

# NEXT IAS

## GRADED ASSESSMENT TEST 2025

(To be filled by candidate)

TEST CODE : M25GAT02

TEST NO. : 02

Name of Candidate: ..... SHUBHAM SINGH .....

Roll No.: ..... Start Time 2:45 PM End Time .....

Date of Examination: ..... 29.06.25 ..... Mobile No. ....

Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
1	10	
2	10	
3	10	
4	10	
5	10	
Total Marks : 50		

Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
6	15	
7	15	
8	15	
9	15	
10	15	
Total Marks : 75		

GRAND TOTAL - ..... / 125

EVAL CODE: ..... GRADED DATE: .....

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Immediately on receipt of the QCA booklet, please check that this QCA booklet does not have any misprint or torn or missing pages or items, etc. If so, get it replaced by a fresh QCA booklet.
2. Candidates must mention all relevant details like Name, Email, Roll No, Mobile, etc. in the space allocated.
3. Candidate is expected to attempt all 10 questions within the given timeline.
4. Answers must be written in the medium authorized at the time of admission.
5. Candidates must write answers for the specific question under the respective question itself. Any answer written outside the space allotted may not be given credit.
6. Please write neatly. Avoid illegible writing.
7. Do not write/mark irrelevant matters in the QCAB.
8. Only those copies that are submitted on the date of exam till 5 pm will be graded.

REMARKS: .....

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**MARKING SCHEME \***

Marks Per Ques	Below Average	Average	Above Average
10 Marks	Below 2.50	3.00 - 3.50	4.00 and above
15 Marks	Below 4.00	4.00 - 5.50	6.00 and above

\* Subject to change without prior notice.

**MACRO COMMENTS**

*The Purpose of evaluation@nextias.com is to provide constructive suggestions on 'How to improve Answer Writing and thereby score better marks.*

**STRENGTHS OF THE CANDIDATE**

**AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT**

**IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS**

1. "One of the mandates of NITI Aayog is to promote competitive and cooperative federalism among States and UTs." In this context, evaluate the role of NITI Aayog in strengthening cooperative federalism and encouraging innovation in policy making since 2015.

(Answer in 150 words) 10 marks

NITI Aayog was established in 2015 to replace Planning Commission as premier policy think tank. It was created via executive order.

### Achievements in Cooperative federalism

- ① Culture of "Team India" in its governing council meetings
- ② Sub-committees of CMs to suggest policy suggestions. e.g. Chandrababu Naidu Committee on Agri-reforms
- ③ Aspirational District programme: where state machinery worked with center  $\Rightarrow$  all districts surpassed their respective state average
- ④ Sharing of best practices among states through SAATHI programme

### Achievements in Competitive Federalism

- ① Ranking of states along various indices such as SDG Index, MPI Index  
etc.

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- ② Competitive sub-federalism through delta rankings in Aspirational Block Programme
- ③ Engaged third parties in evaluating performances of states in various sectors

### Challenges

1. Ground level reach to district & block level
2. Limited capacity to undertake bottom-up planning
3. ~~lacks~~ Lacks mechanism to build capacities among states

Vijay Kelkar Committee  
has given framework for Niti Aayog 2.0 which 2.5% of GDP funding to undertake capacity building at ground level.

2. Examine the structure and jurisdiction of courts in the United States and India. How do the contempt powers of courts differ in both countries? (Answer in 150 words) 10 marks

Courts in United States and India have both differences and similarities.

### Differences

US

- ① Separate judiciary from federal & state level
- ② Appointments by Executive & confirmed by the Senate
- ③ Fixed size of constitutional bench
- ④ Total no. of judges is 9 in Supreme Court at Federal level
- ⑤ Lifelong tenure of judges
- ⑥ No special powers like under A.141 & A.142

India

- ① Integrated judiciary for center & states
- ② Appointments by Collegium of senior-most judges
- ③ Polyvocal bench with 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 - multiple sizes of bench
- ④ Total 34 judges in Supreme Court
- ⑤ SC judges retire at the age of 65 yrs.
- ⑥ Scope for judicial legislation under A.141 & A.142

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## Similarities

1. Both judiciary enjoy vast powers of Judicial reviews of executive as well as legislature
2. Both act as guardian of constitution and guarantor of fundamental rights
3. Both follow dul process of law doctrine over procedure established by law

~~Jus~~ Alladi Krishnaswami  
Iyer had called the Supreme Court of India as the most powerful than any other in the world.

3. "Universal basic services and targeted welfare are fiscally sound, but competitive populism may hinder productive investment." In this context, highlight the constitutional and legal perspectives on welfare provisioning and discuss the impacts of the rising freebie culture.  
(Answer in 150 words) 10 marks

Constitutions of India envisaged a welfare state to ensure social, economic democracy along with political democracy.

### Constitutional Perspectives on welfare

- ① Article 46: requires state to take special measures for weaker sections
- ② Article 39(a), (b), (c) requires state to actively counter inequality
- ③ A. 21 ⇒ right to life requires basic capacities (health, education, shelter) to lead a life of dignity
- ④ A. 15(5) ⇒ enables special provision → for women & children

### Legal Perspectives

- ① Rights based welfare provisions under RTE 2009 Act, National Food Security Act 2013,

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Right to work under MGNREGS Act 2005

② FRBM Act 2003, however, puts limits on government borrowings to under take expenditure

Impacts of freebie culture

- ① Fiscal ~~waste~~ unsustainability
- ② Diverts resources from capital investment, human capital formation
- ③ Translates into electoral bribery

Election Commission may constitute a panel of fiscal experts  
+ Independent Fiscal Council  
as check on freebie culture

4. "The Attorney-General is the chief legal adviser and lawyer of the Government of India."  
Discuss. (Answer in 150 words) 10 marks

Article 76 creates the office of Attorney General of India.

Acts as Chief Legal Advisor

- ① Advises governments on legality of bills, policies, measures
- ② Acts as amicus curiae for the higher judiciary in certain cases
- ③ Advises on whether a case is fit for contempt proceedings under Contempt of Courts Act 1976
- ④ oversees litigation policy of the government

Acts as the lawyer of the GOI

- ① Represents GOI in all cases in the Supreme Court
- ② Also defends the GOI in certain cases before the High Courts
- ③ Presents government's view in the Parliament and before Parliament.

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ny committees

- ④ Gives government's views in PIL cases  
~~and~~

However, he/she:

- ① Continues to practice privately
- ② Does not head any department
- ③ Can't appear in cases against the Government.
- ④ Holds office at the pleasure of President

In U.K., Attorney

General is also responsible for improving justice delivery mechanism.

5. "Lokpal is not a panacea, but a vital step towards ensuring accountability in public life." In this context, discuss the significance of the institution of Lokpal, along with the limitations it faces. (Answer in 150 words) 10 marks

Lokpal, as anti-corruption watchdog, has been established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act of 2013.

Vital Step for Accountability in public life

- ① Independent inquiry, investigation into the allegations of corruption under Prevention of Corruption Act 1988
- ② Protection of whistleblowers to encourage revealing of corruption
- ③ Transparency in assets of public servants
- ④ Also a watchdog for probity among the NGOs who receive substantial fort. aid or foreign funding

But, not a panacea :

- ① Judicial delays, pendencies create culture of impunity
- ② Not a preventive mechanism

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- ③ Limited reach to lower level personnel
- ~~④ Lokayuktas~~
- ④ Not a solution for red tapism which cause coercive corruption
- ⑤ Lokayuktas at state level are not regularly constituted.

### Way forward

Lokpal Annual Report of FY 2022 has outlined reform measures:

- ① Increased funding
- ② Dedicated inquiry & prosecution wings
- ③ Interface with state police, lokyuktas
- ④ Binding powers on its enforcement

6. "Municipal corporations are key to urban governance, yet states often show reluctance to empower them functionally and financially". In this context, examine the key challenges faced by municipal corporations and suggest measures for a paradigm shift in urban local governance. (Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 envisaged local self governance at local level for urban centers for grass root democracy & inclusive development



### Key to urban governance

- ① Urban planning → Delhi master Plan 2041
- ② Public health & sanitation → Indore
- ③ Inclusive, participative governance  
→ Surat's People's budget
- ④ Basic amenities — health, education, roads etc.

### KEY CHALLENGES

#### Functional

- ① Lack of devolution of powers by state govt as required in 12<sup>th</sup> Schedule

1. BMC - has 4/18 subjects in 12<sup>th</sup> schedule

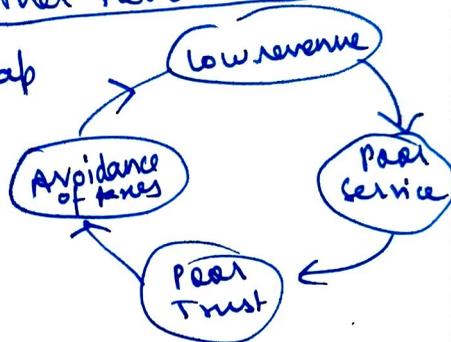
② Encroachment on their jurisdiction by parastatal bodies P.J. Delhi Development Authority (DDA)

③ Made to serve as scheme implementing bodies of state govt.

### Financial

④ Lack of own taxes & other revenue streams  
⇒ low equilibrium trap

⑤ Delays in disbursement of funds create uncertainty at local level



⑥ Outdated property tax collection system resulting in ~0.15% GDP collection vs 1% in OECD

### Other challenges

⑦ Functionaries: Lack of own dedicated cadre

⑧ Political Empowerment: rubber stamp mayor and excessive centralization at municipal commissioner level

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## Measures Required

① FBI Report 2022 - Municipal Finances  
⇒ Sharing of 16% GST

② Reforms in Property Tax Collection  
↳ crosspatial tools to assess  
↳ Review every 4-5 years  
↳ online self assessment

③ 2nd ARC 6th report → mandatory devolution  
of all 18 functions  
of 12th schedule  
↳ ~~Direct~~ Vesting of  
executive powers in mayors

④ Punchhi Commission ⇒ separate dedicated  
(2010)  
cadre.

By 2050, 50% population  
is expected to be urban. ULBs need  
to become effective for cities to  
become growth hubs.

Intro :

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7. Discuss the constitutional provisions governing the imposition of President's Rule in India and its significance within the federal framework. Examine the challenges and criticisms related to its misuse. Mention key Supreme Court observations that have shaped the constitutional understanding of President's Rule. (Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

Article 356 provides for imposition of President's rule in a state under extraordinary circumstances. Since 1950, it has been invoked over 100 times.

### Constitutional Provisions

#### Grounds

1. **A. 356**: Governor sends a report if he concludes that governance in the state cannot be carried out as per the constitution.
2. **A. 355**: Duty on Center to safeguard constitutional machinery in the state.
3. **A. 365**: Center may invoke A. 356 if administrative directives under A. 256 & A. 257 are not complied by the states.

### Effect on Center-State relations

1. State legislative assembly gets suspended and Parliament enacts laws on state subjects as well.

2. Council of ministers gets suspended

### SIGNIFICANCE IN FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

- ① flexibility  
Allows ~~more~~ unitary style of center-state relation in the event of extraordinary situations - Insurgency, war etc.
- ② Situational adaptability such as during hung assembly at state level
- ③ Ultimate tool to preserve unity, integrity of the nation

### Criticisms & challenges

- ① Misused for political reasons
- ② Partisan role of governor is interfering in local state politics
- ③ violates federalism and integrity of state's democratic framework
- ④ No institutional check to ensure its limited & rare use
- ⑤ Vague reasons such as "breakdown of constitutional machinery"

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② No standard / principle for Governor's report to be objective, fact based

Supreme Court observations

① S. R. Bommai 1992

↳ Clarified when Governor should disinvest assembly, conducts floor test and what is the standard for "constitutional breakdown"

② Pameshwar Prasad 2006 ⇒ floor test of confidence of govt. must happen on the floor of the house

③ Nabam Rebia 2016

↳ Governor's discretion is subjected to judicial review

↳ State governments can be restored in case of arbitrary dismissal

B. R. Ambedkar had expected A.356 to remain a dead letter in the constitution.

8. "Delay in disqualification under the Anti-Defection Law weakens governance and undermines democratic stability." Discuss the provisions of the Anti-Defection Law and the role of the Speaker in its implementation. How does the delay in disqualification affect governance? Suggest reforms needed to strengthen the law.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

52nd Amendment Act of 1985 enacted the anti-defection law to ensure stability of government and to prevent horse-trading.

~~However~~

Provisions

- ① Grounds :
- In an elected member changes his party
  - If ~~as~~ a member voluntarily resigns from the party
  - If Nominated member joins a party after 6 months
  - If Independent member joins any party

- ② Exception : If a 2/3rd of a party merges with another party then those part of merges are exempted

- ③ Deciding authority : Speaker/Presiding Officer of the house

- ④ Consequence : membership gets disqualified and ineligible to be part of council of ministers.

Role of speaker:

- ① Receiving complaints of defectives
- ② Giving opportunity of hearing to all parties
- ③ Time body disposal in non-partisan manner

Delays in disqualification

- Examples:
- ① Sena vs Sena case in Maharashtra Assembly
  - ② Previous instances observed in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra as well

Weakens Governance:

- ① Uncertainty over stability of government delays policy making, public participation in Governance.
- ② Affects public perception and credibility
- ③ lowers the authority of council of ministers
- ④ weakens accountability by impeding role of opposition

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## Reforms Needed

- ① Supreme Court in Sena vs Sena Case 2021 ⇒ gave strict timeline for Speaker to decide
- ② Velkatchachiah Commission (2002) ⇒ shift the role from Speaker to Election Commission who recommends to President
- ③ UK model for Speaker where he/she voluntarily resigns from party membership
- ④ Speaker may be assisted by a Committee of senior most members
- ⑤ Role of Parliamentary Committee on Privileges / Ethics

Limiting anti-defection to critical matters (no-confidence, budget)  
 and empowering civil society to keep a watch on the conduct of the members.

9. Examine the key mechanisms available to the Indian Parliament to scrutinise the executive. What are the major gaps in these mechanisms, and how can they be strengthened to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability? (Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

Article 75 establishes parliamentary form of democracy where executive must enjoy the confidence of Lok Sabha and is collectively responsible to the Parliament.

### Key Mechanisms

- ① No-confidence motion, censure motion, Adjournment motion, Token cut motion ⇒ to express approval / disapproval of executive's policy
- ② Through debates, discussions, questions during Question hour, Calling Attention motion, Zero hour
- ③ Budget scrutiny through Departmentally Related Standing Committees
- ④ Financial accountability through 3 finance committees (PAC) and CAG
- ⑤ Discussions during motion of thanks every year

## Major Craps

1. Executive <sup>overbearing</sup> control over the agenda of the house
2. Partisan role of Speaker & other Presiding officers
3. Anti-defection law has curbed free & open debates
4. Declining role of Parliamentary Committees due to discretion based reference of issues / bills
5. Lack of expertise, capacity among members to ~~and~~ tackle technical subjects
6. Quillotine of bills without significant discussing
7. Misuse of money bill route to bypass Rajya Sabha
8. Disruptions over debate culture

## Measures to Strengthen

## Transparency

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- ① Use of online tools by Parliament & its committees to engage with civil society.
- ② ~~the~~ mandatory time bound tabling of reports by constitutional / statutory bodies without delays
- ③ Follow up mechanism to track actions taken by the executive over Parliament's observations

### Accountability

- ① mandatory referral of bills to PSCs
- ② Role of opposition in deciding agenda of the house through Business Advisory Committees
- ③ Increasing no. of sitting days to minimum 120/year (Velupillai Prabhakaran Commission 2002)

Effective Parliament is the bedrock of effective democracy.

10. "The powers of the Governor, particularly with respect to state bills, have sparked recurring tensions between the Centre and the States." Discuss the constitutional powers of the Governor in this regard. Highlight the key concerns arising out of the Governor's role in the legislative process. What reforms can help address the Governor-State disputes? Refer to the case laws. (Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

Governor is the constitutional head of the state and plays a critical role in the legislative process based on both aid & advice of Council of Ministers as well as his own discretion.

### Constitutional Powers of Governor with regard to State bills

- ① Assent to State bills only then the bill is deemed to be passed
- ② May send the bill for reconsideration of the legislature
- ③ Money bill's introduction
- ④ A.200 : May reserve the bill for Presidential reference if in his opinion, bill violates any constitutional provisions
- ⑤ Pocket veto : may sit indefinitely without any decisions (implicit provision)
- ⑥ ~~Summons~~

## Key Concerns with Governor's role

- ① Timeliness : not bound to follow any strict timeline to take decisions ~ bill
- ② ~~✗~~ Undue interference in state's democratic process → State of T.N. vs Governor of T.N. 2025
- ③ A.200 x A.201 violates principles of federalism as it enables central control over state's bills
- ④ creates uncertainty in state's legislative policies • thereby affecting development
- ⑤ Lack of checks & balances
- ⑥ Undemocratic discretion overriding will of democratically elected govt.

~~⑦~~

~~Reforms~~

## Reforms Required

- ① Appointment of Governor
  - ↳ only outsider who is of eminence and apolitical (Punchhi 2010)
  - ↳ After consultation with Chief Minister (Sarkaria 1984)
- ② Introduce procedure for impeachment by state legislature for checks & balances (Punchhi 2010)

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- ③ Time line of 6 months under A. 200 & A. 201 (Punchhi Commn 2010)
- ④ Inter-state Council must formulate guidelines for discretionary powers of Governor
- ⑤ views of Supreme Court
- ↳ State of TN vs Governor Case 2025 ⇒ Powers under A. 200 & A. 201 does not allow indefinite pocket veto.
  - ↳ B. P. Singhal 2010 ⇒ Governor is an independent office and must not act as agent of Center
  - ↳ Govt. of NCT Case 2018 ⇒ Principle of Democratic governance must be upheld by the conduct of governor

Governors must remain solely loyal to the Constitution to balance dual role as constitutional head of state and agent of center