NEXT IAS

MAINS TEST SERIES 2.0 - 2025 (SLT)

(To be filled by candidate)

TEST CODE : SLT2504 **Test No. : 04**

Name of Candidate: MOHIT GUPTA Mobile No. ....

Roll No. : MT25SLTRA004 Start Time 11:20 End Time 2:40

Date of Examination: 12/07/25 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 12 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 12 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: .....

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Student Concerns / Query	Evaluator's Feedback / Response
1	1 .....
2	2 .....
3	3 .....

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.

Q1.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q2.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q3.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q4.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q5.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q6.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q7.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q8.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q9.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q10.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q11.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q12.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q13.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q14.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q15.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q16.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q17.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q18.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q19.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Q20.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion

Candidates must not write on this margin

1. "कौशल विकास को प्रभावी बनाने हेतु, प्रधानमंत्री इंटर्नशिप योजना (PMIS) जैसे कार्यक्रमों को केवल सहभागिता तक सीमित न रहकर, रोजगारोन्मुख परिणाम सुनिश्चित करने की आवश्यकता है।" टिप्पणी कीजिए।

(उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

"To make skilling meaningful, programs like PM Internship Scheme (PMIS) must ensure not just participation but employability-linked outcomes." Comment

(Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans) Programs like PMIS, Kaushal Vikas Yojna aim to impart livelihood capabilities & boost employability prospects of the youth.

Skilling Programmes aimed at Participation

(1) Covering all possible areas/regions of skill development. (Ex) - Aspirational District Programme has skilling component.

(2) Targetting vulnerable & marginalised. (Ex): USTTAD Scheme for traditional arts of minorities.

(3) Making rural/semi-urban areas as talent hub. (Ex) - Skilling under National Rural Livelihood Mission.

(4) Imparting vocational education as part of National Education Policy, 2020.

Need for employability linked outcomes

① Difficult to find employment post skill training. Ex:- 45% youths were not placed after Kaushal Vikas Training.

② Low employability post education.
Ex:- AICTE Report → 43% technical trained people are unemployable.

③ Return to exploitative informal sector.
Ex:- NRLM skilling saw 35% reduction in gainful employment.

④ Corporates consider PIMS as part of CSR responsibilities & not talent pool.

⑤ Persistent unemployment in rural & urban areas.

Way Forward:- ① Market demand led skilling. Ex:- Training for IR4.0.

② Assured employment post skilling.

③ Industry collaboration (PPP) in skilling program.

PM Modi asserted, "Skilled Youth is going to be "engine for growth" in Amrit Kaal".

Candidates must not write on this margin

2. "महिला-केन्द्रित कल्याण योजनाओं को महज कल्याणकारी दृष्टिकोण से आगे बढ़कर सशक्तिकरण की दिशा में अग्रसर होना चाहिए।" प्रमुख योजनाओं के परिप्रेक्ष्य में परीक्षण कीजिए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

"Women-centric welfare schemes need to move beyond welfare to empowerment." Examine in the context of key women-centric welfare schemes. (Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans 2) Continued lag in literacy levels (72%) as well as employment (41% LFPR) and health indicator demand empowerment driven women-centric schemes:

Current design of welfare centric schemes

(1) Providing nutrition & maternity benefits
(Ex) - PM Matru Vandana Yojana.

(2) Tokenism persistence in welfare schemes. (Ex) - Business registered on woman's name but run by male members.

(3) Shift towards cash disbursement that has potential for misuse.
(Ex) - Ladki Behan Yojana.

(4) Concentration of women in low paying informal sector. (Ex) - Feminization of Agriculture.

(5) Women as "passive beneficiary". (Ex) - Ujjwala Scheme.

Moving towards empowerment of women

1. Economic Empowerment
   - → Credit Facility to women business. (Ex) - Stand Up India
   - → Gainful Employment for financial autonomy. (Ex) - GATI, KIRAN etc.
   - → SHG led women empowerment (Ex) - SHG Bank Linkage.
2. Social Empowerment by removal of taboos & Countering gender discrimination. (Ex) :- Sambal & Shakti subschemes.
3. Political Empowerment for discourse led by women. (Ex) - Nari Vandan Adhiniyam, 2024
4. Allowing for women centric policy making. (Ex) - Occupational Safety Code having women centric provisions.
5. Improving HDI indicators for holistic empowerment. (Ex) - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

Women Empowerment welfare schemes are life & soul to achieve SDG 5 Gender Equality.

Candidates must not write on this margin

3. स्व-सहायता समूह (SHG)-बैंक लिंकिंग कार्यक्रम को भारत में गरीबी उन्मूलन के लिए स्वदेशी उपकरण माना गया है। ग्रामीण आजीविका सुधारने और बहुआयामी गरीबी कम करने में इसके प्रभाव का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

(उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

The SHG-Bank Linkage Programme has been hailed as an indigenous tool for poverty alleviation in India. Examine its impact on improving rural livelihoods and reducing multi-dimensional poverty.

(Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans) Microfinance provided by SHG-Bank Linkage Program (SBLP) is antidote for poverty alleviation.

SBLP as indigenous tool for poverty alleviation

1. Micro-credit for SHGs for ease of operations.
2. Bank Linkage for direct access to funds.
3. Mentorship & support for unlocking SHG potential.

SBLP impact on improving rural livelihoods

1. Alleviating income levels of rural areas.
   Ex - Jay Ambe SHG using funds for establishing new business units.
2. Multidimensional streams of income
   Ex - Kudumbashree Model of Kerala.

(3) Sustainable incomes by establishing small & micro enterprises.

(4) Shift towards formalisation of incomes & preventing informal debt trap.

(5) Financial Inclusion : Availing benefits of other schemes too.

(Ex) - NABARD Report → >5cr beneficiaries in rural areas of SBLP finance.

Impact on reducing multi-dimensional poverty

(1) Reducing gendered poverty.

(Ex) - Women entrepreneurs in SHGs.

(2) Removing social disabilities by targetted delivery of welfare schemes.

(Ex) - Prajwala SHG delivering benefits of social schemes.

(3) Countering digital poverty & illiteracy.

(Ex) - SHG led Common Service Centres

(4) Nutritional Poverty is removed.

(Ex) - SHGs involved in ICDS, Mid Day Meals etc.

NABARD highlights that SBLP has been successful in countering rural multidimensional poverty

Candidates must not write on this margin

4. भारत सामाजिक उद्यमिता के वैश्विक केंद्र के रूप में उभर रहा है। क्या सामाजिक उद्यम राज्य की समावेशी विकास की उपलब्धियों में प्रभावी रूप से पूरक हो सकते हैं? (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

India is emerging as a global hub for social entrepreneurship. Can social enterprises effectively complement the state in achieving inclusive development?

(Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans 4) Social enterprises are Civil society organisations (CSOs) involved in delivery of developmental benefits on non-profit basis.

India as emerging hub for social entrepreneurship

① Availability of formal funding channels
(Ex) - Social Stock Exchange of NSE (SSE).

② Increasing registration of social enterprises under Societies & Companies Act

③ Social enterprises in vulnerable ~~sector~~ development (Ex) - CSO involved in tribal welfare.

~~Ten~~ Social enterprises Complementing state for inclusive development

① Augmenting channels of public service delivery.
(Ex) - CSOs participating in skilling.

② Mobilizing private funding for development

(Ex): Tata skilling centre using CSR funds.

(3) Complementing manpower for benefit delivery - (Ex) - Social enterprises in immunization.

(4) Cater to sectional demands of vulnerable.
(Ex) - Care India social enterprise for elderly.

However, Challenges exist for social enterprise

(1) Lack of funding from formal sources -
(Ex) - NSE highlighted low uptake of SSE.

(2) State monopolised areas of development
(Ex) - Social enterprise cannot operate in scheduled tribal areas -

(3) Possibility of vested interests affecting developmental process.

(4) Over-concentration: Spatially in urban areas & sectorally in health & education.

Formal Policy of Collaboration & ensuring development of Social Enterprise can synergise private & public efforts for inclusive development.

Candidates must not write on this margin

5. नागरिक-आधारित पर्यावरणीय आंदोलनों ने हाल के वर्षों में पारिस्थितिक संरक्षण के प्रभावी उपकरण के रूप में कितना योगदान दिया है? उदाहरण सहित व्याख्या करें। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

How far do you think Citizen-led environmental movements have proven to be effective tools of ecological preservation in recent years. Justify with examples.

(Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans) Chipko Andolan was the beginning point of Citizen-led Environmental Movements (CEMs) for ecological preservation.

Effectiveness of CEMs in recent years

(1) Increased public awareness about ecological preservation. (Ex) - Public backlash against deforestation in forest areas.

(2) Pressurise state for mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
(Ex) - Char Dham Project faced citizen protests.

(3) Integrating ecological preservation in developmental projects.
(Ex) - Public participation in DMF led development in mining areas.

(4) Protecting valuable & biodiverse zones.
(Ex) - CEM against industries on Odisha's Coastal zones.

(5) Legal Channels for ecological preservation.
(Ex) - CEM led PIL for judicial stay on denotifying ESZ in Western Ghats.

However, there has been challenges too

(1) Issues of Anti-Developmental Agenda & vested interests.
(Ex) - IB Report highlighting foreign funded CEMs against projects.
(2) Lack of coordination & participation.
(3) Legal loopholes to pacify CEMs & gain permissions by backchannels.
(Ex) - Post project EIA allowed for security projects.
(4) Issues with sustained momentum of CEMs.

Way Forward : (1) Participatory Governance: Make citizens stakeholders in ecological preservation.
(2) Mandatory Environmental & Social Impact Audit with transparent disclosure.

Proactive citizenry is necessary for ecocentric developmental processes.

Candidates must not write on this margin

6. "नागरिक समाज संगठनों पर बढ़ती नियामक निगरानी लोकतांत्रिक क्षेत्र को संकुचित करने की आशंका उत्पन्न करती है।" आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

"The increasing regulatory oversight on civil society organisations risks shrinking democratic space." Examine (Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans 6) Pew Research, 2022 highlighted that Civil society organisations (CSOs) are increasingly regulated leading to restricted activities & state interference -

Increasing Regulatory Oversight shrinking Democratic Space

(1) Use of Stringent laws and making "process as punishment".

Ex - BBC v/s UOI Case : Supreme Court demanded restrained use of PMLA provisions.

(2) Mandatory registration of FCRA Accounts & government oversight on funding channels.

Ex - Centre for Science & Environment saw reduced funding due to FCRA cancellation.

(3) Political narratives of CSOs engaging in "anti-national activities".

(4) High oversight reduces space for democratic questioning. (Ex) - Cases of Fact Checking CSO members being jailed.

(5) Chilling effect due to State crackdown.

(6) Loss of democratic credential. (Ex) - Death of RTI activists highlighting law & order issue.

However, certain minimum regulation is necessary

(1) To ensure CSO platforms are not misused. (Ex) - IB report of CSOs engaged in Anti-Developmental activities.

(2) Financial regulation to minimise money laundering. (Ex): CBI Report on 10% CSOs are front for Money Laundering.

(3) Doctrine of reasonable restrictions. (Ex) - Countering threat to security & sovereignty.

Light Regulation & Graded Regulation as per Compliance will balance regulation v/s democratic space debate.

Candidates must not write on this margin

7. "डिजिटल शासन वैश्विक एजेंडा का नया मोर्चा बनकर उभर रहा है, और भारत उदाहरण स्थापित करने का प्रयास कर रहा है।" इस पर विचार कीजिए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

"Digital governance is emerging as a frontier of global agenda and India seeks to lead by example." Examine (Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Intro) PM Modi highlighted, "Digital Governance is Pro-People Good Governance mechanism in a globalised world".

Digital Governance as frontier of Global Agenda

(1) Building Global Collaboration Networks
(Ex) - CCTNS integration with INTERPOL.

(2) Implementing global best practices.
(Ex) - Brazil's governance e-delivery model replicated in Digital India Mission.

(3) Allow easy tracking & monitoring.
(Ex) - Trade Dashboards for instant overview of global dynamics.

(4) Partnerships for governance channels.
(Ex) - Digital Network for e-education using MOOC Courses.

(5) Connecting local to global chain.
(Ex) - Digital Mapping under Land Record Modernisation using GPS technology.

India seeks to lead by example

(1) Proactive e-governance initiatives -
(Ex) - Direct Benefit Transfer is world's largest benefit delivery channel.

(2) Global outsourcing of domestic technology.
(Ex) - Internationalisation of UPI architecture.

(3) Digitizing new frontiers of governance.
(Ex) - ABHA-ID for online health records.

(4) Global implementation of e-governance steps. (Ex) : e-Vidya Bharati in Africa.

(5) Partnering with Global South for e-governance initiatives
(Ex) : G20 Digital Track Diplomacy.

Digital Governance is future of governance & India Stack + India e-Architecture lies at heart of it.

Candidates must not write on this margin

8. "भारत का अफ्रीका के साथ संबंध अब केवल विकास सहयोग तक सीमित नहीं रह गया है, बल्कि वह रणनीतिक तथा आर्थिक हितों से भी प्रेरित होता जा रहा है।" विवेचना कीजिए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

India's engagement with Africa is no longer limited to development cooperation, but increasingly shaped by strategic and economic considerations. Discuss (Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans 8) Hon'ble PM at Ghana trip asserted, "India-Africa Partnership will shape fate of 21st Century"

Traditional Indian Engagement with Africa

1. Developmental Aid based.
   Ex - Export of finished goods
2. Introducing new technologies.
   Ex: e-Vidya Bharati for tele-education
3. Asymmetric Nature of relationship.

Strategic Considerations driving new partnership

1. Africa as major player in Indo-Pacific Region Stability.
2. Countering China's Debt Trap Diplomacy in Africa to contain China
   Ex: India led Asia-Africa Growth Corridor

(3) Strategic dependence for [Critical minerals].
(Ex): India-Congo MoU for Cobalt exploration.

(4) India's "Necklace of Diamonds" to counter String of Pearls of China (Djibouti Port)

(5) Academic Collaboration for strategic needs. (Ex)- Defence Research Collaboration.

[Economic Considerations guiding new partnership]

(1) Demographic Potential of Africa & emerging export market.

(2) Presence of business interests in Africa.
(Ex)- Many small traders in Africa are of Indian origin.

(3) Energy Security by diversifying import sources. (Ex): ECOWAS for oil imports.

(4) Market for defence exports like export of UAVs by India.

India-Africa have [Complementary needs] & partnership has become multidimensional.

Candidates must not write on this margin

9. हाल की विवादों के संदर्भ में, भारत के पाकिस्तान और बांग्लादेश के साथ सीमा पार जल-साझाकरण की चुनौतियों की समीक्षा कीजिए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

Examine India's transboundary water-sharing challenges with Pakistan and Bangladesh in light of recent disputes. (Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans) India's suspension of Indus Water Treaty (IWT) post terror attack at Pahalgam highlights transboundary water challenges

India's transboundary water challenges with Pakistan

① IWT issues: (a) Lack of consensus over dispute settlement mechanism.

(b) Unjust sharing of water: 80% of basin water belongs to Pakistan.

(c) Continuous objection over Run-of-River Projects like Ratle, Kishenganga etc.

② India's policy: "Terror & Treaty" does not go hand-in-hand.

③ Pakistan's misuse of geopolitical forums leading to increased confrontation.

④ Broken Communication Channels due to

strategic reasons. This affect dispute settlement over transboundary rivers.

Challenges of water-sharing with Bangladesh

① Domestic politics of either side hindering transboundary river agreement

Ex: Deadlock over Teesta waters.

② Poor demarcation of borders leading to disputing claims of water channels.

③ Use of rivers for ~~smuggl~~ smuggling from Bangladeshi side → interfering of internal security & water sharing issue.

Way Forward: ① Keeping National Interest First: No agreement till assured cessation of terror activities.

② Helsinki Rules based water sharing.

③ With Bangladesh, diplomatic outreach can help secure mutually agreed settlement.

Transboundary river agreements are sine-qua-non of stability in neighbourhood relations.

10. "खाड़ी क्षेत्र में भारतीय प्रवासी भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था एवं जन-आधारित कूटनीति को आकार देने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।" चर्चा कीजिए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए) 10 अंक

The Indian diaspora in the Gulf region plays a pivotal role in shaping India's economic relations and people-centric diplomacy with West Asia. Discuss (Answer in 150 words) 10 Marks

Ans(B) As per External Affairs Ministry, "18 million Indian Diaspora is settled in Gulf region constituting largest population of foreign nationals there".

Indian Diaspora for Economic Relations

(1) Sending Remittances back home which generate economic activity.

Ex: India is largest recipient of remittance at $118 bn with Gulf being largest contributor.

(2) Energy security ensured due to deepening oil export relations.

Ex: Indian Diaspora advocate for export friendly policies in Gulf region.

(3) Expanding export market for Indian goods

Ex: FTA for imports of Gulf region.

(4) Significant bilateral trade relations

with the Gulf between Indians abroad.

Ex: UAE & Saudi Arabia among Top 5 trade partners of India.

India Diaspora for people-centric diplomacy

1. People to People Connect due to shared culture. Ex - Popularity of Bollywood in Gulf Countries.

2. Soft Power of Diaspora nudging for India-Friendly Policy.

Ex: Backdoor diplomacy by Indian expats during Qatar-espionage case.

3. Advocacy for reforms in labor relations.

Ex: Indian Diaspora relations for changing Kafaqat contract conditions.

4. Growing Convergence on Global issues.

Ex: UAE's Vision 2030 & India's Panchamrit Plan.

India & Gulf have been traditional allies owing to strong People to People Connect

11. चुनावी राजनीति में मुफ्त सुविधाओं ने भारत में शासन पर उनके प्रभाव को लेकर बहस छेड़ दी है। मुफ्त सुविधाओं और कल्याण उपायों के बीच अंतर स्पष्ट कीजिए और उनके शासन पर प्रभाव का मूल्यांकन कीजिए।

(उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

Freebies in electoral politics have sparked debate over their impact on governance in India. Differentiate between freebies and welfare measures, and examine their impact on governance.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Intro) On PIL filed by Association for Democratic reforms, Supreme Court highlighted "perceived fallouts" of freebie culture.

Debate regarding freebies
- (1) Doing away with governance responsibilities.
- (2) Inflationary impact.
- (3) Debate on prudent use of public funds.
- (4) Debate over efficiency of freebies.

Difference Between Freebies & welfare Measures

Freebies	Welfare Measures
(1) Freebies are cash or kind transfers with perverse political motives	(1) welfare measures are public service delivery to vulnerable sections

(2) Cross against constitutional & democratic principles.	(2) Rooted in Article (38), (39) etc of Constitution.
(3) Non-Targetted & generally inflationary. (Ex) - Women Cash Transfer Schemes	(3) Positive ~~Reverse~~ discrimination with targetting and non-inflationary. (Ex) - Benefits under Jan Aarogya Yojana.
(4) Main agenda is populist politics.	(4) Developmental Marginalized is core agenda.
(5) Misuse of public funds.	(5) Targetted utilisation of public funds.

Impact of freebies on governance.

(1) Easy way & akin to "abdication of governance responsibilities".

(Ex) :- Schemes require meticulous implementation while freebies are easily distributed.

(2) Inflationary impact causes rise

of poverty & degraded quality of life.

(Ex) - NITI Aayog on Freebies highlighted rise in retail inflation.

(3) Politicisation of welfarism & possible diversion of public funds -

(Ex) - Delhi Election 2024: All parties promised freebies.

(4) Dependency Culture rather than ~~empo-~~ ~~werm~~ empowerment.

(5) Legal Challenges causes throttling of public funds -

Way Forward: (1) Outcome based audit to determine Freebie V/s welfare Scheme.

(2) Parliamentary & CAG's oversight over freebie disbursal.

(3) Proactive citizenry to discourage freebie promises.

(4) General Financial Rules 2017: Guide to prudent use of public Funds -

Freebies are "termites" to India's developmental path & must be eliminated.

Candidates must not write on this margin

12. "सूचना आयोगों की संस्थागत स्वतंत्रता की दुर्बलता ने सूचना के अधिकार (RTI) व्यवस्था की प्रभावशीलता को क्षीण किया है।" सूचना आयोगों की स्वायत्तता एवं स्वतंत्रता के संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

"Weak institutional independence of Information Commissions has diluted the effectiveness of the Right to Information (RTI) regime." Discuss in the light of autonomy and independence of the Information Commissions. (Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans:- Information Commissions (ICs) are formed under RTI Act, 2005 are pillars of information flow in democratic India.

Weak institutional independence of ICs

(1) RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019 :- (a) Terms of ~~Conditions~~ Services of Central IC determined by Central Government.

(b) Eligibility Criteria determined by Central government instead of independent Committee.

(c) Removal of CIC & IC to be decided by Central Government.

(2) Does not have Constitutional status or independent budget.

(3) 40% PIOs & 35% ICs posts are lying vacant.

(4) Lack of enforcement mechanism for

orders of state & central ICs.

Diluted effectiveness due to reduced autonomy & independence

(1) Reduced public credibility due to high executive interference.

(2) RTI (Amendment) Act made IC subsidiary to rules of Central Government.

(3) Refusal to ~~demand~~ disclose information diminish public image of ICs.

(4) High RTI rejection (35% at appellate levels) reduces salience of SIC & CIC.

(5) Legal loopholes reduce effectiveness of ICs.

(Ex) - Official Secret Act exemptions of RTI with wide ambit of rejections.

(6) Lack of independent cadre like CAG

reduces enforceability of CIC orders.

(7) Constraints on budgets impacts operational efficiency.

(8) Centre For Policy Research : CIC usually follow government orders in case of sensitive information.

Reforms required for autonomy of ICs.

(1) Independent Committee to appoint CIC & SIC members.

(2) 2nd ARC : (a) Abolish Official Secrets Act.

(b) Implement RTI Act Section 4(1) : Proactive disclosures to reduce need for filing RTI.

(c) Financial Autonomy to CIC & SIC.

(3) Independent Cadre & Action Taken Report on orders of Information Commissions.

ICs are bulwarks protecting Right to Free Speech (Art. 19(1)(a)) & their independence is mandatory to uphold it.

Candidates must not write on this margin

13. "भारतीय सिविल सेवाओं की परिकल्पना निष्पक्षता एवं दक्षता के उपकरण के रूप में की गई थी, तथापि वर्तमान में इन्हें कठोर तथा राजनीतिक रूप से प्रेरित माना जा रहा है।" इस धारणा के कारणों की समीक्षा करते हुए उपयुक्त सुधारात्मक उपाय प्रस्तुत कीजिए। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

"Civil services in India were envisioned as instruments of neutrality and efficiency, yet they are increasingly perceived as rigid and politicised." Examine the issues responsible for this perception and suggest corrective measures. (Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans13) Civil services are link between policy design and policy implementation resting on pillars of efficiency & Neutrality.

Non-partisanship & impartiality

High Specialized task division

Civil Services as instruments of Neutrality & efficiency

Spirit of Public Interest First

Best utilisation of Public Funds

Factors for perceived rigidity of civil services

① Red Tapism & Bureaucratic Delays.
Ex - Buckpassing culture in government offices.

② Delayed implementation of welfare schemes. Ex - Late disbursal of funds leading to March Rush.

(3) Ivory Tower Syndrome : Lack of stake-holder consultation.

(Ex) - One size fits all approach of policies.

(4) Low incentives for innovation & efficient service delivery.

(Ex) : No penalty for inaction of officials

(5) Policy Paralysis due to "high oversight".

(Ex) : Fear of 3 C's : CVC, CBI & Courts.

Factors leading to perceived politicisation

(1) 2nd ARC highlighted bureaucratic-politician unholy nexus.

(2) Cases of collusive corruption of officials.

(Ex) - 2G Scam & Coal Scam : Both officials & politicians implicated.

(3) Political control over transfers & postings. (Ex) : Plum-Posting Culture.

(4) Ideological inclination of civil servants to political narratives.

(5) Bureaucratic Apathy to Public & 'Yes-Man Culture' to political Bosses.

Steps to correct thus perceived inefficiencies

(1) Implement [Mission Karmyogi]: (a) Rule-based to Role-Based Civil Servant.

(b) Digital Accountability to minimize delays.

(c) Capacity Building & Innovation approach.

(d) Building [ethical infrastructure]: Political neutrality & Public orientation.

(2) Participative Governance: Social Audit of efficiency of civil servants.

(3) Digital offices & Grievance Redressal for efficiency evaluation of civil servant.

(4) Legal Backing to "Minimum Tenure" to Counter political control of postings.

Civil Services can only serve as steel frame when it is galvanised with values of [Impartiality & efficiency].

Candidates must not write on this margin

14. कई संस्थानों के होने के बावजूद एक मजबूत शोध वातावरण के विकास में संरचनात्मक बाधाएं लंबे समय से अवरोध बनी हुई हैं। अनुसंधान राष्ट्रीय निधि (ANRF) इन संरचनात्मक चुनौतियों को दूर करने के लिए कैसे प्रयासरत है? चर्चा कीजिए।

(उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

Structural barriers have long impeded the development of a robust research environment despite the presence of numerous institutions. Discuss how the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) seeks to address these structural challenges.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans(14) Ex-CEA R. Subramanian highlighted, "For every ₹1 invested in Research & Development (R&D), the future returns are more than ₹10".

Structural Barriers impeding robust research environment despite numerous institutions

(1) Low Funding Availability for R&D.

(Ex):- India spends 0.7% of GDP on R&D while China spends → 2.5% & USA → 3%

(2) Manpower availability is low due to low enrollment in research streams.

(Ex) - IIT graduates → 90% opting for non-research jobs (IIT B report).

(3) Misplaced flow of funds -

(Ex): 60% cornered by central institutions leaving little for lower institutions.

(4) Redundant research topics for post-

graduate thesis.

(Ex) - IISc Director highlighted most PG students aim for "easy thesis topics".

(5) Absence of cutting edge research infrastructure. (Ex) - India still does not have 6G testbed in signal processing.

(6) Poor collaboration with global institutions

(7) Brain Drain Challenge : Students prefer foreign universities for research.

(8) Poor Research-Industry Linkage.

(Ex) - South Korea → Samsung funds major research project.

ANRF seeking to address structural challenges

(1) Increased Funding with convergence of public & private sector. (Ex) ≈ 40% funds by government & ~60% by private sector.

(2) Upgradation of research infrastructure.
(Ex) - ANRF to source cutting edge equipments.

(3) ANRF to diversify funding as:
(a) Horizontal → New research areas like biotechnology, drone research etc.
(b) Vertically → More funds to state & regional research institutions.

(4) Public - Private Collaboration for R&D.
(Ex) → ANRF aims for lab-industry linkage.

(5) Promote global collaborations for faster flow of information.
(Ex) - IISc-MIT Collaborations.

(6) Introducing scholarships for research incentives for students.

(7) Promote research in emerging areas like quantum theory, particle physics etc.

ANRF aims to revolutionize R&D in India & make it global leader in research ecosystem.

Candidates must not write on this margin

15. अच्छी तरह से संचालित सरकारी पहल तब भी विफल हो जाती हैं जब उनके संचालन और रखरखाव को कार्यक्रम की रूपरेखा में शामिल नहीं किया जाता। भारत में स्वच्छ भारत मिशन के संदर्भ में, सामूहिक प्रयास और समुदाय की सहभागिता इसकी दीर्घकालिक स्थिरता कैसे सुनिश्चित कर सकती है? चर्चा कीजिए। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

Well-executed government initiatives often fail if operations and maintenance are not integral to the programme design. In the context of Swachh Bharat Mission in India, discuss how collective action and community ownership can ensure its long-term sustainability.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans (15) ~~Sustaine~~ Life cycle of government initiative begin at Planning and end at Execution & Evaluation, where each step require sustained efforts for implementation.

Failing of government programmes in absence of operations & maintenance

(1) Top Down implementation & lack of Community involvement.

(Ex) - Failure of Land Reforms.

(2) Failure to change in light of emerging challenges. (Ex) - Changed demands of citizens from program.

(3) operations are necessary for institutional robustness of any programmes.

(Ex) - Establishing regulations for smooth operation.

(4) Community uptake ensures achieving goal even if government support withdraws

Collective Action & Community ownership for Swachh Bharat Mission

(1) Public participation to augment state machinery. (Ex) - Cleanliness Drives.

(2) Attitudinal Change prevent problem of littering, open defecation etc.

(Ex) - Aware citizens calling out public littering.

(3) Complementing civil society resources for effective implementation.

(Ex) - Formation of Rwa wings for cleanliness operations in surrounding.

(4) Responsibility sharing between state & citizens.

(Ex) - Shimla organized co-cleanliness campaign of residents & municipality.

(5) Reduces the problem in the long run-

(Ex) - Reduction of cases of open Defecation.

(6) Community led social change is more sustainable than top down implementation.

(Ex) - Student Awareness about salience of cleanliness.

(7) Becomes part of civic duty of residents.

(8) Proactive demand of accountability if efforts of state lags somewhere.

(Ex) - Delhi launched app for public geotagging of waste-ridden spaces.

(9) Public Policy transforms to Public Movement creating sustained success.

Swachh Bharat Mission was designed to be a [Social Revolution] where operations & maintenance are shared responsibility of state & citizens.

Candidates must not write on this margin

16. निरंतर आर्थिक प्रगति एवं सामाजिक क्षेत्र में व्यय के बावजूद भारत का वैश्विक मानव विकास सूचकांकों में प्रदर्शन संतोषजनक नहीं है। समावेशी एवं न्यायसंगत मानव विकास में बाधा उत्पन्न करने वाले संरचनात्मक कारणों की विवेचना कीजिए। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

Despite consistent economic growth and social sector spending, India continues to perform poorly in global human development rankings. Examine the structural issues that inhibit equitable and inclusive human development. (Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans:- World's 5th largest economy still ranks lowly ~~40th~~ 130th on Human Development Index reflecting dichotomy of development & deprivation.

Consistent economic Growth & social sector spending

1. High number of welfare schemes for all sections. Ex:- NSAP for elderly, SC/ST Subplans etc.
2. Overall economic size and per-capita income has increased manifold since 1950s.
3. ~~Ex~~ ~~Ex~~ Huge number of people uplifted from poverty but multidimensional deprivations exists.
4. Multisectoral Coverage of schemes → Housing → Awas Yojana → Food → NFSA → Health → Jan Arogya

Structural Issues inhibiting equitable & Inclusive Development

(1) Excessive focus on growth & withdrawal of state post neo-liberal reforms.

(Ex) - High Agrarian Distress post 1990s.

(2) Leakage in welfare schemes → Diversion of Funds
→ Ghost Beneficiaries
→ Corruption in schemes
→ Delays in implementation

(3) Malfunction of Centrally Sponsored ~~Schemes~~ Schemes due to One-Size Fits All approach (Eco Survey 24).

(Ex) - Regionally diverse demands under PM-PoshAN.

(4) Lack of stakeholder Consultation for effective policy design.

(Ex) - Rollback of Farm laws due to little deliberation at design.

(5) Issues of Public Service Delivery like

Inclusion - exclusion errors, lack of last mile delivery of services etc.

(Ex) - Exclusion errors under Ayushman Bharat.

(6) Limited public infrastructure & high population burden. (Ex) - High IMR due to less PHCs.

(7) Socio-economic marginalities impacting uptake of welfare schemes.

(Ex) :- Nutrition Poverty among Tribals & Dalits.

Steps required to reform structural limitation

(1) Policy Design → Stakeholder Consultation
→ Principle of Subsidiarity in Design
→ Sectorally inclusive design.

(2) Policy Implementation :→ Focus on improving HDI levels. (Ex) - Reduced dropout rate

Ensuring last mile service delivery. (Ex) - Universal Immunization.

(3) Evaluation & Course Correction of schemes

We need to ensure that not only money is spent, but also used "effectively" & in direction of human capability enhancement.

17. "BRICS के विस्तार से भारत को वैश्विक आर्थिक शासन में अपनी भूमिका को सशक्त करने का अवसर प्राप्त होता है।" BRICS Plus मंच के माध्यम से भारत किस प्रकार वैश्विक दक्षिण (Global South) के हितों को प्रोत्साहित कर सकता है, चर्चा कीजिए। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

"The expansion of BRICS offers opportunities for India to strengthen its voice in global economic governance." Discuss how India can leverage the BRICS Plus to advance the interests of the Global South. (Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans 17) BRICS has recently inducted Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Ethiopia & UAE and has enhanced the role of BRICS Plus.

Indian opportunities for increasing voice in global economic governance

(1) New financial mechanisms apart from west led IMF & world Bank.

(Ex) - Contigency Reserve Arrangement of BRICS.

(2) BRICS promoting free trade among members - (Ex) - India-UAE CEPA

(3) Building New Economic Partnerships for import-export channels -

(Ex) - Iran as possible oil source for energy security.

(4) Countering the dollar weaponisation

of USA. (Ex)- Talks around BRICS international currency.

(5) Initiatives for internationalisation of Rupee in BRICS+.

(Ex)- UPI expansion & Bilateral Trade Settlement in local currencies.

(6) Building resilient supply chains to shield from global shocks.

India leveraging BRICS+ for interests of Global South

(1) Raising voice for developmental parity of global south.

(Ex)- NDB loans for development to new members.

(2) Demands of Global South for reforms of Global Institutions.

(Ex): BRICS+ support UNSC reforms

(3) Using BRICS+ for equitable trading order globally. (Ex)- Resilience against unilateral sanctions of West.

(4) Raising demands of Global South in Climate domain - (Ex) - Kazan Declaration highlighted need for Loss & Damages Fund.

(5) Building global collaborations for clean energy. (Ex) - BRICS+ to advocate for International Solar Alliance -

(6) Building defence & strategic resilience.
(Ex) :- Egypt, Ethiopia & UAE & Indonesia have high stakes in Indian Ocean Region.

(7) India can build bilateral partnerships based on unique demands -
(Ex) - Mobility Pact with Iran & UAE.

(8) Using BRICS Plus to mediate with China over bilateral issues -

BRICS+ Plus highlights emerging multipolar global order & India is positioning itself as Voice of Global South.

Candidates must not write on this margin

18. भारत की रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका और चीन के साथ संबंधों को संचालित करने में मार्गदर्शक सिद्धांत बनी हुई है। इस संदर्भ में, भारत के सामने संभावित चुनौतियों और अवसरों का विश्लेषण कीजिए और भारत को इस नए अमेरिका-चीन प्रतिद्वंद्विता में कैसे अपना रास्ता बनाना चाहिए, इस पर विचार करें।

(उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

India's strategic autonomy remains the guiding principle in navigating relations with the United States and China. In this context, analyze the potential challenges and opportunities for India and how should India navigate this renewed US-China rivalry.

(Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans 18) EAM S. Jaishankar said, "Strategic Autonomy is life & soul of India's Multi-alignment based foreign policy".

Strategic Autonomy as guiding Principle

1. Not submitting to economic & geopolitical pressures of west.
   - Ex - India imported Russian oil despite USA condemning it.
2. Countering China over inviolable National Interests.
3. Policy of independent issue based stance on global matters.
   - Ex - Attending SCO with China-Russia & QUAD with USA.
4. Maintaining strategic independence.
   - Ex - India's Abstention during Iran-Israel conflict.

Renewed US-China rivalry creating challenges for India

(1) Indo-Pacific as new theatre of confrontation where Indian interests lie.

Ex: China-US deadlock over Taiwan issue.

(2) Balancing strategic autonomy at international forums.

Ex: India maintains → QUAD is not Anti-China
→ SCO is not Anti-USA

(3) Substantial economic interests with both countries. Ex: USA & China are two largest trading partners.

(4) Emerging bipolar axis in global order.

Ex: NATO Plus vs Beijing-Moscow-Tehran axis.

(5) Challenges of balancing national interest against geo-political rivalries.

Ex: Dependence on China for Critical Minerals as well as USA for service exports.

(6) Increased multilateral pressures to

side with either USA or China i.e. Challenge of Multi-Alignment.

Opportunities offered by US-China rivalry

(1) Pursuing national interest at geopolitics
(a) India-China counter Dollar weaponization
(b) US-India counter Debt trap of China.

(2) Providing leadership to interests of Global South amid geopolitical clashes.
Ex - Advocacy for Free open & Rule Based Indo-Pacific

(3) Issue based alignment for geo-economic & geopolitical leverage.
Ex - Using QUAD for developmental collaboration & SCO for Combatting terrorism.

(4) Bilateral Partnership have influence of US-China rivalry. Ex - USA condemning Chinese aggression at Galwan.

India's diplomatic balancing & strategic autonomy will help it to prioritize own National Interests at global level.

Candidates must not write on this margin

19. भारत-मिडिल ईस्ट-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारा (IMEC) की शुरुआत भारत की कनेक्टिविटी कूटनीति में एक महत्वपूर्ण मोड़ है। चीन की बेल्ट एंड रोड इनिशिएटिव (BRI) के मुकाबले इसकी भारत के लिए रणनीतिक प्रासंगिकता का विश्लेषण करें। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

The launch of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) marks a turning point in India's connectivity diplomacy. Analyse its strategic relevance for India vis-à-vis China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). (Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans:- IMEC is launched to connect India to Europe via Middle East for greater geo-economic integration among like minded countries.

IMEC marks a turning point in connectivity diplomacy

(1) Moving from regional to global connectivity projects. Ex: I2U2 trilateral to IMEC corridor.

(2) Pursuing multimodal connectivity projects globally. Ex: IMEC combines land & sea route.

(3) New Connectivity Partners. Ex India to partner with UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel & Greece for IMEC.

(4) Using geopolitical relations for trans-regional integration.

(Ex) - First Indian Project with direct access to Europe.

Strategic Relevance vis-a-vis BRI

(1) Direct counter to China's BRI. (Ex): China-Europe rail network v/s IMEC Corridor to Europe.

(2) Country led development against debt diplomacy of China.

(Ex) - All countries are equal stakeholders in IMEC agreement.

(3) Counter to Chinese Marine Belt in Indian Ocean Region.

(Ex): Bombay - Jabal Ali maritime route to ensure free & open Indian Ocean.

(4) ~~IMEC~~ IMEC counters expanding Chinese influence in West Asia.

(5) Builds alternative supply chains which are insulated from Chinese regulation.

(Ex): India-Europe Export Import Channels.

(6) Establishes India as credible developmental partner in Indo-Pacific & building multi-lateral leverage.

(7) Expansion of IMEC to include countries looking to diversify away from BRI.

(Ex): Central Asian Republics have shown interest as East wing of IMEC.

(8) Important for Energy Security of India due to import dependence of fossil fuels from Middle East

(8) Building global partnership as bulwark against Chinese expansionism.

IMEC is a direct counter to BRI where countries are pooling resources to counter debt trap infrastructure Nexus of China.

Candidates must not write on this margin

20. "'एक्ट ईस्ट नीति' केवल आर्थिक कूटनीति का उपकरण नहीं, बल्कि यह क्षेत्रीय संतुलन सुनिश्चित करने का भी माध्यम है।" ASEAN के साथ भारत की सहभागिता एवं हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में बदलती शक्ति-संरचना के परिप्रेक्ष्य में इस कथन का विश्लेषण कीजिए। (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए) 15 अंक

'Act East Policy is as much about regional balancing as it is about economic diplomacy.' Analyse this statement in the context of India's engagement with ASEAN amidst shifting power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. (Answer in 250 words) 15 Marks

Ans) Act East Policy aims to build ~~diplo~~ ~~mutual~~ diplomatic synergy, economic relations as well as regional power balance in Indo-Pacific region.

Act East Policy vis-a-vis India's engagement with ASEAN

① Military Engagements: (a) Defence Exercises of India-ASEAN. Ex: SIMBEX, UIMBEX etc.

(b) Bilateral collaboration for Arms Exports. Ex: India exported BrahMos to Vietnam.

② Economic engagement: (a) India-ASEAN FTA with India being 4th largest trading partner of ASEAN.

(b) Huge inflow of tourists as well as business relations.

Ex: Visa Free Arrival of Indians to Thailand.

(C) ~~Econ~~ India-ASEAN Collaboration on Investment & Infrastructure -

Ex: Singapore is among largest FDI contributors.

(3) Developmental & Disaster Relief Engagement.

Ex: India's HADR operations after Sagaing Earthquake in Thailand, Myanmar etc.

(4) Increasing integration over free, open & rule based Indo-Pacific region.

Ex - Partnership in IORA of ASEAN countries.

(5) Strategic & Connectivity engagements vis-a-vis North East

Ex - IMT trilateral to connect Northeast to Mainland India

(6) Institutional Engagements like East Asia Summit & Shangri La Dialogue.

(7) Cultural Engagement as part of Act East Pillar. Ex - Shared Hindu & Buddhist Heritage.

Thus, Act East balances regional interests along with economic interests. However, India-ASEAN engagement has modified vis-a-vis power dynamics in ~~that~~ Indo-Pacific

1. Common threat of Chinese expansionism.
   Ex:- Doklam issue with ASEAN & Galwan issue with India.
2. India-ASEAN Counter to militarization of Indo-Pacific.
   Ex: India-Philippines Navy collaborated to counter Chinese Naval ships.
3. Geostrategic interests especially with intensifying US-China rivalry.
   Ex: India extended production collaboration to Vietnam to reduce Chinese dependence.
4. Leveraging Bay of Bengal region for free trade amid global protectionism.

India & ASEAN are central players to maintain balance of power in Indo-Pacific region.

Space for Rough Work