

NEXT IAS

MTS 2.0 - FOUNDATION BATCH (2025)

(To be filled by candidate)

TEST CODE : XXXXXXXXXX

Name of Candidate: Mobile No.

Roll No. : Start Time End Time.....

Date of Examination: Medium : English Hindi

Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
1	10	
2	10	
3	10	
4	10	
5	10	
6	10	
7	10	
8	10	
9	10	
10	10	
TOTAL MARKS - 100		

Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
11	15	
12	15	
13	15	
14	15	
15	15	
16	15	
17	15	
18	15	
19	15	
20	15	
TOTAL MARKS - 150		

GRAND TOTAL -/ 250

EVAL CODE: EVAL 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 20 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.

सामान्य निर्देश

1. QCA पुस्तिका प्राप्त होने पर कृपया तुरंत जांच लें कि इस QCA पुस्तिका में कोई पृष्ठ या सामग्री आदि गलत छपी हुई या फटी हुई या गायब तो नहीं है। यदि ऐसा है, तो इसे एक नई QCA पुस्तिका से बदल लें।
2. अभ्यर्थियों को सभी प्रासंगिक विवरण जैसे नाम, ईमेल, रोल नंबर, मोबाइल नंबर आदि का आवंटित स्थान पर उल्लेख करना होगा।
3. अभ्यर्थियों से अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वह आवंटित समय-सीमा के भीतर ही सभी 20 प्रश्नों के उत्तर-लेखन का प्रयास करें।
4. प्रत्येक उत्तर, प्रवेश के समय चुनी गयी भाषा के माध्यम में ही लिखे जाने चाहिए।
5. अभ्यर्थियों को विशिष्ट प्रश्न के उत्तर संबंधित प्रश्न के नीचे ही लिखने होंगे। आवंटित स्थान के बाहर लिखे गए किसी भी उत्तर को क्रेडिट नहीं दिया जाएगा।
6. कृपया साफ-सुथरा लिखें। अपठनीय लेखन से बचें।
7. QCAB में अप्रासंगिक तथ्यों को न लिखें / न ही चिह्नित करें।

REMARKS:

Student Concerns / Query

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Evaluator's Feedback / Response

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MARKING SCHEME *

Marks Per Ques	Below Average	Average	Above Average
10 Marks	Below 3.00	3.00 - 3.75	4.00 and above
15 Marks	Below 4.50	4.50 - 5.75	6.00 and above

* Subject to change without prior notice.

IMPORTANT QR CODES



Topper's Copy



Common mistake and Correct Filled QCAB



Copy Scanner App



Next IAS Test Centre Location

MACRO COMMENTS

The Purpose of MTS 2.0 Score Improvement Program (SIP) 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

6.

The expansion of BRICS has been projected as a step towards greater representation for the Global South. Critically examine this claim in the context of growing concerns about China's strategic dominance within the grouping. (Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

Recently, BRICS has inducted new members such as - UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Bahrain, Venezuela. BRICS began as grouping of emerging market economies (on the advice of economist Jim O'Neil) in 2000s.

Expansion - Step towards greater representation of Global South

- ① Emerging as non-western dominated groupings unlike G7, G20, UNSC etc.
- ② Diverse representation from different continents unlike UNSC veto powers
- ③ New institutions such as New Development Bank, Contingency Reserve Agreement has facilitated development finance and alternatives to world Bank & IMF
- ④ Trading in local currencies for protection against trade wars, unilateral sanctions
- ⑤ Non-judgmental relationships unlike west breaching its own values

However, concerns of China's dominance

- ① China's attempts to use BRICS for de-dollarization
- ② China using BRICS to further promote BRI & chequebook diplomacy through NDB (China - 26% share)
- ③ Attempt to present BRICS as anti-west rather than non-west
- ④ Creating dependencies on China's exports, China's opaque credit, China's tech such as Deep seek etc.

Other Concerns

- ① Lack of strong trade complementarities between BRICS countries
- ② Differences among major powers within BRICS
 - ↳ Iran vs UAE & Saudi
 - ↳ China vs India
 - ↳ China vs Russia (recent leaked intel reports)
- ③ Countries using BRICS merely as bargaining chip for better deal with west (C. Rajamohan's view)

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Intro :
Body :
Conc. :
Total :

④ Lack of connectivity between the countries

way forward

- ① Use of DPI like UPI, GSTN for inter-linkages
- ② Increasing people to people contacts of BRICS Year of tourism, cultural exchange
- ③ Working towards trade facilitation.
- ④ Permanent charter, Secretariat to define aims, vision, mission

BRICS is part of India's strategy to provide leadership to global south and act as bridge between Global North (G7+1, Quad, Malabar) and Global South (Caricom, FIIAC, VOCS).

7. 'India's recent diplomatic outreach to the Taliban government in Afghanistan marks a significant shift in its regional geopolitical strategy'. Examine the rationale behind this shift and the strategic risks and opportunities it presents for India.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

from visit of Joint Secretary level officer (Iran-Afgh-Pak desk) to Afghanistan to recent telephonic conversation of S. Jaishankar to Afghanistan Foreign minister, it shows growing relationship between India & the Taliban govt. in Afghanistan.

SIGNIFICANT SHIFT

1. Growing official recognition of Taliban govt. from earlier approach of no-talks with terrorists.
2. History of India's ties with Northern Alliance inside Afghanistan which fought against Taliban.
3. National interests over humanitarian concerns such as denial of women education

RATIONALE

- ① To counter growing presence of china and Afghanistan eg. China-Pakistan-Afghanistan trilateral

- ② To prevent Pakistan from gaining Strategic depth e.g. LeT, Jem presence in Afghanistan
- ③ To safeguard and further leverage India's investments in Afghanistan
e.g. Salma Dam, Herat ring road etc.
- ④ To counter threat of terrorism, radicalization, narco-terrorism
e.g. IS KP growing inside Afghanistan

STRATEGIC RISKS

1. Legitimacy to Taliban has potential to legitimize radical ideologies in the region
2. Taliban's earlier record of helping the hijacking of ICT & LY
3. If Taliban grows richer, it may aggravate Kashmir situation inside India
4. Threat of smuggling of drugs etc.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

1. Link Afghanistan with Chabahar port, INSTC to counter BRI
2. Diplomatic isolation of Pakistan as Taliban-Pakistan tension grows over Durand line & TTP
3. Natural resources inside Afghanistan for India's economy
4. Investment opportunities for India's priv. sector.

Way forward

1. Commitment from Taliban over Kashmir & larger terrorism in the region
2. Use of aid, infrastructure to nudge Taliban govt
3. Integrate Afghanistan in connect to Central Asia policy.

Candidate:

write on this

Intro : 8

Body :

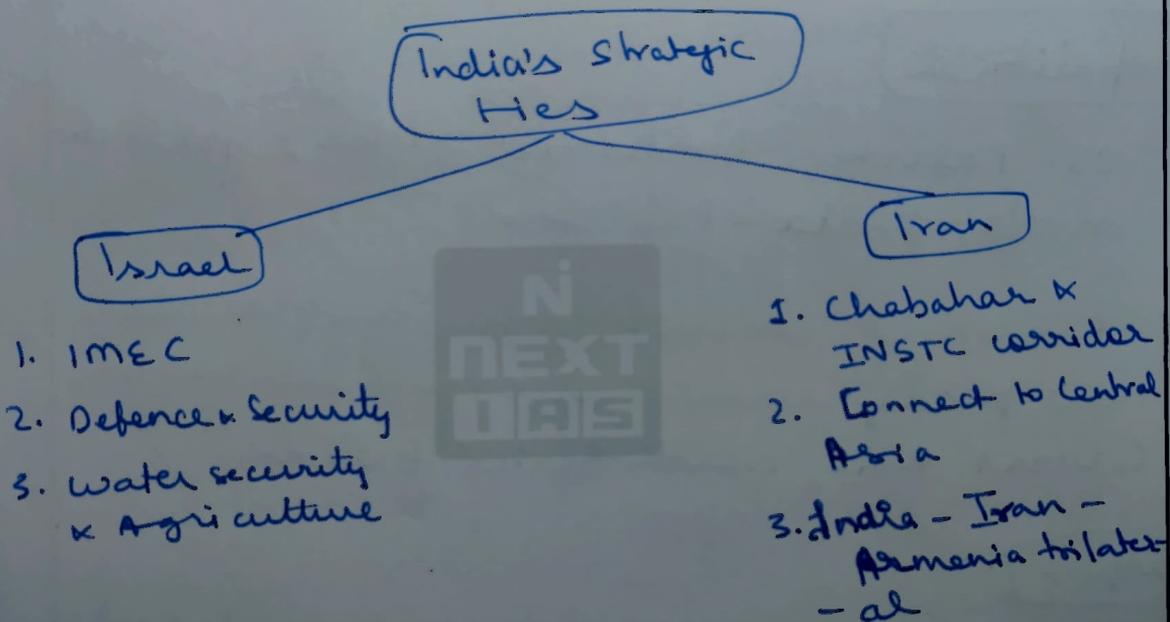
Conc. :

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8. The ongoing tensions between Iran and Israel present a foreign policy dilemma for India, given its strategic ties with both. Analyse the challenges this conflict poses and suggest how India can balance its interests amid rising instability in the region?

(Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

After October 2023 terror attack on Israel, with Operation Rising Lion, Iran-Israel ~~at~~ conflict has taken a dangerous turn.



Challenges

Economic

1. Energy Security: 70% of India's energy (oil & gas) flows through Persian gulf.
2. Rising cost of shipping, insurance due to Houthi rebels' adventure in Red Sea

Diplomatic

1. Delays progress on IMEC, INSTC, Ashgabad agreements (Link-west Policy)
2. It makes India's policy of De-hyphenation among regional powers difficult to practice

Geopolitical

1. US-Pakistan bonhomie risks ^{re-}hyphenation of India-Pakistan
2. Prolonged conflicts may aggravate new proxy wars across multiple regions (West Asia, North Africa, EU) etc.

Diaspora

1. Security of diaspora present in Israel, Iran and other Gulf countries

HOW INDIA CAN BALANCE

1. Connectivity diplomacy for stabilizing & nudging states to de-escalate
 E.g. Israel has stakes in IMEC & Iran in INSTC
2. Diversify energy sources e.g. PM recent visit Ayazma which has been

Candidates must not
write on this margin

Intro :

Body :

Conc. :

Total :

massive new discoveries of oil & gas

3. Blue Water Navy, Maritime Domain
Awareness within Indian Ocean to counter
threats to shipping routes

4. Diversify relationships in the region
eg. I2U2 with US & M-E countries
India-France-UAE bilateral

5. Deepen partnerships to increase India's
leverage in the region

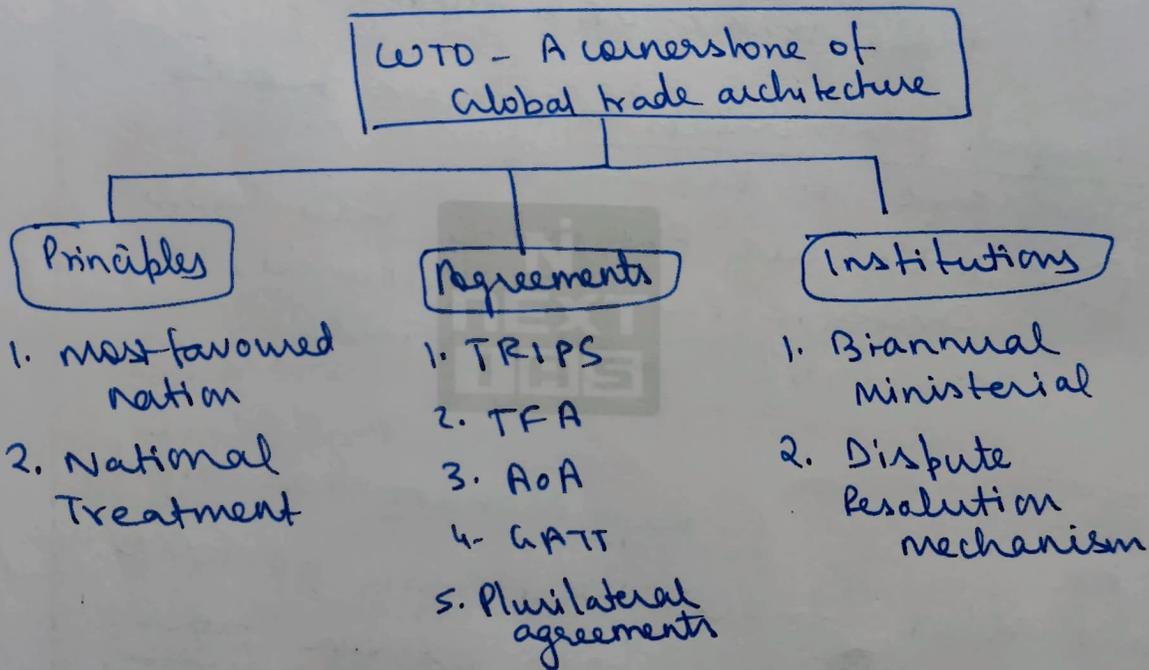
P.I. → India-ACC FTA talks; India-Saudi
Strategic Partnership Council,
IMEC High level Round Table

C. Raja Mohan has rightly
said that India's West Asia posture
has moved away from passive fence-
sitter to active balancer.

9. Despite being a cornerstone of the global trade architecture, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is facing a crisis of relevance. Examine the major challenges undermining the WTO's effectiveness and suggest measures for its revival in a multipolar world.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

WTO was established in 1992 (Marrakesh Treaty) for promotion of free trade and investments among member states.



MAJOR CHALLENGES

GEOPOLITICAL

1. Major powers not agreeing on basic principles of free trade
 ↳ US - EU trade war
2. Weaponization of supply chain
 ↳ Chinese control of Rare-earth, APUs etc.

3. Economic interdependence as geo-political tool

↳ Chinese - Maldives FTA × India's concerns

GEOECONOMICS

1. Regionalization of free trade

↳ RCEP, TPP

2. Ideas of friend-sharing, re-sharing, de-risking prevailing over concerns for efficiency, lower cost etc.

↳ US CHIPS Act, Inflation Reduction Act

3. Concerns over de-industrialization of both developed × developing countries due over-concentration of manufacturing in China

POLITICAL

1. Withdrawal ~~from~~ of US from WTO - dispute mechanism over concerns of bias

2. Domestic compulsions for protectionism

3. Developed-developing conflict over subsidies ↳ Peace clause under AOA

SOCIAL

1. Rising xenophobia, ~~the~~ concerns of demographic change, specially in EU, US etc.

TECHNOLOGICAL

1. AI, Cloud-Computing, 3D, automation has made re-Shoring of manufacturing possible

MEASURES FOR REVIVAL

1. Greater transparency, monitoring of non-market economies like china
2. Effective dispute resolution mechanism addressing Non-Tariff barriers
3. Greater accommodation of interests of developing countries to enhance their trade
1. e.g. Capacity building support for poorer countries
4. Leverage technology like AI, ML, Cloud for better monitoring of trade and data-based discussions

Free & stable trade is vital for rise of India as major economic powerhouse.

Candidate
write on this

Intro :

Body :

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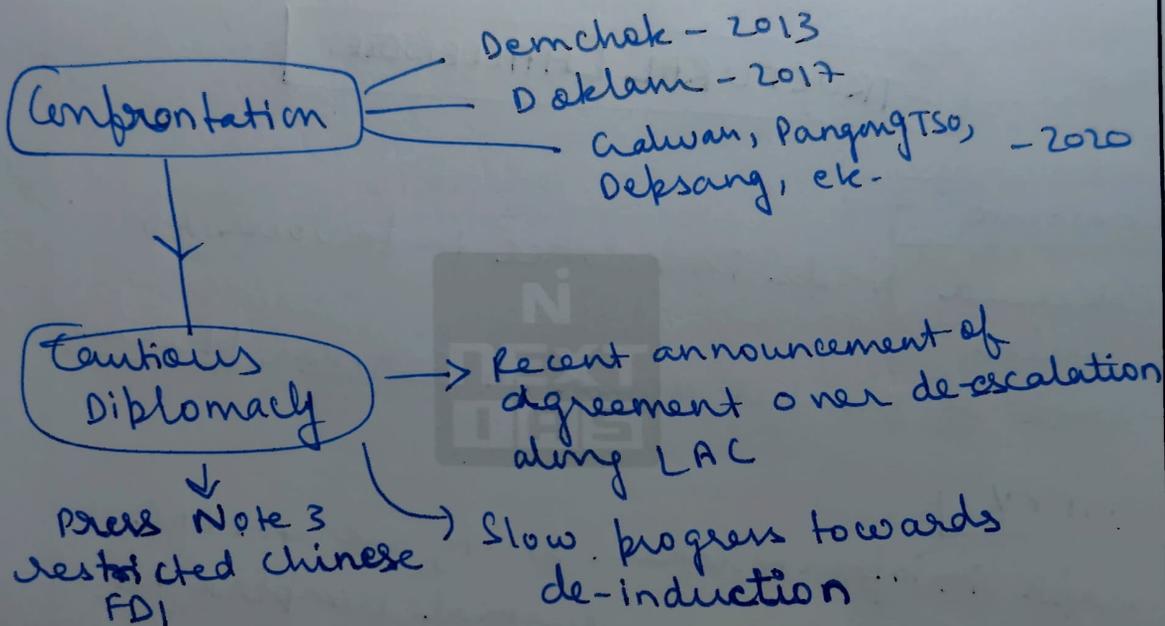
Total :

10.

10. India-China relations are evolving from confrontation to cautious diplomacy. In this context, discuss the recent efforts made to stabilise the relationship and identify the structural challenges that continue to impede complete normalisation.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 marks

India - China diplomatic relationship has entered a phase of deep freeze post Galwan clash and resulting military standoff along LAC for over 4 years since April 2020.



Recent Efforts for Stabilizing

- ① Military level talks for de-escalation, disengagement
- ② Special Representatives (NSA) level talks between NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Premier Wang Yi
- ③ Bilateral summit level talks between PM Modi & President Xi on the sidelines of BRICS Kazan Summit.

- ④ Regular exchanges between FMs of both countries
- ⑤ Resumption of Kailash Yatra pilgrimage, direct flights
- ⑥ Cautious liberalization of Chinese FDI

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Economic

- ① Skewed trade imbalance in favour of China
- ② Lack of market access in services, pharma

MILITARY

- ③ Gaps in infrastructure parity across LAC
- ④ Chinese military-industrial complex is much more advanced
- ⑤ Disparity in defence budgets $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{China} - \sim \$250bn \\ \text{India} - \sim \$80bn \end{array} \right.$

GEOPOLITICAL

- ⑥ Sino-Pakistan axis $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{army Pakistan} \\ \text{against India} \\ \text{CPEC across Indian} \\ \text{territory} \end{array} \right.$
- ⑦ String of pearls along around India - Hambantota, Awadar, Kyukpakiyu
- ⑧ Chinese disregard for international law - South China Sea

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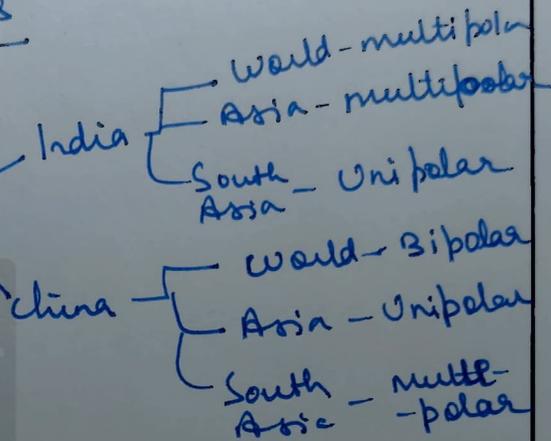
Intro :
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Total :

BORDER DISPUTES

1. Unsettled LAC plus Chinese "5 palm claims" over Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Arunachal, Sikkim.
2. Salami Slicing along LAC - Doklam (2017), Demchok (2013)
3. Water sharing issues

GLOBAL LEVEL

1. Polarity Dilemma



WAY FORWARD

Nirupama Roy has recommended:

- ① military readiness, modernization, balancing
- ② Economic self-reliance x diversification
- ③ Diplomatic engagement of major powers to balance China \rightarrow I2U, I2U2, IMEC
- ④ Narrative control to highlight abuse of International order by China.