vikrama era – 58 B.C.; Saka era – 78 A.D.; Gupta era – 320 A.D.; Kali era – 3102 B.C. Option (d) matches this sequence (I-D, II-C, III-B, IV-A); other codes mismatch at least one era's starting point.

([licchavilyceum.com](https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1995-solved-question-paper/))

UPSC 1995

Ancient History › Gupta Empire

easy

Q18. In Sanskrit plays written during the Gupta Period women and sudras speak

- (a) Sanskrit
- (b) Prakrit**
- (c) Pali
- (d) Sauraseni

Answer: (b)

Classical Sanskrit plays follow a fixed sociolinguistic code: male nobles converse in Sanskrit, while women and lower-caste characters, including [kdras, use Prakrit dialects to reflect everyday speech. Women and [kdras in Gupta-era dramas speak Prakrit. Options a, c and d do not match the correct answer. (licchavilyceum.com)(https://licchavilyceum.com/upsc-civil-services-prelims-1995-solved-question-paper/?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1995

Ancient History › Mauryan Empire

easy

Q21. The name by which Asoka is generally referred to in his inscriptions is

- (a) Chakravarti
- (b) Dharmadeva
- (c) Dharmakirti
- (d) Priyadarshini**

Answer: (d)

In almost all his edicts Ashoka calls himself "Devanampiya Priyadarsi/Priyadarshi" (Beloved of the Gods, He-who-looks-with-kindness). None of the other epithets—Chakravarti, Dharmadeva or Dharmakirti—occur as his usual self-designation in the inscriptions. (studocu.com)(https://www.studocu.com/in/document/sambalpur-university/zoology-ge-student/inscriptions-opsc/110766251?utm_source=openai))

UPSC 1995

Ancient History › Trade & Economy

moderate

Q56. The term Yavanapriya, mentioned in ancient Sanskrit texts, denoted

- (a) a fine variety of Indian muslin
- (b) ivory
- (c) damsels sent to the Greek court for dance performance
- (d) pepper**

Answer: (d)

Yavanapriya (literally, "dear to the Yavanas/Greeks") is recorded in Sanskrit glossaries as a name for black pepper, the prized spice that was exported from South India to the Greco-Roman world. The term is never used for muslin, ivory or dancing girls, so those options are incorrect. (sanskritdictionary.com)(https://sanskritdictionary.com/yavanapriya/185299/1?utm_source=openai))

Q118. Zero was invented by

- (a) Aryabhata
- (b) Varahamihira
- (c) Bhaskara I
- (d) an unknown Indian**

Answer: (d)

The place-value numeral '0' emerged in India (e.g., 9th-century inscription at Gwalior), but surviving sources do not identify a single inventor; therefore it is attributed to an unknown Indian mathematician rather than to Aryabhata, Varahamihira or Bhaskara I individually.

([id.scribd.com](https://id.scribd.com/document/731910046/1995?utm_source=openai))