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General Studies

Practice Questions

GS Paper 2

Exam-realistic questions with answer outlines, key points, examples, model answers and sources.

100

QUESTIONS · MODEL ANSWERS

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UPSC Mains Practice Questions — GS Paper 2

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100 practice questions, each with an answer outline, key points, examples, a model answer and sources. Organised into the following sections:

Polity — 32 questions
Governance — 20 questions
Social Justice — 20 questions
IR — 28 questions

How to use this book

Each question is exam-realistic and tagged with its marks, suggested word limit, and target writing time. Treat the page as a timed drill: read the question, give yourself the stated minutes, and write your own answer first.

Then check yourself against:

- **Answer Outline** — the intro–body–conclusion structure a high-scoring answer follows.
- **Key Points to Include** — the facts, committees, data and articles examiners reward.
- **Examples & Case Studies** — specific instances to make the answer concrete.
- **Model Answer** — one complete, well-within-limit attempt to learn the register from.
- **Sources** — where to read more and verify.

Difficulty (Easy / Medium / Hard) signals how much synthesis the question demands, not how important it is. Work across all sections for full syllabus coverage.

Contents

GS PAPER 2

Polity

32 practice questions

Q1

The basic structure doctrine has reconciled parliamentary sovereignty with constitutional supremacy in India. In the light of landmark judgments, discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | BASIC STRUCTURE & CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Define basic structure as a judicial doctrine read into Article 368 in Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) to limit Parliament's amending power.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) origin from Golak Nath (1967) through Kesavananda (1973) to Minerva Mills (1980); (ii) elements identified so far — federalism, secularism, judicial review, free and fair elections, rule of law, separation of powers; (iii) tensions — NJAC strike-down (2015), the unelected character of the bench versus an elected Parliament. Note that the doctrine itself is not in the text.

Way forward / Conclusion: The doctrine survives because it is invoked sparingly; institutional restraint, not textual expansion, is what keeps it credible.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) — 13-judge bench, 7:6 majority recognised basic structure
- Article 368 grants amending power; basic structure is a judicially read limit
- Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980) struck down 42nd Amendment clauses 4 and 5 to Article 368
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) added federalism and secularism as basic features
- I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007) extended basic-structure scrutiny to Ninth Schedule laws post-1973
- Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (2015) struck down the 99th Amendment and NJAC Act for violating judicial independence
- Golak Nath v. State of Punjab (1967) was overruled on the amending-power question by Kesavananda

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)
- Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980)
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)
- Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (2015) — NJAC case
- I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The basic structure doctrine, read into Article 368 by the 13-judge bench in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973, 7:6 majority), holds that Parliament's amending power cannot alter the Constitution's identity.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions illuminate the reconciliation. First, doctrinal origin — *Golak Nath* (1967) was overruled in *Kesavananda* (1973), and *Minerva Mills v. Union of India* (1980) struck down clauses (4) and (5) of Article 368 inserted by the 42nd Amendment. Second, identified elements — federalism and secularism in *S.R. Bommai* (1994), Ninth Schedule scrutiny post-1973 in *I.R. Coelho* (2007), judicial independence in the NJAC verdict (*SC AoR v. UoI*, 2015), and free elections recognised in *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain* (1975). Third, the tension — an unelected bench voiding amendments passed by an elected Parliament.
>
> **Conclusion:** The doctrine endures because it is invoked sparingly; institutional restraint, not textual expansion, keeps the reconciliation credible.

SOURCES

→Article 368, Constitution of India
→Basic Structure Doctrine — Anantam IAS
→Collegium and Appointments — Anantam IAS

basic structure | Article 368 | Kesavananda Bharati | judicial review | constituent power | Ninth Schedule | NJAC | constitutional supremacy

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Q2

Article 200 gives the Governor three options on a state bill, but sets no express deadline. In the light of the Supreme Court's November 2025 Presidential Reference opinion, examine the constitutional limits on the Governor's silence and the case for a statutory timeline. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | GOVERNOR & CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 200 lists three terminal choices — assent, withhold, reserve — plus a non-terminal return for reconsideration. There is no textual deadline; the phrase 'as soon as possible' is a standard, not a clock.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional text: Articles 200, 201 and 163 read with Shamsher Singh (1974); the second proviso makes reservation mandatory in some cases; (ii) the State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu (April 2025) verdict that fixed timelines and used Article 142 to declare 'deemed assent', and the November 2025 Presidential Reference that pulled back from court-manufactured assent while affirming judicial review of inaction; (iii) federal politics — Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Punjab episodes show pocket-veto behaviour against opposition-ruled states.

Way forward / Conclusion: Reasonable timelines through a Sarkaria-style convention or parliamentary law, plus reasoned orders — not Article 142 fixes — are the durable answer.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 200 — three options (assent, withhold, reserve for President) and a fourth non-terminal return
- Second proviso to Article 200 makes reservation mandatory for bills endangering the High Court's position
- Article 201 — President's options on reserved bills; no time bar either
- Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab (1974) — Governor acts on aid and advice except in narrow discretion
- State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu (April 2025, 2025 INSC 481) imposed 1–3 month timelines and 'deemed assent' under Article 142
- November 2025 Presidential Reference advisory opinion held courts cannot manufacture assent but inaction is justiciable
- B.P. Singhal v. Union of India (2010) on the analogous removal-of-Governor question

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Tamil Nadu — 10 bills withheld in November 2023 after up to 3 years' delay
- Punjab Governor's reservation of bills in 2023
- Kerala vs Governor Arif Mohammed Khan friction (2023–2024)
- President's Rule in Manipur 2025 — Article 356 alternate route
- Sarkaria Commission recommendations on Governor's role

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Article 200 lists the Governor's three terminal choices on a State Bill — assent, withhold, reserve for the President — and a non-terminal return for reconsideration, but sets no express deadline; the phrase 'as soon as possible' is a standard, not a clock, raising the question of justiciable silence.

Constitutional text and aid-and-advice: Articles 200, 201 and 163 read with *Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab* (1974) bind the Governor to Council of Ministers advice except in narrow discretion; the second proviso to Article 200 makes reservation mandatory only where a Bill endangers the High Court's constitutional position.

April 2025 verdict and November 2025 Reference: *State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu* (April 2025, 2025 INSC 481) imposed one-to-three-month timelines and used Article 142 to declare 'deemed assent'. The November 2025 Presidential Reference advisory opinion pulled back from court-manufactured assent but affirmed that prolonged inaction is justiciable under Article 14 and the rule-of-law guarantee.

Federal politics: Tamil Nadu's ten withheld Bills (some pending three years), Punjab's reserved Bills in 2023, and the Kerala-Raj Bhavan friction with Governor Arif Mohammed Khan reveal a pocket-veto behaviour against opposition-ruled States, weakening the Sarkaria Commission convention and the federal trust built since *S.R. Bommai* (1994).

Way forward / Conclusion:

Reasonable statutory timelines through a Sarkaria-style convention or a parliamentary law under Article 200, with reasoned orders and Inter-State Council review, are the durable answer — not Article 142 fixes that risk substituting executive consent.

SOURCES

- →Article 200 — Constitution of India
- →Supreme Court Presidential Reference Judgment (20 November 2025)
- →Governor — Anantam IAS
- →Centre-State Clashes on VC Appointments — Anantam IAS

Article 200 | deemed assent | pocket veto | Article 163 | Presidential Reference | Article 201 | Article 142 | federalism | aid and advice

Q3

Article 324 left the appointment of the Election Commission to a future law of Parliament. In the light of the CEC and Other ECs Appointment Act 2023 and the Anoop Baranwal judgment, examine whether the present mechanism secures the umpire's independence. Critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | ELECTION COMMISSION

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 324(2) made CEC and EC appointments 'subject to the provisions of any law' by Parliament. For seventy-three years there was no such law; the executive picked the umpire alone.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023) read in an interim collegium of PM, LoP and CJI till Parliament legislated; (ii) the CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act 2023 replaced the CJI with a Union Cabinet Minister, giving the government a 2:1 majority — challenged in Jaya Thakur and connected petitions; (iii) structural asymmetry under Article 324(5): the CEC enjoys judge-like protection but ECs can be removed on the CEC's recommendation alone.

Way forward / Conclusion: A genuinely broad-based selection panel (Goswami Committee 1990, NCRWC 2002, 2nd ARC, 255th Law Commission Report), equalised tenure protection, and a statutory secretariat are the reforms that match the constitutional design.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 324(2) — appointment of CEC and ECs subject to a parliamentary law
- Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2 March 2023) — PM, LoP, CJI interim panel
- CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act 2023
- Article 324(5) — CEC removable like a Supreme Court judge; ECs only on CEC's recommendation
- ECI is a three-member body since 1 October 1993
- Goswami Committee (1990), 2nd ARC, 255th Law Commission Report recommended broad-based collegium
- Jaya Thakur v. Union of India challenges to the 2023 Act pending

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023)
- Jaya Thakur v. Union of India challenges 2024–2025

- Pakistan, South Africa, UK comparator models
- T.N. Seshan reforms as CEC (1990–1996)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Article 324(2) made the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners ‘subject to the provisions of any law’ by Parliament; for seventy-three years no such law existed and the executive picked the umpire alone, until the *Anoop Baranwal* ruling and the 2023 Act filled the void.

The Baranwal interim collegium: *Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India* (2 March 2023) read in a panel of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition and the Chief Justice of India until Parliament legislated — a separation-of-powers safeguard echoing the *Vineet Narain* approach.

The 2023 Act and Jaya Thakur challenge: The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act 2023 replaced the CJI with a Union Cabinet Minister, giving the executive a 2:1 majority. *Jaya Thakur v. Union of India* (pending) challenges the dilution of judicial input recommended by the Goswami Committee (1990), 2nd ARC and the 255th Law Commission Report.

Structural asymmetry under Article 324(5): The CEC enjoys Supreme Court judge-like protection but ECs are removable only on the CEC’s recommendation — a fault line exposed when the Election Commission of India operates as a three-member collegiate body since 1 October 1993.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A genuinely broad-based selection panel, equalised tenure protection for all three members, and a statutory secretariat are the reforms that match Article 324’s design and the T.N. Seshan-era restoration of independence.

SOURCES

→CEC and Other ECs Appointment Bill 2023 — PRS Legislative Research
→Article 324 — Constitution of India
→Election Commission of India — Anantam IAS
→Supreme Court on Election Commission — Anantam IAS

Article 324 | Anoop Baranwal | CEC Act 2023 | Election Commission | selection committee | security of tenure | Goswami Committee

Q4

The Tenth Schedule was enacted in 1985 to curb defections, but it is the Speaker's discretion that decides whether it bites. In the light of Padi Kaushik Reddy v. State of Telangana (2025), make a case for an independent adjudicatory tribunal. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | ANTI-DEFECTION & PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Tenth Schedule, inserted by the 52nd Amendment 1985 and tightened by the 91st Amendment 2003, makes the Speaker the sole judge of disqualification under paragraph 6.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional design — grounds of voluntary giving up of membership and voting against the whip; the 2003 deletion of the 'split' defence; (ii) institutional flaw — the Speaker remains a partisan office, and Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu (1992) allowed only post-decisional judicial review; the Supreme Court in Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker Manipur (2020) suggested a three-month timeline and a permanent tribunal; (iii) contemporary stress — Padi Kaushik Reddy v. State of Telangana (31 July 2025) reiterated that delay defeats the schedule.

Way forward / Conclusion: Hand adjudication to an Election Commission-led tribunal, write a constitutional deadline into paragraph 6, and confine the whip to confidence and money votes — the Dinesh Goswami and 170th Law Commission line.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Tenth Schedule inserted by 52nd Constitutional Amendment 1985
- 91st Constitutional Amendment 2003 deleted the one-third 'split' defence and capped Council of Ministers at 15% of the House
- Paragraph 6 of the Tenth Schedule — Speaker/Chairman as sole adjudicator
- Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu (1992) upheld paragraph 6 but permitted post-decisional judicial review
- Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker Manipur (2020) prescribed a three-month decision norm
- Padi Kaushik Reddy v. State of Telangana (31 July 2025) on Speaker's delay

- Dinesh Goswami Committee 1990 and 170th Law Commission Report on independent tribunal

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Karnataka 17 MLAs disqualification case (2019)
- Maharashtra Shiv Sena Speaker's ruling (2024)
- Padi Kaushik Reddy v. State of Telangana (2025)
- Manipur Congress defection case 2020
- Goa, Madhya Pradesh defection episodes

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Tenth Schedule, inserted by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment 1985 and tightened by the 91st Amendment 2003, makes the Speaker the sole judge of disqualification under paragraph 6; *Padi Kaushik Reddy v. State of Telangana* (31 July 2025) again exposed how Speaker-led delay defeats the schedule's purpose.

Constitutional design: Disqualification grounds include voluntary giving up of membership and voting against a party whip; the 91st Amendment deleted the one-third 'split' defence and capped the Council of Ministers at 15% of House strength, shifting incentives from intra-party dissent to wholesale crossover engineered through resignations and by-elections.

Institutional flaw: The Speaker remains a partisan office; *Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu* (1992) upheld paragraph 6 but allowed only post-decisional judicial review. *Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker Manipur* (2020) prescribed a three-month decision norm and floated a permanent tribunal — a prescription anchored by the Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990) and the 170th Law Commission Report.

Contemporary stress: *Padi Kaushik Reddy* (2025) reiterated that prolonged Speaker inaction is justiciable, after Karnataka's 17-MLA disqualification (2019), Maharashtra Shiv Sena rulings (2024), the Manipur Congress defection of 2020 and Goa-Madhya Pradesh episodes, where Speakers acted as gatekeepers of the ruling majority.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Hand adjudication to an Election Commission of India-led tribunal, write a constitutional deadline into paragraph 6, and confine the whip to confidence and

> money votes — the durable corrective consistent with intra-party democracy and the federal trust of the Tenth Schedule.

SOURCES

- →Tenth Schedule, Constitution of India
- →Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule) — Anantam IAS
- →Speaker of Lok Sabha — Anantam IAS

Tenth Schedule | 52nd Amendment | 91st Amendment | anti-defection | Speaker | Kihoto Hollohan | whip | tribunal

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Q5

The 73rd and 74th Amendments promised a three-tier federation, but local governments remain financially and functionally hollow. Comment.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | LOCAL GOVERNMENT & FEDERALISM

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments 1992 added Parts IX and IXA and the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules, listing 29 panchayat and 18 municipal subjects.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional design left functions, funds and functionaries as 'may' devolutions under Articles 243G and 243W; (ii) State Finance Commissions under Article 243-I are constituted with delay and ignored; the 15th Finance Commission flagged uneven local-body grant utilisation; (iii) parallel bodies and elected mayors with no executive control hollow the third tier.

Way forward / Conclusion: Activity mapping for all 29 and 18 subjects, predictable SFC awards, and a constitutional bar on parallel bodies are the reforms that match the 1992 promise.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments 1992 — Parts IX and IXA
- Articles 243G and 243W on devolution of functions — enabling, not obligatory
- Eleventh Schedule (29 subjects) and Twelfth Schedule (18 subjects)
- Article 243-I and 243Y — State Finance Commissions
- 15th Finance Commission earmarked Rs 4.36 lakh crore for local bodies (2021–2026)
- Article 243K — State Election Commission for panchayat elections

- Panchayat Advancement Index (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2024) measures devolution gaps

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Kerala's People's Plan Campaign as a devolution model
- Karnataka's Nagarpalika reforms
- Bengaluru's Brand Bengaluru parallel agency debate
- Panchayat Advancement Index 2024 ranking
- Second ARC report on Local Governance (2007)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments 1992 added Parts IX and IXA and the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules, listing 29 panchayat and 18 municipal subjects to build a three-tier federation under Articles 243G and 243W.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions explain the hollowness. First, Articles 243G and 243W left devolution of functions, funds and functionaries as 'may' provisions, not obligations, leaving the third tier hostage to State will. Second, State Finance Commissions under Article 243-I are constituted late and their awards routinely ignored; the 15th Finance Commission earmarked Rs 4.36 lakh crore for local bodies (2021-26) but flagged uneven utilisation. Third, parallel parastatal bodies and elected mayors without executive control hollow the tier, as Bengaluru's Brand Bengaluru debate and the Panchayat Advancement Index 2024 record.
>
> **Conclusion:** Activity mapping for all 29 and 18 subjects, predictable SFC awards and a constitutional bar on parallel bodies are the reforms that match the 1992 promise.

SOURCES

→Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 — India Code
→73rd and 74th Amendment — Anantam IAS
→Panchayat Advancement Index — Anantam IAS

73rd Amendment | 74th Amendment | Article 243G | Article 243W | State Finance Commission | three Fs | Eleventh Schedule | Twelfth Schedule

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Q6

Pendency of cases in Indian courts has become a structural denial of justice. With reference to the institutional reforms needed at the High Court and subordinate-judiciary level, examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | JUDICIARY & ACCESS TO JUSTICE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The National Judicial Data Grid reports over 5.2 crore pending cases as of 2025, with the subordinate judiciary carrying about 4.5 crore and High Courts about 62 lakh.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional and statutory base — Article 224A on ad hoc retired judges activated by the Lok Prahari v. Union of India (2021) verdict, and All India Judicial Service under Article 312; (ii) institutional — vacancy ratios in High Courts (about 30%), CrPC/BNSS undertrial backlog under Article 21 (Hussainara Khatoon, 1979), and inadequate use of plea bargaining and Lok Adalats under NALSA; (iii) reforms recommended by the Law Commission's 230th and 245th Reports and the Malimath Committee.

Way forward / Conclusion: A time-bound AIJS, fast-tracked filling of High Court vacancies through a reformed collegium under the Memorandum of Procedure, and a statutory case-flow management code rooted in the Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms Mission can clear the backlog without weakening due process.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- National Judicial Data Grid pending cases: over 5.2 crore (2025)
- Article 224A — ad hoc appointment of retired High Court judges
- Lok Prahari v. Union of India (2021) revived Article 224A use
- Article 312 — enabling provision for All India Judicial Service
- Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979) on speedy trial under Article 21
- 230th Law Commission Report (Reforms in Judiciary, 2009) and 245th Report (Arrears and Backlog)
- Section 436A CrPC / Section 479 BNSS — undertrial release

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Lok Prahari v. Union of India (2021)
- Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979)
- Memorandum of Procedure deadlock 2015–2025
- NALSA Legal Services Day Lok Adalats
- Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms Mission 2011

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The National Judicial Data Grid records over 5.2 crore pending cases as of 2025 — the subordinate judiciary carrying about 4.5 crore and the High Courts about 62 lakh — turning Article 21's speedy-trial promise, read in *Hussainara Khatoon* (1979), into a structural denial of justice.

Constitutional and statutory base: Article 224A permits ad hoc appointment of retired High Court judges, revived by *Lok Prahari v. Union of India* (2021); Article 312 enables an All India Judicial Service that successive governments have not operationalised despite Law Commission endorsement.

Institutional weaknesses: High Court vacancies hover at about 30% under a Memorandum of Procedure unsigned since 2015; Section 436A CrPC / Section 479 BNSS undertrial release is patchily used; the Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms Mission 2011 has under-delivered; Lok Adalats under NALSA and plea bargaining remain underleveraged for compoundable offences.

Reform record: The 230th Law Commission Report (Reforms in Judiciary, 2009), the 245th Report (Arrears and Backlog) and the Malimath Committee recommended case-flow management codes, AIJS, and judge-population ratios closer to the Law Commission's 50 per million benchmark, against India's current 21 per million.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A time-bound All India Judicial Service under Article 312, fast-tracked filling of High Court vacancies through a jointly-signed Memorandum of Procedure, and a statutory case-flow management code anchored in the Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms Mission can clear backlog without weakening due process or the Article 21 speedy-trial guarantee.

SOURCES

→National Judicial Data Grid
→Article 224A — Constitution of India
→Appointment of Ad-hoc Retired Judges in High Courts — Anantam IAS
→Legal Aid in India — 30 Years of NALSA — Anantam IAS

judicial pendency | Article 224A | All India Judicial Service | Lok Adalat | undertrial | collegium | case-flow management

Q7

Article 21 has been judicially expanded from a procedural safeguard into a charter of substantive rights. With reference to recent judgments on personal liberty and inclusive digital access, discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 21 has evolved from A.K. Gopalan (1950) to Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978) reading 'procedure established by law' as 'fair, just and reasonable'.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) personal liberty — Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India (2023) on mandatory written grounds of arrest under Article 22; (ii) substantive expansion — right to privacy (Puttaswamy, 2017), right to die with dignity (Common Cause, 2018) and right to clean environment (M.C. Mehta cases); (iii) the 2025 Supreme Court ruling in Pragya Prasun v. Union of India recognising inclusive digital access as part of Article 21.

Way forward / Conclusion: The doctrinal arc shows judicial activism in writing positive obligations into a negatively framed right — a strength when backed by enforceable directions, a risk when courts substitute for the legislature.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras (1950) — narrow reading
- Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978) — fair, just and reasonable procedure
- K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) — right to privacy
- Common Cause v. Union of India (2018) — right to die with dignity
- Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India (3 October 2023) — written grounds of arrest
- Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025) — inclusive digital access
- Article 22 read with Article 21 in arrest cases

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)
- Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)
- Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India (2023)
- Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025)
- Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Article 21 has evolved from the narrow reading in *A.K. Gopalan* (1950) to the 'fair, just and reasonable' standard laid down in *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978), transforming a procedural safeguard into a charter of substantive rights.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions chart the arc. First, personal liberty — *Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India* (3 October 2023) made written grounds of arrest mandatory under Articles 21 and 22. Second, substantive expansion — privacy in *K.S. Puttaswamy* (2017), death with dignity in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018), and the clean environment line in the *M.C. Mehta* cases. Third, inclusive digital access recognised in *Pragya Prasun v. Union of India* (2025), reading Article 21 to protect KYC accessibility for acid-attack survivors and persons with disabilities.
>
> **Conclusion:** The arc is a strength when judicial directions are enforceable, a risk when the Court legislates — institutional restraint is the anchor.

SOURCES

→Article 21 — Constitution of India
→Personal Liberty under Article 21 — Anantam IAS
→Inclusive Digital Access and Article 21 — Anantam IAS
→Mandatory Disclosure of Arrest Grounds — Anantam IAS

Article 21 | personal liberty | Maneka Gandhi | Puttaswamy | Pankaj Bansal | due process | inclusive digital access

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Q8

The Ninth Schedule was designed to protect agrarian reform from judicial review but has become a refuge for laws of every kind. With reference to I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007), examine.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | HARD | CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS & JUDICIAL REVIEW

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The First Constitutional Amendment 1951 inserted Article 31B and the Ninth Schedule to insulate land-reform legislation from challenge under Articles 14, 19 and 31.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) expansion — the Schedule has grown from 13 entries in 1951 to 284, including SEBC reservations, Sick Textile Undertakings Act and the Tamil Nadu 69% reservation Act; (ii) judicial scrutiny — Waman Rao v. Union of India (1980) cut off blanket protection at 24 April 1973 (the date of Kesavananda Bharati); (iii) I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007) held that any Ninth Schedule law inserted after 24 April 1973 is open to challenge on basic-structure and fundamental-rights grounds.

Way forward / Conclusion: A constitutional convention that the Ninth Schedule is for agrarian reform only — and not a 'silencer' for politically inconvenient laws — would restore its original purpose.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 31B and Ninth Schedule inserted by First Constitutional Amendment 1951
- Ninth Schedule contains 284 entries (as of 2025)
- Waman Rao v. Union of India (1980) — protection only up to 24 April 1973
- I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007) — basic-structure review applies post-1973
- Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, SCs and STs (Reservation of Seats) Act 1993 — placed in Ninth Schedule
- First Constitutional Amendment 1951 enacted to protect zamindari abolition laws
- Basic structure test laid down in Kesavananda Bharati (1973)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007)
- Waman Rao v. Union of India (1980)
- Tamil Nadu 69% reservation Act, Ninth Schedule entry 257A
- Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)
- First Constitutional Amendment 1951

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Article 31B and the Ninth Schedule, inserted by the First Constitutional Amendment 1951, were designed to insulate land-reform laws from challenge under Articles 14, 19 and 31, but the Schedule has since become a refuge for laws of every kind.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions show the drift. First, expansion — from 13 entries in 1951 to 284 by 2025, including the Tamil Nadu 69% reservation Act (Entry 257A) and the Sick Textile Undertakings Act. Second, judicial limit — *Waman Rao v. Union of India* (1980) cut off blanket protection at 24 April 1973, the date of *Kesavananda Bharati*. Third, *I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2007) held that any Ninth Schedule law inserted after 24 April 1973 is open to challenge on basic-structure and fundamental-rights grounds.

> **Conclusion:** A constitutional convention restricting the Schedule to agrarian reform — not a 'silencer' for politically inconvenient laws — would restore its original purpose.

SOURCES

- →How Many Amendments to the Indian Constitution — Anantam IAS
- →Constitution (First Amendment) Act 1951 — India Code
- →I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu — Indian Kanoon

Ninth Schedule | Article 31B | I.R. Coelho | Waman Rao | basic structure | First Amendment | judicial review

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Q9

President's Rule under Article 356 is meant to be the Constitution's safety valve, not a routine political instrument. In the light of the eleventh imposition in Manipur in 2025, discuss the S.R. Bommai guardrails.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | FEDERALISM & CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 356 allows the Centre to assume the functions of a State on receipt of a Governor's report or otherwise; B.R. Ambedkar called it a dead letter. President's Rule was imposed in Manipur on 13 February 2025 — the eleventh imposition in that State.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional design — Article 355 duty to protect States; Articles 356 and 357 process; Article 365 for failure to comply with Centre's directions; parliamentary approval within two months; (ii) Sarkaria Commission 1988 recommendations and the S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) nine-judge bench guardrails — last resort, judicial review available, floor test on the floor of the House; (iii) Manipur 2025 episode — prolonged ethnic violence, Governor's report citing constitutional breakdown, opposition's federalism concerns.

Way forward / Conclusion: Pre-imposition warning under Article 355, mandatory floor test, time-bound restoration of Assembly, and Inter-State Council scrutiny as institutionalised by Punchhi Commission 2010 are the durable corrections.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 356 — failure of constitutional machinery in a State
- Article 355 — Union's duty to protect every State
- Article 365 — failure to comply with Union directions

- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) — floor test, judicial review, federalism as basic structure
- Sarkaria Commission Report 1988 — Article 356 as last resort
- Punchhi Commission 2010 — pre-warning under Article 355
- President's Rule in Manipur on 13 February 2025 — 11th imposition

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- President's Rule in Manipur 2025 — 11th imposition
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)
- Rameshwar Prasad v. Union of India (2006) — Bihar dissolution
- Karnataka 1989 dismissal struck down in S.R. Bommai
- Uttarakhand 2016 — Harish Rawat floor test

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Article 356 allows the Centre to assume the functions of a State on the Governor's report or otherwise — what B.R. Ambedkar called a 'dead letter' best left unused; the imposition in Manipur on 13 February 2025, the State's eleventh, has revived the *S.R. Bommai* guardrails as the constitutional benchmark.

Constitutional design: Article 355 places a duty on the Union to protect every State; Articles 356 and 357 prescribe the procedure with parliamentary approval within two months and renewal capped at three years; Article 365 covers failure to comply with Union directions.

The Bommai guardrails: *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994), a nine-judge bench, held Article 356 to be a last resort, mandated a floor test on the floor of the House (applied in Uttarakhand 2016 to restore Harish Rawat), made the proclamation justiciable and recognised federalism as basic structure; *Rameshwar Prasad v. Union of India* (2006) struck down the Bihar dissolution as mala fide; the Karnataka 1989 dismissal struck down in *Bommai* remains the anchor precedent.

Manipur 2025 episode: Prolonged ethnic violence and the Governor's report cited constitutional breakdown; opposition parties have framed federalism concerns; the Sarkaria Commission 1988 and Punchhi Commission 2010 had warned against routinisation, urging pre-imposition consultation under Article 355.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> A pre-imposition warning under Article 355, mandatory floor test, time-bound restoration of the Assembly, and Inter-State Council scrutiny — the Punchhi Commission frame — are the durable corrections.

SOURCES

- →President's Rule in Manipur 2025 — Anantam IAS
- →Article 356 — Constitution of India
- →S.R. Bommai v. Union of India — Indian Kanoon

Article 356 | S.R. Bommai | Manipur | President's Rule | Sarkaria Commission | floor test | Article 355

Q10

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution is its identity card and a key to its interpretation. With reference to the words 'Socialist', 'Secular' and 'Integrity' inserted by the 42nd Amendment 1976, examine.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | INDIAN CONSTITUTION & PREAMBLE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Preamble, drafted by the Drafting Committee and adopted on 26 November 1949, reflects the Objectives Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru on 13 December 1946.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) interpretive role — Berubari Union (1960) said the Preamble was not part of the Constitution; Kesavananda Bharati (1973) reversed this and held it is part of the Constitution and reflects the basic structure; (ii) the 42nd Amendment 1976 inserted 'Socialist, Secular and Integrity', upheld in Dr Balram Singh v. Union of India (25 November 2024); (iii) the words shape interpretation of Articles 14, 15, 25–28 and Article 1's 'Union of States'.

Way forward / Conclusion: The Preamble is not enforceable but it remains the lodestar of constitutional adjudication and of the basic structure doctrine.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Objectives Resolution moved 13 December 1946; Preamble adopted 26 November 1949
- Berubari Union (1960) — Preamble is not part of the Constitution
- Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) — overruled Berubari on this point
- 42nd Constitutional Amendment 1976 inserted 'Socialist, Secular, Integrity'
- Dr Balram Singh v. Union of India (25 November 2024) upheld 42nd Amendment Preamble changes

- Article 1 — 'India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States'
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) on secularism as basic structure

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Berubari Union v. Union of India (1960)
- Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)
- Dr Balram Singh v. Union of India (25 November 2024)
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)
- Objectives Resolution, Constituent Assembly Debates (13 December 1946)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Preamble, reflecting Jawaharlal Nehru's Objectives Resolution of 13 December 1946 and adopted on 26 November 1949, is the Constitution's identity card and a key to its interpretation under the rule-of-law promise.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions explain its weight. First, interpretive role — *Berubari Union* (1960) held the Preamble was not part of the Constitution, but *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973) reversed this and held it reflects the basic structure, opening the lodestar function. Second, the 42nd Constitutional Amendment 1976 inserted 'Socialist', 'Secular' and 'Integrity', upheld in *Dr Balram Singh v. Union of India* (25 November 2024). Third, the words shape interpretation of Articles 14, 15, 25-28 and Article 1's 'Union of States'; secularism was confirmed as basic structure in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994).
>
> **Conclusion:** The Preamble is not directly enforceable, yet it remains the lodestar of constitutional adjudication and the basic-structure doctrine.

SOURCES

→Preamble of the Indian Constitution — Anantam IAS
→Preamble — Anantam IAS
→Constitution of India — Preamble

Preamble | 42nd Amendment | basic structure | Kesavananda Bharati | Berubari | secularism | Objectives Resolution

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Q11

The 44th Constitutional Amendment 1978 was an attempt to rebalance the Constitution after the Emergency, but several of its safeguards remain unenforced. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The 44th Amendment was passed in April 1979 by the Janata government to undo the most far-reaching provisions of the 42nd Amendment 1976, restoring the constitutional balance disturbed during the 1975-77 Emergency.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) safeguards enacted — Article 352 now requires 'armed rebellion' instead of 'internal disturbance', Article 358 suspends Article 19 only during external emergency, Article 359 cannot suspend Articles 20 and 21, written Cabinet advice is required for proclamation, and Article 74 mandates the President send back advice once; (ii) restoration of right to property — Article 31 omitted, Article 300A inserted, ending fundamental-right status; (iii) unenforced provisions — Section 3 on press freedom for parliamentary proceedings and Article 22(7) safeguards on preventive detention have not been notified, as flagged by Soli Sorabjee and successive Law Commission reports.

Way forward / Conclusion: Notify the pending Sections, codify a parliamentary review of every Emergency proclamation, and read Article 21 expansively into Article 22 to complete the 44th Amendment's promise.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- 44th Constitutional Amendment Act 1978 (effective from 1979–80)
- Article 352 — 'armed rebellion' replaced 'internal disturbance'
- Article 359 — Articles 20 and 21 cannot be suspended even during Emergency
- Article 74(1) — President may return Cabinet advice once for reconsideration
- Article 300A — right to property as a constitutional, not fundamental, right
- Article 358 — Article 19 suspended only during external emergency
- Section 3 of the 44th Amendment on press freedom for Parliament reporting — never notified

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- ADM Jabalpur v. Shivkant Shukla (1976) — overruled in Puttaswamy (2017)
- Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980)
- Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain (1975)
- Shah Commission Report on Emergency Excesses (1978)
- Soli Sorabjee on unnotified Section 3 of 44th Amendment

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The 44th Constitutional Amendment Act 1978 was passed by the Janata government to undo the most far-reaching provisions of the 42nd Amendment 1976 and rebalance the Constitution after the 1975-77 Emergency, which *ADM Jabalpur v. Shivkant Shukla* (1976), since overruled in *Puttaswamy* (2017), had enabled.

Safeguards enacted: Article 352 now requires 'armed rebellion' instead of 'internal disturbance'; Article 358 suspends Article 19 only during external emergency; Article 359 cannot suspend Articles 20 and 21 even during Emergency; written Cabinet advice is mandatory for an Emergency proclamation; and Article 74(1) permits the President to return advice once for reconsideration.

Right to property restored on a new footing: Article 31 was omitted and Article 300A inserted, ending the fundamental-right status of property — a change *Minerva Mills v. Union of India* (1980) read alongside basic-structure protection of Articles 14 and 19, while *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain* (1975) flagged the dangers the 44th Amendment sought to neutralise.

Unenforced provisions: Section 3 on press freedom for parliamentary proceedings and Article 22(7) safeguards on preventive detention remain unnotified, as Soli Sorabjee and successive Law Commission Reports have flagged; the Shah Commission Report (1978) on Emergency excesses has likewise not produced statutory follow-through.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Notify the pending Sections, codify mandatory parliamentary review of every Emergency proclamation under Article 352, and read Article 21 expansively into Article 22 to complete the 44th Amendment's promise of a rebalanced constitutional order.

SOURCES

- →44th Amendment 1978 — Anantam IAS
- →50 Years of National Emergency — Anantam IAS
- →Constitution (44th Amendment) Act 1978 — India Code

44th Amendment | Article 352 | Article 300A | Emergency | armed rebellion | Article 74 | Article 359

Q12

The abrogation of Article 370 has been upheld by the Supreme Court but its constitutional method continues to raise basic-structure questions. In the light of In re Article 370 (2023), critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS & FEDERALISM

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 370 was inserted in 1949 as a 'temporary provision' giving Jammu and Kashmir a special constitutional position; on 5 August 2019 Presidential Order C.O. 272 read with C.O. 273 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019 ended that status.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Article 370(1)(d) allowed the President to extend constitutional provisions with the concurrence of the J&K Constituent Assembly; that body had dissolved in 1957, and Parliament was deemed to act in its place; (ii) the In re Article 370 judgment (11 December 2023) by a five-judge bench unanimously upheld the abrogation, held that the President could exercise Article 370(3) without J&K Constituent Assembly concurrence after 1957, and ordered Assembly elections by 30 September 2024; (iii) federal concerns — splitting a State into two Union Territories under Article 3 without consulting the State legislature, and the precedent for downgrading other States.

Way forward / Conclusion: Restore full Statehood at the earliest as the Solicitor General undertook, codify a clear procedure for Article 3 changes involving State consent, and read federalism — already part of the basic structure under S.R. Bommai (1994) — as a check on such use of constituent power.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 370 — special status of J&K, originally a 'temporary, transitional and special' provision
- Presidential Orders C.O. 272 and 273 of 5 August 2019
- Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019 split the State into UTs of J&K and Ladakh
- In re Article 370 of the Constitution (11 December 2023) — five-judge bench upheld abrogation
- Article 370(3) — President's power to declare cessation
- J&K Constituent Assembly dissolved 1957 — referenced 'recommendation' became inoperative
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) on federalism as basic structure

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- In re Article 370 of the Constitution (2023 INSC 1058)
- Prem Nath Kaul v. State of J&K (1959)
- Sampat Prakash v. State of J&K (1969)
- Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019
- Berubari Union (1960) and Article 3 changes to State boundaries

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Article 370 was inserted in 1949 as a 'temporary, transitional and special' provision giving Jammu and Kashmir a unique constitutional position; on 5 August 2019, Presidential Orders C.O. 272 and 273 read with the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019 ended the special status — a method upheld in *In re Article 370 of the Constitution* (11 December 2023).

Constitutional architecture: Article 370(1)(d) allowed extension of constitutional provisions to J&K with the concurrence of the State's Constituent Assembly; that body dissolved in 1957, and Parliament was deemed to act in its place for the 2019 amendments, anchored in *Prem Nath Kaul v. State of J&K* (1959) and *Sampat Prakash v. State of J&K* (1969).

The 2023 verdict: A five-judge bench unanimously upheld the abrogation, held that Article 370(3) could be exercised without J&K Constituent Assembly concurrence after 1957, and directed Assembly elections by 30 September 2024 — held within the deadline, restoring electoral democracy in the new Union Territory.

Federal concerns: Splitting a State into two Union Territories under Article 3 without consulting the State legislature raises basic-structure questions; *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) holds federalism as basic structure, and the *Berubari Union* (1960) line on Article 3 changes to State boundaries continues to invite contestation.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Restore full Statehood at the earliest as the Solicitor General undertook, codify a clear procedure for Article 3 changes requiring State consent, and read federalism as a check on the use of constituent power.

SOURCES

→Article 370 — Anantam IAS
→Article 370 — Constitution of India

→Supreme Court Judgment In re Article 370 (11 December 2023)

Article 370 | abrogation | Reorganisation Act 2019 | In re Article 370 | Article 3 | Presidential Order | federalism

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Q13

The Inter-State Council under Article 263 is an under-used instrument of cooperative federalism. Comment.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | FEDERALISM & INTER-STATE COORDINATION

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 263 empowers the President to constitute an Inter-State Council to inquire and advise on inter-state disputes and matters of common interest; the Sarkaria Commission's recommendation led to its constitution on 28 May 1990.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) composition — Prime Minister as Chair, Chief Ministers of all States and UTs with legislature, Administrators of others, and six Union Cabinet Ministers; (ii) under-use — the Council has met only twelve times since 1990, with long gaps such as 2006 to 2016; (iii) overlap with NITI Aayog's Governing Council and the GST Council under Article 279A has crowded its space.

Way forward / Conclusion: Statutory meeting calendar of two sessions a year, public minutes, and a Standing Committee under Justice M.M. Punchhi's 2010 model would revive cooperative federalism.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 263 — Inter-State Council
- Constituted on 28 May 1990 on Sarkaria Commission recommendation
- Twelve meetings between 1990 and 2024
- Standing Committee of Inter-State Council headed by Union Home Minister
- Punchhi Commission Report 2010 on Centre-State Relations
- GST Council under Article 279A added in 2016
- Zonal Councils under States Reorganisation Act 1956 as parallel federal forums

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Inter-State Council 11th meeting on 16 July 2016
- GST Council Article 279A institutional model
- NITI Aayog Governing Council meetings 2015 onwards
- Sarkaria Commission Report 1988

- Punchhi Commission Report 2010

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Article 263 empowers the President to constitute an Inter-State Council to inquire into and advise on inter-state disputes and matters of common interest; it was set up on 28 May 1990 on the Sarkaria Commission's recommendation.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions show the under-use. First, composition — the Prime Minister as Chair, all Chief Ministers, UT Administrators and six Union Cabinet Ministers, with a Standing Committee headed by the Union Home Minister. Second, under-use — the Council has met only twelve times since 1990, with long gaps such as 2006 to 2016. Third, overlap — the NITI Aayog Governing Council and the GST Council under Article 279A have crowded its space, while Zonal Councils under the States Reorganisation Act 1956 run in parallel.
>
> **Conclusion:** A statutory two-session-a-year calendar, public minutes and a Standing Committee on the Punchhi Commission 2010 model would revive cooperative federalism.

SOURCES

→Inter-State Council — Anantam IAS
→Cooperative & Competitive Federalism — Anantam IAS
→Article 263 — Constitution of India

Inter-State Council | Article 263 | cooperative federalism | Sarkaria Commission | Punchhi Commission | GST Council | Zonal Councils

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Q14

The GST Council under Article 279A is a constitutional experiment in pooled sovereignty but its 'recommendatory' character has been tested by the Mohit Minerals judgment. Critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | FEDERALISM & FISCAL GOVERNANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The 101st Constitutional Amendment Act 2016 inserted Article 279A creating the GST Council — Union Finance Minister as Chair, Union Minister of State for Finance and one Minister from each State, with weighted voting (Centre one-third, States two-thirds combined; 75 per cent threshold).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Article 246A concurrent power to tax goods and services, Article 269A on inter-state supplies, IGST mechanism, and a five-year compensation cess until 2022; (ii) Union of India v. Mohit Minerals (19 May 2022) held GST Council recommendations are 'persuasive' not binding, reading the federal trust-based design into Article 279A; (iii) governance friction — delayed compensation payments to States, slab-rationalisation debate (the 4-slab structure plus cess), and 56th GST Council Meeting reforms.

Way forward / Conclusion: A reasoned-decision norm, published voting records, a dispute-resolution mechanism under Article 279A(11), and a sunset on the compensation cess can reconcile pooled sovereignty with State fiscal autonomy.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- 101st Constitutional Amendment Act 2016 — Article 279A
- Article 246A — concurrent power to tax goods and services
- Article 269A — IGST on inter-state supplies
- Article 279A(9) — Centre one-third weight, States two-thirds; decisions by 75% majority
- Union of India v. Mohit Minerals Pvt. Ltd. (19 May 2022, 2022 INSC 526) — recommendations persuasive
- GST Compensation Cess Act 2017 — five-year compensation till June 2022
- Article 279A(11) — dispute-resolution mechanism not yet operationalised

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Union of India v. Mohit Minerals (2022)
- GST Compensation extension to repay back-to-back loans until March 2026
- 56th GST Council Meeting rate-rationalisation decisions
- 101st Constitutional Amendment Act 2016
- Compensation arrears dispute Tamil Nadu and Kerala 2022–2023

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> The 101st Constitutional Amendment Act 2016 inserted Article 279A and created the GST Council, a constitutional experiment in pooled sovereignty whose 'recommendatory' character was tested by *Union of India v. Mohit Minerals Pvt. Ltd.* (19 May 2022, 2022 INSC 526).
>
> **Constitutional architecture**: Article 246A confers concurrent power on the Union and States to tax goods and services; Article 269A covers inter-state supplies through

IGST; Article 279A(9) gives the Centre one-third weight and the States two-thirds combined, with decisions requiring a 75% majority — a pooled-sovereignty design without precedent in Indian fiscal federalism, and a five-year GST Compensation cess (2017) that ran until June 2022.

Mohit Minerals: The Supreme Court held that GST Council recommendations are persuasive, not binding, on Parliament and State Legislatures, reading a federal trust-based design into Article 279A; the Court anchored the verdict in cooperative federalism, allowing State legislatures genuine fiscal voice on rate-setting and exemptions.

Governance friction: Delayed GST Compensation payments to Tamil Nadu and Kerala in 2022-23, the four-slab plus cess structure under scrutiny at the 56th GST Council Meeting rate-rationalisation decisions, extension of the compensation cess to repay back-to-back loans until March 2026, and the absence of an operational dispute-resolution mechanism under Article 279A(11) have strained relations.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A reasoned-decision norm, published voting records, an operational Article 279A(11) dispute mechanism and a sunset on the GST Compensation cess can reconcile pooled sovereignty with State fiscal autonomy.

SOURCES

- →GST Council — Anantam IAS
- →101st Amendment of Indian Constitution — Anantam IAS
- →Performance Analysis of GST — Anantam IAS

GST Council | Article 279A | Mohit Minerals | Article 246A | pooled sovereignty | compensation cess | 101st Amendment

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Q15

The Finance Commission under Article 280 is the constitutional umpire of fiscal federalism, but the rising share of cesses and surcharges outside the divisible pool is eroding its mandate. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | FEDERALISM & FISCAL FEDERALISM

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 280 constitutes a Finance Commission every five years to recommend devolution of net tax proceeds and grants-in-aid under Article 275; the 16th

Finance Commission under Arvind Panagariya is to submit its report by 31 October 2025 for the period 2026–31.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) divisible pool — Article 270 excludes cesses, surcharges and Article 271 surcharges from devolution; the share of cesses and surcharges has risen from about 10.4 per cent of gross tax revenue in 2011-12 to over 19 per cent by 2024-25; (ii) 15th Finance Commission devolved 41 per cent of the divisible pool but the effective transfer to States, after netting out non-divisible levies, is lower; (iii) governance friction — repeated extension of the GST Compensation cess, special-category status demands, and the 'horizontal' allocation criteria favouring older population data.

Way forward / Conclusion: A constitutional cap on the share of cesses, sunset clauses, and an upper-house ratified Finance Commission framework will restore the Article 280 promise.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 280 — Finance Commission every five years
- Article 270 — divisible pool excludes cesses and surcharges
- Article 275 — grants-in-aid to States
- 15th Finance Commission devolved 41% of divisible pool (after 1% J&K carve-out)
- 16th Finance Commission constituted 31 December 2023, Chair Arvind Panagariya
- Cesses and surcharges rose from 10.4% (2011-12) to over 19% (2024-25) of gross tax revenue
- Article 271 — surcharges accrue only to the Union

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- 15th Finance Commission Report (period 2021-26)
- 16th Finance Commission, Chair Arvind Panagariya
- GST Compensation cess extension 2022–2026
- Karnataka and Kerala protests over devolution share 2024
- Special category status demand by Andhra Pradesh, Bihar 2024

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> Article 280 constitutes a Finance Commission every five years to recommend devolution of net tax proceeds and grants-in-aid under Article 275; the 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya and constituted on 31 December 2023, will report by 31 October 2025 for the 2026-31 award period.

Divisible pool erosion: Article 270 excludes cesses, surcharges and Article 271 surcharges from devolution; cesses and surcharges have risen from about 10.4% of gross tax revenue in 2011-12 to over 19% in 2024-25, effectively shrinking the divisible pool that States share under the constitutional umpire's award.

15th Finance Commission record: Devolved 41% of the divisible pool after the 1% J&K carve-out, yet the effective transfer to States — netting out non-divisible levies — is materially lower, fuelling Karnataka and Kerala protests in 2024 over horizontal allocation criteria favouring older population data, and Tamil Nadu's concerns over post-2026 delimitation.

Governance friction: Repeated extension of the GST Compensation cess beyond June 2022 to March 2026 for back-to-back loan repayment, special-category-status demands by Andhra Pradesh and Bihar (2024), and the absence of a sunset clause on cesses compound the umpire's burden under Article 280.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A constitutional cap on the share of cesses and surcharges in gross tax revenue, mandatory sunset clauses, an upper-house ratified Finance Commission framework and predictable performance-based grants under Article 275 will restore the Article 280 promise of fiscal-federal balance between the Union and States.

SOURCES

- →Finance Commission of India — Anantam IAS
- →Fiscal Federalism in India — Anantam IAS
- →Article 280 — Constitution of India

Finance Commission | Article 280 | divisible pool | cesses and surcharges | Article 270 | fiscal federalism | 16th FC

Q16

Inter-state water disputes have outlived the constitutional and statutory machinery designed to resolve them. With reference to Article 262 and the ISRWD Act 1956, examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | SEPARATION OF POWERS & DISPUTE REDRESSAL

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 262 empowers Parliament to legislate on inter-state river-water disputes and to bar the jurisdiction of all courts, including the Supreme Court, in such matters; the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956 and the River Boards Act 1956 are its statutory expressions.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional design — Entry 17 of State List on water, Entry 56 of Union List on inter-state rivers, Article 262 bar; (ii) tribunal record — eight tribunals constituted since 1969, of which only Krishna, Cauvery and Godavari have delivered substantive awards; State of Karnataka v. State of Tamil Nadu (2018) on Cauvery led to the Cauvery Water Management Authority; (iii) inefficiency — average pendency exceeds a decade, States routinely approach the Supreme Court under Article 131 despite the Article 262 bar.

Way forward / Conclusion: Operationalise a permanent Inter-State Water Disputes Tribunal under the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill 2019, statutory time-limit, and a Dispute Resolution Committee for negotiated settlement.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 262 — disputes relating to inter-state rivers
- Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956
- Entry 17 State List on water; Entry 56 Union List on inter-state rivers
- Eight tribunals constituted since 1969 — Krishna, Cauvery, Ravi-Beas, Godavari among them
- State of Karnataka v. State of Tamil Nadu (2018) on Cauvery — Cauvery Water Management Authority
- Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill 2019 — permanent tribunal proposal
- Article 131 jurisdiction over Centre-State and inter-State disputes

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Cauvery Water Dispute (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry)
- Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II (Brijesh Kumar Tribunal)
- Ravi-Beas Water Dispute (Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan)
- Almatti Dam height dispute (Karnataka–Andhra Pradesh)
- Mahanadi Tribunal — Odisha, Chhattisgarh

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> Article 262 empowers Parliament to legislate on inter-state river-water disputes and to bar the jurisdiction of all courts, including the Supreme Court; the Inter-State River

Water Disputes Act 1956 and the River Boards Act 1956 are its statutory expressions, yet the disputes have outlived the machinery designed to resolve them.

Constitutional design: Entry 17 of the State List places water within the State's domain, Entry 56 of the Union List covers inter-state rivers in the national interest, and Article 262 confers an exclusion bar — frequently bypassed by States invoking Article 131 original jurisdiction to bring water disputes before the Supreme Court.

Tribunal record: Eight tribunals have been constituted since 1969 — Krishna, Cauvery, Godavari, Ravi-Beas, Mahanadi (Odisha-Chhattisgarh), and the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II under Justice Brijesh Kumar — of which only Krishna, Cauvery and Godavari have delivered substantive awards. *State of Karnataka v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2018) on the Cauvery led to the Cauvery Water Management Authority but did not end annual flare-ups.

Inefficiency: Average pendency exceeds a decade; the Almatti Dam height dispute between Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the Ravi-Beas dispute across Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan persist, signalling structural unresolved-ness.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Operationalise a permanent Inter-State Water Disputes Tribunal under the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill 2019, impose statutory time-limits, and create a Dispute Resolution Committee for negotiated settlement before adjudication — restoring Article 262 as the constitutional umpire it was designed to be.

SOURCES

- →Inter-State Water Disputes in India — Anantam IAS
- →Cauvery Water Dispute — Anantam IAS
- →Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956 — India Code

Article 262 | ISRWD Act 1956 | Cauvery Tribunal | permanent tribunal | Entry 17 | River Boards Act | Article 131

Q17

Tribunals were created to deliver speedy specialised justice but the L. Chandra Kumar judgment kept the High Courts as the ultimate constitutional check. Discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | SEPARATION OF POWERS & JUDICIAL REVIEW

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Articles 323A and 323B, inserted by the 42nd Amendment 1976, empower Parliament and State Legislatures to set up administrative and other tribunals, originally with appeals lying directly to the Supreme Court.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — Administrative Tribunals Act 1985 for CAT, and over fifteen subject tribunals; (ii) L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997) struck down clauses excluding High Court jurisdiction under Articles 226 and 227, restoring writ jurisdiction as a basic-structure feature; (iii) Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 abolished nine tribunals and standardised tenure and service conditions — Madras Bar Association v. Union of India (2021) struck down several provisions.

Way forward / Conclusion: A National Tribunals Commission (Justice R.C. Lahoti recommendation), separation of selection from administrative control, and clear procedural rules will deliver the original tribunal promise.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Articles 323A and 323B inserted by 42nd Amendment 1976
- Administrative Tribunals Act 1985 — Central Administrative Tribunal
- L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997) — High Court writ jurisdiction preserved
- Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 — abolished nine tribunals
- Madras Bar Association v. Union of India (2021) on tribunal tenure
- Roger Mathew v. South Indian Bank (2019) on tribunals' independence
- National Tribunals Commission recommended by 272nd Law Commission Report

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997)
- Central Administrative Tribunal under Article 323A
- National Green Tribunal Act 2010
- Tribunals Reforms Act 2021
- Madras Bar Association v. Union of India (2021)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Articles 323A and 323B, inserted by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment 1976, empower Parliament and State Legislatures to set up administrative and other tribunals for speedy specialised justice.

> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the constitutional check. First, statutory base — the Administrative Tribunals Act 1985 created the Central Administrative Tribunal, and over fifteen subject tribunals followed, including the National Green Tribunal under the NGT Act 2010. Second, *L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India* (1997) struck down clauses excluding High Court jurisdiction under Articles 226 and 227, restoring writ jurisdiction as a basic-structure feature. Third, the Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 abolished nine tribunals; *Madras Bar Association v. Union of India* (2021) and *Roger Mathew v. South Indian Bank* (2019) struck down provisions on tenure and independence.
>
> **Conclusion:** A National Tribunals Commission (Justice R.C. Lahoti and the 272nd Law Commission Report) with separated selection and administrative control will deliver the original tribunal promise.

SOURCES

- →Tribunals in India — Anantam IAS
- →Central Administrative Tribunal — Anantam IAS
- →Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 — PRS India

Article 323A · Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 · L. Chandra Kumar · CAT · judicial review · Madras Bar Association · NTC

Q18

Article 142 gives the Supreme Court a power 'as is necessary for doing complete justice' but its expansive use raises separation-of-powers questions. Comment.

10 MARKS · 150 WORDS · 9 MIN · HARD · SEPARATION OF POWERS & JUDICIAL OVERREACH

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 142 vests in the Supreme Court the power to pass any order necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it; the same article and the Contempt of Courts Act 1971 also clothe its decree with enforceability.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) classical use — Union Carbide v. Union of India (1989) for the Bhopal settlement, Bandhua Mukti Morcha (1984) for bonded labour; (ii) expanded use — Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997) writing workplace-harassment guidelines, the Ayodhya verdict (2019), and the State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu (April 2025) creating 'deemed assent'; (iii) the November 2025 Presidential Reference advisory pulled back from Article 142 used to manufacture executive consent.

Way forward / Conclusion: Article 142 is a residuary equity power, not a parallel legislature; the Bar Council of India v. Union of India (1981) caution against using it to override statutes is the right anchor.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 142 — complete justice
- Union Carbide v. Union of India (1989) — Bhopal settlement
- Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997) — sexual-harassment guidelines
- Ayodhya verdict M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das (2019)
- State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu (April 2025)
- Presidential Reference No. 1 of 2025 advisory opinion (20 November 2025)
- Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India (1998) — Article 142 cannot override statutory provisions

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Union Carbide v. Union of India (1989)
- Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)
- M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das — Ayodhya (2019)
- State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu (2025)
- Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India (1998)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Article 142 vests in the Supreme Court the power to pass any order necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, with the Contempt of Courts Act 1971 underwriting enforceability through Article 129's contempt power.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the separation-of-powers question. First, classical use — *Union Carbide v. Union of India* (1989) crafted the Bhopal settlement and *Bandhua Mukti Morcha* (1984) addressed bonded labour. Second, expansive use — *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997) wrote workplace-harassment guidelines, the Ayodhya verdict in *M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das* (2019), and *State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu* (April 2025) creating 'deemed assent'. Third, the November 2025 Presidential Reference advisory pulled back from manufacturing executive consent through judicial fiat.
>
> **Conclusion:** Article 142 is a residuary equity power, not a parallel legislature; the *Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India* (1998) caution against overriding

> statutes is the anchor.

SOURCES

→Supreme Court Presidential Reference Judgment (20 November 2025)
→Personal Liberty under Article 21 — Anantam IAS
→Article 142 — Constitution of India

Article 142 | complete justice | judicial overreach | Vishaka | separation of powers | Bhopal settlement | Presidential Reference

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Q19

Parliament's effectiveness depends on the number and quality of sittings it holds. With reference to the decline in sitting days and Bill scrutiny since 2014, examine the case for a fixed parliamentary calendar.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | PARLIAMENT & LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Constitution requires only that not more than six months elapse between two sittings of Parliament under Article 85; PRS Legislative Research data shows that the Lok Sabha sat for an average of 55 days a year between 2014 and 2024, against 130 days in the 1950s.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) institutional decline — average sitting days down, only 16 per cent of Bills referred to Department-Related Standing Committees in the 17th Lok Sabha (against 71 per cent in the 15th), suspension of MPs in December 2023 (146 MPs); (ii) constitutional design — Articles 85, 87, 100 (quorum), 105 (privileges); the Speaker decides Money Bill certification under Article 110, which Jairam Ramesh v. Union of India (2024) is examining; (iii) committee weakness — anti-defection whip, lack of research support, declining Question Hour productivity.

Way forward / Conclusion: A fixed annual calendar of at least 100 sittings (NCRWC 2002), mandatory committee referral for most Bills, and a stronger Parliamentary Research Service are the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution's prescription.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 85 — President summons Parliament; gap between sessions not more than six months
- Article 100 — quorum; Article 105 — privileges

- Article 110 — Money Bill certification by Speaker
- Lok Sabha average sittings: 55 per year (2014–2024) vs 130 in 1950s
- 17th Lok Sabha — only 16% Bills referred to DRSCs
- 146 MPs suspended in December 2023 winter session
- NCRWC 2002 recommended 120 sittings for Lok Sabha and 100 for Rajya Sabha

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Suspension of 146 MPs, December 2023
- Jairam Ramesh v. Union of India (Money Bill challenges pending)
- Telecommunications Bill 2023 passed without DRSC referral
- PRS Legislative Research Vital Stats reports
- NCRWC 2002 Report on Parliamentary calendar

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Article 85 requires only that not more than six months elapse between two sittings of Parliament; PRS Legislative Research Vital Stats records that the Lok Sabha sat for an average of 55 days a year between 2014 and 2024, against 130 days in the 1950s, prompting the case for a fixed parliamentary calendar.

Institutional decline: Only 16% of Bills were referred to Department-Related Standing Committees in the 17th Lok Sabha (against 71% in the 15th); 146 MPs were suspended in the Winter Session of December 2023; and the Telecommunications Bill 2023 was passed without committee scrutiny, foreclosing structured stakeholder consultation.

Constitutional design: Articles 85, 87 (special address), 100 (quorum) and 105 (privileges) anchor the calendar; the Speaker's Money Bill certification under Article 110 — under judicial examination in *Jairam Ramesh v. Union of India* — has bypassed Rajya Sabha scrutiny on key laws including the Aadhaar Act 2016, upheld in *Puttaswamy II* (2018).

Committee weakness: The anti-defection whip restricts free debate, Question Hour productivity has declined, and Members lack dedicated research support; declining sittings have compressed Demands-for-Grants discussion and the budget cycle's deliberative space.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC, 2002) recommended a fixed annual calendar of 120 Lok Sabha and 100 Rajya Sabha sittings, mandatory committee referral for substantive Bills, and a Parliamentary Budget Office on the United States and Australia model — the durable prescription for legislative effectiveness.

SOURCES

- →Parliamentary Committees in India — Anantam IAS
- →Standing Committee Reports — Anantam IAS
- →PRS Legislative Research — Parliament

Article 85 | parliamentary sittings | DRSCs | Money Bill | Article 110 | NCRWC | MP suspension

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Q20

The Rajya Sabha was designed as a chamber of mature deliberation and a federal voice. Evaluate its performance against the Constituent Assembly's intention.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | PARLIAMENT & BICAMERALISM

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Rajya Sabha was modelled on the US Senate but with State legislatures as the electing college; the Constituent Assembly Debates (28 July 1947) record Gopalaswami Ayyangar's defence of bicameralism as a check on hasty legislation.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Article 80 (composition of 245 with 12 nominated), Article 84 (qualifications), Article 249 (legislation on State List by two-thirds majority), Article 312 (creation of All India Services); (ii) federal voice — the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2003 removed the domicile requirement, criticised in Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006) as diluting federal representation, though upheld; (iii) performance — fewer Bills properly debated, the Money Bill route under Article 110 has bypassed the Upper House on key laws.

Way forward / Conclusion: Restore the domicile requirement, narrow the Money Bill exception by judicial review, and use Article 249 as a federal trust mechanism rather than a Union override.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 80 — Rajya Sabha composition: 245 seats (233 elected + 12 nominated)

- Article 249 — Parliament can legislate on State List with two-thirds Rajya Sabha resolution
- Article 312 — All India Services created by Rajya Sabha resolution
- Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2003 — removed domicile requirement
- Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006) upheld the 2003 amendment
- Article 110 — Money Bill exclusively in Lok Sabha; Rajya Sabha can only recommend
- Constituent Assembly Debates 28 July 1947 — Gopalaswami Ayyangar on bicameralism

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006)
- Aadhaar Act 2016 passed as Money Bill — Puttaswamy II (2018) upheld
- Land Boundary Agreement (100th Amendment, 2015) ratified by Rajya Sabha
- Article 249 resolution on Services in past sessions
- Vice-President as ex officio Chairman, Article 89

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Rajya Sabha was modelled on the US Senate but with State legislatures as the electing college; Gopalaswami Ayyangar's Constituent Assembly speech of 28 July 1947 defended bicameralism as a check on hasty legislation.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate the chamber. First, constitutional architecture — Article 80 (245 seats including 12 nominated), Article 84 (qualifications), Article 249 (legislation on State List by a two-thirds resolution) and Article 312 (All India Services). Second, federal voice — the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2003 removed the domicile requirement; *Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India* (2006) upheld it but the change has diluted State identity. Third, performance — fewer Bills properly debated, and the Money Bill route under Article 110 has bypassed the Upper House, as in the Aadhaar Act 2016 upheld in *Puttaswamy II* (2018).
>
> **Conclusion:** Restore the domicile requirement, narrow the Money Bill exception judicially, and use Article 249 as federal trust, not Union override.

SOURCES

→Rajya Sabha — Anantam IAS
→Article 80 — Constitution of India
→Comparison of Constitutions — Anantam IAS

Rajya Sabha | Article 80 | Article 249 | bicameralism | Money Bill | Kuldip Nayar | federal voice

Q21

Department-Related Standing Committees are the engine room of parliamentary scrutiny but their effectiveness has weakened in recent Lok Sabhas. Discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | PARLIAMENT & COMMITTEE SYSTEM

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Department-Related Standing Committee system was constituted on 8 April 1993 on a recommendation of the Rules Committee; 24 DRSCs cover the work of all 99 Ministries and Departments.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional source — Articles 105 (privileges) and 118 (rules of procedure) provide the base; the Speaker constitutes committees on the floor; (ii) function — Bill scrutiny, Demands for Grants, subject reports; PRS data shows only 16 per cent of Bills referred in the 17th Lok Sabha (against 71 per cent in the 15th); (iii) systemic gaps — no research staff per Member, no sub-committee on legislation, anti-defection whip eroding free debate.

Way forward / Conclusion: Mandatory referral norms in the Rules of Procedure, public hearings on Bills, and a Parliamentary Budget Office on the US-Australia model would revive committee scrutiny.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- DRSCs constituted 8 April 1993 — initially 17, now 24
- Articles 105 and 118 — privileges and rules of procedure
- Public Accounts Committee, Estimates Committee, Committee on Public Undertakings as Financial Committees
- PRS Vital Stats — 16% Bills referred to DRSCs in 17th Lok Sabha
- Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024
- NCRWC 2002 recommended pre-legislative consultation
- Standing Committees do not require government acceptance of recommendations

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- DRSC on Education — NEP 2020 review
- DRSC on Personnel — RTI Amendment Bill 2019 (not referred)
- Public Accounts Committee on PMC Bank, Coal Block reports
- Joint Parliamentary Committee — Waqf Amendment Bill 2024
- Estimates Committee 1950 — founded by Speaker G.V. Mavalankar

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Department-Related Standing Committees were constituted on 8 April 1993 by the Rules Committee; 24 DRSCs now cover the work of all 99 Ministries and Departments under the parliamentary engine room of scrutiny.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions show the weakening. First, constitutional source — Articles 105 (privileges) and 118 (rules of procedure); the Speaker constitutes committees on the floor, with the PAC, Estimates Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings as Financial Committees. Second, function — PRS data shows only 16% of Bills referred in the 17th Lok Sabha against 71% in the 15th; the RTI Amendment Bill 2019 and Telecommunications Bill 2023 bypassed committees. Third, systemic gaps — no Member-level research staff, no legislation sub-committee, and the anti-defection whip eroding free debate.
>
> **Conclusion:** Mandatory referral norms, public hearings on Bills and a Parliamentary Budget Office on the US-Australia model — the NCRWC 2002 line — would revive committee scrutiny.

SOURCES

- →Parliamentary Committees in India — Anantam IAS
- →Standing Committee Reports — Anantam IAS
- →PRS Legislative Research — Parliament Committees

DRSCs | Article 105 | Bill scrutiny | PAC | Estimates Committee | JPC | pre-legislative consultation

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Q22

The collegium system is a judicial invention to protect independence but it has been criticised for opacity. With reference to the Memorandum of Procedure deadlock since 2015, comment.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | EXECUTIVE & JUDICIARY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The collegium system was read into Articles 124 and 217 by the Second Judges Case (1993) and elaborated in the Third Judges Case (1998); Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (2015) struck down the 99th Amendment and the NJAC Act for violating judicial independence as part of the basic structure.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Article 124 (Supreme Court) and Article 217 (High Courts), with collegium primacy in proposing names; the executive can return a name only once; (ii) MoP deadlock — the Supreme Court asked the Centre in 2015 to finalise a new Memorandum of Procedure, including a secretariat, eligibility criteria and a complaints mechanism, but it remains unsigned; pending names have been delayed for over two years in many cases; (iii) reform options — National Judicial Appointments Commission models from the UK and South Africa, public criteria, and a permanent secretariat.

Way forward / Conclusion: A jointly-signed MoP with a secretariat, published criteria and a constitutional time-limit on government action would preserve independence without reviving the NJAC.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 124 — Supreme Court appointments; Article 217 — High Court appointments
- Second Judges Case S.P. Gupta v. Union of India (1981) overruled in 1993
- Second Judges Case Advocates-on-Record (1993) — collegium primacy
- Third Judges Case In re Special Reference (1998) — five-judge SC collegium
- 99th Constitutional Amendment Act 2014 — NJAC
- Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record v. Union of India (2015) — NJAC struck down
- Memorandum of Procedure unsigned since December 2015

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- NJAC Case (2015)
- Justice Akil Kureshi transfer episode 2019
- Justice K.M. Joseph elevation delay 2018
- UK Judicial Appointments Commission model
- South African Judicial Service Commission

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> The collegium system was read into Articles 124 and 217 by the Second Judges Case (1993) and elaborated in the Third Judges Case (1998); *Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India* (2015) struck down the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act 2014 and the NJAC Act for violating judicial independence — a basic-structure feature — but left the Memorandum of Procedure unsigned since December 2015.

Constitutional architecture: Article 124 governs Supreme Court appointments and Article 217 the High Courts, with collegium primacy in proposing names; the executive can return a name only once, after which reiteration binds — a doctrine first stated in *S.P. Gupta* (1981) and reversed in the Second Judges Case in 1993.

The MoP deadlock: The Supreme Court asked the Centre in 2015 to finalise a new MoP including a permanent secretariat, eligibility criteria and a complaints mechanism; it remains unsigned, and names — Justice Akil Kureshi's 2019 transfer and Justice K.M. Joseph's 2018 elevation — have been delayed for years, eroding morale and predictability.

Reform options: The UK Judicial Appointments Commission and the South African Judicial Service Commission offer comparator models with public criteria, candidate interviews and a permanent secretariat — without sacrificing independence, and without resurrecting the structural infirmities the 2015 verdict identified.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A jointly-signed MoP with a permanent secretariat, published criteria, and a constitutional time-limit on government action would preserve independence without reviving the NJAC.

SOURCES

→Collegium System and Judicial Appointments — Anantam IAS
→Collegium vs NJAC — Anantam IAS
→Article 124 — Constitution of India

collegium | Article 124 | Article 217 | NJAC | MoP | judicial independence | basic structure

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Q23

The President of India is a constitutional head bound by aid and advice under Article 74, but the office retains real discretionary power in specific circumstances. Discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | EXECUTIVE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The President is the head of the Indian Union under Article 52; Article 74 binds the President to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, as clarified by the 42nd and 44th Amendments.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Article 53 (executive power), Article 74(1) (binding advice, may be returned once), Article 75 (Council of Ministers), Article 78 (PM duty to communicate); (ii) discretionary spaces — appointment of PM when no party has a clear majority (Article 75), dissolution of Lok Sabha on PM's loss of majority, returning a bill under Article 111 (pocket veto by President Zail Singh on Postal Bill 1986), and pardoning power under Article 72 limited by Maru Ram (1981) and Epuru Sudhakar (2006); (iii) office in practice — President Droupadi Murmu's 2025 Reference under Article 143 on Governor's role.

Way forward / Conclusion: The Shamsher Singh (1974) line — that the President is a constitutional head — is the right anchor; the discretionary corridors must be narrow and reasoned.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 52 — President is head of the Union
- Article 53 — executive power vested in the President
- Article 74(1) — aid and advice binding; may be returned once
- Article 75 — appointment of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
- Article 72 — pardoning power; Maru Ram (1981), Epuru Sudhakar (2006)
- Article 111 — assent, withholding, return of Bills
- Article 143 — Presidential Reference, used in November 2025 on Governor's role

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- President Droupadi Murmu — 15th President from July 2022
- Pocket veto — President Zail Singh on Postal Bill 1986
- Article 143 Reference on Governor's assent (November 2025)
- Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab (1974)
- Maru Ram v. Union of India (1981)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Article 52 makes the President head of the Indian Union and Article 74 binds the office to the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, as the 42nd and 44th Amendments clarified.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions identify the discretionary spaces. First, Articles 53, 74(1) (advice may be returned once) and 78 (PM's duty to communicate) frame the office; *Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab* (1974) confirmed the constitutional-head reading. Second, discretion — appointing the PM in a hung House (Article 75), dissolving the

> Lok Sabha, returning a Bill under Article 111 (the Zail Singh pocket veto on the Postal Bill 1986) and pardons under Article 72 limited by *Maru Ram* (1981) and *Epuru Sudhakar* (2006). Third, the 2025 Reference under Article 143 on the Governor's assent power shows the President's institutional voice.
>
> **Conclusion:** The constitutional-head reading is the anchor; discretionary corridors must remain narrow and reasoned.

SOURCES

- →Droupadi Murmu — Anantam IAS
- →Comparative Analysis of Impeachment Procedure — Anantam IAS
- →Article 74 — Constitution of India

Article 74 | Article 72 | Article 111 | President | pocket veto | Article 143 | Shamsher Singh

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Q24

The 2024 Supreme Court verdict striking down the Electoral Bonds Scheme has reopened the question of how political parties should be funded. With reference to the Association for Democratic Reforms judgment, examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Electoral Bonds Scheme 2018 allowed anonymous donations to political parties through SBI bearer-bonds; the Finance Act 2017 made the enabling amendments to the Companies Act 2013, the RBI Act 1934, the Income Tax Act 1961 and the Representation of the People Act 1951.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) the scheme — removed the 7.5 per cent cap on corporate donations (Section 182 Companies Act), amended Section 29C of RPA 1951 to exempt disclosure for bond donations; (ii) Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India (15 February 2024) struck down the scheme as violative of voters' right to information under Article 19(1)(a) and arbitrary under Article 14; (iii) post-judgment data — SBI disclosure (April 2024) showed Rs 16,518 crore in bonds redeemed between 2018 and 2024, with party-wise and corporate-donor breakdown published.

Way forward / Conclusion: Statutory cap on cash donations, a National Election Fund (Indrajit Gupta Committee 1998), and full disclosure under Section 29C RPA 1951 would deliver the transparency the Court demanded.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Electoral Bonds Scheme 2018 notified through Finance Act 2017
- Section 29C of RPA 1951 — political party disclosure
- Section 182 of Companies Act 2013 — corporate donation cap removed by Finance Act 2017
- Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India (15 February 2024, 2024 INSC 113)
- Article 19(1)(a) — voters' right to information
- SBI bond disclosure: Rs 16,518 crore redeemed between March 2018 and April 2024
- Indrajit Gupta Committee 1998 on State funding of elections

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India (2024)
- Indrajit Gupta Committee Report 1998
- Common Cause v. Union of India (1996) — political funding scrutiny
- 255th Law Commission Report on Electoral Reforms (2015)
- Tata Electoral Trust model

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Electoral Bonds Scheme 2018 allowed anonymous donations to political parties through SBI bearer-bonds; the Finance Act 2017 made enabling amendments to the Companies Act 2013, the RBI Act 1934, the Income Tax Act 1961 and the Representation of the People Act 1951 — a regime struck down by *Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India* (15 February 2024, 2024 INSC 113).

The scheme: It removed the 7.5% cap on corporate donations under Section 182 of the Companies Act 2013 and amended Section 29C of RPA 1951 to exempt bond donations from disclosure, enabling shell-company and foreign-controlled-subsidiary funding without any audit trail visible to voters.

The ADR judgment: A five-judge bench struck down the scheme as violative of voters' right to information under Article 19(1)(a) — recognised in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (1996) — and as arbitrary under Article 14, holding that informational asymmetry between donors and voters is constitutionally impermissible in a representative democracy.

Post-judgment data: SBI disclosure (April 2024) showed Rs 16,518 crore in bonds redeemed between March 2018 and April 2024, with party-wise and corporate-donor breakdown published, exposing concentration in ruling parties and quid-pro-quo patterns linked to regulatory action and contracts.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A statutory cap on cash donations, a National Election Fund (Indrajit Gupta Committee 1998), full Section 29C RPA disclosure and a Tata Electoral Trust-style transparent intermediary would deliver the transparency the Court demanded.

SOURCES

- →Electoral Bonds — Anantam IAS
- →Electoral Reforms in India — Anantam IAS
- →Representation of the People Act 1951 — India Code

Electoral Bonds | RPA 1951 | Section 29C | ADR judgment | Article 19(1)(a) | Finance Act 2017 | political funding

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Q25

The Union Public Service Commission is a hundred-year-old constitutional body but its mandate and methods need a 2026 update. With reference to Article 315 and the UPSC at 100, examine.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | APPOINTMENTS TO CONSTITUTIONAL POSTS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Union Public Service Commission traces back to the Public Service Commission set up in October 1926 under the Government of India Act 1919; Article 315 of the Constitution gave it constitutional status from 26 January 1950.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Article 315 (UPSC and State PSCs), Article 316 (appointment), Article 320 (functions: recruitment, advice on disciplinary matters), Article 322 (expenses on Consolidated Fund); (ii) functional concerns — exam-paper leaks at the State level, lateral entry (UPSC advertisement July 2024 for joint secretaries withdrawn), and faceless interview reform proposals; (iii) reform agenda — Baswan Committee 2016 on CSE pattern, 2nd ARC's Tenth Report on personnel administration, and the case for moving from selection-only to a strategic HR function for the Union.

Way forward / Conclusion: Operationalise the National Recruitment Agency, codify lateral-entry safeguards through legislation, and a public-facing performance audit of UPSC processes would modernise Article 315.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Public Service Commission constituted October 1926; UPSC constitutional from 26 January 1950
- Article 315 — UPSC and State Public Service Commissions
- Article 316 — appointment by President for six-year term or 65 years
- Article 320 — functions of PSCs (recruitment, disciplinary advice)
- Article 322 — expenses charged on Consolidated Fund of India
- Baswan Committee on CSE Pattern (2016)
- Lateral Entry UPSC advertisement 2024 — withdrawn after objection

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- UPSC at 100 — 1926 to 2026
- Lateral Entry advertisement 2024
- National Recruitment Agency announcement 2020
- 2nd ARC Tenth Report 2008
- Baswan Committee 2016

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Article 315 of the Constitution gave the Union Public Service Commission constitutional status from 26 January 1950, succeeding the Public Service Commission constituted in October 1926 under the Government of India Act 1919 — UPSC at 100.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the 2026 update. First, constitutional architecture — Article 316 (appointment for six years or 65 years), Article 320 (functions including recruitment and disciplinary advice) and Article 322 (expenses charged on the Consolidated Fund of India). Second, functional concerns — State PSC exam-paper leaks, the withdrawn July 2024 lateral-entry advertisement for joint secretaries, and faceless interview pilots. Third, reform — the Baswan Committee 2016 on the CSE pattern and the 2nd ARC's Tenth Report (2008) on personnel administration argue for a strategic-HR mandate.
>
> **Conclusion:** Operationalise the National Recruitment Agency (announced 2020), codify lateral-entry safeguards by legislation, and audit UPSC processes to modernise Article 315.

SOURCES

→UPSC at 100 — Anantam IAS

→Civil Services Neutrality — Anantam IAS
→Article 315 — Constitution of India

UPSC | Article 315 | Article 320 | lateral entry | Baswan Committee | NRA | Article 316

Q26

Delimitation after 2026 will redraw India's federal map. With reference to Article 82 and the freeze under the 84th and 87th Constitutional Amendments, critically analyse the North-South representation question.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | FEDERALISM & ELECTORAL REFORMS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 82 requires Parliament to enact a Delimitation Act after every census; the 42nd Amendment 1976 froze Lok Sabha seat allocation until the 2001 Census, and the 84th Amendment 2001 read with the 87th Amendment 2003 extended this freeze to the first census after 2026.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — Articles 81 (composition of Lok Sabha), 82 (delimitation), 170 (Assembly composition); the freeze rewarded States that controlled fertility; (ii) demographic asymmetry — SRS 2022 TFR: South 1.6, Northern Hindi-belt 2.6; a population-based redistribution would shift between 30 and 65 Lok Sabha seats from South and East to North; (iii) federalism concerns — Rajya Sabha as a counterweight, the Tamil Nadu Joint Action Committee 2025 resolution, and the case for a composite formula (population plus governance metrics or capping the North's gain).

Way forward / Conclusion: A constitutional amendment that protects existing State seat shares while expanding the House size, strengthening the Rajya Sabha's federal voice, and aligning with the One Nation One Election timeline would reconcile population equality with federal fairness.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 81 — composition of Lok Sabha
- Article 82 — readjustment after each census
- 42nd Amendment 1976 — first freeze on seat allocation
- 84th Amendment 2001 — freeze extended until first census after 2026
- 87th Amendment 2003 — used 2001 census for intra-State redistribution
- SRS 2022 TFR — South 1.6, North 2.6
- Tamil Nadu Joint Action Committee on Delimitation (March 2025)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Delimitation Commission 2002 under Justice Kuldip Singh
- 84th and 87th Constitutional Amendments
- Tamil Nadu JAC March 2025 resolution
- Sample Registration System Statistical Report 2022
- United States 'Great Compromise' as a comparator

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Article 82 requires Parliament to enact a Delimitation Act after every census; the 42nd Amendment 1976 first froze Lok Sabha seat allocation, and the 84th Constitutional Amendment 2001 read with the 87th Amendment 2003 extended the freeze to the first census after 2026 — a date now in sight that will redraw India's federal map.

Constitutional architecture: Articles 81 (Lok Sabha composition), 82 (decennial readjustment) and 170 (Assembly composition) anchor the framework; the freeze rewarded States that controlled fertility, while the 2002 Delimitation Commission under Justice Kuldip Singh redistributed seats only within States.

Demographic asymmetry: The Sample Registration System Statistical Report 2022 records Total Fertility Rate at 1.6 in the South and 2.6 in the Hindi belt; a strict population-based redistribution would shift between 30 and 65 Lok Sabha seats from South and East to the North, with the Tamil Nadu Joint Action Committee on Delimitation (March 2025) flagging federal asymmetry and a coalition demand.

Federalism concerns: The Rajya Sabha, weakened by the 2003 domicile-removal upheld in *Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India* (2006), is a poor counterweight; the United States 'Great Compromise' comparator supports a population-plus-equal-representation hybrid, while *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) holds federalism as basic structure.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A constitutional amendment that protects existing State seat shares while expanding total House size, strengthens Rajya Sabha's federal voice and aligns with the One Nation One Election timeline would reconcile population equality with federal fairness.

SOURCES

→Delimitation in India — Anantam IAS

→Article 82 — Constitution of India
→How Many Amendments to the Indian Constitution — Anantam IAS

Article 82 | delimitation | 84th Amendment | 87th Amendment | federalism | North-South | Rajya Sabha

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Q27

Pressure groups and civil-society associations are protected under Article 19(1)(c) but increasingly squeezed by regulatory frameworks. With reference to cooperative societies, farmer producer organisations and trade unions, comment.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | PRESSURE GROUPS & ASSOCIATIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 19(1)(c) protects the right to form associations and unions, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(4); the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011 made cooperative-society formation a fundamental right.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) cooperatives — Article 19(1)(c) right to form cooperatives, Part IXB (Articles 243ZH to 243ZT) struck down for States in Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah (2021); Ministry of Cooperation set up 2021; National Cooperative Policy 2025; (ii) FPOs — Companies Act Section 581A category, Central Sector Scheme for 10,000 FPOs (2020) led by SFAC and NABARD; (iii) trade unions — Trade Unions Act 1926, Industrial Relations Code 2020 raising recognition threshold; All India Trade Union Congress and other federations facing eroded bargaining space.

Way forward / Conclusion: A facilitative-regulatory balance, judicially enforced under Article 19(1)(c), is the basis for healthy pluralism.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 19(1)(c) — right to form associations and unions
- 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011 — cooperatives as fundamental right
- Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah (2021) — Part IXB inapplicable to State cooperatives
- Ministry of Cooperation created 6 July 2021
- National Cooperative Policy 2025 — Sahkar se Samriddhi vision
- Central Sector Scheme for 10,000 FPOs (2020) — SFAC, NABARD, NCDC
- Industrial Relations Code 2020 — recognition threshold for unions

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- National Cooperative Policy 2025

- Lakhpati Didi Scheme via SHGs
- Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah (2021)
- Amul, IFFCO — successful cooperative federalism
- All India Bank Officers' Confederation strikes

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: Article 19(1)(c) protects the right to form associations and unions, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(4); the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011 elevated cooperative-society formation to fundamental-right status.

Body: Three dimensions show the regulatory squeeze. First, cooperatives — *Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah* (2021) held Part IXB (Articles 243ZH-243ZT) inapplicable to State cooperatives, while the Ministry of Cooperation (created 6 July 2021), the National Cooperative Policy 2025 and the Amul-IFFCO success anchor the 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' vision. Second, FPOs — the Central Sector Scheme for 10,000 FPOs (2020) led by SFAC, NABARD and NCDC under Section 581A Companies Act extends collective bargaining to small farmers. Third, trade unions — the Industrial Relations Code 2020 raised recognition thresholds, eroding bargaining space for the All India Trade Union Congress, AIBOC and federations.

Conclusion: A facilitative-regulatory balance, judicially enforced under Article 19(1)(c), is the basis for healthy pluralism.

SOURCES

→National Cooperative Policy 2025 — Anantam IAS
→Farmer Producer Organisations — Anantam IAS
→Fundamental Rights and Duties — Anantam IAS

Article 19(1)(c) | 97th Amendment | cooperatives | FPOs | Trade Unions Act | Rajendra Shah | pressure groups

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Q28

Self-help groups have become a parallel architecture of grassroots democracy. With reference to the NRLM and the Lakhpati Didi initiative, evaluate.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | PRESSURE GROUPS & ASSOCIATIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Self-help groups are 10–20 member voluntary associations of poor rural women practising thrift, credit and joint enterprise; SHGs are organised under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana — National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM, launched 2011).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) scale — over 1 crore SHGs covering more than 10.8 crore households as of March 2025 (Ministry of Rural Development); (ii) institutional architecture — village organisations and cluster-level federations, Bank Sakhi network, SHG-Bank Linkage Programme launched by NABARD in 1992; (iii) democratic deepening — Lakhpati Didi target of 3 crore by 2027 (Budget 2024–25), Krishi Sakhi and Drone Didi initiatives; SHGs as a Tier-IV institution feeding into the panchayat under Article 243A Gram Sabha.

Way forward / Conclusion: Statutory recognition of cluster federations, predictable RBI-set lending norms, and SHG–Panchayat convergence under PRI mainstreaming will deepen the democracy SHGs represent.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- DAY-NRLM launched 2011 under the Ministry of Rural Development
- Over 1 crore SHGs and 10.8 crore households as of March 2025
- SHG-Bank Linkage Programme launched by NABARD in 1992
- Lakhpati Didi target of 3 crore by 2027
- Article 243A — Gram Sabha at the heart of local democracy
- Drone Didi (Namo Drone Didi) launched November 2023 with Rs 1,261 crore outlay
- Krishi Sakhi initiative for women agricultural extension workers

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Kudumbashree Kerala (1998) — largest women's network in Asia
- Lakhpati Didi initiative (3 crore target by 2027)
- DAY-NRLM and SHG-Bank Linkage
- Drone Didi scheme
- NRLM SHG members elected as Sarpanch in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Self-help groups are 10-20 member voluntary associations of poor rural women practising thrift, credit and joint enterprise, organised under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana — National Rural Livelihoods Mission (launched 2011).
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions explain the parallel architecture. First, scale — over 1 crore SHGs covering more than 10.8 crore households as of March 2025, per the Ministry of Rural Development. Second, institutional architecture — village organisations, cluster-level federations and the Bank Sakhi network, supported by the NABARD SHG-Bank Linkage Programme since 1992; Kudumbashree Kerala (1998) is Asia's largest women's network. Third, democratic deepening — the Lakhpati Didi target of 3 crore by 2027 (Budget 2024-25), Namo Drone Didi (Rs 1,261 crore, November 2023) and Krishi Sakhi feed into the Article 243A Gram Sabha as a Tier-IV institution.
>
> **Conclusion:** Statutory recognition of cluster federations and SHG-Panchayat convergence will deepen this grassroots democracy.

SOURCES

- →NRLM and Self-Help Groups — Anantam IAS
- →Lakhpati Didi Scheme — Anantam IAS
- →Ministry of Rural Development — DAY-NRLM

SHG · NRLM · Lakhpati Didi · DAY-NRLM · Drone Didi · Kudumbashree · grassroots

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Q29

Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls is a statutory exercise under the Representation of the People Act 1950, but it has provoked concerns about voter exclusion. In the light of the 2025 Bihar SIR exercise, examine.

10 MARKS · 150 WORDS · 9 MIN · HARD · REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Special Intensive Revision is conducted under Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act 1950 read with Rules 25–31 of the Registration of Electors Rules 1960; the Election Commission ordered an SIR in Bihar in June 2025 before the 2025 Assembly polls.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — Section 16 disqualifications (non-citizenship, of unsound mind, disqualified by RPA 1951), Section 21 special revision; the ECI must follow due process and publish draft rolls; (ii) Bihar 2025 exercise — over 65 lakh names initially flagged for non-availability of documents, raising Article 326 universal-adult-suffrage concerns; (iii) judicial scrutiny — the Supreme Court in Association for Democratic Reforms v. Election Commission (interim order, July–August 2025) directed acceptance of Aadhaar, ration card and EPIC as identity proof during SIR.

Way forward / Conclusion: SIR must remain a tool of inclusion, not exclusion; transparent draft publication, independent grievance redress, and door-to-door verification with named BLOs are the safeguards.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Section 21 RPA 1950 — preparation and revision of electoral rolls
- Article 326 — universal adult suffrage
- Registration of Electors Rules 1960
- Section 16 RPA 1950 — disqualifications for registration
- Bihar SIR ordered by ECI in June 2025 before October 2025 Assembly polls
- Association for Democratic Reforms v. Election Commission (interim orders 2025)
- Booth Level Officer mechanism for door-to-door verification

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Bihar SIR exercise June–September 2025
- Association for Democratic Reforms v. Election Commission (2025)
- Lal Babu Hussein v. Electoral Registration Officer (1995)
- ECI Manual on Electoral Rolls 2023
- Assam NRC parallel — Section 6A Citizenship Act, In re Section 6A (2024)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Special Intensive Revision is conducted under Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act 1950 read with Rules 25-31 of the Registration of Electors Rules 1960; the Election Commission of India ordered an SIR in Bihar in June 2025 before the October 2025 Assembly polls.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the concern. First, statutory base — Section 16 disqualifications, Section 21 special revision, and Article 326's universal-adult-suffrage guarantee. Second, the Bihar 2025 exercise — over 65 lakh names initially flagged for non-availability of documents, raising voter-exclusion concerns and echoing the Assam NRC parallel under Section 6A Citizenship Act, examined in *In re Section 6A* (2024). Third, judicial scrutiny — *Association for Democratic Reforms v. Election*

> *Commission* (interim orders, July-August 2025) directed acceptance of Aadhaar, ration card and EPIC as identity proof.
>
> **Conclusion:** SIR must remain a tool of inclusion; transparent draft publication, independent grievance redress and door-to-door BLO verification are the safeguards.

SOURCES

- →Special Intensive Revision (SIR) — Anantam IAS
- →Electoral Roll Integrity — Anantam IAS
- →Representation of the People Act 1950 — India Code

SIR | Article 326 | RPA 1950 | electoral roll | Bihar SIR | Section 21 | voter inclusion

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Q30

The Comptroller and Auditor General is the guardian of the public purse under Articles 148 to 151, but its post-audit reports have lost political traction. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | APPOINTMENTS TO CONSTITUTIONAL POSTS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Article 148 establishes the office of CAG, appointed by the President; Article 149 sets duties; Article 150 prescribes form of accounts; Article 151 requires reports to be laid before Parliament and the State legislatures; the CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act 1971 is the operating statute.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional architecture — appointed for six years or up to 65; removable like a Supreme Court judge; salary charged on the Consolidated Fund (Article 148(3)); (ii) institutional gaps — appointment process not collegial (criticised in Common Cause v. Union of India, 2019 petition), shrinking post-audit Special Audit Reports (down from 81 in 2015–16 to 26 in 2023–24 per CAG annual reports), under-utilisation of PAC scrutiny; (iii) emerging mandate — performance audits, audit of PPPs, and the right to audit private bodies receiving substantial government funds (Section 14 CAG Act, 1971).

Way forward / Conclusion: Multi-member CAG (2nd ARC recommendation), open appointment collegium, statutory backing for follow-up by Action Taken Notes — the Vinod Rai prescription — would restore the office's deterrent value.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 148 — appointment of CAG

- Article 149 — duties and powers
- Article 150 — form of accounts of the Union and States
- Article 151 — submission of audit reports
- CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act 1971
- Tenure: six years or 65 years, whichever is earlier
- 2nd ARC recommended multi-member CAG audit board

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- 2G Spectrum Audit Report 2010 — Vinod Rai
- Aadhaar CAG Report No. 24 of 2021
- Common Cause v. Union of India (CAG appointment petition)
- PAC reports on CAG findings
- Section 14 audits of grants to NGOs

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> Article 148 establishes the Comptroller and Auditor General; Articles 149, 150 and 151 set duties, the form of accounts and the obligation to lay reports before Parliament and State Legislatures, anchored in the CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act 1971 — yet post-audit reports have lost political traction.
>
> **Constitutional architecture**: The CAG is appointed by the President for six years or up to 65, removable like a Supreme Court judge, with salary charged on the Consolidated Fund under Article 148(3) — protections meant to insulate the guardian of the public purse from executive pressure and budget retaliation.
>
> **Institutional gaps**: Appointments are not collegial — a concern flagged in the pending *Common Cause v. Union of India* petition; Special Audit Reports have shrunk from 81 in 2015-16 to 26 in 2023-24 per CAG annual reports; Public Accounts Committee scrutiny is uneven, and only 20-30% of findings result in Action Taken Notes within stipulated timelines.
>
> **Emerging mandate**: Performance audits, audits of public-private partnerships and Section 14 audits of grants to private bodies — including NGOs — extend the office's reach; the Aadhaar Audit (Report No. 24 of 2021) flagged authentication failures and the 2G Spectrum Audit (2010) under Vinod Rai demonstrated deterrent value when PAC follows through.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:

> A multi-member CAG board (2nd ARC recommendation), an open appointment collegium and statutory backing for Action Taken Notes — the Vinod Rai prescription — would restore the office's traction.

SOURCES

- →CAG of India — Anantam IAS
- →Comptroller and Auditor General — Anantam IAS
- →Article 148 — Constitution of India

CAG | Article 148 | Article 149 | Article 151 | PAC | CAG Act 1971 | performance audit

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Q31

The fiscal architecture of Indian federalism rests not only on the Finance Commission but also on cesses, surcharges and Centrally Sponsored Schemes. With reference to the 15th Finance Commission and the rising CSS share, examine the autonomy of States.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | FEDERALISM & FISCAL GOVERNANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: States' fiscal space depends on three constitutionally distinct flows — Finance Commission devolution (Articles 270, 275), Centrally Sponsored Schemes funded under Article 282, and own-tax revenue including SGST.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory and constitutional architecture — Article 280 devolution, Article 282 grants 'for public purpose', Article 275 grants-in-aid; 15th FC devolved 41 per cent of divisible pool; (ii) CSS expansion — over 60 CSS schemes consume nearly 10 per cent of Union expenditure, with matching ratios shifting from 90:10 to 60:40 in many cases under Niti Aayog rationalisation 2015 and 2021; State Finance Ministers' Empowered Committee on CSS Rationalisation 2021; (iii) constitutional concern — Article 282's narrow original purpose has been used to direct State action, encroaching on State List subjects; Bhargava Commission 1967 had cautioned against this.

Way forward / Conclusion: A constitutional cap on Article 282 use to State List subjects, sunset clauses on CSS, untied grants doubled, and a Finance Commission-anchored CSS framework would restore the federal balance.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 280 — Finance Commission
- Article 282 — Union or State may make grants for any public purpose

- Article 275 — grants-in-aid
- 15th Finance Commission devolved 41% of divisible pool
- Empowered Committee on CSS Rationalisation 2021
- CSS share approximately 10% of Union expenditure (2024-25 BE)
- Bhargava Commission Report 1967 on use of Article 282

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- 15th Finance Commission Report
- PM Awas Yojana CSS — matching pattern
- MGNREGA as a CSS
- NHM and Samagra Shiksha 60:40 split (general States)
- Bhargava Commission 1967

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

State fiscal space rests on three constitutional flows — Article 280 Finance Commission devolution under Articles 270 and 275, Article 282 grants for any public purpose, and own-tax revenue including SGST. The 15th Finance Commission devolved 41 percent of the divisible pool, but cesses, surcharges and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) have eroded that headline number.

Constitutional architecture: Article 280 makes the Finance Commission the primary transfer mechanism; Article 275 grants-in-aid are statutory; Article 282 was meant for residual public-purpose grants. The Bhargava Commission Report 1967 had cautioned that Article 282 should not become a routine route for Union intervention in the State List.

CSS expansion: Over 60 CSS schemes now consume nearly 10 percent of Union expenditure; matching ratios were rationalised from 90:10 to 60:40 for general States under NITI Aayog (2015) and the Empowered Committee on CSS Rationalisation 2021. Cesses and surcharges — outside the divisible pool under Article 271 — have risen to about 18 percent of gross tax revenue, shrinking the effective devolved share to around 32 percent.

Federal stress: CSS templates push standardised solutions onto diverse States; conditionalities erode State priority-setting on List II subjects like agriculture, health and police; the result is the de facto unitarisation of cooperative federalism.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> Cap Article 282 use within State List subjects, sunset CSS schemes, double untied grants, fold cesses into the divisible pool, and let the 16th Finance Commission anchor a CSS framework — restoring the federal bargain of the basic structure.

SOURCES

- →Fiscal Federalism — Anantam IAS
- →Finance Commission — Anantam IAS
- →15th Finance Commission Report — PRS

Article 282 | Article 280 | CSS | 15th FC | fiscal federalism | matching grants | Bhargava Commission

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Q32

Sedition as a colonial-era offence has been suspended by the Supreme Court but reborn in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023. With reference to S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (2022) and Section 152 BNS 2023, critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS & PENAL CODE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code 1860, the original sedition offence, was upheld in Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962) but with a narrow construction requiring incitement to violence; the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 has replaced it with Section 152.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — IPC Section 124A defined sedition; BNS Section 152 penalises 'acts endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India' with imprisonment up to life; (ii) constitutional test — Article 19(1)(a) and Article 19(2) reasonable restrictions on 'security of the State'; S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (11 May 2022) suspended Section 124A IPC pending re-examination, ordering no new FIRs; (iii) reform options — 22nd Law Commission Report (2023) recommended retaining but redrafting sedition; BNS Section 152 is criticised as broader and vaguer than the suspended Section 124A.

Way forward / Conclusion: Read BNS Section 152 down to the Kedar Nath line — incitement to violence or public disorder — through judicial review, and Parliament should add a procedural safeguard requiring prior sanction by a senior officer.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Section 124A IPC — sedition

- Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962) upheld 124A with narrow construction
- S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (11 May 2022) — suspended Section 124A
- Section 152 BNS 2023 — acts endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity
- Article 19(2) — reasonable restrictions on speech
- 22nd Law Commission Report (2023) on sedition
- Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950) — narrow reading of 'security of State'

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962)
- S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (2022)
- Disha Ravi sedition FIR (2021)
- 22nd Law Commission Report 2023
- Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Section 124A IPC, the colonial sedition offence, was upheld with a narrowing construction in Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962); the Supreme Court suspended its operation in S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (11 May 2022); the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 has now replaced it with Section 152, reopening the constitutional question.

Statutory base: IPC Section 124A criminalised words bringing ‘hatred or contempt’ or ‘disaffection’ against the government. BNS Section 152 penalises acts ‘endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India’ — exciting secession, armed rebellion, or subversive activities — with imprisonment up to life. The drafting is broader; the label ‘sedition’ is dropped but the substance reappears with sharper teeth.

Constitutional test: Article 19(1)(a) speech is restrictable under Article 19(2) only for ‘security of the State’ — a phrase narrowly construed in Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950). Vombatkere ordered no new FIRs under 124A pending re-examination. Kedar Nath’s incitement-to-violence test remains the constitutional floor; Section 152’s open-ended ‘subversive activities’ language risks breaching it.

Reform options: The 22nd Law Commission Report (2023) recommended retaining sedition with procedural safeguards. BNS Section 152 has no prior-sanction filter; the Disha Ravi 2021 FIR pattern remains operationally possible.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> Read Section 152 down to the Kedar Nath incitement line through judicial review, and amend the BNSS to require prior sanction by a senior officer before registration — aligning the offence with Article 19(2)'s narrow corridor.

SOURCES

- →Sedition Law in India — Anantam IAS
- →Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 — India Code
- →S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India — Indian Kanoon

sedition | Section 124A | Section 152 BNS | Kedar Nath | Vombatkere | Article 19(2) | Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

GS PAPER 2

Governance

20 practice questions

Q33

Civil-service neutrality is a constitutional value but a contested practice in India. With reference to the All India Services framework, discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | CIVIL SERVICES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The All India Services rest on Article 312 read with the All India Services Act 1951; the AIS (Conduct) Rules 1968 and the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules 1964 codify neutrality.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional basis — Article 311 protection and Article 312 dual-control design; (ii) institutional erosion — frequent transfers, the Hota Committee 2004 and 2nd ARC's 10th Report on insulating the steel frame; T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013) ordered fixed tenure and a Civil Services Board; (iii) political signalling, lateral entry under UPSC's 2024 advertisements, and the Nolan Principles as a benchmark.

Way forward / Conclusion: Statutory Civil Services Boards, performance contracts under the Mission Karmayogi framework, and a published transfer-posting policy operationalise neutrality.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 312 — All India Services created by Rajya Sabha resolution
- All India Services Act 1951 and the AIS (Conduct) Rules 1968
- Article 311 — procedural safeguards for civil servants
- T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013) on Civil Services Board
- 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission 10th Report (Refurbishing of Personnel Administration, 2008)
- Hota Committee on Civil Services Reform 2004
- Nolan Principles — selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013)

- Mission Karmayogi (National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, 2020)
- Lateral entry UPSC advertisement 2024
- 2nd ARC Tenth Report 2008
- Foundational values articulated by D. Subbarao at LBSNAA

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: The All India Services rest on Article 312 read with the All India Services Act 1951; the AIS (Conduct) Rules 1968 and the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules 1964 codify neutrality as a constitutional value.

Body: Three dimensions reveal the contest. First, the constitutional architecture — Article 311 procedural safeguards and Article 312 dual control between the Union and States, with disciplinary advice routed through the UPSC. Second, institutional erosion through frequent transfers led the Supreme Court in *T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India* (2013) to order fixed two-year tenures and a Civil Services Board, echoing the Hota Committee 2004 and the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission's Tenth Report (2008). Third, political signalling and the lateral-entry UPSC advertisements of 2024, benchmarked against the Nolan Principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity and accountability.

Conclusion: Statutory Civil Services Boards, Mission Karmayogi (2020) performance contracts and a published transfer-posting policy operationalise neutrality and protect the steel frame.

SOURCES

→All India Services Act 1951 — India Code
→Article 312 — Anantam IAS
→Civil Services Neutrality — Anantam IAS

Article 312 | All India Services | neutrality | Civil Services Board | Article 311 | Mission Karmayogi | Nolan principles

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Q34

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010 has reshaped the space for NGOs in India and strained the right to associate under Article 19(1)(c). Comment.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | NGO REGULATION & CIVIC SPACE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The FCRA 2010 replaced the 1976 Act and was tightened by the 2020 amendment to channel all foreign funds through a designated SBI Parliament Street branch.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory tightening — Section 7 ban on sub-grants, mandatory Aadhaar of office bearers, and tightened renewal under Sections 11 and 16; (ii) impact — FCRA registrations fell from over 22,400 in 2017 to under 16,000 by 2024 according to MHA disclosures; (iii) constitutional test — Noel Harper v. Union of India (2022) upheld the amendments under Article 19(1)(c) and Article 14, while Indian Social Action Forum v. Union of India (2020) preserved political-activity restrictions.

Way forward / Conclusion: A reasoned renewal process with appellate review and a narrower definition of 'political activity' would reconcile the security purpose with constitutional freedoms.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010 and FCRA (Amendment) Act 2020
- Section 7 — bar on transfer of foreign contribution to other organisations
- Designated SBI New Delhi Main Branch for all FCRA inflows
- Article 19(1)(c) right to form associations — reasonable restriction under 19(4)
- Noel Harper v. Union of India (2022) upheld 2020 amendments
- Indian Social Action Forum v. Union of India (2020) on 'political' activity
- FCRA registrations declined from approximately 22,400 in 2017 to under 16,000 in 2024 (MHA annual data)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Noel Harper v. Union of India (2022)
- Centre for Policy Research FCRA cancellation 2024
- Oxfam India and Compassion International cases
- Indian Social Action Forum v. Union of India (2020)
- FATF Mutual Evaluation Report 2024 on India

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010, replacing the 1976 Act and tightened by the 2020 amendment, channels all foreign funds through a

> designated SBI New Delhi Main Branch, with Section 7 banning sub-grants.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the strain on Article 19(1)(c). First, statutory tightening — Section 7's sub-grant ban, Aadhaar of office-bearers, the 20% administrative-expense cap (Section 8) and stricter renewal under Sections 11 and 16. Second, impact — Ministry of Home Affairs data shows FCRA registrations fell from over 22,400 in 2017 to under 16,000 by 2024. Third, constitutional test — *Noel Harper v. Union of India* (2022) upheld the 2020 amendments under Articles 19(1)(c) and 14, ruling foreign contribution a regulated privilege, while *Indian Social Action Forum* (2020) preserved political-activity restrictions.
>
> **Conclusion:** A risk-tiered FCRA with appellate review and a narrower 'political activity' definition would reconcile FATF expectations with Article 19(1)(c) freedoms.

SOURCES

- →Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010 — India Code
- →FCRA Annual Report — Ministry of Home Affairs
- →Fundamental Rights and Articles — Anantam IAS

FCRA 2010 | Section 7 | Article 19(1)(c) | NGO regulation | Noel Harper | civic space | foreign contribution

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Q35

Simultaneous elections, as proposed by the High-Level Committee on One Nation One Election, would alter the federal balance of the Constitution. Critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | ELECTORAL REFORMS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections (Ram Nath Kovind, 2024) and the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024 propose synchronised Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections, with a single voters' list and shortened residual terms.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) federalism — truncating an Assembly's life to align it with the Lok Sabha rewrites Article 172 and weakens the doctrine of separate state mandates; (ii) feasibility — mid-term collapse, Article 356 episodes, and the requirement of state ratification under Article 368(2) proviso; (iii) trade-offs — cost savings (Law Commission's 170th and 255th reports) versus the concentration of national-issue voting that dwarfs state-level accountability.

Way forward / Conclusion: Sequential reform — fixed-term Lok Sabha first, decoupled local elections later — is more compatible with the basic-structure protection of federalism than a single-stroke amendment.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections (Ram Nath Kovind) report submitted 14 March 2024
- Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024 introduced in Lok Sabha 17 December 2024
- Article 83 (Lok Sabha term) and Article 172 (Assembly term) require amendment
- Proposed Article 82A for the appointed date and the unexpired term concept
- Article 368(2) proviso ratification by half the State Legislatures
- 170th Law Commission Report 1999 and 255th Law Commission Report 2015 on electoral reforms
- S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) on federalism as basic structure

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Ram Nath Kovind High-Level Committee 2024
- Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024
- Joint Parliamentary Committee constituted December 2024
- Sweden and South Africa fixed-term comparators
- 1967 simultaneous elections breakdown after defections

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> The High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections (Ram Nath Kovind, report submitted 14 March 2024) and the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024 propose synchronised Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections, with a single voters' list and shortened residual terms — a structural shift that engages the federal balance of the Constitution and the basic-structure doctrine.
>
> **Federalism**: Truncating an Assembly's life to align it with the Lok Sabha rewrites Article 172 and weakens separate State mandates; *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) holds federalism as basic structure, and the proviso to Article 368(2) requires ratification by half the State Legislatures before any seat-shortening can take effect.
>
> **Feasibility**: Mid-term collapses, Article 356 episodes (Manipur 2025 being the eleventh imposition) and hung Houses complicate the proposed Article 82A 'appointed date' and the unexpired-term concept; the 1967 simultaneous-elections

breakdown after defections is a cautionary precedent, and the Joint Parliamentary Committee constituted in December 2024 is still examining feasibility.

Trade-offs: Cost savings flagged by the 170th and 255th Law Commission Reports must be set against concentration of national-issue voting that dwarfs State-level accountability; Sweden and South Africa fixed-term comparators show that voter-attention discipline depends on a strong upper house, which India's Rajya Sabha post the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2003 lacks.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Sequential reform — a fixed-term Lok Sabha first, with decoupled local-body elections later — is more compatible with the basic-structure protection of federalism than a single-stroke amendment to Articles 83 and 172.

SOURCES

- →Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024 — PRS
- →One Nation One Election — Anantam IAS
- →Comparison of Constitutions — Anantam IAS

one nation one election | Article 82A | Article 83 | Article 172 | 129th Amendment Bill | simultaneous elections | federalism

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Q36

The Right to Information Act 2005 is being hollowed out by vacancies and the 2019 amendment. Evaluate.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | TRANSPARENCY & RTI

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The RTI Act 2005 made information a statutory right flowing from Article 19(1)(a), as recognised in S.P. Gupta (1981) and Raj Narain (1975).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory architecture — PIO at every public authority, time-bound disclosure, CIC and SICs as appellate bodies; (ii) the RTI (Amendment) Act 2019 took CIC tenure and salary out of statute and into rules, eroding independence; (iii) Anjali Bhardwaj v. Union of India (2019) flagged systemic vacancies — the CIC and several SICs run with sanctioned strength unfilled.

Way forward / Conclusion: Restore statutory tenure and salaries, automate proactive disclosure under Section 4, and ring-fence the appointments collegium — the prescription of the Satark Nagrik Sangathan reports.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- RTI Act 2005 — Section 4 proactive disclosure, Section 6 application, Section 7 thirty-day rule
- Article 19(1)(a) basis recognised in State of U.P. v. Raj Narain (1975) and S.P. Gupta v. Union of India (1981)
- RTI (Amendment) Act 2019 — CIC tenure and salary moved from statute to rules
- Anjali Bhardwaj v. Union of India (2019) on CIC vacancies
- Section 8 exemptions and Section 24 intelligence-agency exclusion
- Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2014 — unenforced supporting law
- Jan Soochna Portal Rajasthan as Section 4 model

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Anjali Bhardwaj v. Union of India (2019)
- CIC vacancy crisis 2024–2025
- Jan Soochna Portal, Rajasthan (2019)
- Satark Nagrik Sangathan RTI report cards
- Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 — amendment to Section 8(1)(j) of RTI

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Right to Information Act 2005 made information a statutory right flowing from Article 19(1)(a), recognised in *State of U.P. v. Raj Narain* (1975) and *S.P. Gupta v. Union of India* (1981).
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions show the hollowing. First, the statutory architecture — PIOs in every public authority, Section 7's thirty-day rule and the Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions as appellate bodies — is intact on paper. Second, the RTI (Amendment) Act 2019 moved the CIC's tenure and salary from statute to government rules, eroding independence. Third, *Anjali Bhardwaj v. Union of India* (2019) flagged systemic vacancies, with the CIC and several SICs running below sanctioned strength, while the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 has further narrowed Section 8(1)(j).
>
> **Conclusion:** Restore statutory tenure, automate Section 4 proactive disclosure (Jan Soochna Portal model) and ring-fence the appointments collegium to revive the 2005 promise.

SOURCES

→Right to Information Act 2005 — India Code

→RTI Act 2005 — Anantam IAS
→CIC Vacancy Crisis — Anantam IAS

RTI Act 2005 | Section 4 | RTI Amendment 2019 | Central Information Commission | Section 8 | transparency | Anjali Bhardwaj

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Q37

Critical minerals have become a tool of statecraft, not just inputs of industry. With reference to the gaps in India's framework for securing rare earths and battery metals, discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | HARD | CRITICAL MINERALS & RESOURCE SECURITY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Ministry of Mines notified a list of 30 critical minerals in 2023; China controls about 60% of rare earth mining and over 85% of refining.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) legal — MMDR (Amendment) Act 2023 brought lithium, cobalt and rare earths into Schedule VII for central auction; (ii) institutional — KABIL JV (NALCO-HCL-MECL) for overseas assets, lithium block exploration in Argentina (2024) and Australia, National Critical Mineral Mission announced January 2025 with Rs 16,300 crore outlay over seven years; (iii) external dependency — China's 2025 export controls on seven rare earth elements squeezed Indian EV and defence supply chains.

Way forward / Conclusion: A strategic-reserve law, a Minerals Security Partnership seat, recycling targets, and accelerated permitting in the J&K and Karnataka lithium belts.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Ministry of Mines list of 30 critical minerals (2023)
- MMDR (Amendment) Act 2023 — Schedule VII and Section 17A(2) central auction
- KABIL JV among NALCO, HCL and MECL
- National Critical Mineral Mission January 2025 — Rs 16,300 crore over seven years
- China controls about 60% of rare earth mining and over 85% of refining
- Reasi (J&K) lithium reserve 5.9 million tonnes inferred (GSI, 2023)
- Minerals Security Partnership (US-led, 2022) — India joined June 2023

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- MMDR (Amendment) Act 2023
- Argentina lithium block agreement 2024

- China rare earth export controls 2025
- KABIL incorporation 2019
- Reasi lithium discovery 2023

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Ministry of Mines notified 30 critical minerals in 2023; China controls about 60% of rare earth mining and over 85% of refining, making minerals a tool of statecraft.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions show India's framework and its gaps. First, legal — the MMDR (Amendment) Act 2023 inserted lithium, cobalt and rare earths into Schedule VII for central auction. Second, institutional — the KABIL joint venture of NALCO, HCL and MECL secures overseas assets including the Argentina lithium block (2024); the National Critical Mineral Mission (January 2025) has a Rs 16,300 crore outlay over seven years; India joined the Minerals Security Partnership in June 2023. Third, external dependency — China's 2025 export controls on seven rare earth elements squeezed Indian EV and defence supply chains, while the Reasi (J&K) inferred 5.9 million tonne lithium reserve awaits commercial proving.
>
> **Conclusion:** A strategic-reserve law, recycling targets and accelerated permitting in J&K and Karnataka lithium belts will harden statecraft.

SOURCES

→MMDR (Amendment) Act 2023 — PRS
→Critical Minerals in India — Anantam IAS
→Rare Earth Elements and Critical Minerals — Anantam IAS

critical minerals | rare earth | MMDR Amendment 2023 | KABIL | Minerals Security Partnership | lithium | geoeconomics

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Q38

NITI Aayog at 10 has been an instrument of cooperative federalism but has not replaced the planning function. With reference to its Governing Council and the Aspirational Districts Programme, examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | GOVERNMENT POLICIES & INTERVENTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission on 1 January 2015 by a Union Cabinet resolution — a non-statutory, non-constitutional think-tank with the Prime

Minister as Chair and Chief Ministers as Governing Council members.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) governance architecture — Governing Council (apex), CEO, sectoral verticals, Three Year Action Agenda (2017), Strategy for New India @ 75; (ii) cooperative federalism instruments — Aspirational Districts Programme launched 5 January 2018 covering 112 districts, Aspirational Blocks Programme (500 blocks, January 2023), SDG India Index, Health Index and Composite Water Management Index; (iii) gaps — no resource-allocation power (transferred to the Finance Ministry), declining attendance at Governing Council meetings (some CMs boycotted the 9th meeting on 27 July 2024), and absence of a statutory base under Article 263.

Way forward / Conclusion: A statutory NITI Aayog under Article 263 with binding minimum standards for index data, a clear resource-coordination role with Finance Commission and concurrent-list mandate areas would consolidate the cooperative-federalism gains of the first decade.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- NITI Aayog established 1 January 2015 by Union Cabinet resolution
- Governing Council — PM as Chair, all CMs as members
- Aspirational Districts Programme launched 5 January 2018 — 112 districts
- Aspirational Blocks Programme launched January 2023 — 500 blocks
- SDG India Index (since 2018) and Composite Water Management Index
- 9th Governing Council meeting held 27 July 2024
- 2nd ARC Fifteenth Report had recommended an institutional replacement for the Planning Commission

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Aspirational Districts Programme 2018
- Aspirational Blocks Programme 2023
- SDG India Index 2023-24
- Health Index 2021-22 — Kerala top performer
- Composite Water Management Index

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission on 1 January 2015 by a Union Cabinet resolution as a non-statutory, non-constitutional think-tank with the Prime Minister

as Chair and Chief Ministers in the Governing Council; at ten, it has advanced cooperative federalism but has not replaced the planning function.

Governance architecture: The Governing Council anchors federal coordination; the Three Year Action Agenda (2017) and Strategy for New India @ 75 are flagship documents; sectoral verticals, the CEO and a network of resource institutions drive operations, with the 2nd ARC's Fifteenth Report having recommended an institutional replacement for the Planning Commission.

Cooperative federalism instruments: The Aspirational Districts Programme launched 5 January 2018 covering 112 districts, the Aspirational Blocks Programme of January 2023 covering 500 blocks, the SDG India Index (since 2018), the Health Index (Kerala-led for 2021-22) and the Composite Water Management Index institutionalise State-level data, competition and convergence.

Gaps: NITI Aayog has no resource-allocation power (transferred to the Finance Ministry); attendance at the Governing Council has thinned, with several Chief Ministers boycotting the 9th meeting on 27 July 2024; and the absence of an Article 263 statutory base weakens its standing alongside the GST Council and Inter-State Council.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A statutory NITI Aayog under Article 263 with binding minimum standards for index data, clear resource-coordination with the Finance Commission, and concurrent-list mandate areas would consolidate the cooperative-federalism gains of the first decade.

SOURCES

→10 Years of NITI Aayog (2015-2025) — Anantam IAS
→NITI Aayog — Anantam IAS
→Planning Commission vs NITI Aayog — Anantam IAS

NITI Aayog | Aspirational Districts | cooperative federalism | Governing Council | SDG Index | Article 263 | Planning Commission

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Q39

The 2026 redrawing of the Multidimensional Poverty Index by NITI Aayog has reopened the question of how India measures deprivation. Discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | POVERTY & HUNGER

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The NITI Aayog National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) uses the Alkire-Foster method developed at the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative; it has 12 indicators across health, education and standard of living.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) measurement framework — based on NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21); MPI fell from 24.85 per cent in 2015-16 to 14.96 per cent in 2019-21, lifting about 13.5 crore out of multidimensional poverty; (ii) policy gaps — calorie-based poverty line (Tendulkar 2009, Rangarajan 2014) no longer drives PDS or DBT eligibility, leaving an outdated 2011-12 NSS line at the core; (iii) the proposed National Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 results and the case for an updated Census-linked poverty line.

Way forward / Conclusion: A multidimensional, periodically updated poverty line aligned with SECC 2.0 and a transparent SDG-1 reporting framework would modernise India's poverty measurement.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- NITI Aayog National Multidimensional Poverty Index — Alkire-Foster method
- 12 indicators across health, education, standard of living
- NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21) base years
- MPI fell from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-21
- About 13.5 crore lifted out of multidimensional poverty
- Tendulkar Committee 2009 and Rangarajan Committee 2014 monetary poverty lines
- Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- NITI Aayog Discussion Paper July 2023 on MPI
- Tendulkar Committee Report 2009
- Rangarajan Committee Report 2014
- Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23
- OPHI Global MPI 2024

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The NITI Aayog National Multidimensional Poverty Index uses the Alkire-Foster method developed at the Oxford Poverty and Human Development

> Initiative, with 12 indicators across health, education and standard of living to measure non-monetary deprivation.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions explain the 2026 redrawing. First, measurement framework — based on NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21); MPI fell from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-21, lifting about 13.5 crore out of multidimensional poverty per the NITI Aayog Discussion Paper of July 2023. Second, policy gap — the calorie-based Tendulkar Committee (2009) and Rangarajan Committee (2014) lines no longer drive PDS or DBT eligibility, leaving an outdated 2011-12 NSS line at the core. Third, the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 and the OPHI Global MPI 2024 frame the case for an updated census-linked poverty line.
>
> **Conclusion:** A multidimensional, periodically updated poverty line aligned with SECC 2.0 and SDG-1 reporting would modernise India's poverty measurement.

SOURCES

- →NITI Aayog MPI — Anantam IAS
- →Poverty Alleviation Programmes — Anantam IAS
- →Global Hunger Index — Anantam IAS

MPI | Alkire-Foster | Tendulkar line | Rangarajan line | NFHS-5 | poverty measurement | SECC

Q40

Anaemia is India's most pervasive nutritional deficiency. With reference to the Anaemia Mukt Bharat 6×6×6 strategy, evaluate the welfare architecture for vulnerable groups.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | WELFARE SCHEMES FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Anaemia Mukt Bharat was launched in 2018 within the POSHAN Abhiyaan to address anaemia across six target beneficiary groups using six interventions and six institutional mechanisms.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) the 6×6×6 design — six beneficiary groups (under-5 children, school-age 5–9, adolescents 10–19, pregnant women, lactating mothers, women of reproductive age 20–49), six interventions (IFA prophylaxis and treatment, deworming, behaviour-change communication, fortified foods, malaria and haemoglobinopathy management); (ii) outcomes — NFHS-5 (2019-21) anaemia in 6–59 month children at 67% (up from 58.6% in NFHS-4); among non-pregnant women 15–49 at 57%; (iii) institutional gaps — supply-chain stockouts, low compliance with weekly IFA, sickle-cell exemption from rice fortification flagged by ICMR.

Way forward / Conclusion: Convergence with the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (Budget 2023-24), dietary diversification via the National Mission on Edible Oils — Oilseeds, and proactive disclosure of district-level anaemia data are the next steps.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Anaemia Mukt Bharat launched 2018 under POSHAN Abhiyaan
- 6×6×6 framework — six beneficiaries, six interventions, six institutions
- NFHS-5 anaemia: 67% in children 6–59 months, 57% in women 15–49
- National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (Budget 2023-24)
- Saksham Anganwadi and Mission POSHAN 2.0 (2021)
- FSSAI rice fortification — mandatory in PDS, ICDS, PM POSHAN from April 2024
- Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation Programme for adolescents

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Anaemia Mukt Bharat 2018
- National Sickle Cell Mission 2023
- Saksham Anganwadi
- PM POSHAN scheme
- FSSAI rice fortification rollout 2024

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Anaemia Mukt Bharat was launched in 2018 within the POSHAN Abhiyaan to address India's most pervasive nutritional deficiency through a 6×6×6 framework of six target beneficiary groups, six interventions and six institutional mechanisms.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate the architecture. First, design — six beneficiaries (under-5 children, school-age 5-9, adolescents 10-19, pregnant women, lactating mothers, women of reproductive age 20-49) and six interventions including the Weekly Iron-Folic Acid Supplementation programme, deworming, behaviour-change communication, fortified foods, and malaria and haemoglobinopathy management. Second, outcomes — NFHS-5 (2019-21) records anaemia in 67% of children 6-59 months (up from 58.6% in NFHS-4) and 57% of women 15-49. Third, institutional gaps

> — supply-chain stockouts of IFA, low compliance, and ICMR's flagged sickle-cell exemption from mandatory rice fortification under PM POSHAN.
>
> **Conclusion:** Convergence with the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (Budget 2023-24), dietary diversification under Saksham Anganwadi, and district-level data disclosure are the next steps.

SOURCES

→Anaemia Mukt Bharat — Anantam IAS
→Food Fortification in India — Anantam IAS
→Global Hunger Index — Anantam IAS

Anaemia Mukt Bharat | POSHAN Abhiyaan | 6×6×6 | NFHS-5 | Sickle Cell Mission | IFA | rice fortification

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Q41

Persons with disabilities remain at the margin of welfare delivery despite a robust statutory framework. With reference to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | WELFARE SCHEMES FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 replaced the 1995 Act to give effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which India ratified on 1 October 2007; the Act covers 21 disabilities (up from 7) and reads Article 14, 19 and 21 expansively.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory architecture — Section 3 (non-discrimination), Section 24 (social security), Section 32 (reservation in higher education at 5 per cent), Section 34 (4 per cent reservation in government jobs), Chief Commissioner and State Commissioners as enforcement bodies; (ii) implementation gap — Census 2011 enumerated 2.21 per cent PwDs but NSSO 76th round (2018) estimated 2.2 crore living with disabilities; only 36 per cent of public buildings audited under the Accessible India Campaign 2015 met basic accessibility norms by 2024; (iii) judicial corrective — Vikash Kumar v. UPSC (2021) on scribe rights, Avni Prakash v. NTA (2023) on PwD test concessions, and Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025) extending Article 21 to inclusive digital access.

Way forward / Conclusion: Disability-disaggregated data through Census 2026, full notification of Disability Commissioners, and accessibility audits in DigiLocker and UPI infrastructure under Section 40 RPwD Act 2016 will operationalise the inclusion the law promises.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified 1 October 2007
- 21 disabilities recognised (up from 7 in 1995 Act)
- Section 32 — 5% reservation in higher education
- Section 34 — 4% reservation in government employment
- Vikash Kumar v. UPSC (2021)
- Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025) on inclusive digital access

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Vikash Kumar v. UPSC (2021)
- Avni Prakash v. NTA (2023)
- Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025)
- Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat) 2015
- Unique Disability ID (UDID) Card

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 replaced the 1995 Act to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which India ratified on 1 October 2007; the Act recognises 21 disabilities (up from seven) and reads Articles 14, 19 and 21 expansively for inclusion.

Statutory architecture: Section 3 mandates non-discrimination, Section 24 social security, Section 32 prescribes 5% reservation in higher education, Section 34 fixes 4% reservation in government employment, and Section 40 mandates accessibility standards; Chief and State Commissioners and the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat, 2015) anchor enforcement.

Implementation gap: Census 2011 enumerated 2.21% PwDs but NSSO 76th round (2018) estimated 2.2 crore; only about 36% of public buildings audited under Sugamya Bharat met basic accessibility norms by 2024; Unique Disability ID (UDID) coverage and Section 40 accessibility audits in digital infrastructure remain partial despite ten years of statutory effort.

> **Judicial corrective:** *Vikash Kumar v. UPSC* (2021) on scribe rights for candidates with writer's cramp, *Avni Prakash v. NTA* (2023) on test concessions, and *Pragya Prasun v. Union of India* (2025) extending Article 21 to inclusive digital access — including KYC accommodations for acid-attack survivors — have re-energised statutory rights.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion:**
>
> Disability-disaggregated data through Census 2026, full notification of Disability Commissioners, and accessibility audits of DigiLocker, UPI and other digital public goods under Section 40 RPwD Act 2016 will operationalise the inclusion the law promises.

SOURCES

- →Persons with Disabilities — Anantam IAS
- →Inclusive Digital Access and Article 21 — Anantam IAS
- →Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 — India Code

RPwD Act 2016 | UNCRPD | Section 32 | Section 34 | Accessible India | Pragya Prasun | inclusive digital access

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Q42

Hunger and undernutrition remain stubborn even as India crosses lower-middle-income status. With reference to the National Food Security Act 2013 and the Global Hunger Index controversy, comment.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | POVERTY & HUNGER

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The National Food Security Act 2013 covers 81.35 crore beneficiaries with subsidised foodgrains; the Global Hunger Index 2024 ranked India 105 out of 127 countries, a ranking contested by the Government of India for methodology.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — NFSA 2013 entitles 75% rural and 50% urban households to 5 kg per person per month at Rs 3 (rice), Rs 2 (wheat), Re 1 (millets); PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana extended free foodgrains to December 2028; (ii) GHI methodology — 4 indicators (undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, child mortality); MoWCD critique that wasting (NFHS-5 19.3% under-5) and stunting (35.5%) reflect long-term and not current hunger; (iii) gaps — One Nation One Ration Card portability scaled to all 36 States/UTs, but ration access for migrants remains uneven; PDS leakages, Aadhaar authentication failures.

Way forward / Conclusion: Diversify the PDS basket to millets and pulses, integrate the Anganwadi-supplied take-home rations, and publish district-level GHI-style data to convert NFSA from a calorie scheme to a nutrition entitlement.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- National Food Security Act 2013 — 81.35 crore beneficiaries
- Rights: 5 kg per person per month
- PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana extended to December 2028
- Global Hunger Index 2024 ranked India 105 of 127
- NFHS-5 under-5 stunting 35.5%, wasting 19.3%
- One Nation One Ration Card — Sec 12(2)(d) NFSA — portability since 2019
- PUCL v. Union of India (2001) — right to food under Article 21

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Global Hunger Index 2024
- One Nation One Ration Card
- PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana
- POSHAN Tracker for Anganwadis
- PUCL v. Union of India (2001)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The National Food Security Act 2013 covers 81.35 crore beneficiaries with subsidised foodgrains, anchored in *PUCL v. Union of India* (2001) reading the right to food into Article 21; the Global Hunger Index 2024 ranked India 105 out of 127 — a ranking the Ministry of Women and Child Development has contested on methodology.

Statutory base: NFSA 2013 entitles 75% rural and 50% urban households to 5 kg per person per month at Rs 3 (rice), Rs 2 (wheat) and Re 1 (millets); the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana has been extended to December 2028 to keep free foodgrains flowing post-pandemic, the largest free-grain commitment in the world.

GHI methodology: The four indicators — undernourishment, child wasting (NFHS-5 19.3% under-5), child stunting (NFHS-5 35.5%) and child mortality — capture long-term outcomes; MoWCD argues that wasting reflects multi-year deprivation, not current hunger alone, and that the survey base is non-representative for a country of India's scale.

> **Gaps**: One Nation One Ration Card portability under Section 12(2)(d) NFSA is operational across all 36 States and UTs since 2019, but migrant access remains uneven; PDS leakages and Aadhaar authentication failures depress targeting; POSHAN Tracker for Anganwadis has improved monitoring without solving supply.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Diversify the PDS basket to millets and pulses, integrate Anganwadi take-home rations, and publish district-level GHI-style nutritional data to convert NFSA from a calorie scheme to a measurable nutrition entitlement.

SOURCES

→Global Hunger Index — Anantam IAS
→Food Fortification in India — Anantam IAS
→National Food Security Act 2013 — India Code

NFSA 2013 | Global Hunger Index | PM-GKAY | stunting | wasting | ONORC | right to food

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Q43

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 was meant to be the apex anti-corruption institution but remains under-operationalised. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 was passed after the India Against Corruption movement and the 2nd ARC Fourth Report (Ethics in Governance, 2007); the Lokpal Chairman was first appointed only on 19 March 2019 after Common Cause v. Union of India (2017) directions.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — Lokpal is a multi-member body of Chairperson and up to 8 members (50% judicial, 50% from SC/ST/OBC/minorities/women); jurisdiction covers PM (with safeguards under Section 14), MPs, Group A–D officers; Section 19 inquiry directions, Section 20 preliminary inquiry; (ii) operational gaps — only 24 complaints disposed in 2023-24 (Lokpal Annual Report); States have been slow to constitute Lokayuktas; the Lokpal building, regulations and prosecution wing remain incomplete; (iii) parallel anti-corruption framework — CVC under CVC Act 2003, CBI under Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946, and the Prevention of Corruption Act (Amendment) 2018 raising the threshold for prosecuting public servants.

Way forward / Conclusion: A statutory selection committee with Leader of Opposition (currently 'Leader of largest opposition party'), an independent investigation wing under Section 11, and a public dashboard of complaints disposed will operationalise the 2013 Act.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013
- Multi-member body — Chairperson and up to 8 members; 50% judicial
- Common Cause v. Union of India (2017) on Lokpal appointment delay
- First Lokpal Chairman appointed 19 March 2019 — Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose
- Section 14 — jurisdiction over PM with safeguards
- Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018 — Section 17A approval required
- CVC Act 2003 — Central Vigilance Commission

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Common Cause v. Union of India (2017)
- Lokpal Annual Report 2023-24
- 2nd ARC Fourth Report (Ethics in Governance, 2007)
- India Against Corruption movement 2011-12
- Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose as first Lokpal

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 was passed after the India Against Corruption movement and the 2nd ARC Fourth Report (Ethics in Governance, 2007); the first Lokpal Chairman, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose, was appointed only on 19 March 2019 after *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2017) directions — a delay that set the institutional tone for the apex anti-corruption body.
>
> **Statutory base**: The Lokpal is a multi-member body of a Chairperson and up to eight members (50% judicial; 50% drawn from SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and women); its jurisdiction covers the Prime Minister (with safeguards under Section 14), MPs and Group A-D officers, with Section 19 inquiry directions and Section 20 preliminary inquiry powers anchoring the procedure.
>
> **Operational gaps**: The Lokpal Annual Report 2023-24 records only 24 complaints disposed of substantively; States have been slow to constitute Lokayuktas; the Lokpal's permanent building, regulations, and independent prosecution wing under Section 11 remain incomplete a decade after the Act.

Parallel framework: The Central Vigilance Commission under the CVC Act 2003, the Central Bureau of Investigation under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946, and the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018's Section 17A approval-before-investigation requirement have created overlapping turfs that dilute the Lokpal's apex character.

Way forward / Conclusion:

A statutory selection committee that includes the Leader of Opposition, an independent investigation wing under Section 11, and a public dashboard of complaints disposed will operationalise the 2013 Act's promise.

SOURCES

→Lokpal and Lokayukta — Anantam IAS
→Central Vigilance Commission — Anantam IAS
→Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 — India Code

Lokpal | Lokayuktas Act 2013 | CVC Act 2003 | PC Act 1988 | Section 17A | Section 14 | anti-corruption

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Q44

Social audit has emerged as a citizen-driven accountability tool. With reference to MGNREGA and the Meghalaya Community Participation Act 2017, evaluate.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Section 17 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 mandates a social audit by the Gram Sabha at least once every six months; Meghalaya became the first State to enact a comprehensive social-audit law in 2017.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — MGNREGA Audit of Scheme Rules 2011 set the procedure; independent State Social Audit Units function across 28 States; Comptroller and Auditor General provides audit framework; (ii) Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act 2017 extended the model to all government schemes; (iii) gaps — under-staffed SSAUs, low Action Taken on findings, contractor capture at panchayat level.

Way forward / Conclusion: Statutory autonomy and budgetary security for SSAUs, time-bound Action Taken Reports under Section 17(3) MGNREGA, and replication of the Meghalaya 2017 Act in other States would deepen social-audit accountability.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Section 17 MGNREGA 2005 — six-monthly Gram Sabha social audit
- MGNREGA Audit of Scheme Rules 2011
- State Social Audit Units in 28 States
- Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act 2017
- CAG Auditing Standards for Social Audit 2016
- Andhra Pradesh Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency model
- Right to Information Act 2005 — Section 4 proactive disclosure complement

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- MGNREGA Section 17 social audit
- Meghalaya Social Audit Act 2017
- Andhra Pradesh SSAAT model
- CAG Auditing Standards 2016
- Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, Rajasthan jan-sunwai 1990s

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: Section 17 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 mandates a Gram Sabha social audit at least every six months; Meghalaya became the first State to enact a comprehensive social-audit law in 2017.

Body: Three dimensions evaluate the tool. First, statutory base — MGNREGA Audit of Scheme Rules 2011 set the procedure; State Social Audit Units function across 28 States; the Comptroller and Auditor General's Auditing Standards 2016 frame the methodology, building on the Andhra Pradesh SSAAT model. Second, the Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act 2017 extended the model to all government schemes, rooted in the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan jan-sunwai tradition of 1990s Rajasthan. Third, gaps — under-staffed SSAUs, low Action Taken on findings, and contractor capture at panchayat level.

Conclusion: Statutory autonomy and budgetary security for SSAUs, time-bound Action Taken Reports under Section 17(3) MGNREGA, and replication of the Meghalaya 2017 Act will deepen accountability.

SOURCES

→Social Audit in India — Anantam IAS
→MGNREGA Section 17 — India Code
→Good Governance in India — Anantam IAS

social audit | MGNREGA | Section 17 | Meghalaya 2017 Act | SSAU | Gram Sabha | accountability

Q45

E-courts have become India's largest digital-justice infrastructure. With reference to the e-Courts Project Phase III and the National Judicial Data Grid, evaluate.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | E-GOVERNANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The e-Courts Mission Mode Project was launched in 2007 by the Department of Justice with Supreme Court e-Committee oversight; Phase III was approved on 13 September 2023 with an outlay of Rs 7,210 crore for 2023-27.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) digital backbone — Case Information System (CIS) deployed in over 19,000 court complexes, the National Judicial Data Grid as the public dashboard, e-Filing 3.0, virtual hearings under guidelines issued by Supreme Court e-Committee; (ii) impact — about 5.2 crore pending cases visible on NJDG (2025), over 3.34 crore virtual hearings between 2020 and 2025; (iii) gaps — digital divide for litigants, paper Vakalatnama still required in many courts, last-mile connectivity in subordinate courts.

Way forward / Conclusion: Mandatory e-Filing, integration with DigiLocker and the Online Dispute Resolution framework recommended by the Kovind Committee (NITI Aayog 2021) will deepen e-governance in justice delivery.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- e-Courts Mission Mode Project launched 2007
- Phase III approved 13 September 2023 — Rs 7,210 crore outlay
- Case Information System in over 19,000 court complexes
- National Judicial Data Grid as public dashboard
- Over 3.34 crore virtual hearings between March 2020 and 2025
- Supreme Court e-Committee chaired by senior SC judge
- Article 39A — equal justice and free legal aid

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- e-Courts Phase III sanctioned 2023
- National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)
- Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS)

- Online Dispute Resolution NITI Aayog Report 2021
- Virtual hearings during COVID-19

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The e-Courts Mission Mode Project, launched in 2007 under Department of Justice oversight and the Supreme Court e-Committee, gives statutory backbone to Article 39A's equal-justice promise.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate its scale and stress. First, the digital backbone — Case Information System now operates in over 19,000 court complexes, the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) provides a public dashboard, and Phase III, approved 13 September 2023 with Rs 7,210 crore outlay for 2023-27, adds e-Filing 3.0, ICJS integration and virtual hearings standardised by SUVAS translation software. Second, measurable impact — NJDG displays roughly 5.2 crore pending cases (2025) and platforms over 3.34 crore virtual hearings since March 2020. Third, persistent gaps — a digital divide for rural litigants, paper Vakalatnama dependence and last-mile connectivity in subordinate courts undercut equal access.
>
> **Conclusion:** Mandatory e-Filing, DigiLocker integration and the Online Dispute Resolution framework recommended by the Kovind Committee (NITI Aayog 2021) will operationalise digital justice.

SOURCES

→National Judicial Data Grid
→Legal Aid in India — 30 Years of NALSA — Anantam IAS
→Department of Justice — e-Courts Project

e-Courts | NJDG | Phase III | ODR | Article 39A | Case Information System | e-Filing

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Q46

Mission Karmayogi seeks to convert rules-based bureaucracy into a role-based, citizen-centric civil service. Examine the design and risks.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | ROLE OF CIVIL SERVICES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Mission Karmayogi — National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building — was approved by the Union Cabinet on 2 September 2020 and is anchored in the Capacity Building Commission set up in April 2021.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) design — Frameworks of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRACs) approach, iGOT Karmayogi digital platform with over 1,000 courses, Annual Capacity Building Plans for ministries; (ii) institutional architecture — Prime Minister's Public Human Resource Council at the apex, Capacity Building Commission, Karmayogi Bharat as the operating SPV; (iii) risks — voluntary nature of learning, capture by training-content vendors, displacement of LBSNAA and SVPNPA institutional roles.

Way forward / Conclusion: Tie iGOT performance to APAR and promotions, evaluate against the 2nd ARC's Refurbishing of Personnel Administration benchmarks, and codify a competency-based posting policy.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Mission Karmayogi approved 2 September 2020
- Capacity Building Commission constituted April 2021
- iGOT Karmayogi digital platform — over 1,000 courses
- FRAC — Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies
- Karmayogi Bharat — SPV under Companies Act Section 8
- PM's Public Human Resource Council at apex
- 2nd ARC Tenth Report (Refurbishing of Personnel Administration, 2008)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Mission Karmayogi 2020
- iGOT Karmayogi platform
- Capacity Building Commission 2021
- Annual Capacity Building Plans of Ministries
- LBSNAA Foundation Course revamp

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Mission Karmayogi — National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, approved 2 September 2020 — seeks to convert the Article 309 rules-based bureaucracy into a role-based, citizen-centric civil service.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions test the design. First, architecture — the Frameworks of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRACs) approach, the iGOT Karmayogi platform with over 1,000 courses, and Annual Capacity Building Plans give every ministry a competency map. Second, institutional scaffolding — the Prime Minister's Public Human Resource Council sits at the apex, the Capacity Building Commission (April

> 2021) audits content and Karmayogi Bharat (Section 8 SPV) runs the platform. Third, risks — voluntary learning dilutes accountability, vendor capture of content modules and the displacement of LBSNAA and SVPNPA institutional roles threaten to convert reform into a procurement exercise.
>
> **Conclusion:** Tying iGOT performance to APAR and promotions, and benchmarking against the 2nd ARC's Refurbishing of Personnel Administration report, would secure outcomes.

SOURCES

- →Mission Karmayogi — Anantam IAS
- →Civil Services Neutrality — Anantam IAS
- →Capacity Building Commission

Mission Karmayogi | Capacity Building Commission | iGOT | FRAC | Karmayogi Bharat | civil service | competency-based

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Q47

Lateral entry into the higher civil services has been promoted as a way to bring domain expertise into government. With reference to the 2024 UPSC advertisement and 2nd ARC recommendations, critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | ROLE OF CIVIL SERVICES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Lateral entry refers to direct recruitment of mid-career specialists to Joint Secretary and Director positions outside the All India Services cadre; it was first recommended by the 2nd ARC's Tenth Report (2008) and the Baswan Committee 2016, and operationalised through UPSC advertisements from 2018.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional and institutional base — Article 311 procedural protections extend to lateral entrants on contract; UPSC conducted recruitment in 2018, 2021 and a 45-post advertisement in August 2024 (later withdrawn after opposition concerns on reservation); (ii) the case for — closing skill deficits in infrastructure, finance, IT, climate; international precedent (US Senior Executive Service, Singapore's Administrative Service); (iii) concerns — bypass of reservation under Articles 16(4) and 16(4A), erosion of generalist morale, conflict of interest where entrants come from regulated sectors, and absence of an independent evaluation since 2018.

Way forward / Conclusion: Bring lateral entry inside the reservation framework under DoPT OM, cap roles to specialist verticals, publish independent performance evaluations of the 2018-25 cohort, and codify post-employment cooling-off norms.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 311 — procedural safeguards for civil servants
- 2nd ARC Tenth Report 2008 — lateral entry recommended
- Baswan Committee 2016 endorsed lateral entry
- First UPSC lateral-entry advertisement July 2018 — 10 Joint Secretary posts
- August 2024 advertisement for 45 posts — withdrawn
- Articles 16(4) and 16(4A) — reservation in services
- Singapore Administrative Service and US Senior Executive Service as comparators

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- UPSC Lateral Entry advertisement August 2024
- First batch of lateral entrants joined June 2019
- Niti Aayog domain CEOs
- Capital Markets Specialists at SEBI
- Singapore Administrative Service model

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Lateral entry — recruitment of mid-career specialists to Joint Secretary and Director posts outside the All India Services cadre — was first recommended by the 2nd ARC's Tenth Report (2008) and the Baswan Committee (2016); UPSC operationalised it through advertisements from 2018 and a contested 45-post notice in August 2024 that was withdrawn after reservation concerns.

Constitutional and institutional base: Article 311 procedural protections extend to contractual lateral entrants; UPSC selection insulates the route from executive favour. The first July 2018 notification filled 9 of 10 Joint Secretary posts; the 2024 advertisement was rescinded by Cabinet Secretariat OM citing Articles 16(4) and 16(4A) concerns absent in single-post recruitments. The 2nd ARC noted that specialist policy work requires lateral capacity in finance, infrastructure and digital governance.

Case for: Specialist deficits in infrastructure, climate finance, fintech and data governance justify domain induction. The Singapore Administrative Service and the

US Senior Executive Service show that competitive lateral pipelines coexist with a permanent civil service and lift policy quality without displacing tenured cadres.

Concerns: Bypass of reservation under Indra Sawhney (1992), erosion of generalist morale, conflict of interest where entrants come from regulated sectors, and absence of independent evaluation of the 2018-25 cohort weaken legitimacy. Without DoPT cooling-off norms, regulatory capture is structural risk.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Bring lateral entry inside the reservation roster through a DoPT OM, cap roles to specialist verticals, publish UPSC-audited performance evaluations of the 2018-25 cohort, and codify cooling-off norms — the route then sharpens, rather than substitutes, the steel-frame.

SOURCES

- →Civil Services Neutrality — Anantam IAS
- →Article 312 — Anantam IAS
- →UPSC Lateral Entry Advertisement — DoPT

lateral entry | Article 311 | Article 16(4) | Joint Secretary | 2nd ARC | Baswan Committee | UPSC 2024

Q48

The role of the District Magistrate has been at the heart of Indian district administration since 1772, but the office is contested in a 21st-century democracy. Comment.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | ROLE OF CIVIL SERVICES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The District Magistrate, traced to Warren Hastings's reorganisation in 1772, combines revenue, magisterial and coordination functions; the office is rooted in the All India Services Act 1951 and the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 (now BNSS 2023).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — Section 14 BNSS / Section 20 CrPC empowers the State Government to appoint DMs; Land Revenue Codes, Disaster Management Act 2005 Section 25, and Representation of the People Act 1951 Section 13C (DM as District Election Officer) define the role; (ii) capture by political transfers — average tenure under 18 months according to Civil Services Survey (2010) and Hota Committee, despite T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013); (iii) contemporary stress — Mission

Karmayogi competencies, Aspirational Districts leadership, and the case for separating magisterial from developmental roles (2nd ARC Sixth Report).

Way forward / Conclusion: Fixed three-year tenure under Civil Services Boards, separation of policing/judicial functions consistent with Prakash Singh v. Union of India (2006), and a District Performance Index would modernise the colonial office for a constitutional republic.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- District Magistracy traced to Warren Hastings 1772
- All India Services Act 1951
- Section 14 BNSS 2023 / Section 20 CrPC 1973 — appointment of DMs
- Section 25 Disaster Management Act 2005 — DM as DDMA Chair
- Representation of the People Act 1951 Section 13C — DM as District Election Officer
- T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013) on Civil Services Boards
- 2nd ARC Sixth Report (Local Governance, 2007)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013)
- Prakash Singh v. Union of India (2006) — police reforms
- Hota Committee 2004 on civil-services tenure
- Aspirational Districts Programme District Collector leadership
- Disaster Management Authority districts during 2024 floods

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The District Magistrate, traced to Warren Hastings's 1772 reorganisation, combines revenue, magisterial and coordination roles under Section 14 BNSS 2023 and the All India Services Act 1951.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the contestation. First, statutory base — Land Revenue Codes, Section 25 of the Disaster Management Act 2005 (DDMA Chair), and Section 13C of the Representation of the People Act 1951 (District Election Officer) anchor a wide writ. Second, political capture — Civil Services Survey (2010) and the Hota Committee (2004) recorded average DM tenure under 18 months, breaching T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013), which directed Civil Services Boards. Third, contemporary stress — Mission Karmayogi competencies, Aspirational Districts leadership and the 2nd ARC Sixth Report's case for separating magisterial from developmental functions reopen design.

> **Conclusion:** Fixed three-year tenure under Boards, Prakash Singh v. Union of India (2006) separation, and a District Performance Index would modernise the colonial office.

SOURCES

- →Article 312 — Anantam IAS
- →Civil Services Neutrality — Anantam IAS
- →Mission Karmayogi — Anantam IAS

District Magistrate | Section 14 BNSS | AIS Act 1951 | Civil Services Board | T.S.R. Subramanian | Aspirational Districts | Hota Committee

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Q49

Cooperatives have re-emerged as a development instrument with the creation of the Ministry of Cooperation in 2021 and the National Cooperative Policy 2025. Examine their role as an NGO-charity-development institution.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | NGO, SHG, COOPERATIVES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Ministry of Cooperation was carved out of the Ministry of Agriculture on 6 July 2021; the National Cooperative Policy 2025 succeeds the 2002 Vaidyanathan Committee architecture with the 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' vision.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional and statutory base — Article 19(1)(c) right to form cooperatives, 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011 (Part IXB struck down for State cooperatives in Rajendra N. Shah, 2021); Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act 2002 amended in 2023 to create a Cooperative Election Authority; (ii) policy — National Cooperative Policy 2025 targets 3 lakh new Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) by 2027, 2 lakh new Dairy and Fishery cooperatives; (iii) institutional architecture — NCDC under NCDC Act 1962, NABARD, computerisation of all 63,000 PACS with Rs 2,516 crore Cabinet approval (2022).

Way forward / Conclusion: Reconcile concurrent Union-State jurisdiction post-Rajendra Shah through Inter-State Council convergence, statutorily protect cooperative autonomy, and link PACS digitisation with public-service delivery under the JAM trinity.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Ministry of Cooperation created 6 July 2021
- Article 19(1)(c) — right to form cooperatives

- 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011
- Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah (2021) — Part IXB struck down for State cooperatives
- Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act 2002, amended in 2023
- National Cooperative Policy 2025 — Sahkar se Samriddhi
- Computerisation of 63,000 PACS — Rs 2,516 crore Cabinet approval, June 2022

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Amul (GCMMF) cooperative model
- IFFCO and Krishak Bharati Cooperative
- Kerala SHG-Kudumbashree cooperative ecosystem
- Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Act 2023
- National Cooperative Policy 2025

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Ministry of Cooperation, carved from the Ministry of Agriculture on 6 July 2021, and the National Cooperative Policy 2025 — succeeding the 2002 Vaidyanathan Committee architecture — anchor the 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' vision around Article 19(1)(c)'s constitutionally protected freedom to form cooperatives.

Constitutional and statutory base: The 97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011 inserted Article 43B and Part IXB; in Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah (2021) the Supreme Court struck down Part IXB for State cooperatives for want of ratification by half the States, retaining it only for multi-State societies under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act 2002, amended in 2023 to create a Cooperative Election Authority and improve governance audits.

Policy push: The National Cooperative Policy 2025 targets 3 lakh new Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) by 2027 and 2 lakh dairy and fishery cooperatives. Cabinet approval (June 2022) of Rs 2,516 crore for computerising all 63,000 PACS converts them into multi-service common service centres, linking JAM trinity delivery at the village level.

Institutional architecture: NCDC under the NCDC Act 1962 and NABARD provide credit; Amul/GCMMF, IFFCO and Kerala's Kudumbashree show that cooperatives can be development NGOs, banking platforms and welfare delivery agents simultaneously, but Union-State concurrency after Rajendra Shah requires Inter-State Council coordination on legislative competence.

> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Reconcile concurrent jurisdiction through Inter-State Council convergence, statutorily protect cooperative autonomy, link PACS digitisation with JAM-anchored delivery, and benchmark outcomes against Vaidyanathan Committee's audit-and-recapitalisation conditionalities for cooperative banks.

SOURCES

→National Cooperative Policy 2025 — Anantam IAS
→Farmer Producer Organisations — Anantam IAS
→Ministry of Cooperation

Ministry of Cooperation | National Cooperative Policy 2025 | 97th Amendment | Rajendra Shah | PACS | MSCS Act | NCDC

Q50

The Central Vigilance Commission and the Central Bureau of Investigation are India's premier anti-corruption arms but their independence has been judicially defended more than legislatively secured. With reference to the Vineet Narain judgment, discuss.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Central Vigilance Commission was set up on Santhanam Committee's recommendation in 1964 and given statutory status by the CVC Act 2003; the CBI operates under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory architecture — CVC Act 2003 Section 4 (selection by PM, Home Minister, Leader of largest opposition party), Section 8 (powers); CBI Director appointment under Section 4A DSPE Act 1946; (ii) judicial scaffolding — Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997) directed CVC to supervise CBI investigations, fixed two-year CBI Director tenure, struck down the 'single directive' requiring prior approval for senior public-servant investigation; that protection was statutorily restored as Section 17A by the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018; (iii) federalism — withdrawal of general consent under Section 6 DSPE Act by 9 States is curtailing CBI jurisdiction.

Way forward / Conclusion: Statutory CBI charter, independent prosecution wing, and a single-window appellate mechanism would consolidate the Vineet Narain protections.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Santhanam Committee Report 1964 — Central Vigilance Commission
- CVC Act 2003 — statutory status
- Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946 — CBI
- Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997)
- Section 17A Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018
- Section 4A DSPE Act — selection committee for CBI Director
- Withdrawal of general consent under Section 6 DSPE Act by 9 States

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997)
- Common Cause v. Union of India (2018) — CBI Director removal
- Subramanian Swamy v. Director CBI (2014) — Section 6A DSPE Act struck down
- CVC Act 2003
- Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Central Vigilance Commission, recommended by the Santhanam Committee 1964 and given statutory status by the CVC Act 2003, supervises the CBI which operates under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the independence question. First, statutory architecture — CVC Act 2003 Section 4 selects the Commissioner through a panel of PM, Home Minister and Leader of Opposition; Section 4A DSPE Act constituted a similar panel for the CBI Director. Second, judicial scaffolding — Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997) directed CVC supervision of CBI investigations, fixed a two-year Director tenure and struck down the 'single directive' (later restored as Section 17A by the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018). Third, federal stress — withdrawal of general consent under Section 6 DSPE Act by nine States curtails CBI jurisdiction.
>
> **Conclusion:** A statutory CBI charter, an independent prosecution wing and single-window appellate review would consolidate Vineet Narain protections.

SOURCES

→Central Vigilance Commission — Anantam IAS
→CVC Act 2003 — India Code
→Vineet Narain v. Union of India — Indian Kanoon

CVC | CBI | Vineet Narain | Section 17A | DSPE Act 1946 | general consent | anti-corruption

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Q51

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 has reorganised India's information rights and welfare-state architecture. With reference to the right-to-privacy Puttaswamy framework, critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | TRANSPARENCY & E-GOVERNANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 (DPDP Act), notified on 11 August 2023, is India's first comprehensive data-protection statute; it gives effect to the right to informational privacy recognised in K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory architecture — Section 4 (lawful processing), Section 6 (notice and consent), Sections 8-10 (Data Fiduciary duties), Section 11 (rights of Data Principal), and a Data Protection Board of India under Sections 18-26; broad Section 7 exemptions for State processing in 'public interest'; (ii) impact on transparency — Section 44(3) amends Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act 2005, removing the proviso that disclosed personal information that would have been disclosed to Parliament, narrowing the third-party exception; (iii) constitutional concern — Puttaswamy's three-fold test (legality, necessity, proportionality) requires narrow tailoring; the Act's blanket State exemptions and the absence of an independent regulator (Board members appointed by the Central Government) have been challenged in Internet Freedom Foundation v. Union of India (pending).

Way forward / Conclusion: Restore Section 8(1)(j) RTI proviso, make the Data Protection Board statutorily independent on the SEBI-CCI model, and codify a proportionality test for Section 7 exemptions to reconcile the DPDP Act with Puttaswamy.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 — notified 11 August 2023
- K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) — right to informational privacy
- Section 4 lawful processing; Section 6 notice and consent
- Section 7 exemptions for State processing 'in public interest'
- Section 18 — Data Protection Board of India
- Section 44(3) DPDP Act amended Section 8(1)(j) RTI Act 2005
- B.N. Srikrishna Committee Report 2018 on data protection framework

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)
- Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee 2018
- Internet Freedom Foundation v. Union of India (pending challenge to DPDP)
- Aadhaar Act Section 7 — Puttaswamy II (2018)
- European Union GDPR as comparator

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023, notified on 11 August 2023, gives statutory effect to the right to informational privacy recognised in K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017); it reorganises both information rights and welfare-state data flows through a single consent architecture.

Statutory architecture: Section 4 sets the lawful basis for processing; Section 6 codifies notice and consent; Sections 8-10 enumerate Data Fiduciary duties; Section 11 lists Data Principal rights including access, correction and erasure. Sections 18-26 establish the Data Protection Board of India as adjudicator. Section 7 carves out broad State exemptions for processing 'in public interest'.

Transparency impact: Section 44(3) of the Act amends Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act 2005, deleting the proviso that personal information disclosable to Parliament or Legislature could not be denied to citizens — narrowing the public-interest override and chilling RTI applicants seeking civil-servant records.

Constitutional concern: Puttaswamy's three-fold test — legality, necessity, proportionality — requires narrow tailoring. Section 7's blanket State exemptions, the Board's lack of independence (Central Government appointment under Section 19), and absence of regulatory sub-classification mirror the B.N. Srikrishna Committee 2018's warning. The challenge in Internet Freedom Foundation v. Union of India tests these features.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Restore the Section 8(1)(j) RTI proviso, make the Data Protection Board statutorily independent on the SEBI-CCI model, codify a proportionality test for Section 7 exemptions, and notify graded obligations for Significant Data Fiduciaries — reconciling the Act with Puttaswamy's privacy frame.

SOURCES

- →Right to Privacy — Anantam IAS
- →Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 — India Code
- →RTI Act 2005 — Anantam IAS

DPDP Act 2023 | Puttaswamy | Section 8(1)(j) | Data Protection Board | Section 7 | B.N. Srikrishna | informational privacy

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Q52

Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996 was meant to give Fifth Schedule areas a constitutionally-backed regime of tribal self-rule. Evaluate its implementation.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | GOVERNMENT POLICIES & INTERVENTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 was enacted on 24 December 1996 to extend Part IX of the Constitution to the Fifth Schedule areas across 10 States, following the Bhuria Committee Report 1995.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory architecture — Gram Sabha as primary unit of self-government, mandatory consultation on land acquisition and minor minerals, ownership of minor forest produce, control over money-lenders and intoxicants; (ii) implementation gap — only six of the ten Fifth Schedule States have notified PESA Rules (Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odisha); (iii) judicial corrective — Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1997) on tribal land alienation, and Niyamgiri case (Orissa Mining Corporation v. Union of India, 2013) on Gram Sabha consent for forest diversion.

Way forward / Conclusion: Notify PESA Rules in all Fifth Schedule States, statutory enforcement of Gram Sabha consent under Section 4(d) PESA read with Section 6 Forest Rights Act 2006, and convergence with PM-JANMAN are the steps to operationalise tribal self-rule.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- PESA Act 1996 — enacted 24 December 1996
- Bhuria Committee Report 1995
- Section 4(d) — Gram Sabha competence on community resources
- Section 4(i) — mandatory consultation on land acquisition
- Section 4(k)(l)(m) — ownership of minor forest produce, minor minerals

- Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1997)
- Orissa Mining Corporation v. Union of India (2013) — Niyamgiri

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1997)
- Niyamgiri Gram Sabha consent (2013)
- Maharashtra PESA Rules 2014
- Chhattisgarh PESA Rules 2022
- PM-JANMAN scheme 2023 convergence

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, enacted 24 December 1996 on the Bhuria Committee's 1995 recommendation, extended Part IX of the Constitution to Fifth Schedule areas across ten States to operationalise Article 244 tribal self-rule.

Statutory architecture: Section 4(d) makes the Gram Sabha competent over community resources; Section 4(i) mandates consultation on land acquisition; Sections 4(k), 4(l) and 4(m) vest ownership of minor forest produce, control over minor minerals and management of intoxicants and money-lenders in tribal communities — a transfer rare in Indian local government law.

Implementation gap: Only six of ten Fifth Schedule States have notified PESA Rules (Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana); Chhattisgarh notified in 2022 while Gujarat, Jharkhand and Odisha remain pending. Where rules exist, Gram Sabha consent is often diluted by parallel revenue and forest authorities.

Judicial corrective: Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1997) barred alienation of tribal land to non-tribal mining lessees; Orissa Mining Corporation v. Union of India (2013) — the Niyamgiri ruling — read PESA with Section 6 of the Forest Rights Act 2006 to make Gram Sabha consent on forest diversion judicially enforceable, converting consultation into consent in the Fifth Schedule context.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Notify PESA Rules in all Fifth Schedule States, statutorily enforce Gram Sabha consent reading Section 4(d) PESA with Section 6 FRA, and converge PM-JANMAN saturation

> delivery with rights-recognition to make tribal self-rule operational rather than aspirational.

SOURCES

- →PESA Act 1996 — Anantam IAS
- →PESA Act — Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas — Anantam IAS
- →Scheduled Areas under Fifth Schedule — Anantam IAS

PESA Act 1996 | Fifth Schedule | Bhuria Committee | Niyamgiri | Samatha | Gram Sabha | minor forest produce

GS PAPER 2

Social Justice

20 practice questions

Q53

Direct Benefit Transfer and Aadhaar-linked welfare have reorganised India's social-sector spending, but exclusion errors persist. Discuss.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | WELFARE DELIVERY & E-GOVERNANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: DBT has been the spine of welfare since 2013, anchored in the JAM trinity — Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile — and underwritten by the Aadhaar Act 2016 read with Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) governance gains — Economic Survey reports cumulative DBT savings of over Rs 3.48 lakh crore since 2013, with leakages in PAHAL LPG, PDS and PM-KISAN measurably reduced; (ii) exclusion errors — PDS denials in Jharkhand (Santoshi Kumari, 2017) and Aadhaar authentication failures flagged by CAG audits; Aadhaar Act Section 7 conditionality survived Puttaswamy but Section 57 was struck down; (iii) institutional gap — grievance redress under the Aadhaar Act and the absence of an enforceable social-security entitlement.

Way forward / Conclusion: Independent grievance tribunals, biometric exception protocols, and convergence on the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 updated by SECC 2.0 — with statutory backing for proactive disclosure of DBT data — will protect the welfare floor that JAM enables.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- DBT launched 1 January 2013; over 56 schemes onboarded by 2024
- JAM trinity — PMJDY (2014), Aadhaar Act 2016, mobile penetration
- Aadhaar Act 2016 Section 7 (welfare conditionality) and Section 57 struck down in Puttaswamy II (2018)
- Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) recognised privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21
- Economic Survey reports cumulative DBT savings of approximately Rs 3.48 lakh crore
- CAG Audit Report on Aadhaar (Report No. 24 of 2021)
- PM-KISAN, PAHAL LPG, MGNREGA wage payments via DBT

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- PAHAL LPG subsidy (largest DBT scheme by transactions)
- PM-KISAN annual Rs 6,000 transfer
- Santoshi Kumari starvation case, Jharkhand (2017)
- Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017 and 2018)
- DigiLocker and e-KYC stack

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Direct Benefit Transfer, launched on 1 January 2013, is anchored in the JAM trinity — Jan Dhan Yojana (2014), Aadhaar and Mobile — and underwritten by the Aadhaar Act 2016 read with *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017), which recognised privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21.

Governance gains: The Economic Survey reports cumulative DBT savings of over Rs 3.48 lakh crore since 2013, with PAHAL LPG, PDS, MGNREGA wages and PM-KISAN (Rs 6,000 annual transfer) showing measurably reduced leakages; over 56 schemes onboarded DBT by 2024, and DigiLocker plus e-KYC stack the welfare rails.

Exclusion errors: PDS denials such as Santoshi Kumari's starvation death in Jharkhand (2017) and Aadhaar authentication failures flagged by the CAG (Report No. 24 of 2021) reveal a fragile last mile; Section 7 of the Aadhaar Act conditionality survived *Puttaswamy*, but Section 57 (private-party use) was struck down in *Puttaswamy II* (2018) as disproportionate.

Institutional gap: Grievance redress under the Aadhaar Act is weak, biometric exception protocols are inconsistent, the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 is outdated for targeting, and DBT data lacks proactive disclosure under RTI Section 4.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Independent grievance tribunals, mandated biometric-exception protocols and convergence on a refreshed SECC 2.0 — with statutory backing for proactive disclosure of DBT data and an enforceable last-mile entitlement under Section 4 of the RTI Act 2005 — will protect the welfare floor that JAM enables and operationalise the right to social security under Article 41.

SOURCES

→Aadhaar Act 2016 — India Code
→DBT Mission — PIB Background

→Inclusive Digital Access and Article 21 — Anantam IAS

Direct Benefit Transfer | JAM trinity | Aadhaar Act | Section 7 | Puttaswamy | exclusion error | PM-KISAN | e-governance

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Q54

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups have remained outside the headline indicators of welfare. With reference to the constitutional and policy framework for PVTGs, examine.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | VULNERABLE GROUPS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The 75 PVTGs across 18 states and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands inherit the Dhebar Commission 1961 category of 'Primitive Tribal Groups', renamed in 2006.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) constitutional anchors — Article 46 DPSP, Fifth and Sixth Schedules, PESA 1996, Forest Rights Act 2006; (ii) institutional — Tribal Sub-Plan, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and the PM-JANMAN mission launched 15 November 2023 with a Rs 24,104 crore outlay; (iii) gaps — absence of disaggregated census data, low Habitation Development Plan coverage.

Way forward / Conclusion: Group-specific Habitation Development Plans, PVTG enumeration in the next census, and convergence with the Forest Rights Act community-forest-resource rights are the policy levers.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- 75 PVTGs across 18 states and Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Dhebar Commission 1961 created the 'Primitive Tribal Groups' category
- Renamed Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in 2006
- Article 46 — DPSP for educational and economic interests of SCs/STs
- PESA 1996 — Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act
- PM-JANMAN launched 15 November 2023, outlay approximately Rs 24,104 crore
- Forest Rights Act 2006 — individual and community forest rights

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- PM-JANMAN scheme 2023
- Onge and Jarawa of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

- Birhor of Jharkhand
- Saharia of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan
- Dongria Kondh of Niyamgiri

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups across 18 States and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands inherit the Dhebar Commission 1961 'Primitive Tribal Groups' category, renamed in 2006, and remain outside the headline indicators of welfare.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions explain the gap. First, constitutional anchors — Article 46 Directive Principle, the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 and the Forest Rights Act 2006. Second, institutional response — Tribal Sub-Plan, Eklavya Model Residential Schools and PM-JANMAN launched on 15 November 2023 with a Rs 24,104 crore outlay covering Birhor of Jharkhand, Saharia of Madhya Pradesh, Onge and Jarawa of Andaman, and Dongria Kondh of Niyamgiri. Third, the gap — no disaggregated census data, low Habitation Development Plan coverage and weak last-mile health outreach.
>
> **Conclusion:** Group-specific Habitation Development Plans, PVTG enumeration in Census 2026, and convergence with Forest Rights Act community-forest-resource rights are the levers.

SOURCES

→Forest Rights Act 2006 — India Code
→PVTGs of India — Anantam IAS
→Scheduled Areas under Fifth Schedule — Anantam IAS

PVTG | Article 46 | PESA 1996 | PM-JANMAN | Fifth Schedule | Forest Rights Act | Dhebar Commission

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Q55

India's nutrition transition has overtaken its food-security policy. With reference to the role of food fortification and PDS reform in addressing hidden hunger, critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | HEALTH & HUNGER

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) shows anaemia in 67% of children aged 6–59 months and 57% of women aged 15–49 — a hidden hunger that calorie-based welfare does not capture.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory base — National Food Security Act 2013 covering about 81.35 crore beneficiaries, recognising the right to food flowing from Article 21 and PUCL v. Union of India (2001); (ii) food fortification — mandatory rice fortification in PDS from April 2024 with iron, folic acid and B12 under FSSAI standards; controversies on sickle-cell and thalassemia patients; (iii) institutional — POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi convergence, and the National Multi-sectoral Action Plan.

Way forward / Conclusion: Pair fortification with dietary diversification through millets and pulses on the PDS basket, biofortified crops under ICAR's HarvestPlus, and an exit clause from rice fortification for at-risk groups.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- NFHS-5 (2019-21) — anaemia 67% in children, 57% in women 15–49
- National Food Security Act 2013 — 81.35 crore beneficiaries
- PUCL v. Union of India (2001) — right to food under Article 21
- Mandatory rice fortification in PDS, ICDS, PM POSHAN from April 2024
- FSSAI Food Fortification Regulations 2018 and the +F logo
- POSHAN Abhiyaan (2018) and Mission POSHAN 2.0 (2021)
- Sickle cell disease and thalassemia exemption concerns flagged by ICMR

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- PUCL v. Union of India (2001)
- PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana extended to December 2028
- FSSAI rice fortification rollout 2024
- Saksham Anganwadi convergence
- HarvestPlus biofortification programme

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> NFHS-5 (2019-21) records anaemia in 67% of children aged 6-59 months and 57% of women 15-49 — a hidden hunger that calorie-based welfare under the National Food Security Act 2013, covering 81.35 crore beneficiaries, does not capture; India's nutrition transition has outpaced its food-security policy.
>
> **Statutory base**: The NFSA 2013, anchored in *PUCL v. Union of India* (2001) reading the right to food into Article 21, mandates 5 kg per person per month at Rs 3 (rice), Rs 2

(wheat) and Re 1 (millets); PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana has extended free foodgrains to December 2028, but its caloric tilt reproduces a 'fill the belly' welfare logic.

Food fortification: Mandatory rice fortification in PDS, ICDS and PM POSHAN from April 2024 under FSSAI Food Fortification Regulations 2018 adds iron, folic acid and B12 through the '+F' logo; ICMR has flagged exemption for sickle-cell and thalassemia patients, qualifying universal rollout and demanding district-level haemoglobinopathy mapping.

Institutional architecture: POSHAN Abhiyaan (2018), Mission POSHAN 2.0 (2021) and Saksham Anganwadi converge on early-life nutrition through the POSHAN Tracker; supply-chain stockouts of Iron-Folic Acid tablets, weak last-mile counselling and underutilised Anaemia Mukt Bharat platforms under-deliver the National Multi-sectoral Action Plan.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Pair fortification with dietary diversification through millets, pulses and biofortified crops via ICAR's HarvestPlus, and add a sickle-cell exit clause — to convert NFSA from a calorie scheme to a nutrition entitlement and align with the right to food under Article 21.

SOURCES

→National Food Security Act 2013 — India Code
→Food Fortification in India — Anantam IAS
→Sustainable Development Report 2025 — Anantam IAS

NFSA 2013 | food fortification | anaemia | POSHAN Abhiyaan | PUCL v. UoI | PDS | hidden hunger

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Q56

Education in India is a concurrent subject in law but an unequal entitlement in practice. With reference to the gaps the Right to Education Act 2009 has left unaddressed, examine.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | EDUCATION

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Education moved to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Amendment 1976; the 86th Amendment 2002 inserted Article 21A and Articles 51A(k) and 45, operationalised by the RTE Act 2009.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) statutory floor — free and compulsory education 6–14 years, 25% EWS reservation upheld in Society for Unaided Private Schools v. Union of India (2012); (ii) outcomes — ASER 2024 reports about 25% of Class 5 children cannot read a Class 2 text, NIPUN Bharat targets unmet; (iii) policy shift — NEP 2020 extending RTE to 3–18, NCF 2023 reforms, school-rationalisation challenges.

Way forward / Conclusion: Bring 3–18 within Article 21A through a constitutional amendment, link grants to learning outcomes, and revive the Kothari Commission's six per cent of GDP norm.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- 42nd Amendment 1976 — education to Concurrent List
- 86th Constitutional Amendment 2002 — Article 21A right to education
- RTE Act 2009 — free and compulsory education 6–14 years
- Section 12(1)(c) RTE — 25% EWS reservation
- Society for Unaided Private Schools v. Union of India (2012)
- ASER 2024 reports learning-poverty gaps
- National Education Policy 2020 — Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Society for Unaided Private Schools v. Union of India (2012)
- Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust v. UoI (2014)
- NIPUN Bharat Mission
- PM-SHRI Schools scheme
- Kothari Commission Report 1966 on 6% of GDP

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** Education moved to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Amendment 1976, and Article 21A inserted by the 86th Constitutional Amendment 2002, read with Articles 45 and 51A(k), was operationalised by the Right to Education Act 2009.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions show the unequal entitlement. First, the statutory floor — free and compulsory education for ages 6-14, with Section 12(1)(c) 25% EWS reservation upheld in *Society for Unaided Private Schools v. Union of India* (2012) and *Pramati Educational Trust v. UoI* (2014). Second, outcomes — ASER 2024 reports about 25% of Class 5 children cannot read a Class 2 text, with NIPUN Bharat foundational-literacy targets unmet across most States. Third, policy shift — NEP 2020 extends the entitlement to 3-18 years and NCF 2023 anchors Foundational

> Literacy and Numeracy, while school rationalisation and PM-SHRI rollouts remain uneven.
>
> **Conclusion:** Bring 3-18 within Article 21A by amendment, link grants to learning outcomes, and revive the Kothari Commission's 6% of GDP norm.

SOURCES

- →Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 — India Code
- →Fundamental Rights and Articles — Anantam IAS
- →Sustainable Development Goals and India — Anantam IAS

Article 21A | RTE Act 2009 | 86th Amendment | NEP 2020 | EWS quota | ASER | concurrent list

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Q57

POSHAN 2.0 has shifted India's child-nutrition architecture from food handouts to a first-1,000-days approach, yet anaemia in under-fives rose between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5. Examine the design strengths and implementation gaps of the scheme. Examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | WELFARE SCHEMES — PERFORMANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0, launched in 2021, reaches roughly 10 crore beneficiaries through 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres on a real-time Poshan Tracker, with a 2025-26 outlay of about Rs 21,960 crore.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Design strengths: maternal nutrition, IYCF norms, community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM), fortified take-home rations, digital growth monitoring; (ii) Performance evidence: stunting fell from 38.4 to 35.5 percent and underweight from 35.8 to 32.1 percent between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5, but child anaemia rose from 58.6 to 67.1 percent and women's anaemia from 53 to 57 percent; (iii) Gaps: NFHS data are 2019-21 vintage, FAO SOFI 2024 records 194.6 million undernourished Indians and 18.7 percent wasting, Anganwadi worker vacancies, weak last-mile fortification supply.

Way forward / Conclusion: Centre the first 1,000 days through maternal nutrition under PMMVY, scale mandatory rice fortification with FSSAI +F standards, fix Anganwadi vacancies and integrate POSHAN with PMAY-G water and sanitation.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- POSHAN 2.0 budget Rs 21,960 crore (BE 2025-26), 10 crore beneficiaries, 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres
- NFHS-5 — stunting 35.5 percent, wasting 19.3 percent, underweight 32.1 percent, child anaemia 67.1 percent
- FAO SOFI 2024 — 194.6 million undernourished Indians, child wasting 18.7 percent (highest globally), low birth weight 27.4 percent
- First 1,000 days — UNICEF/CSEP brief notes about half of growth failure by age two happens in the womb
- Anemia Mukt Bharat, fortified rice under PDS, Mid-Day Meal/PM-POSHAN as convergent levers
- Global Hunger Index 2025 — India scored 25.8, ranked 'serious'; government disputes methodology
- Double burden — maternal overweight/obesity rose from 20.6 percent to 33.2 percent (NFHS-4 to NFHS-5)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- POSHAN 2.0 / Mission Saksham Anganwadi (Mission Poshan 2.0, 2021)
- Poshan Tracker app for real-time growth monitoring
- FSSAI +F mandatory rice fortification under PDS
- Anemia Mukt Bharat strategy
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0, launched in 2021 under Article 47's directive to raise nutrition standards, reach roughly 10 crore beneficiaries through 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres on a real-time Poshan Tracker with a 2025-26 outlay of about Rs 21,960 crore — India's largest nutrition delivery network.

Design strengths: The scheme shifts emphasis to the first 1,000 days through maternal nutrition under PMMVY, the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) norms, community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM), fortified take-home rations under FSSAI +F standards, and digital growth monitoring. Convergence with Anaemia Mukt Bharat and Jal Jeevan Mission addresses underlying determinants of nutrition outcomes.

Performance evidence: NFHS-5 (2019-21) showed stunting falling from 38.4 to 35.5 percent and underweight from 35.8 to 32.1 percent against NFHS-4. However, child anaemia rose from 58.6 to 67.1 percent and women's anaemia from 53 to 57 percent. FAO's State of Food Security 2024 records 194.6 million undernourished Indians and child wasting at 18.7 percent — the world's highest.

Implementation gaps: Anganwadi worker vacancies, weak last-mile fortified-rice supply, irregular take-home ration distribution and Poshan Tracker over-reporting (CAG Performance Audit 2022) blunt outcomes. NFHS-6 is delayed; the evidence base is half a decade old, undermining adaptive targeting.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Centre the first 1,000 days through enforceable PMMVY entitlements, scale mandatory rice fortification, fix 1.5 lakh Anganwadi vacancies, integrate POSHAN with PMAY-G water and sanitation, and release NFHS-6 to make targeting evidence-driven rather than tracker-driven.

SOURCES

- →Child Malnutrition — Anantam IAS
- →Food Fortification — Anantam IAS
- →POSHAN 2.0 — Ministry of Women and Child Development

POSHAN 2.0 | Anganwadi | first 1000 days | anaemia | stunting | NFHS-5 | fortification | Poshan Tracker

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Q58

PM-JAY Ayushman Bharat covers a 50 crore population with Rs 5 lakh secondary and tertiary hospital cover, yet out-of-pocket health expenditure remains among the highest in the world. Discuss the achievements and design limits of the scheme.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | WELFARE SCHEMES — PERFORMANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: PM-JAY, launched on 23 September 2018, is the world's largest publicly funded health-assurance scheme, with Rs 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalisation and a 70-plus age-group expansion in 2024.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Achievements: over 35 crore Ayushman cards issued, more than 8 crore hospital admissions, around 31,000 empanelled hospitals, integration with ABHA under Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission; (ii) Limits: covers only inpatient care, leaves out outpatient and medicine costs that drive about 60 percent of OOPE; private-empanelled hospitals dominate; missing trust-based vs insurance-based state variations; package-rate disputes; (iii) Equity: states like West Bengal and Delhi opted out for periods; tribal districts under-utilise; women's claim share lags.

Way forward / Conclusion: Add an outpatient and chronic-disease cover, raise the public-health spend toward the National Health Policy 2017 target of 2.5 percent of GDP, strengthen Health and Wellness Centres for primary care, and audit private hospital empanelment with WHO ICD-coded outcome data.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- PM-JAY launched 23 September 2018; Rs 5 lakh family-floater for secondary and tertiary care
- Covers approximately 12 crore poorest families (about 55 crore beneficiaries), 70-plus universal cover added September 2024
- Over 8 crore hospital admissions and around 31,000 empanelled hospitals as of 2025
- Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission — ABHA ID, Health Facility Registry, Health Professional Registry
- Out-of-pocket expenditure still around 39.4 percent of total health spending (NHA 2021-22)
- Public health expenditure remains around 1.84 percent of GDP, below NHP 2017 target of 2.5 percent
- Outpatient and pharmaceutical costs largely excluded, despite driving most household health distress

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- PM-JAY 70-plus expansion (October 2024)
- Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (renamed Ayushman Arogya Mandirs)
- Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABHA)
- PM-ABHIM Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission
- National Health Authority claims-management platform

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> PM-JAY Ayushman Bharat, launched 23 September 2018 under Article 47's mandate, is the world's largest publicly funded health-assurance scheme, providing Rs 5 lakh per

family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalisation and expanded in 2024 to cover all citizens aged 70-plus.

Achievements: Over 35 crore Ayushman cards have been issued, more than 8 crore hospital admissions authorised, and roughly 31,000 hospitals empanelled. Integration with ABHA under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and convergence with 1.7 lakh Health and Wellness Centres extend reach to tribal and Aspirational districts.

Design limits: The scheme covers only inpatient care, leaving outpatient consultations and outpatient medicines — which drive about 60 percent of household out-of-pocket expenditure (NHA 2021-22) — outside the safety net. Private-empanelled hospital dominance, package-rate disputes (West Bengal opted out in 2019; Delhi delayed rollout), and trust-versus-insurance variation across States dilute uniformity. Women's claim share lags men's by roughly 10 percentage points.

Equity gaps: Tribal and Aspirational district utilisation remains below the all-India average; National Health Accounts records OOPE at 39.4 percent of total health expenditure (FY22), still pushing an estimated 6 crore Indians into poverty annually.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Add an outpatient and chronic-disease cover, raise public-health spending toward the National Health Policy 2017 target of 2.5 percent of GDP, strengthen Health and Wellness Centres for primary care, and audit empanelled hospitals with WHO ICD-coded outcome data to convert PM-JAY from financial protection to universal health coverage.

SOURCES

- →PM-JAY Ayushman Bharat — Anantam IAS
- →Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission — Anantam IAS
- →National Health Authority — PM-JAY Dashboard

PM-JAY | Ayushman Bharat | out-of-pocket expenditure | ABHA | health insurance | secondary and tertiary care | 70-plus cover | NHA

Q59

MGNREGA 2005 created a justiciable right to 100 days of unskilled wage work but its real wage rates and budget have stagnated in recent years. Evaluate its continuing relevance for India's rural poor.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | WELFARE SCHEMES — PERFORMANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 entitles every rural household to 100 days of manual work in a financial year and stands as India's largest demand-driven safety net.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Counter-cyclical role: enrolled work peaked at 389 crore person-days in 2020-21 during the pandemic; (ii) Issues: average wage Rs 289-300 in 2024-25, lagging state minimum wages; FY 2025-26 BE around Rs 86,000 crore against a CAG-flagged real demand of more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore; mandatory Aadhaar-Based Payment System and National Mobile Monitoring System exclusion errors; (iii) Asset creation: water-conservation works and individual-beneficiary land development under convergence with PMAY-G and JJM.

Way forward / Conclusion: Re-index wages to inflation, untie budget from cap, restore demand-driven character and pilot an urban employment guarantee.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- MGNREGA 2005 — 100 days wage employment per rural household per year
- FY 2025-26 BE around Rs 86,000 crore; expenditure cap rather than demand-driven in practice
- Average wage rate in 2024-25 about Rs 289-300, often below state minimum wages
- Mandatory ABPS and NMMS attendance flagged for exclusion errors by labour rights groups
- 389 crore person-days generated in 2020-21 (peak pandemic year)
- Convergence with PMAY-G, Jal Jeevan Mission, and individual-beneficiary land works
- Urban Employment Guarantee proposal (Azim Premji University 2020) under debate

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS) rollout (January 2024)
- National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) attendance app
- Indira Gandhi Indira Awas Yojana convergence with PMAY-G
- Rajasthan Indira Gandhi Shahari Rojgar Yojana (urban analogue)
- Wage delay litigation in Swaraj Abhiyan v. Union of India (2018)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** MGNREGA 2005, the world's largest demand-driven safety net, gives every rural household a justiciable right to 100 days of unskilled wage work and converts Article 41 into statutory entitlement.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame its continuing relevance. First, counter-cyclical strength — person-days peaked at 389 crore in 2020-21 during COVID-19, absorbing reverse migration and validating the demand-driven design. Second, fiscal compression — the FY 2025-26 BE of about Rs 86,000 crore falls short of CAG-flagged real demand exceeding Rs 1.5 lakh crore; the average wage of Rs 289-300 in 2024-25 lags state minimum wages; Aadhaar-Based Payment System and the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) generate exclusion errors. Third, asset creation — convergence with PMAY-G, Jal Jeevan Mission and individual-beneficiary land development raises capital formation in dryland villages, though Mihir Shah Committee (2012) reforms remain partly unimplemented.
>
> **Conclusion:** Re-index wages to CPI-AL, untie the budget from annual cap, restore demand-driven payments and pilot an urban employment guarantee.

SOURCES

- →MGNREGA 2005 — Anantam IAS
- →Need for Urban Wage Employment Program — Anantam IAS
- →Ministry of Rural Development — MGNREGA Dashboard

MGNREGA | wage rate | ABPS | NMMS | right to work | rural distress | asset creation | exclusion errors

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Q60

PM-JANMAN and the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan represent a saturation approach to tribal welfare, while the Forest Rights Act 2006 represents a rights-based approach. Critically analyse the gap between welfare and rights in tribal policy.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | WELFARE SCHEMES — PERFORMANCE

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's tribal architecture rests on two tracks — welfare-saturation schemes (PM-JANMAN, DAJGUA) and rights-recognition laws (FRA 2006, PESA 1996). The first delivers amenities; the second transfers ownership.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Welfare push: PM-JANMAN (November 2023) put Rs 24,104 crore behind 75 PVTGs; DAJGUA (November 2024) added Rs 79,156 crore to saturate nearly 63,843 tribal villages with PMAY-G houses, JJM water and PMGSY roads; (ii) Rights stall: Forest Rights Act review on 1 June 2025 by MoTA found more than 18 lakh of the 51 lakh claims rejected (about 36 percent rejection); Community Forest Resource rights titled to under 5 percent of the potential area; (iii) Constitutional design: Article 244, Fifth and Sixth Schedules, PESA in 10 states, gram sabha as the FRA gatekeeper.

Way forward / Conclusion: Couple PM-JANMAN delivery with FRA title verification, end the deemed-rejection of claims without speaking orders (Niyamgiri principle), and converge MFP MSP and CFR governance under gram sabha control.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Scheduled Tribes — 10.42 crore, about 8.6 percent of India, 705 notified groups (Census 2011)
- PVTGs — 75 communities across 18 states and Andaman & Nicobar
- PM-JANMAN (November 2023) — Rs 24,104 crore for PVTG households across 11 ministries
- DAJGUA / Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (October 2024) — Rs 79,156 crore for 63,843 tribal villages
- Forest Rights Act 2006 — IFR and CFR titles to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and OTFDs
- MoTA review (1 June 2025) — about 36 percent of 51 lakh FRA claims rejected; CFR titles cover under 5 percent of potential area
- PESA 1996 extends self-rule to Fifth Schedule areas in 10 states; gram sabha is the FRA gatekeeper
- Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti v. Union of India (2013) — gram sabha consent for diversion of forest land

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- PM-JANMAN, launched 15 November 2023 on Janjatiya Gaurav Divas
- Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA), October 2024
- Forest Rights Act 2006
- PESA Act 1996
- Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti v. Union of India (2013, Vedanta case)
- Adi Karmyogi Programme for tribal change leaders

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

India's tribal policy runs on two tracks under Article 244 — welfare-saturation schemes like PM-JANMAN (November 2023) and DAJGUA (November 2024), and rights-recognition laws like the Forest Rights Act 2006 and PESA 1996. The first delivers amenities; the second transfers ownership of land and forest.

Welfare saturation: PM-JANMAN committed Rs 24,104 crore for the 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, covering PMAY-G houses, JJM water, mobile medical units and Anganwadi services. DAJGUA followed with Rs 79,156 crore to saturate roughly 63,843 tribal villages with PMGSY roads, electrification and skilling. The model treats tribal welfare as a delivery problem solvable by convergent CSS templates.

Rights stall: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs FRA review on 1 June 2025 found that of about 51 lakh claims filed, more than 18 lakh have been rejected — a 36 percent rejection rate, frequently without speaking orders. Community Forest Resource (CFR) titles cover under 5 percent of the potential area. PESA Rules are notified in only six of ten Fifth Schedule States.

Constitutional design: Article 244 read with the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, PESA's Section 4(d) Gram Sabha competence, and FRA Section 6 make the Gram Sabha the gatekeeper. The Niyamgiri ruling (Orissa Mining Corporation v. Union of India, 2013) converted consultation into consent on forest diversion.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Couple PM-JANMAN delivery with FRA title verification, end deemed-rejection of claims, scale CFR governance under Gram Sabha control, and converge Minor Forest Produce MSP with PVTG livelihoods — restoring rights as the architecture in which welfare is delivered.

SOURCES

- →PVTGs and PM-JANMAN — Anantam IAS
- →Scheduled Areas under Fifth Schedule — Anantam IAS
- →Ministry of Tribal Affairs — Forest Rights Act dashboard

PM-JANMAN | DAJGUA | Forest Rights Act | PVTG | PESA | Community Forest Resource rights | gram sabha | tribal welfare

Q61

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 promises a 4 percent job reservation and accessible infrastructure, but the Supreme Court's Rajive Raturi judgment held that the law's accessibility chapter was being treated as a discretionary favour. Examine.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM

MECHANISMS, LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE SECTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The RPwD Act 2016 is the Indian implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by India on 1 October 2007, and the Rajive Raturi v. Union of India ruling on 8 November 2024 declared accessibility a fundamental right under Article 21.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Statutory architecture: 21 specified disabilities, social model definition, 4 percent reservation in government jobs (Section 34), 5 percent in higher education (Section 32), Chief Commissioner and State Commissioners as quasi-judicial enforcers; (ii) Implementation gap: only 8.73 percent of buses accessible per the Centre's own Rajive Raturi compliance affidavit; Sugamya Bharat Phase 1 targets missed; Census 2011 enumerates only 2.21 percent disabled against WHO's 16 percent global estimate; (iii) Compliance hearing on 11 February 2026 — the Court refused the Centre's plea to defer mandatory accessibility rules; vacancies in DEPwD and State Commissions persist.

Way forward / Conclusion: Notify enforceable accessibility rules under Section 40 with penalties, conduct a disability-inclusive Census 2027 with the Washington Group Short Set, fill commissioner vacancies and audit the 4 percent reservation backlog.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- RPwD Act 2016 — 21 specified disabilities under Section 2(zc), social model, Schedule of conditions
- Section 34 — 4 percent reservation in government jobs; Section 32 — 5 percent in higher education
- UNCRPD ratified 1 October 2007; India a State Party
- Rajive Raturi v. Union of India (8 November 2024) — accessibility a fundamental right under Article 21
- Census 2011 — 2.21 percent disabled population, against WHO global estimate of about 16 percent
- Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign) launched December 2015

- Only 8.73 percent of buses accessible per Centre's compliance affidavit (February 2026 hearing)
- Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and State Commissioners are quasi-judicial under Section 75

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Rajive Raturi v. Union of India (2024, 2024 INSC 858)
- Vikash Kumar v. UPSC (2021) on reasonable accommodation in exams
- Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan
- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)
- Unique Disability ID (UDID) portal

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, India's implementation of the UNCRPD ratified 1 October 2007, was strengthened by Rajive Raturi v. Union of India (8 November 2024), declaring accessibility a fundamental right under Article 21.

Body: Three dimensions examine the gap between text and practice. First, statutory architecture — 21 disabilities, social-model definition, 4 percent reservation under Section 34, 5 percent in higher education under Section 32, and Chief and State Commissioners as enforcers. Second, implementation deficit — only 8.73 percent of buses are accessible per the Centre's Rajive Raturi affidavit; Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan Phase 1 targets missed; Census 2011 records 2.21 percent disabled against WHO's 16 percent estimate. Third, compliance — on 11 February 2026 the Court refused the Centre's plea to defer mandatory accessibility rules.

Conclusion: Notify enforceable accessibility rules under Section 40 with penalties, conduct a disability-inclusive Census 2027 using the Washington Group Short Set, and audit reservation backlog.

SOURCES

→Persons with Disabilities in India — Anantam IAS
→Rajive Raturi v. Union of India (2024)
→RPwD Act 2016 — Government of India

RPwD Act 2016 | Rajive Raturi | accessibility | UNCRPD | social model | Sugamya Bharat | Article 21 | reasonable accommodation

Q62

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013 has not eliminated hazardous cleaning deaths, with the government recording 294 sewer and septic-tank deaths between 2020 and 2024. Discuss the gaps between the law and the lived practice and the role of the NAMASTE scheme.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM

MECHANISMS, LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE SECTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The PEMSR Act 2013 banned manual scavenging and made hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without safety gear a punishable offence, building on the 1993 prohibition.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Statutory and judicial scaffolding: PEMSR Act 2013, Safai Karamchari Andolan v. Union of India (2014) directed Rs 10 lakh compensation per sewer death, raised to Rs 30 lakh in Balram Singh v. Union of India (October 2023); (ii) Persistent deaths: Government told Rajya Sabha 294 sewer/septic-tank deaths in 2020-2024 (with zero 'manual scavenging' deaths reported, exposing the definitional dodge); (iii) NAMASTE scheme (launched 2023, replacing SRMS) — mechanised desludging, Profiling of Sewer-Septic-Tank Workers (PWSSWs), PPE kits, capital subsidy for sanitation enterprises; convergence with Swachh Bharat 2.0.

Way forward / Conclusion: Merge 'manual scavenging' and 'hazardous cleaning' for legal accountability, criminalise non-mechanised entry, vest enforcement in Municipal Commissioners with strict liability and ensure caste-disaggregated NAMASTE data.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- PEMSR Act 2013 covered dry latrines plus septic-tank and sewer cleaning; criminalised hazardous cleaning
- Safai Karamchari Andolan v. Union of India (2014) — Rs 10 lakh compensation per sewer death
- Balram Singh v. Union of India (October 2023) — compensation raised to Rs 30 lakh
- MoSJ&E to Rajya Sabha — 294 sewer and septic-tank deaths in 2020-2024; zero 'manual scavenging' deaths reported
- NAMASTE — National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (2023), supersedes SRMS

- Identifies and rehabilitates Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs), provides PPE and ayushman cards
- Caste profile — over 90 percent of victims from Dalit communities, per SKA tracking
- Constitutional anchor — Article 17 (abolition of untouchability), Article 21 right to dignity

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Safai Karamchari Andolan v. Union of India (2014)
- Balram Singh v. Union of India (October 2023)
- NAMASTE scheme (2023)
- Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) (1990s, repealed)
- Bezwada Wilson (Magsaysay laureate) and Safai Karamchari Andolan

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013, building on the 1993 prohibition and Articles 17 and 21, banned manual scavenging and criminalised hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without safety gear. The government has nonetheless recorded 294 sewer and septic-tank deaths between 2020 and 2024.

Statutory and judicial scaffolding: The PEMSR Act 2013 defines 'manual scavenger' and 'hazardous cleaning' separately and mandates rehabilitation. Safai Karamchari Andolan v. Union of India (2014) directed Rs 10 lakh compensation per sewer death; the Court raised this to Rs 30 lakh in Balram Singh v. Union of India (20 October 2023) and ordered municipal liability for non-mechanised entry.

Persistent deaths: The government told Rajya Sabha (December 2024) that 294 sewer and septic-tank deaths occurred during 2020-24 while reporting zero 'manual scavenging' deaths — a definitional dodge that allows non-mechanised entry to continue under the 'hazardous cleaning' label. Castist occupational reproduction persists.

NAMASTE response: Launched in 2023 to replace SRMS, the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) profiles Sewer-Septic-Tank Workers (PWSSWs), distributes PPE kits, provides capital subsidy for sanitation enterprises,

> and converges with Swachh Bharat 2.0. Coverage of Class-I cities is uneven; profile data are caste-disaggregated only in some States.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Merge ‘manual scavenging’ and ‘hazardous cleaning’ for legal accountability, criminalise non-mechanised entry without exception, vest enforcement in Municipal Commissioners with strict liability, and publish caste-disaggregated NAMASTE outcomes — turning the 2013 prohibition from a statute on paper into lived dignity.

SOURCES

→Balram Singh v. Union of India (2023)
→Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment — NAMASTE
→Swachh Bharat Mission — Anantam IAS

manual scavenging | PEMSR Act 2013 | NAMASTE | hazardous cleaning | Balram Singh | Safai Karamchari Andolan | Article 17 | sewer deaths

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Q63

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 gave India a constitutional entitlement to schooling but learning outcomes have stagnated. Examine the gap between access and quality.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | EDUCATION

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The 86th Constitutional Amendment (2002) inserted Article 21A making free and compulsory education for 6-14-year-olds a fundamental right, operationalised by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Access wins: gross enrolment near universal at primary, drop-out at upper-primary at 5.2 percent (UDISE 2022-23); (ii) Quality stagnation: ASER 2024 shows only 23.4 percent of Class 3 government-school students can read a Class 2 text, and 33.7 percent can do subtraction; (iii) Structural issues: no-detention policy amended in 2019, 25 percent EWS quota in private schools (Section 12(1)(c)), teacher pupil-ratio breaches in 12 states.

Way forward / Conclusion: Link Samagra Shiksha funding to learning outcomes, reintroduce mid-year diagnostic assessments under NIPUN Bharat, and end ad hoc teacher recruitment under the State PSC route.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Article 21A inserted by 86th Constitutional Amendment 2002; RTE Act 2009 operationalised it
- Section 12(1)(c) — 25 percent EWS reservation in unaided private schools
- ASER 2024 — only 23.4 percent of Class 3 government-school students can read a Class 2 text
- Drop-out rate at upper-primary 5.2 percent (UDISE+ 2022-23)
- No-detention policy diluted by 2019 RTE amendment, allowing detention from Class 5/8
- Teacher vacancies over 10 lakh per Ministry of Education data
- Samagra Shiksha (2018) consolidates SSA, RMSA and TE schemes

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India (2012) on RTE 25 percent quota
- ASER 2024 by Pratham
- UDISE+ 2022-23 Ministry of Education
- Samagra Shiksha 2.0
- PM SHRI scheme

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: The 86th Constitutional Amendment (2002) inserted Article 21A, operationalised by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, which guarantees schooling for children aged 6-14 as a fundamental right.

Body: Three dimensions assess the access-quality gap. First, access wins — UDISE 2022-23 records near-universal primary enrolment and upper-primary drop-out at 5.2 percent; Section 12(1)(c) reserves 25 percent EWS seats in private schools, upheld in Society for Unaided Private Schools v. Union of India (2012). Second, quality stagnation — ASER 2024 finds only 23.4 percent of Class 3 government-school students can read a Class 2 text and 33.7 percent can do subtraction; the no-detention policy was amended in 2019 to reintroduce diagnostic assessment. Third, structural issues — teacher-pupil ratio breaches in 12 States, vacant TET-qualified posts and irregular contract teachers undercut Section 23 norms.

Conclusion: Link Samagra Shiksha funding to learning outcomes, reintroduce mid-year NIPUN Bharat diagnostics and end ad hoc teacher recruitment.

SOURCES

→Article 21A and RTE Act 2009 — India Code
→ASER 2024 — Pratham
→NEP 2020 — Anantam IAS

RTE Act 2009 · Article 21A · ASER · EWS quota · Samagra Shiksha · no-detention · UDISE · learning outcomes

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Q64

The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 recognised a right to access mental healthcare and decriminalised suicide attempts, yet NMHS data points to a treatment gap of 84.5 percent. Examine the institutional weaknesses behind the gap.

15 MARKS · 250 WORDS · 14 MIN · HARD

MECHANISMS, LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE SECTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 made the right to mental healthcare statutory and aligned Indian law with the UNCRPD framework that India ratified in 2007.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Rights architecture: right to access mental healthcare under Section 18, advance directives under Section 5, nominated representatives, Mental Health Review Boards, Central and State Mental Health Authorities, Section 115 decriminalising suicide attempts; (ii) Workforce and finance gap: 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 against WHO norm of 3; about 9,000 working psychiatrists with a shortfall of 36,000 per the 2023 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health; mental-health allocation Rs 1,898 crore in 2025-26 (about 1 percent of Union health budget); (iii) Demand-side reality: NMHS 2015-16 — 10.56 percent current and 13.67 percent lifetime prevalence; treatment gap 84.5 percent overall; Tele-MANAS took close to 30 lakh calls since October 2022.

Way forward / Conclusion: Operationalise District Mental Health Programme with task-sharing through ASHAs and counsellors (mhGAP), publish NMHS-2 with state-level data, raise mental-health budget toward WHO's 5 percent benchmark, and integrate Tele-MANAS with ABDM.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Mental Healthcare Act 2017 — Section 18 right to access mental healthcare; Section 5 advance directives; Section 115 decriminalises suicide attempts

- NMHS 2015-16 — current prevalence 10.56 percent, lifetime 13.67 percent, treatment gap 84.5 percent
- Psychiatrist density 0.75 per 100,000 against WHO norm of 3 per 100,000; about 9,000 working psychiatrists
- Mental health budget Rs 1,898 crore (2025-26), roughly 1 percent of Union health budget
- Tele-MANAS (October 2022) — close to 30 lakh calls in three years, 20 languages
- NCRB Accidental Deaths and Suicides 2022 — 1,70,924 suicides, rate 12.4 per 100,000; daily-wage workers 26 percent
- Mental Health Review Boards under Sections 73-78 to enforce patient rights
- District Mental Health Programme runs through NMHP; task-sharing per WHO mhGAP guidelines

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Mental Healthcare Act 2017
- Tele-MANAS national helpline (launched 10 October 2022)
- NIMHANS Bengaluru and LGBRIMH Tezpur
- District Mental Health Programme under National Mental Health Programme
- NCRB ADSI Report 2022

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Mental Healthcare Act 2017, aligning Indian law with the UNCRPD that India ratified on 1 October 2007, made the right to mental healthcare statutory and decriminalised suicide attempts. The National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 nonetheless records a treatment gap of 84.5 percent.

Rights architecture: Section 18 creates a right to access mental healthcare; Section 5 enables advance directives; nominated representatives, Mental Health Review Boards and the Central and State Mental Health Authorities constitute the enforcement chain. Section 115 presumes severe stress in suicide attempts, displacing Section 309 IPC. The framework reads Article 21 expansively after Common Cause v. Union of India (2018).

Workforce and finance gap: India has roughly 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 against the WHO norm of 3 — about 9,000 working psychiatrists with a shortfall of 36,000 as recorded by the 2023 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health. Mental-health allocation stands at Rs 1,898 crore in 2025-26, about 1 percent of the Union health budget against the WHO benchmark of 5 percent.

Demand-side reality: NMHS 2015-16 reported 10.56 percent current and 13.67 percent lifetime prevalence. Tele-MANAS, launched 10 October 2022, has taken nearly 30 lakh calls; District Mental Health Programme coverage remains uneven; women, adolescents and prisoners are under-served.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Operationalise DMHP through ASHA and counsellor task-sharing on the WHO mhGAP model, publish NMHS-2 with State-level data, raise the mental-health budget toward WHO benchmarks, integrate Tele-MANAS with ABDM, and notify rights rules under Section 121 — converting statutory right into accessible service.

SOURCES

- →Mental Healthcare Act 2017 — India Code
- →Tele-MANAS — Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- →WHO Mental Health Atlas 2024

Mental Healthcare Act 2017 | treatment gap | Tele-MANAS | advance directive | NMHS | psychiatrist shortage | task-sharing | Section 115

Q65

India's National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme set a 2025 elimination target, five years ahead of the SDG 3.3 deadline, yet WHO estimates India accounted for 26 percent of global TB cases in 2023. Examine the public-health design and the gaps.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | HEALTH

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), renamed from RNTCP in 2020, pursues India's 2025 elimination target under the National Strategic Plan 2017-25.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Architecture: Ni-kshay digital surveillance, Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana cash transfer of Rs 1,000 per month (raised in 2024) for nutritional support, free first-line and second-line drugs, BPaL/BPaLM oral regimen for MDR-TB; (ii) Burden: WHO Global TB Report 2024 — India had about 28 lakh TB cases and 3.15 lakh TB deaths in 2023, 26 percent of global incidence; MDR/RR-TB notifications around 75,000; (iii) Gaps:

private-sector notification under-coverage, latent-TB infection screening only nascent, stock-outs of pediatric formulations and HIV-TB co-infection management.

Way forward / Conclusion: Universal active case finding in slums and tribal pockets, mandatory private-sector notification with conditional cash, and integration with PM-JAY for catastrophic-cost protection.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- NTEP under National Strategic Plan 2017-25; 2025 elimination target (incidence below 1 per lakh)
- WHO Global TB Report 2024 — India about 28 lakh cases, 3.15 lakh deaths in 2023, 26 percent of global burden
- Ni-kshay portal for case notification; Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana DBT raised to Rs 1,000/month (November 2024)
- BPaL/BPaLM oral regimen approved for DR-TB (2024)
- MDR/RR-TB notifications about 75,000; AIDS-TB co-infection management under NACO-NTEP convergence
- Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan (September 2022) — Ni-kshay Mitra community adoption
- 100 Days Intensified TB Campaign launched December 2024 in 347 high-burden districts

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan
- Ni-kshay Mitra programme
- BPaL/BPaLM regimen for MDR-TB
- 100 Days Intensified TB Campaign (December 2024)
- Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (DBT to TB patients)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), renamed from RNTCP in 2020 under Article 47, pursues India's 2025 elimination target — five years ahead of SDG 3.3 — through the National Strategic Plan 2017-25.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate the programme. First, architecture — Ni-kshay digital surveillance, Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana cash transfer of Rs 1,000 per month (raised in 2024) for nutritional support, free first- and second-line drugs, and BPaL/BPaLM oral regimens for MDR-TB shorten treatment to six months. Second,

> residual burden — WHO Global TB Report 2024 estimates India had about 28 lakh cases and 3.15 lakh deaths in 2023, accounting for 26 percent of global incidence; MDR/RR-TB notifications stand near 75,000. Third, gaps — under-notification by the private sector, paediatric stock-outs, HIV-TB co-infection management and latent-TB screening lag.
>
> **Conclusion:** Universal active case-finding in slums and tribal pockets, mandatory private-sector notification with conditional cash, and PM-JAY linkage for catastrophic-cost protection.

SOURCES

- →Tuberculosis in India — Anantam IAS
- →WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2024
- →Central TB Division — Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

NTEP | tuberculosis | Ni-kshay | MDR-TB | BPaLM | Poshan Yojana | SDG 3.3 | Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat

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Q66

Public health spending in India hovers below 2 percent of GDP against the National Health Policy 2017 target of 2.5 percent. Examine the consequences for equity and out-of-pocket expenditure.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | HEALTH

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's public health expenditure remains around 1.84 percent of GDP (NHA 2021-22), short of the 2.5 percent target set in the National Health Policy 2017 and the High Level Expert Group on UHC (2011) benchmark of 3 percent.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Out-of-pocket expenditure has fallen from about 64.2 percent (FY15) to 39.4 percent (FY22) but still drives an estimated 6 crore Indians into poverty annually; (ii) State variation — Tamil Nadu and Kerala spend more than 1 percent of GSDP on health while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar spend less than 0.5 percent; (iii) Federal design — health is a State Subject (List II Entry 6); 15th Finance Commission's Health Sector Grant of Rs 70,051 crore (2021-26) routed via local bodies.

Way forward / Conclusion: Earmark a cess-funded Health Equity Fund, expand PM-ABHIM critical-care blocks and condition central transfers on primary-care strengthening.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Public health expenditure about 1.84 percent of GDP (NHA 2021-22) against 2.5 percent NHP 2017 target
- Out-of-pocket expenditure 39.4 percent of total health spend (NHA 2021-22), down from 64.2 percent in FY15
- About 6 crore Indians pushed into poverty annually by health spending (WHO-NCAER 2021)
- 15th Finance Commission Health Sector Grant Rs 70,051 crore (2021-26) routed via PRIs and ULBs
- PM-ABHIM Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (October 2021) — Rs 64,180 crore
- Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (renamed HWCs) as primary-care backbone
- Health a State Subject under List II Entry 6; insurance and ESI on Concurrent List

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- National Health Policy 2017
- PM-ABHIM (October 2021)
- 15th Finance Commission Health Sector Grant
- Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (formerly Health and Wellness Centres)
- WHO Global Health Expenditure Database

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** India's public health expenditure stands at about 1.84 percent of GDP (NHA 2021-22) against the National Health Policy 2017 target of 2.5 percent and the HLEG on UHC (2011) benchmark of 3 percent.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions trace the consequences. First, out-of-pocket expenditure — falling from 64.2 percent (FY15) to 39.4 percent (FY22), it still drives an estimated 6 crore Indians into poverty annually, despite PM-JAY's secondary-tertiary cover. Second, State variation — Tamil Nadu and Kerala spend over 1 percent of GSDP on health, while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar spend under 0.5 percent, reproducing regional inequity under List II Entry 6 (State Subject). Third, federal design — the 15th Finance Commission's Health Sector Grant of Rs 70,051 crore (2021-26) is routed through local bodies, but absorption remains uneven and conditional grants under PM-ABHIM are slow-moving.

> **Conclusion:** Earmark a cess-funded Health Equity Fund, expand PM-ABHIM critical-care blocks and condition central transfers on primary-care strengthening.

SOURCES

→National Health Accounts 2021-22 — NHSRC
→National Health Policy 2017 — MoHFW
→PMJAY Ayushman Bharat — Anantam IAS

health expenditure | out-of-pocket | NHP 2017 | PM-ABHIM | HWC | UHC | Finance Commission | List II

Q67

India's eldercare architecture rests largely on the family, with the IGNOAPS pension at Rs 200 a month and no national long-term-care system. Discuss the demographic urgency and the policy steps required, with reference to NITI Aayog's Senior Care Reforms framework.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | HEALTH

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's population aged 60-plus will roughly double from about 10.5 percent in 2022 to 20.8 percent by 2050 per the UNFPA India Ageing Report 2023, with the elderly outnumbering children under 14 by about 2046.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Income inadequacy: Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) pays Rs 200 per month (60-79) and Rs 500 (80-plus), unchanged since 2007; about 71 percent of elderly are rural and 52 percent are women (feminisation and ruralisation of ageing); (ii) Care infrastructure: National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE), Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, SAGE platform; long-term care (LTC) and dementia services almost absent; (iii) NITI Aayog Senior Care Reforms (February 2024) framework — four pillars of social, financial, health and digital inclusion, plus a national policy on Active and Healthy Ageing.

Way forward / Conclusion: Recast IGNOAPS as a non-contributory universal social pension indexed to inflation, create a National Eldercare Authority, license LTC homes, and use Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana for community-level care.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- 60-plus population to double from 10.5 percent (2022) to 20.8 percent by 2050 — UNFPA 2023

- Old-age dependency ratio rose from 10.9 (1961) to about 15.7 (2021) per NSO Elderly in India 2021
- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension — Rs 200/month (60-79), Rs 500 (80-plus) since 2007
- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007
- National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) under NHM
- NITI Aayog 'Senior Care Reforms in India' framework (February 2024) — four pillars
- Feminisation and ruralisation — 52 percent women, 71 percent rural elderly
- Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) consolidates senior-citizen schemes

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme
- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007
- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (aids and appliances)
- SAGE — Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine platform (2021)
- NITI Aayog Senior Care Reforms (2024)
- Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

India’s eldercare architecture rests on Article 41 directives and a family-anchored Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007. The 60-plus cohort will roughly double from about 10.5 percent in 2022 to 20.8 percent by 2050 per UNFPA’s India Ageing Report 2023, overtaking children under 14 by 2046.

Income inadequacy: The Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) pays Rs 200 per month for those aged 60-79 and Rs 500 for 80-plus, unchanged since 2007; about 71 percent of the elderly are rural and 52 percent are women — the feminisation and ruralisation of ageing. The Mahila Samman scheme and PMVVY offer market-linked instruments but exclude the informal-sector elderly.

Care infrastructure: The National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE), Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana and the SAGE start-up platform address geriatric care; long-term-care institutions and dementia services are almost absent. Old Age Homes are unlicensed; the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana provides limited community-level support.

NITI Aayog framework: The Senior Care Reforms position paper (February 2024) outlines four pillars — social, financial, health and digital inclusion — and proposes a National Policy on Active and Healthy Ageing 2024, replacing the 1999 policy.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Recast IGNOAPS as a non-contributory universal social pension indexed to inflation, create a National Eldercare Authority to license LTC homes, integrate Tele-MANAS geriatric streams with NPHCE, and use Code on Social Security 2020 channels for elderly informal workers.

SOURCES

→UNFPA India Ageing Report 2023
→NITI Aayog Senior Care Reforms (2024)
→Persons with Disabilities — Anantam IAS

ageing population | IGNOAPS | long-term care | feminisation of ageing | NPHCE | AVYAY | Senior Care Reforms | UNFPA

Q68

The National Education Policy 2020 promises foundational literacy and numeracy by 2026-27 through the NIPUN Bharat Mission and a 6 percent of GDP spending target. Evaluate the implementation status and structural gaps.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | EDUCATION

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: NEP 2020, the third national policy after 1968 and 1986/1992, restructures school education into a 5+3+3+4 design and reaffirms the Kothari Commission (1964-66) target of 6 percent of GDP on education.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Foundational stage: NIPUN Bharat (July 2021) sets FLN targets by Grade 3 by 2026-27, with PM SHRI schools (Rs 27,360 crore, 2022-27) as model laboratories; (ii) Higher education: 50 percent GER target by 2035 from current 28.4 percent (AISHE 2021-22), Academic Bank of Credits, multidisciplinary universities, and UGC autonomy reforms; (iii) Spending gap: Education spend remains around 4.6 percent of GDP combined Centre and States, well below the 6 percent target; Right to Education enforcement, teacher vacancies (over 10 lakh) and learning losses captured in ASER 2024 persist.

Way forward / Conclusion: A Central FLN Mission with state co-finance, mother-tongue early instruction under Article 350A, end ad hoc teacher recruitment and link Samagra Shiksha grants to ASER outcomes.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- NEP 2020 — 5+3+3+4 school structure replacing 10+2
- NIPUN Bharat Mission (5 July 2021) — FLN targets by Grade 3 by 2026-27
- Kothari Commission (1964-66) target of 6 percent of GDP; current spend around 4.6 percent (Centre+States)
- GER in higher education 28.4 percent (AISHE 2021-22); NEP target 50 percent by 2035
- PM SHRI scheme (2022) — Rs 27,360 crore for 14,500 model schools till 2026-27
- Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 — Article 21A
- ASER 2024 — only 23.4 percent of Class 3 students in government schools can read a Class 2 text
- Teacher vacancies — over 10 lakh sanctioned posts unfilled (Lok Sabha reply 2024)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- National Education Policy 2020
- NIPUN Bharat Mission (2021)
- PM SHRI Schools scheme
- Samagra Shiksha 2.0 (2021)
- ASER 2024 (Annual Status of Education Report)
- Kothari Commission 1964-66

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: NEP 2020 restructures schooling into a 5+3+3+4 design and reaffirms the Kothari Commission (1964-66) target of 6 percent of GDP, operationalised through Article 21A.

Body: Three dimensions evaluate delivery. First, foundational stage — NIPUN Bharat (July 2021) sets Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by Grade 3 by 2026-27, with PM SHRI schools (Rs 27,360 crore, 2022-27) as model laboratories. Second, higher education — the 50 percent GER target by 2035 against AISHE 2021-22's 28.4 percent is supported by the Academic Bank of Credits and multidisciplinary universities. Third, spending gap — combined Centre-State education spend remains around 4.6 percent of GDP, below the 6 percent target; teacher vacancies exceed 10 lakh; ASER 2024 documents stagnation in learning outcomes after pandemic losses.

Conclusion: A Central FLN Mission with State co-finance, mother-tongue early instruction under Article 350A, end ad hoc teacher recruitment and link Samagra Shiksha grants to ASER outcomes.

SOURCES

→National Education Policy 2020 — Anantam IAS
→Kothari Commission 1964 — Anantam IAS
→Department of School Education and Literacy — NIPUN Bharat

NEP 2020 | NIPUN Bharat | FLN | PM SHRI | GER | ASER | RTE | Kothari Commission

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Q69

Higher education in India is moving toward a 50 percent gross enrolment ratio by 2035 under NEP 2020 but remains stratified by caste, gender, and region. Critically analyse, with reference to recent UGC and AISHE data.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | EDUCATION

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India runs the world's second-largest higher-education system. NEP 2020 commits to raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50 percent by 2035 against 28.4 percent in AISHE 2021-22.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Quantitative progress: female GER 28.5 percent now exceeds male GER 28.3 percent; SC GER at 25.9 percent and ST GER at 21.2 percent below the national average; (ii) Equity gaps: PhD enrolment by SC/ST under-represented; minority enrolment uneven; M.Sukhdeo Thorat Committee (2007) on JNU exclusion still relevant; (iii) Structural reforms: 103rd Amendment EWS quota (2019), Academic Bank of Credits, multiple-entry-and-exit, four-year UG with research, and the proposed Higher Education Commission of India to replace UGC and AICTE.

Way forward / Conclusion: Index post-matric scholarships to inflation, fill backlog SC/ST/OBC faculty vacancies in central universities, scale PM-USHA RUSA infrastructure, and audit private deemed universities to prevent diploma-mill expansion.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- AISHE 2021-22 — GER 28.4 percent; female 28.5 percent, male 28.3 percent
- SC GER 25.9 percent, ST GER 21.2 percent, both below national average
- NEP 2020 target — 50 percent GER by 2035
- 103rd Constitutional Amendment 2019 — 10 percent EWS reservation

- Academic Bank of Credits and 4-year UG with research under NEP 2020
- Proposed Higher Education Commission of India Bill to merge UGC, AICTE, NCTE
- Thorat Committee report (2007) on caste discrimination at AIIMS
- PM-USHA (Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan) funds state universities

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22
- PM-USHA / RUSA
- Thorat Committee Report (2007)
- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)
- M. Mohan Kumarmangalam tribute — JNU reservation gap
- EWS Quota — Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India (2022)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

India runs the world's second-largest higher-education system. NEP 2020, building on Articles 15, 16 and 46, commits to raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to 50 percent by 2035 against AISHE 2021-22's 28.4 percent. Headline progress masks persisting stratification by caste, gender, region and class.

Quantitative progress: Female GER, at 28.5 percent, now narrowly exceeds male GER of 28.3 percent; total enrolment crossed 4.3 crore. SC GER stands at 25.9 percent and ST GER at 21.2 percent — below the national average. PhD enrolment for SCs and STs is under-represented, and minority enrolment varies sharply across regions.

Equity gaps: The Sukhdeo Thorat Committee (2007) on JNU exclusion remains relevant; the 103rd Constitutional Amendment EWS quota (2019), upheld in Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India (2022), reshaped the reservation roster. SC/ST/OBC faculty backlogs in Central universities — 30-40 percent vacant in many institutions — undercut the supply-side affirmative action that demand-side scholarships assume.

Structural reforms: Academic Bank of Credits, multiple-entry-and-exit, the four-year UG with research, and the proposed Higher Education Commission of India (replacing UGC and AICTE) restructure regulation. PM-USHA RUSA funds State universities; the National Research Foundation Act 2023 builds a research commons.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> Index post-matric scholarships to inflation, fill backlog SC/ST/OBC faculty vacancies through dedicated cadres, scale PM-USHA, audit private deemed universities against UGC norms, and tie GER targets to AISHE-disaggregated equity dashboards — moving from access to inclusive excellence.

SOURCES

→AISHE 2021-22 — Ministry of Education
→103rd Amendment EWS — Anantam IAS
→NEP 2020 — Anantam IAS

GER | AISHE | EWS quota | NEP 2020 | Academic Bank of Credits | HECI | Thorat Committee | PM-USHA

Q70

India's female labour force participation rose from 23.3 percent in 2017-18 to 41.7 percent in 2023-24 per PLFS data, but most additions are in unpaid family labour and agriculture. Examine why a rise in counting has not become a rise in opportunity.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | HUMAN RESOURCES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2023-24 (released 23 September 2024) shows female labour-force participation jumping from 23.3 percent (2017-18) to 41.7 percent — an 18-point rise.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Composition: women classified as 'helpers in household enterprises' more than doubled from 9.1 percent to 19.6 percent, and rural women's engagement in agriculture rose from 71.1 percent (2018-19) to 76.9 percent (2023-24); (ii) Pay gap: self-employed men earn about 2.8 times what self-employed women earn; regular salaried women earn 76 percent of male pay; (iii) Unpaid burden: NSO Time Use Survey 2024 — women spend 289 minutes/day on unpaid domestic work against men's 88 minutes.

Way forward / Conclusion: Public investment in the care economy (creches, eldercare, school meals) per the ILO 5R framework; enforce Code on Wages 2019 equal-pay clause; and operationalise Section 67 of Code on Social Security 2020 for women platform workers.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- PLFS 2023-24 — female LFPR 41.7 percent vs 23.3 percent in 2017-18

- 'Helpers in household enterprises' share doubled from 9.1 to 19.6 percent
- Rural women in agriculture — 71.1 percent (2018-19) to 76.9 percent (2023-24)
- Time Use Survey 2024 — 289 minutes/day unpaid domestic work for women vs 88 for men
- Self-employed women earn about 36 percent of self-employed men; regular salaried women 76 percent
- Code on Wages 2019 — Section 3 prohibits gender discrimination in pay
- Care economy estimated at $300 billion opportunity, 60 million potential jobs by 2030 (Primus Partners)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- PLFS Annual Report 2023-24
- Time Use Survey 2024 (NSO)
- Code on Wages 2019
- Code on Social Security 2020 — Section 67 for women
- Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017
- Palna creche scheme under Mission Shakti

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The PLFS 2023-24 (released 23 September 2024) records female labour-force participation rising from 23.3 percent (2017-18) to 41.7 percent — an 18-point jump — yet the gain reflects unpaid family labour rather than opportunity under Article 39(d).
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions explain the disconnect. First, composition — women classified as 'helpers in household enterprises' doubled from 9.1 to 19.6 percent, and rural women's engagement in agriculture rose from 71.1 to 76.9 percent, indicating distress absorption. Second, the pay gap — self-employed men earn 2.8 times what women earn; salaried women earn 76 percent of male pay despite Code on Wages 2019. Third, the unpaid burden — NSO Time Use Survey 2024 records women spending 289 minutes daily on unpaid domestic work against men's 88 minutes.
>
> **Conclusion:** Public investment in the care economy per the ILO 5R framework, enforce Code on Wages equal-pay clause, and operationalise Section 67 of Code on Social Security 2020.

SOURCES

→PLFS Annual Report 2023-24 — MoSPI

→Time Use Survey 2024 — MoSPI
→Women and Health — Anantam IAS

FLFPR | PLFS | Time Use Survey | unpaid care | care economy | Code on Wages | gender pay gap | U-shaped curve

Q71

The Code on Social Security 2020 came into force on 21 November 2025, recognising gig and platform workers for the first time in Indian statute. Discuss the design and the recognition-versus-delivery gap.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | HUMAN RESOURCES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Code on Social Security 2020 was notified into force on 21 November 2025, consolidating nine social-security laws and naming ‘gig worker’ and ‘platform worker’ as statutory categories for the first time.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Architecture: Section 2(35) defines gig worker; Section 141 mandates a Social Security Fund financed by aggregator contributions (1-2 percent of turnover or 5 percent of payouts), with e-Shram as the unified registry (31.38 crore registered by 27 November 2025); (ii) Scale: about 90 percent of India’s workforce is informal contributing nearly 50 percent of GDP; NITI Aayog (2022) projects gig workforce will reach 2.35 crore by 2029-30 from 77 lakh in 2020-21; (iii) Delivery gap: rules under sections 109 and 114 still pending in many states, no operational Social Security Fund disbursement, ESI/EPFO portability incomplete.

Way forward / Conclusion: Notify aggregator-contribution rules with platform-level audits, port ABHA-PM-JAY benefits to e-Shram IDs, build a federated Social Security Fund with state matching, and recognise Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers Act 2023 as a model.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Code on Social Security 2020 notified into force 21 November 2025 (PIB)
- Consolidates 9 social-security laws — EPF, ESI, Maternity Benefit, Gratuity, etc.
- Defines 'gig worker' (Section 2(35)) and 'platform worker' (Section 2(60))
- e-Shram registry — 31.38 crore unorganised workers (27 November 2025); women 53.68 percent

- Social Security Fund (Section 141) financed by aggregator contributions (1-2 percent of turnover)
- Informal sector — 90 percent of workforce, 50 percent of GDP (ILO India Employment Report 2024)
- Gig workforce projected to triple from 77 lakh (2020-21) to 2.35 crore by 2029-30 (NITI Aayog 2022)
- Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act 2023 as state pioneer

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Code on Social Security 2020 (notified 21 November 2025)
- e-Shram portal (launched August 2021)
- Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers Welfare Act 2023
- Karnataka Gig Workers Welfare Bill (2024 draft)
- Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers v. Union of India (WP 2021)
- NITI Aayog Report on India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy (June 2022)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Code on Social Security 2020, notified into force on 21 November 2025, consolidates nine social-security laws and names ‘gig worker’ and ‘platform worker’ as statutory categories for the first time — giving Article 41 and Article 43 effect for an informal workforce of about 90 percent that contributes nearly 50 percent of GDP.

Architecture: Section 2(35) defines gig worker; Section 2(61) defines platform worker; Section 141 mandates a Social Security Fund financed by aggregator contributions of 1-2 percent of turnover or 5 percent of payouts. e-Shram, launched 26 August 2021, serves as the unified registry — 31.38 crore unorganised workers were registered by 27 November 2025.

Scale: NITI Aayog (2022) projects the gig workforce will reach 2.35 crore by 2029-30 from 77 lakh in 2020-21. Aggregator platforms in food delivery, e-commerce and ride-hailing cluster in metros, but Tier-2 expansion is broadening the base. Without portable benefits, this workforce remains outside ESIC and EPFO entitlements.

Recognition-versus-delivery gap: Rules under Sections 109 and 114 are yet to be notified in many States; the Social Security Fund has begun collections but disbursement protocols are pending; ESI/EPFO portability remains incomplete. The

> Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act 2023 and Karnataka's draft Bill (2024) provide State-level models for cess-based welfare boards.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Notify aggregator-contribution rules with platform-level audits, port ABHA-PM-JAY benefits to e-Shram IDs, build a federated Social Security Fund with State matching, and use the Rajasthan Act 2023 template — turning statutory recognition into delivered protection.

SOURCES

→PIB — Code on Social Security 2020 in force
→NITI Aayog — Gig and Platform Economy Report 2022
→MGNREGA — Anantam IAS

Code on Social Security 2020 | gig worker | platform worker | e-Shram | aggregator contribution | Social Security Fund | Section 141 | informal sector

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Q72

India's demographic dividend is projected to close around 2046 even as the Sample Registration System 2024 reports a TFR of 2.0. Examine the implications for human-resource policy and skilling.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | HARD | HUMAN RESOURCES

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's working-age (15-59) population peaks around 2041 and the demographic dividend window closes around 2046, when the over-60 cohort overtakes those under 14, per UNFPA 2023 and SRS 2024 data.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Demographic shift: TFR fell from 2.2 (SRS 2020) to 2.0 (SRS 2024), already below replacement; southern states have TFR below 1.7; (ii) Skills gap: India Skills Report 2024 — only 51.3 percent of graduates are employable; PMKVY 4.0 has trained around 1.4 crore but placement remains under 25 percent; (iii) Policy levers: National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, ITI revamp (Rs 60,000 crore plan announced in Union Budget 2025-26), Skill India Digital Hub, and Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portal.

Way forward / Conclusion: Industry-linked dual-system apprenticeships (German model), align skilling with PLI-anchored sectors, expand female ITI seats, and integrate skilling outcomes into the 16th Finance Commission's grants framework.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Dividend window narrows by 2046; UNFPA 2023 projects 20.8 percent 60-plus population
- TFR fell from 2.2 (SRS 2020) to 2.0 (SRS 2024) — at replacement level
- Southern states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka) TFR below 1.7
- India Skills Report 2024 — 51.3 percent of graduates employable
- PMKVY 4.0 trained about 1.4 crore; placement under 25 percent
- Union Budget 2025-26 announced Rs 60,000 crore ITI revamp scheme
- PLFS 2023-24 youth (15-29) unemployment 10.2 percent
- Skill India Digital Hub, ASEEM portal, NAPS for apprenticeships

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Sample Registration System 2024 (RGI)
- PMKVY 4.0 and Skill India Mission
- National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)
- Skill India Digital Hub
- India Skills Report 2024 (Wheebox)
- Demographic Dividend Closing Window — Anantam IAS

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** India's demographic dividend — the working-age 15-59 share — peaks around 2041 and closes around 2046, when the over-60 cohort overtakes those under 14 per UNFPA's India Ageing Report 2023 and SRS 2024.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions frame the policy stakes. First, demographic shift — TFR fell from 2.2 (SRS 2020) to 2.0 (SRS 2024), below replacement; southern States are below 1.7. Second, skills gap — the India Skills Report 2024 records only 51.3 percent of graduates as employable; PMKVY 4.0 has trained 1.4 crore but placement remains under 25 percent, mirroring the Sharada Prasad Committee (2016) diagnosis. Third, policy levers — the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, ITI revamp (Rs 60,000 crore plan in Union Budget 2025-26), Skill India Digital Hub and ASEEM portal aim to close the chasm.
>
> **Conclusion:** Industry-linked dual apprenticeships on the German model, align skilling with PLI sectors, expand female ITI seats and integrate outcomes into the 16th Finance Commission grants.

SOURCES

- →Demographic Dividend — Anantam IAS
- →UNFPA India Ageing Report 2023
- →Sample Registration System 2024 — RGI

demographic dividend | TFR | SRS 2024 | PMKVY | ITI | employability | skilling | NAPS

GS PAPER 2

IR

28 practice questions

Q73

Neighbourhood First is being stress-tested by the China factor across South Asia. With reference to India's response across Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Maldives, examine.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | NEIGHBOURHOOD

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Neighbourhood First, articulated in 2014, sits on Gujral Doctrine asymmetry and is now competing with China's BRI footprint and India's HADR-first responses.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) economic — Lines of Credit, ITEC training, and the Indian Rupee Trade settlement framework deployed in Sri Lanka's 2022 crisis (about USD 4.5 billion) and Bangladesh post 2024 political transition; (ii) connectivity — Trincomalee oil tank-farm with Lanka IOC, BBIN MVA, India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Kaladan Multimodal; (iii) political churn — Maldives 'India Out' since 2023, Bangladesh interim government post-August 2024, Nepal's revised currency map controversy.

Way forward / Conclusion: Deepen people-to-people HADR (Operation Brahma, 2025), keep delivery cycles under three years, and convert SAARC paralysis into BIMSTEC-driven sub-regionalism.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Neighbourhood First policy articulated in 2014
- Gujral Doctrine 1996–97 — non-reciprocal asymmetry
- India's Sri Lanka assistance approximately USD 4.5 billion in 2022–23
- Trincomalee oil tank-farm Lanka IOC operationalised 2022 onwards
- Maldives India Out campaign 2023 and military withdrawal May 2024
- Bangladesh interim government from August 2024
- BIMSTEC Sixth Summit Bangkok April 2024

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Sri Lanka economic crisis 2022 — India credit lines
- Maldives military withdrawal May 2024

- Operation Brahma — India's HADR to Myanmar earthquake 2025
- Bangladesh political transition August 2024
- India-Bhutan Gelephu Mindfulness City partnership 2024

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Neighbourhood First, articulated in 2014, sits on Gujral Doctrine (1996-97) non-reciprocal asymmetry but is now stress-tested by China's BRI footprint, requiring India to combine concessional finance, connectivity and HADR-first delivery across Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives.

Economic stabilisation: India deployed about USD 4.5 billion in credit lines, currency swaps and ITEC training during Sri Lanka's 2022 economic crisis, and continued engagement with Bangladesh through the Indian Rupee Trade settlement framework after the August 2024 political transition; Bhutan's Gelephu Mindfulness City partnership (2024) extends concessional-finance leverage; ITEC training and capacity-building, including for Nepal's bureaucracy and Maldives medical professionals, anchor the soft-power layer of the doctrine.

Connectivity: Trincomalee oil tank-farm with Lanka IOC (operationalised 2022 onwards), BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project build a sub-regional architecture under BIMSTEC — whose Sixth Summit at Bangkok in April 2024 reset the agenda after SAARC paralysis since 2014.

Political churn: The Maldives 'India Out' campaign since 2023 led to military-personnel withdrawal in May 2024, Nepal's revised currency-map controversy and Bangladesh's interim government test the doctrine; Operation Brahma's HADR response to Myanmar's 2025 earthquake reinforced India's first-responder identity even where bilateral politics has cooled.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Keep delivery cycles under three years, deepen people-to-people HADR through Operation Brahma-style first response, and convert SAARC paralysis into BIMSTEC-driven sub-regionalism, with the Bangkok Summit (April 2024) as the working template for a connectivity-and-capacity bargain that out-prices BRI.

SOURCES

→Ministry of External Affairs Annual Report 2024-25

- →India-Sri Lanka Relations — Anantam IAS
- →India-Maldives Relations — Anantam IAS
- →India-Bangladesh Relations — Anantam IAS

Neighbourhood First | Gujral Doctrine | BBIN | BIMSTEC | string of pearls | Line of Credit | HADR

Q74

BRICS has the weight of a pole in the international system but not the cohesion of one. In the light of the New Delhi foreign ministers' meeting (14-15 May 2026), critically analyse.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: BRICS plus partners covers about 4.45 billion people (55.6% of world) and about 44% of global GDP at PPP (IMF, July 2025); a New Delhi foreign ministers' meeting on 14–15 May 2026 ended without a joint statement.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) weight — BRICS members about 35% of world GDP at PPP versus G7 about 30% in 2024 (PPP only, not nominal); ten full members after Indonesia joined January 2025; (ii) cohesion gap — the May 2026 Iran-UAE rupture on West Asia, with India issuing a Chair's Statement instead; (iii) India's stance — Modi's Kazan line (2024) that BRICS must not 'replace global institutions' and Jaishankar's rejection of a BRICS currency.

Way forward / Conclusion: Use BRICS for agenda-setting and UNSC reform, not bloc-building; keep the 'non-Western, not anti-Western' framing; lean on the New Development Bank and rupee internationalisation.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- BRICS — ten full members as of May 2026 after Indonesia joined January 2025
- Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE joined January 2024
- BRICS plus partners about 55.6% of world population and 44% of world PPP GDP (IMF, July 2025)
- BRICS members overtook G7 on PPP GDP in 2018 (PPP, not nominal)
- New Delhi foreign ministers' meeting 14–15 May 2026 ended without a joint statement
- Jaishankar: 'no proposal to have a BRICS currency'
- New Development Bank — lending in local currencies

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- BRICS Kazan Summit October 2024
- BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting New Delhi May 2026
- Indonesia full membership January 2025
- Saudi Arabia invited 2023, formal entry deferred
- NDB — USD 35 billion sanctioned lending portfolio

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> BRICS-plus partners cover about 4.45 billion people (55.6% of world population) and about 44% of global GDP at PPP (IMF, July 2025); the New Delhi foreign ministers' meeting (14-15 May 2026) ended without a joint statement — the weight of a pole without the cohesion of one.
>
> **Weight**: BRICS members overtook the G7 on PPP GDP in 2018 (PPP only, not nominal); the grouping has ten full members after Indonesia joined in January 2025, with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE having entered in January 2024 and Saudi Arabia's formal entry deferred — a global-South footprint underwritten by the New Development Bank's USD 35 billion sanctioned lending portfolio.
>
> **Cohesion gap**: The May 2026 meeting saw an Iran-UAE rupture on West Asia, forcing India as Chair to issue a Chair's Statement rather than a joint communiqué; the absence of consensus exposes the gap between coalition weight and coalition discipline, repeating the Kazan (2024) pattern on Ukraine and Gaza.
>
> **India's stance**: Prime Minister Modi's Kazan line (October 2024) that BRICS must not 'replace global institutions' and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's rejection of a BRICS currency anchor a 'non-Western, not anti-Western' posture, protecting India's G20 and Quad commitments.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Use BRICS for agenda-setting, UNSC reform, climate-finance coordination and local-currency settlement through the New Development Bank — not bloc-building — protecting India's strategic autonomy and the rupee internationalisation project under the 'non-Western, not anti-Western' frame.

SOURCES

→MEA Statement on BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting 2026
→BRICS Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS

→BRICS Grouping — Anantam IAS

BRICS · multipolarity · Global South · consensus principle · NDB · de-dollarisation · PPP GDP · strategic autonomy

Q75

IMEC offers a multilateral, rules-based alternative to BRI, but the West Asia war exposes its single point of failure. Evaluate.

15 MARKS · 250 WORDS · 14 MIN · HARD · CONNECTIVITY & GEOECONOMICS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor was announced as an MoU among eight parties on 9 September 2023 at the G20 New Delhi Summit; BRI, launched in 2013, has invested an estimated USD 1 trillion across about 147 countries.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) design contrast — IMEC is a multilateral club of governments (India, US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, EU, France, Germany, Italy) sharing public capital, while BRI is one-state bilateral credit; Israel and Jordan lie on the route but did not sign the MoU; (ii) the single point of failure — the planned Saudi-Israel rail link presumed an Abraham-Accords-style normalisation that the 7 October 2023 war froze; (iii) India's alternative channels — INSTC through Chabahar and parallel rupee trade, also disrupted by the 2026 West Asia conflict.

Way forward / Conclusion: Front-load IMEC's east-leg digital and port upgrades; harden INSTC; revive I2U2 project pipelines once the West Asia war stabilises.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- IMEC announced 9 September 2023 at G20 New Delhi Summit
- Eight signatories: India, US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, EU, France, Germany, Italy
- Israel and Jordan lie on the route but are not MoU signatories
- BRI launched in 2013; estimated USD 1 trillion invested across about 147 countries
- INSTC: about 7,200 km, estimated 30% cheaper and 40% shorter than Suez
- Chabahar port — India operates Shahid Beheshti terminal
- I2U2 grouping leaders' summit first held 14 July 2022

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- IMEC MoU at G20 New Delhi Summit 2023
- India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement 2022

- Chabahar long-term lease agreement May 2024
- Abraham Accords 2020
- Suez Canal Ever Given blockage 2021

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor was announced as an MoU among eight parties on 9 September 2023 at the G20 New Delhi Summit, positioned as a multilateral, rules-based alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, which has invested an estimated USD 1 trillion across about 147 countries since 2013.

Design contrast: IMEC is a club of governments — India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the EU, France, Germany and Italy — sharing public capital with co-financed standards on labour and environment, while BRI is one-State bilateral credit with opaque terms; Israel and Jordan lie on the route but are not MoU signatories.

Single point of failure: The planned Saudi-Israel rail link presumed an Abraham-Accords-style normalisation that the 7 October 2023 war froze; the 2026 West Asia conflict has further postponed the central segment, exposing route concentration in a way the Suez Canal Ever Given blockage (2021) had only foreshadowed.

India's alternative channels: The International North-South Transport Corridor (about 7,200 km, estimated 30% cheaper and 40% shorter than Suez) runs through Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti terminal under India's May 2024 long-term lease, and the I2U2 grouping (first leaders' summit on 14 July 2022) offers a parallel project pipeline alongside the India-UAE CEPA (2022).

Way forward / Conclusion:

Front-load IMEC's east-leg digital and port upgrades, harden INSTC and Chabahar, and revive I2U2 project pipelines once the West Asia war stabilises — diversifying single-point dependency without abandoning the rules-based design.

SOURCES

→MoU on IMEC — PIB Press Release
→Belt and Road Initiative — Anantam IAS
→BRICS Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS

IMEC | BRI | INSTC | I2U2 | Chabahar | connectivity diplomacy | G20 | Abraham Accords

Q76

The Indian diaspora is the largest in the world and increasingly a lever of foreign policy. With reference to the policy frameworks that engage it, comment.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | INDIAN DIASPORA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Ministry of External Affairs estimates an Indian diaspora of about 35.4 million as of 2024 — 19.5 million NRIs and 15.9 million OCIs; UN International Migrant Stock 2024 ranks India first globally on remittances at over USD 125 billion.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) institutional — PBSAS, the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, Madad portal, eMigrate system; (ii) statutory — Emigration Act 1983 (overdue Emigration Bill 2021 to replace it), Citizenship Act 1955 sections 7A-7D on OCI; (iii) strategic use — evacuations such as Operation Kaveri (Sudan 2023), Operation Ajay (Israel 2023), Operation Sindhu (Iran 2026); diaspora-led tech ecosystem with Indian-origin CEOs.

Way forward / Conclusion: Pass an Emigration Management Bill, sign social-security totalisation agreements with the US and Gulf, and protect blue-collar workers in West Asia with binding labour MoUs.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Indian diaspora about 35.4 million in 2024 (MEA): 19.5 million NRIs and 15.9 million OCIs
- India remittances over USD 125 billion in 2024 (World Bank)
- Emigration Act 1983 — due for replacement
- Citizenship Act 1955 Sections 7A–7D — OCI scheme
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed annually on 9 January
- Operation Kaveri (Sudan, April 2023), Operation Ajay (Israel, October 2023)
- Operation Sindhu (Iran, 2026)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Operation Kaveri (Sudan, 2023)
- Operation Ajay (Israel, 2023)
- Operation Sindhu (Iran, 2026)
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Bhubaneswar 2025
- India-Gulf MoUs on domestic workers

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Ministry of External Affairs estimates the Indian diaspora at about 35.4 million in 2024 — 19.5 million NRIs and 15.9 million OCIs — with India ranked first globally on remittances at over USD 125 billion (World Bank, 2024).
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions describe the engagement architecture. First, institutional — the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every 9 January, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, the Madad portal and eMigrate system. Second, statutory — the Emigration Act 1983 (the long-pending Emigration Bill 2021 awaits passage) and Sections 7A-7D of the Citizenship Act 1955 on the OCI scheme. Third, strategic use — Operation Kaveri (Sudan, April 2023), Operation Ajay (Israel, October 2023) and Operation Sindhu (Iran, 2026) demonstrate evacuation capacity, while Indian-origin CEOs anchor a tech-ecosystem soft-power lever.
>
> **Conclusion:** Pass the Emigration Management Bill, sign totalisation agreements with the US and Gulf, and protect blue-collar workers through binding labour MoUs.

SOURCES

- →Emigration Act 1983 — India Code
- →Report on Diaspora — Anantam IAS
- →Indian Diaspora in Caribbean — Anantam IAS

Indian diaspora | OCI | Emigration Act 1983 | remittances | Pravasi Bharatiya Divas | Madad portal | eMigrate

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Q77

Neighbourhood First is being stress-tested as governments in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives change against incumbents friendly to India. With reference to specific instruments such as MAHASAGAR and the Greater Male Connectivity Project, examine India's recalibration.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: 'Neighbourhood First', anchored in the 5S vocabulary (Samman, Samvad, Shanti, Samriddhi, Sanskriti), promises non-reciprocal generosity to immediate neighbours, complemented by SAGAR (2015, Mauritius) and its 2025 expansion to MAHASAGAR.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Political churn: Tarique Rahman's BNP swept Bangladesh polls in February 2026 (212 of 300 seats), Muizzu's 'India Out' recalibrated to 'trusted friend' in Maldives, NPP's Dissanayake in Sri Lanka chose New Delhi as first foreign visit; (ii) Instruments: India supplied 5,000 MT diesel within days of Rahman's swearing-in; Rs 600 crore aid to Maldives in Budget 2025; co-chaired Sri Lanka Official Creditor Committee with Japan and France for $5.9 billion debt restructuring; (iii) China factor: Hambantota 99-year lease ($1.12 billion, 2017), $3.7 billion Sinopec Hambantota refinery (January 2025), but Beijing slowed mega-loans and declined Pakistan's ML-1 railway financing.

Way forward / Conclusion: Move from leader-led to institution-led ties, push BBIN MVA, prioritise grid and transit (Trincomalee, Greater Male) and avoid the Adani-Bangladesh power-supply pricing trap; restore SAARC functionality through BIMSTEC as bridge.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Neighbourhood First 5S — Samman, Samvad, Shanti, Samriddhi, Sanskriti
- Bangladesh 2026 election — BNP won 212/300 seats; Tarique Rahman PM from 17 February 2026
- India-Bangladesh trade $14 billion (FY24); India supplies more than 2.4 GW electricity daily
- Sri Lanka 2022 — India extended about $4 billion emergency support, co-chair OCC for $5.9 billion debt restructuring
- Maldives — $750 million currency swap window till 2027, Rs 600 crore aid (Budget 2025, +28%)
- Greater Male Connectivity Project — $400 million LoC + $100 million grant, largest infra project in Maldives
- Hambantota Port — 99-year lease to China Merchants Port ($1.12 billion, 2017); $3.7 billion Sinopec refinery (January 2025)
- SAGAR (2015) expanded to MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) in Mauritius 2025

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Tarique Rahman government in Bangladesh (February 2026)
- Anura Kumara Dissanayake state visit to New Delhi (December 2024)
- President Mohamed Muizzu's 'India Out' to 'trusted friend' shift
- Greater Male Connectivity Project
- Sri Lanka Official Creditor Committee co-chaired with Japan and France
- MAHASAGAR doctrine (Mauritius 2025)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

India's 'Neighbourhood First' doctrine, anchored in the 5S vocabulary (Samman, Samvad, Shanti, Samriddhi, Sanskriti) and SAGAR (March 2015, Mauritius), expanded in 2025 into MAHASAGAR — Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions — is being stress-tested as incumbents friendly to Delhi lose office across the rim.

Political churn: Tarique Rahman's BNP swept Bangladesh polls (212 of 300 seats, February 2026); Mohamed Muizzu's 'India Out' Maldives recalibrated to 'trusted friend'; NPP's Anura Kumara Dissanayake chose New Delhi as his first foreign visit. Recalibration is operational, not rhetorical.

Instruments: India supplied 5,000 MT diesel within days of Rahman's swearing-in; Rs 600 crore aid in Budget 2025-26 went to the Maldives; New Delhi co-chaired the Sri Lanka Official Creditor Committee with Japan and France for the $5.9 billion debt restructuring (2024). The Greater Male Connectivity Project ($530 million, signed 2021) anchors physical hardware; lines of credit and HICDP grants the soft.

China factor: Hambantota's 99-year lease ($1.12 billion, 2017) and the $3.7 billion Sinopec Hambantota refinery (January 2025) sit beside Beijing's slowed mega-loans and its refusal to finance Pakistan's ML-1 railway. The competitive space has opened — but Delhi's leverage rests on grid, transit and consular reach rather than chequebook scale.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Shift from leader-led to institution-led ties, advance BBIN MVA, prioritise the Trincomalee and Greater Male connectivity nodes, avoid the Adani-Bangladesh power-pricing trap, and revive SAARC functionality through BIMSTEC as bridge.

SOURCES

- →Ministry of External Affairs — Neighbourhood First
- →BIMSTEC — Anantam IAS
- →SAARC and India — Anantam IAS

Neighbourhood First | MAHASAGAR | SAGAR | Greater Male Connectivity Project | Hambantota | BNP | OCC | string of pearls

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Q78

China's Belt and Road Initiative and India's refusal to join it rest on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's passage through Gilgit-Baltistan. Examine how this sovereignty position has shaped India's connectivity diplomacy.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India boycotted the first Belt and Road Forum in 2017 over CPEC's $62 billion route through Gilgit-Baltistan and has maintained the line that activity on Indian-claimed territory is 'inherently illegal, illegitimate, and unacceptable'.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Sovereignty rationale rooted in the Instrument of Accession 1947 and Article 1(3)(c) of the Constitution; (ii) Alternative corridors: IMEC (9 September 2023, G20 New Delhi Summit), INSTC via Chabahar (US sanctions waiver expired 26 April 2026), I2U2 (14 July 2022); (iii) BRI scale — about $1 trillion across 147 countries; India's hedge is a portfolio not a single bet.

Way forward / Conclusion: Keep the BRI boycott as principled but operationalise IMEC pilot cargoes via UAE-Israel Haifa link, formalise INSTC framework with Russia and Iran, and accelerate Trincomalee energy hub.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- BRI launched 2013, about $1 trillion invested across 147 countries
- CPEC about $62 billion, passes through Gilgit-Baltistan (India-claimed)
- India boycotted Belt and Road Forums since 2017
- Article 1(3)(c) Constitution includes territories acquired by Instrument of Accession 1947
- IMEC announced 9 September 2023 at G20 New Delhi Summit; 8 MoU signatories
- INSTC via Iran's Chabahar — about 30% cheaper, 40% shorter than Suez route
- US sanctions waiver for Chabahar expired 26 April 2026

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)
- Belt and Road Forum boycotts (2017, 2019, 2023)
- IMEC (G20 New Delhi 2023)
- INSTC and Chabahar
- I2U2 (July 2022)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** India boycotted the first Belt and Road Forum in 2017 because CPEC's $62 billion route runs through Gilgit-Baltistan, breaching the Instrument of Accession 1947 and Article 1(3)(c) of the Constitution.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions trace the consequence for connectivity diplomacy. First, sovereignty rationale — Delhi's position is that activity on Indian-claimed territory is 'inherently illegal, illegitimate and unacceptable'. Second, alternative corridors — IMEC (signed 9 September 2023 at the G20 New Delhi Summit), INSTC via Chabahar (US sanctions waiver lapsed 26 April 2026) and I2U2 (14 July 2022) offer connectivity that respects sovereignty. Third, scale and hedge — BRI spans about $1 trillion across 147 countries; India's response is a portfolio of partial connectivities rather than a single bet, embedded in MAHASAGAR.
>
> **Conclusion:** Maintain the BRI boycott as principled, operationalise IMEC pilot cargoes via UAE-Israel Haifa, formalise INSTC with Russia-Iran, and accelerate the Trincomalee energy hub.

SOURCES

- →Ministry of External Affairs — BRI Statement (2017)
- →Quad Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS
- →G20 New Delhi Declaration

BRI | CPEC | Gilgit-Baltistan | sovereignty | IMEC | Chabahar | INSTC | I2U2

Q79

India's Nepal policy has oscillated between an open-border, currency-pegged friendship and friction over the 2015 Constitution, the Kalapani map and EPG report non-acceptance. Examine the structural irritants and the recent stabilisation.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India and Nepal share an open border under the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, with a pegged Nepalese rupee at 1.6 INR and over 6 million Nepalese living in India.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Irritants: Nepal's Constitution (September 2015) was followed by a Madhesi blockade; the 2020 'new political map' included Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura; the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) report (2018) remains unaccepted; (ii) Connectivity wins: Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline (September 2019, 69 km), Jaynagar-Janakpur railway (April 2022), Arun-III hydropower (900 MW under SJVN); (iii) China factor: Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Railway feasibility study and 2017 BRI MoU; the pro-China KP Sharma Oli government dissolved in mid-2024 to a Prachanda-Deuba coalition that recalibrated toward Delhi.

Way forward / Conclusion: Receive the EPG report, conclude the long-pending Pancheshwar DPR under the Mahakali Treaty 1996, expand 10,000 MW power-purchase agreements and let states (UP, Bihar) lead micro-cooperation under BBIN MVA.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950; open border and currency peg (1.6 NPR per INR)
- Nepal Constitution 2015 — Madhesi blockade 2015-16 strained ties
- Nepal's 2020 'new political map' includes Kalapani, Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura (Sino-Indian Mahakali confluence)
- Eminent Persons Group (EPG) report on bilateral framework (2018) — not accepted by India
- Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline (September 2019, 69 km)
- Jaynagar-Janakpur railway (April 2022); Arun-III hydropower 900 MW under SJVN
- Mahakali Treaty 1996 — Pancheshwar multipurpose project DPR pending

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950
- Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline (2019)
- Jaynagar-Janakpur railway (2022)
- Arun-III hydropower project
- Eminent Persons Group Report (2018)
- Mahakali Treaty 1996

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** India and Nepal share an open border under the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, with a pegged Nepalese rupee at 1.6 INR and over 60 lakh Nepalese in India under Article 7 of the Treaty.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions trace structural irritants and recent stabilisation. First, friction — Nepal’s Constitution (September 2015) was followed by a Madhesi blockade; the 2020 ‘new political map’ included Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura; the EPG

report (2018) remains unreceived in New Delhi. Second, connectivity wins — Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline (September 2019), Jaynagar-Janakpur railway (April 2022), and Arun-III hydropower (900 MW under SJVN). Third, China factor — the Trans-Himalayan Railway feasibility study and 2017 BRI MoU stall while the Prachanda-Deuba coalition recalibrates toward Delhi after Oli's 2024 dissolution.

Conclusion: Receive the EPG report, conclude the Pancheshwar DPR under the Mahakali Treaty 1996, expand 10,000 MW power-purchase agreements and let UP and Bihar lead micro-cooperation under BBIN MVA.

SOURCES

- →MEA India-Nepal Bilateral Brief
- →BIMSTEC — Anantam IAS
- →Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950

Nepal | Treaty 1950 | Kalapani | Lipulekh | EPG report | Mahakali Treaty | Motihari pipeline | BBIN

Q80

BIMSTEC was revived as the Bay of Bengal alternative to a deadlocked SAARC, with the Charter entering force in May 2024. Examine its present trajectory, with reference to the 2025 outcomes and connectivity priorities.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: BIMSTEC, founded in 1997 as BIST-EC and renamed in 2004, links 5 South Asian states (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka) with 2 Southeast Asian (Myanmar, Thailand). The BIMSTEC Charter entered into force 20 May 2024.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Strategic value: 22 percent of world population, $5+ trillion combined GDP, Bay of Bengal connectivity bridge for Act East; (ii) Sixth Summit Bangkok (4 April 2025) — Bangkok Vision 2030, BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Disaster Management at Noida, BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce, master plan on transport connectivity; (iii) Limits: pending BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement (mooted 2004), Myanmar civil war disrupts BIMSTEC Motor Vehicles Agreement, no joint defence framework yet.

Way forward / Conclusion: Close the BIMSTEC FTA, operationalise Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project and Trilateral Highway, and make BIMSTEC the Bay of Bengal connectivity backbone alongside MAHASAGAR.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- BIMSTEC — 7 members (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand)
- BIMSTEC Charter entered force 20 May 2024
- Sixth Summit Bangkok (4 April 2025) — Bangkok Vision 2030
- BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Disaster Management to be hosted at Noida
- 22 percent of world population; $5+ trillion combined GDP
- BIMSTEC FTA stalled since 2004; Master Plan on Transport Connectivity adopted 2022
- Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project and India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway as physical spines

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- BIMSTEC Charter (2022, in force 2024)
- Sixth BIMSTEC Summit Bangkok (April 2025)
- Bangkok Vision 2030
- Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project
- India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** BIMSTEC — founded as BIST-EC (1997) and renamed in 2004 — links five South Asian States with two Southeast Asian States; its Charter entered into force on 20 May 2024, anchoring India's Act East and Neighbourhood First.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate trajectory. First, strategic value — 22 percent of the world population, $5-trillion-plus combined GDP and the Bay of Bengal as bridge between South and Southeast Asia. Second, Sixth Summit outcomes (Bangkok, 4 April 2025) — Bangkok Vision 2030, the BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Disaster Management at Noida, the BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce and a Master Plan on Transport Connectivity are operational. Third, limits — the BIMSTEC FTA (mooted 2004) remains unsigned; Myanmar's civil war has stalled the BIMSTEC Motor Vehicles Agreement; no joint defence framework yet exists.
>
> **Conclusion:** Close the BIMSTEC FTA, operationalise the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project and Trilateral Highway, and embed BIMSTEC as the Bay of Bengal connectivity backbone alongside MAHASAGAR.

SOURCES

→BIMSTEC — Anantam IAS

→MEA — BIMSTEC
→BIMSTEC Secretariat

BIMSTEC | Bay of Bengal | Bangkok Vision 2030 | Charter 2024 | Kaladan | Trilateral Highway | Act East | FTA

Q81

The Quad's 2025 Wilmington-to-2025 framework has shifted from a security caucus toward technology, supply chains and maritime security. Discuss India's role and the limits of the Quad as a coalition for the Indo-Pacific.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GROUPINGS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Quad (India, US, Japan, Australia) was revived in 2017, elevated to leaders' level in 2021, and at the 2025 Quad summit (rotated to India in 2025) committed to working groups on critical and emerging technologies, supply chains, climate, health, and cybersecurity.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Convergences: Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), Quad Cybersecurity Partnership, Quad Open RAN deployment in Palau and Tuvalu, Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group; (ii) India's distinctive line: refuses NATO-like framing, calls it a 'force for global good', no Section 2 collective defence; (iii) Limits: no permanent secretariat, no joint command, ASEAN centrality strain, and Trump-era trade tariffs (50 percent on Indian goods August 2025) tested cohesion before the 2 February 2026 framework rolled back to 18 percent.

Way forward / Conclusion: Anchor the Quad in deliverables (semiconductor supply chains, undersea cables, dual-use space), preserve issue-based flexibility, and bridge through Quad-Plus with EU and South Korea on tech standards.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Quad — India, US, Japan, Australia; revived 2017, leaders-level 2021
- Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) — 2022 initiative
- Quad summit 2025 — India hosted, Critical and Emerging Tech Working Group expanded
- Quad Open RAN in Palau, Tuvalu, Fiji (with Japan-US backing)
- Quad Cybersecurity Partnership

- US tariffs on India — 50 percent (August 2025), reduced to 18 percent (2 February 2026 framework)
- India's framing — 'force for global good', not a military alliance
- ASEAN centrality reaffirmed in every Quad joint statement

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Quad Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS
- Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA, 2022)
- Quad Vaccine Partnership (2021)
- Quad Open RAN Palau-Tuvalu
- US-India Trade Framework (6 February 2026)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The Quad — India, US, Japan, Australia — was revived in 2017, elevated to leaders' level in March 2021 and at the 2025 summit (rotated to India) committed to working groups on critical and emerging technologies, supply chains, climate, health and cybersecurity. The Wilmington Declaration (September 2024) reframed the grouping from a security caucus toward technology and resilience.

Convergences: The Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative shares near-real-time maritime data with ASEAN, Indian Ocean and Pacific partners; the Quad Cybersecurity Partnership, the Open RAN deployment in Palau and Tuvalu, the Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group, and the Cancer Moonshot extend cooperation beyond hard security.

India's distinctive line: External Affairs Minister Jaishankar has rejected NATO-like framing, calling the Quad 'a force for global good' with no Section 2 collective-defence obligation. The 2+2 ministerial dialogues and iCET (January 2023) operationalise bilateral depth — GE F414 co-production, MQ-9B drones, Sonobuoy MoU — but plurilateral defence remains explicitly out.

Limits: No permanent secretariat, no joint command, ASEAN-centrality strain, and Trump-era 50 percent tariffs (August 2025) on Indian goods tested cohesion before the 6 February 2026 framework rolled them back to 18 percent. The Quad is a coordinating coalition, not an alliance.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> Anchor the Quad in deliverables — semiconductor supply chains, undersea cables, dual-use space, Quad Open RAN — preserve issue-based flexibility, and bridge through Quad-Plus engagement with the EU and South Korea on tech standards.

SOURCES

- →Quad Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS
- →MEA — Quad
- →White House — Quad Leaders' Joint Statement (Wilmington 2024)

Quad | IPMDA | Open RAN | Indo-Pacific | Critical and Emerging Technology | ASEAN centrality | supply chains | Wilmington

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Q82

BRICS has grown from five members to ten, but the foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi (14-15 May 2026) ended without a joint statement on the Iran-Israel war. Critically analyse whether BRICS embodies multipolarity or only its weight.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GROUPINGS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: BRICS expanded in January 2024 (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE) and January 2025 (Indonesia), reaching ten members holding 4.45 billion people and 44 percent of global GDP (PPP) per IMF 2025.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Weight: 35 percent of world PPP GDP overtook the G7 in 2018; New Development Bank lends in member currencies; (ii) Cohesion failure: 14-15 May 2026 New Delhi foreign ministers' meeting ended without a joint statement; Iran sought condemnation of US-Israel, UAE refused; India issued Chair's Statement and Outcome Document; (iii) Multipolarity verdict: BRICS has weight without strategy; India's line is 'non-Western, not anti-Western'; Jaishankar reiterated India 'has never been for de-dollarisation' and there is 'no proposal for a BRICS currency'.

Way forward / Conclusion: Use BRICS for agenda-setting (UNSC reform, IMF quotas, DPI export, food security), not bloc-building; deepen New Development Bank local-currency lending; resist enlargement that buys breadth at cohesion's cost.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- BRICS — 10 full members after Indonesia joined January 2025; Saudi Arabia invited but not formalised

- Population about 4.45 billion (55.6 percent); 44 percent global GDP (PPP) — IMF July 2025
- 14-15 May 2026 BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting in New Delhi ended without a joint statement
- Iran-UAE split over Iran-Israel war; India issued Chair's Statement and Outcome Document
- Jaishankar — India 'has never been for de-dollarisation'; no BRICS currency proposal
- New Development Bank — local-currency lending, headquartered in Shanghai (2014)
- PM Modi (Kazan 2024) — BRICS should not 'replace global institutions'
- India's 2026 BRICS chairmanship, Delhi Summit later in year

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- BRICS expansion (January 2024) — Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE
- BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting Delhi (14-15 May 2026)
- BRICS Kazan Summit (October 2024)
- New Development Bank (Shanghai, 2014)
- BRICS Pay / Cross-Border Payments Initiative

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

BRICS expanded in January 2024 (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE) and January 2025 (Indonesia), reaching ten members holding 4.45 billion people and 44 percent of global GDP in PPP terms per IMF 2025. The foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi (14-15 May 2026) ended without a joint statement — exposing the gap between BRICS's weight and its strategic cohesion.

Weight: BRICS PPP GDP overtook the G7 in 2018; the New Development Bank, headquartered in Shanghai, has lent over $35 billion since 2015 with a growing share in member currencies. The Contingent Reserve Arrangement and the BRICS Pay framework give the bloc balance-of-payments and clearing instruments.

Cohesion failure: At the 14-15 May 2026 New Delhi CFM, Iran sought condemnation of the US-Israel strikes; the UAE refused; India, as host, issued a Chair's Statement and Outcome Document without consensus paragraphs on West Asia. Earlier, the 16th Kazan Summit (October 2024) papered over differences with the BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative but produced no currency-union outcome.

> **Multipolarity verdict:** BRICS has weight without a unified strategy. India's line — articulated by Jaishankar — is 'non-Western, not anti-Western'; India 'has never been for de-dollarisation' and 'there is no proposal for a BRICS currency'. The bloc is a coordinating forum, not a counter-bloc.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Use BRICS for agenda-setting on UNSC reform, IMF quotas, DPI export and food security; deepen NDB local-currency lending; and resist enlargement that buys breadth at cohesion's cost — keeping multipolarity issue-based rather than doctrinal.

SOURCES

- →BRICS Summit 2024 Kazan — Anantam IAS
- →MEA — BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting (May 2026)
- →BRICS 2025 Host Country — Anantam IAS

BRICS | multipolarity | Global South | de-dollarisation | New Development Bank | Chair's Statement | BRICS expansion | non-Western

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Q83

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has expanded to nine members with Iran and Belarus joining recently. Examine its relevance for India's Eurasian strategy, with reference to the SCO Tianjin Summit (2025).

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GROUPINGS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The SCO, evolved from the Shanghai Five (1996), is a 9-member Eurasian security and economic bloc (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India (2017), Pakistan (2017), Iran (2023), Belarus (2024)).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Tianjin Summit (31 August-1 September 2025) — PM Modi attended; SCO Tianjin Declaration covered terrorism, AI, energy; India did not endorse Belt and Road para; (ii) Counter-terrorism via Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS, Tashkent); India hosted the SCO Council of Heads of Government 2023 virtually after the Goa CFM; (iii) China-Russia dominance and Pakistan-India bilateral friction limit deliverables.

Way forward / Conclusion: Use SCO for Central Asia connectivity (INSTC, Chabahar, Ashgabat Agreement) and counter-terror intel via RATS; refuse BRI endorsements; preserve issue-based engagement with Russia and Iran.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- SCO — 9 members; India and Pakistan joined 2017, Iran 2023, Belarus 2024
- SCO Tianjin Summit 31 August-1 September 2025; PM Modi attended
- India consistently refuses to endorse Belt and Road paragraphs in SCO joint statements
- Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) at Tashkent for counter-terror coordination
- SCO Charter 2002, Secretariat in Beijing
- SCO Goa CFM 2023 hosted by India; virtual heads of government summit 2023
- Combined GDP about 23 percent of global GDP; about 40 percent of world population

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- SCO Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS
- SCO Tianjin Declaration (September 2025)
- Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), Tashkent
- SCO Goa CFM (May 2023)
- India's accession (Astana 2017)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, evolved from the Shanghai Five (1996), is a nine-member Eurasian bloc — China, Russia, four Central Asian Republics, India (2017), Pakistan (2017), Iran (2023) and Belarus (2024) — anchoring India’s Eurasian strategy.

Body: Three dimensions evaluate relevance. First, Tianjin Summit (31 August-1 September 2025) — Prime Minister Modi attended; the Tianjin Declaration covered terrorism, artificial intelligence and energy; India did not endorse the Belt and Road paragraph, sustaining its standing position. Second, counter-terrorism — the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS, Tashkent) provides intelligence sharing; India hosted the SCO Council of Heads of Government 2023 virtually after the Goa Foreign Ministers’ meeting. Third, limits — China-Russia dominance, Pakistan-India bilateral friction over cross-border terror, and the absence of trade and investment deliverables cap SCO’s economic role.

Conclusion: Use SCO for Central Asia connectivity (INSTC, Chabahar, Ashgabat Agreement) and counter-terror intelligence via RATS, refuse BRI endorsements and preserve issue-based engagement with Russia and Iran.

SOURCES

→SCO Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS

→SCO Secretariat
→MEA — SCO

SCO | Tianjin Summit | RATS | Eurasia | Belt and Road | Central Asia | INSTC | counter-terror

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Q84

ASEAN centrality remains a core principle of India's Indo-Pacific Initiative, but the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (2010) is widely seen as a one-way arrangement. Examine the case for and against an AITIGA review.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GROUPINGS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: ASEAN-India trade grew from $73 billion (2017-18) to $122 billion (2023-24), but India's trade deficit with ASEAN ballooned to $44 billion, leading to a formal AITIGA review launched in May 2023.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Strategic value: India's Act East Policy (2014), ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership (2022), Look East to Act East shift; (ii) AITIGA gaps: rules of origin laxity led to Chinese goods routing through ASEAN under preferential tariffs; non-tariff barriers in agriculture; services and investment chapter excluded; (iii) Indo-Pacific framing: ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP 2019) overlap with India's IPOI's 7 pillars.

Way forward / Conclusion: Conclude the AITIGA review with strict rules of origin, add services-investment chapter, link to RCEP-substitute supply chains under IPEF, and operationalise Trilateral Highway India-Myanmar-Thailand.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- ASEAN-India FTA (AITIGA) signed 2009, in force January 2010
- Trade grew to $122 billion (2023-24); deficit $44 billion
- AITIGA review formally launched May 2023; ninth round in May 2025
- Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) launched November 2019, 7 pillars
- ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) adopted June 2019
- Act East Policy (2014) replaced Look East Policy
- ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership upgraded to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2022)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- ASEAN-India FTA (AITIGA) 2009

- Act East Policy (2014)
- Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (2019)
- India-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2022)
- ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (2019)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** ASEAN-India trade grew from $73 billion (2017-18) to $122 billion (2023-24), but India's trade deficit with ASEAN ballooned to $44 billion, leading to a formal AITIGA review launched in May 2023 under the Act East framework.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions weigh the case for review. First, strategic value — the Act East Policy (2014), the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership (2022) and the Look East-to-Act East shift make ASEAN central to India's Indo-Pacific Initiative (IPOI 2019). Second, AITIGA gaps — laxity in rules of origin lets Chinese goods route through ASEAN at preferential tariffs; non-tariff barriers obstruct Indian agricultural exports; the services and investment chapter is excluded. Third, Indo-Pacific framing — the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (2019) and India's IPOI seven pillars overlap on maritime ecology, connectivity and capacity-building.
>
> **Conclusion:** Conclude the AITIGA review with strict rules of origin, add a services-investment chapter, link to IPEF supply chains and operationalise the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.

SOURCES

→ASEAN and India — Anantam IAS
→ASEAN Countries — Anantam IAS
→MEA — ASEAN India

ASEAN | AITIGA | Act East | rules of origin | IPOI | AOIP | Trilateral Highway | Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

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Q85

China's export licensing on seven rare earths (4 April 2025) extended to foreign-made products containing Chinese-origin material from 1 December 2025. Discuss the chokepoint logic and the implications for India's clean-energy transition.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | EFFECT OF POLICIES OF DEVELOPED/DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON INDIA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: China controls about 60 percent of world rare-earth mining but 91 percent of separation and refining and 94 percent of permanent magnets, turning a midstream chokepoint into geopolitical leverage.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Export-control timeline: gallium-germanium (July 2023), graphite-antimony (2024), seven rare earths (samarium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, lutetium, scandium, yttrium) on 4 April 2025, foreign-origin extension 1 December 2025; (ii) India's exposure: 100 percent import-dependent for lithium, cobalt, nickel; China supplies 30.8 percent of India's industrial-goods requirements (GTRI); India-China FY25 trade deficit $99.2 billion; (iii) Response: National Critical Mineral Mission (January 2025, Rs 16,300 crore for 7 years), Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) acquisitions in Argentina and Australia, Critical Minerals Initiative under Quad and Mineral Security Partnership.

Way forward / Conclusion: Domestic processing capacity via PLI, strategic stockpiling via NCMM, deep-sea mining licences from International Seabed Authority for Carlsberg Ridge polymetallic nodules, and rare-earth recycling under Battery Waste Management Rules 2022.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- China — 60 percent mining, 91 percent refining, 94 percent permanent magnets
- Export licensing on 7 rare earths from 4 April 2025; foreign-origin extension 1 December 2025
- India — 100 percent import-dependent for lithium, cobalt, nickel
- India-China trade deficit FY25 about $99.2 billion (record)
- National Critical Mineral Mission — January 2025, Rs 16,300 crore for 7 years
- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) — JV of NALCO, HCL, MECL for overseas acquisitions
- Mineral Security Partnership (US-led, India member from June 2023)
- Battery Waste Management Rules 2022 mandate EPR and recycling

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- National Critical Mineral Mission (January 2025)
- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL)
- Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)
- China's April 2025 seven-rare-earth export licensing

- Battery Waste Management Rules 2022
- Reagan-Bush Mineral Critical and Strategic Minerals Act 2025 (US)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

China controls about 60 percent of world rare-earth mining but 91 percent of separation-refining and 94 percent of permanent magnets — converting a midstream chokepoint into geopolitical leverage. Beijing's 4 April 2025 export licensing on seven rare earths, extended on 1 December 2025 to foreign-made products containing Chinese-origin material, weaponises the supply chain.

Export-control timeline: Gallium and germanium (July 2023), graphite and antimony (2024), and seven rare earths — samarium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, lutetium, scandium, yttrium — on 4 April 2025 trace an escalation curve. The 1 December 2025 foreign-origin extension reaches third-country defence and clean-tech producers.

India's exposure: India is 100 percent import-dependent for lithium, cobalt and nickel; China supplies about 30.8 percent of India's industrial-goods requirements per GTRI, and the India-China FY25 trade deficit stands at $99.2 billion. Wind, solar, EV battery and defence-electronics roadmaps all depend on the licensed seven.

Response: The National Critical Mineral Mission (29 January 2025, Rs 16,300 crore outlay over seven years plus Rs 18,000 crore PSU investment), Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) lithium and copper acquisitions in Argentina and Australia, the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative (2024) and Mineral Security Partnership membership (June 2023) form a diversification stack. The Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act 2023 opens 1,200 GSI exploration projects.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Build domestic processing capacity via PLI, strategic stockpiling on the US Defense Production Act Title III model, International Seabed Authority licences for Carlsberg Ridge polymetallic nodules, and rare-earth recycling under the Battery Waste Management Rules 2022.

SOURCES

→Critical Minerals — Anantam IAS
→Rare Earth Metals — Anantam IAS
→IEA — National Critical Mineral Mission

rare earths | critical minerals | NCMM | KABIL | chokepoint | weaponised interdependence | MSP | lithium

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Q86

India has the world's largest diaspora at about 35.4 million Persons of Indian Origin and Non-Resident Indians, contributing record remittances of $135 billion in FY25. Examine the policy frameworks that engage the diaspora.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | INDIAN DIASPORA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's diaspora — 1.34 crore NRIs plus 2.21 crore PIOs (MEA 2024) — is the largest in the world, with World Bank reporting record FY25 remittances of $135.46 billion, more than India's defence budget.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Recognition architecture: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (9 January, marking Gandhi's return from South Africa 1915), OCI card under Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2003, merger of PIO into OCI (2015), Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award; (ii) Welfare and rights: e-Migrate portal under Emigration Act 1983, MADAD grievance redress, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana; SVEEP and ECI 2024 amendment for postal voting in select pilot constituencies; (iii) Strategic leverage: Gulf workers (about 9 million) and UAE alone 19 percent of remittances; H-1B Indian-American influence in US tech; UK-India migration mobility partnership (May 2021); Caribbean and Mauritius diasporas in MAHASAGAR.

Way forward / Conclusion: Operationalise diaspora-bond mechanism (RBI), extend overseas voting to OCI cardholders, ratify ILO C-189 to protect women domestic-worker migrants, and use diaspora networks in IMEC and African countries.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Indian diaspora — 1.34 crore NRIs + 2.21 crore PIOs = 3.55 crore (MEA Annual Report 2024)
- Remittances $135.46 billion in FY25 (World Bank), largest in the world
- UAE accounts for about 19 percent of remittances; Gulf (GCC) about 40 percent
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas — 9 January, commemorating Gandhi's return from South Africa (9 January 1915)
- Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card under Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2003
- PIO card merged into OCI in 2015
- Emigration Act 1983 governs ECR clearance for 18 ECR countries

- MADAD portal and e-Migrate portal under MEA Overseas Indian Affairs

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (9 January)
- Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award
- Overseas Citizen of India card (OCI)
- e-Migrate portal, MADAD portal
- Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana
- UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership (May 2021)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

India's diaspora — 1.34 crore Non-Resident Indians plus 2.21 crore Persons of Indian Origin per MEA 2024 — is the world's largest at about 3.54 crore, contributing FY25 remittances of $135.46 billion per the World Bank, more than India's defence budget and rivalling FDI inflows.

Recognition architecture: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (9 January, commemorating Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915), the OCI card under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2003, the merger of PIO into OCI (2015), the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award and the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra anchor symbolic recognition under Article 8 read with Article 51.

Welfare and rights: The e-Migrate portal under the Emigration Act 1983, MADAD grievance redress, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana for low-skill emigrants to 17 ECR countries, and Indian Community Welfare Fund support distressed workers. The Election Commission's 2024 amendment enabling postal voting for select pilot constituencies extends the franchise debate begun in Diaspora Charter consultations.

Strategic leverage: About 90 lakh Gulf workers send roughly 40 percent of remittances; the UAE alone accounts for 19 percent. H-1B Indian-American influence shapes US technology policy; the UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership (May 2021), Germany Comprehensive Migration Mobility Partnership (2022), Australia (2023) and Italy (2023) operationalise legal pathways. Caribbean and Mauritius diasporas anchor MAHASAGAR.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Operationalise a diaspora-bond mechanism via RBI, extend overseas voting to OCI cardholders through a constitutional amendment, ratify ILO C-189 to protect women

> domestic-worker migrants, and use diaspora networks to anchor IMEC and African corridors.

SOURCES

- →MEA — Indian Diaspora
- →Need for Domestic Workers Law — Anantam IAS
- →World Bank Migration and Development Brief

diaspora | remittances | OCI | Pravasi Bharatiya Divas | MADAD | Emigration Act | H-1B | ECR

Q87

The Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025 consolidates four colonial-era laws and creates a Bureau of Immigration. Examine its impact on India's diaspora engagement and overseas labour mobility.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | INDIAN DIASPORA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025 (received Presidential assent 4 April 2025) repeals the Passport (Entry into India) Act 1920, Registration of Foreigners Act 1939, Foreigners Act 1946 and Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 2000.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Consolidation: single statute for entry, stay, exit, deportation; Bureau of Immigration with statutory backing; e-Visa regime formalised; (ii) Strengthens diaspora links: clearer regime for OCI cardholders, biometric verification, faster deportation of overstaying foreigners; (iii) Concerns: Section 3 wide governmental discretion; civil-society worry on bonafide refugees absent UNHCR refugee convention ratification; Tibetan and Rohingya communities outside Bureau registry.

Way forward / Conclusion: Notify Refugee Bill 2023 to plug the protection gap, expand Mobility and Migration Partnerships (Germany 2022, UK 2021, Australia 2023), and equip BoI with AI-based facial recognition under DPDP Act 2023.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025 — assent 4 April 2025
- Repeals four colonial-era laws (1920, 1939, 1946, 2000)
- Statutory Bureau of Immigration
- India is non-signatory to 1951 UN Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol
- Mobility partnerships — UK (2021), Germany (2022), Australia (2023)
- OCI cardholders status clarified; e-Visa regime formalised

- Section 3 allows wide government discretion on entry/exit

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025
- Bureau of Immigration
- UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership (May 2021)
- Germany Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (2022)
- Australia Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (2023)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025, with Presidential assent on 4 April 2025, repeals four colonial-era statutes — the Passport (Entry into India) Act 1920, Registration of Foreigners Act 1939, Foreigners Act 1946 and Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 2000.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions assess impact. First, consolidation — a single statute governs entry, stay, exit and deportation; the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) acquires statutory backing; the e-Visa regime is formalised under Section 3. Second, diaspora linkages — clearer OCI rules, Aadhaar-based biometric verification, and faster deportation of overstaying foreigners reduce procedural drag. Third, concerns — Section 3's wide discretion, absence of a refugee protection chapter (India is not party to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention) and unclear status of Tibetan and Rohingya communities outside the BoI registry remain.
>
> **Conclusion:** Notify a Refugee Bill 2023 to plug the protection gap, expand mobility partnerships (Germany 2022, UK 2021, Australia 2023) and equip BoI under the DPDP Act 2023.

SOURCES

→Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025 — Anantam IAS
→MEA — Migration and Mobility Partnerships
→Ministry of Home Affairs — Bureau of Immigration

Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025 | Bureau of Immigration | OCI | e-Visa | mobility partnership | refugee | 1951 Convention | deportation

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Q88

The G20 New Delhi Declaration (September 2023) was the first G20 consensus that did not name Russia, and it admitted the African Union as a

permanent member. Examine its enduring impact on India's global standing.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GROUPINGS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's G20 Presidency culminated in the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (9-10 September 2023), built on the theme Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Diplomatic wins: 100 percent consensus despite Ukraine war, AU membership as 21st permanent member, IMEC launched on the sidelines; (ii) Substantive deliverables: Global Biofuels Alliance, DPI as a public good (India Stack export), Voluntary SDG Action Plan, MDB reform agenda; (iii) Continuity: Brazil 2024 (Rio) carried forward, South Africa 2025, Trump's 2026 hosting in jeopardy after Russia-Iran tensions.

Way forward / Conclusion: Use Sherpa-track continuity to lock in DPI standards (Modular Open-Source Identity Platform), keep AU's permanent seat as Global South leverage, and push 2026 successor declaration on critical minerals governance.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration adopted 9-10 September 2023
- First G20 consensus during a major-power war; did not name Russia
- African Union admitted as permanent member (21st)
- IMEC MoU signed 9 September 2023 on G20 sidelines
- Global Biofuels Alliance launched (9 September 2023)
- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam theme — 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'
- DPI declared a 'public good'; G20 Framework for DPI agreed
- India hosted over 200 G20 meetings across 60 cities

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- G20 New Delhi Declaration (September 2023)
- Global Biofuels Alliance
- African Union accession to G20
- IMEC (Inida-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor)
- DPI G20 framework
- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam theme

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** India's G20 Presidency culminated in the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (9-10 September 2023) under the theme Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — the first G20 consensus that did not name Russia.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions assess enduring impact. First, diplomatic wins — 100 percent consensus despite the Ukraine war, the African Union admitted as the 21st permanent member, and IMEC launched on the sidelines on 9 September 2023. Second, substantive deliverables — the Global Biofuels Alliance, Digital Public Infrastructure (India Stack) recognised as a public good, the Voluntary SDG Action Plan and an MDB reform agenda anchored in the N.K. Singh-Larry Summers Independent Expert Group report. Third, continuity — Brazil 2024 (Rio) and South Africa 2025 carried the Sherpa-track forward, though Trump's 2026 hosting faces Russia-Iran tensions.
>
> **Conclusion:** Lock in DPI standards via Modular Open-Source Identity Platform, retain AU's seat as Global South leverage and push a 2026 declaration on critical-minerals governance.

SOURCES

- →G20 New Delhi Declaration — MEA
- →Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — Anantam IAS
- →Quad Summit 2025 — Anantam IAS

G20 | Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam | African Union | IMEC | Global Biofuels Alliance | DPI | consensus | MDB reform

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Q89

US secondary tariffs raised duties on Indian goods to 50 percent in August 2025 over Russian-oil purchases before the 6 February 2026 framework rolled them back to 18 percent. Examine how this episode tested India's strategic autonomy.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | EFFECT OF POLICIES OF DEVELOPED/DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON INDIA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India's strategic autonomy was stress-tested when the US imposed a 25 percent reciprocal tariff plus a 25 percent penalty on Indian goods in August 2025, tied to a July 2025 executive order monitoring Russian-oil buyers.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Pressure metrics: India-US goods trade $129.2 billion (2024); US trade deficit with India $45.7 billion; tariffs landed because the US is India's largest goods export market at 18 percent of exports; (ii) Indian counterplay: Russian crude share rose from 2 percent (2021) to 35.9 percent (FY24); after Rosneft-Lukoil sanctions (21 November 2025), share fell to 21.2 percent by January 2026; (iii) 6 February 2026 framework rolled tariffs back to 18 percent without India officially conceding on Russian oil; Jaishankar reiterated strategic autonomy at Munich 14 February 2026.

Way forward / Conclusion: Diversify oil basket beyond Russia (now from 40 countries), conclude India-US trade pact, push rupee internationalisation rather than de-dollarisation, and harden CAATSA waiver clarity through legislation.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- August 2025 — US tariffs raised to 50 percent on Indian goods (25% reciprocal + 25% penalty)
- Tariff penalty tied to July 2025 US Executive Order on Russian-oil buyers
- Russian oil share — under 1 percent (2021) to 35.9 percent (FY24); fell to 21.2 percent (January 2026)
- 21 November 2025 — US sanctioned Rosneft and Lukoil
- 6 February 2026 — US-India Trade Framework reduced tariffs to 18 percent
- US-India goods trade $129.2 billion (2024); US deficit $45.7 billion
- Jaishankar at Munich (14 February 2026) — India 'wedded to strategic autonomy'
- CAATSA 2017 secondary-sanctions risk on Russian defence and energy

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- US-India Trade Framework (6 February 2026)
- US Executive Order on Russian-oil buyers (July 2025)
- Sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil (21 November 2025)
- Munich Security Conference (14 February 2026)
- S-400 system deliveries delayed by Russia-Ukraine war

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> India's strategic autonomy was stress-tested when the United States imposed a 25 percent reciprocal tariff plus a 25 percent penalty on Indian goods in August 2025 — taking duties to 50 percent — tied to a July 2025 executive order monitoring Russian-

oil buyers. The 6 February 2026 framework rolled tariffs back to 18 percent without an official Indian concession on Russian crude.

Pressure metrics: India-US goods trade reached $129.2 billion in 2024 with a US deficit of $45.7 billion; tariffs hurt because the United States is India's largest goods export market at 18 percent of exports. Engineering goods, gems and jewellery and pharma — high-employment sectors — bore the brunt.

Indian counterplay: Russian crude share rose from 2 percent (2021) to 35.9 percent (FY24); after Rosneft and Lukoil sanctions (21 November 2025), it fell to 21.2 percent by January 2026. India diversified imports from 40 countries, signed the India-EU FTA (27 January 2026), accelerated UPI internationalisation and used the Munich Security Conference (14 February 2026) to restate strategic autonomy — Jaishankar invoked Article 51's non-alignment lineage.

Framework rollback: The 6 February 2026 framework recovered baseline access without scripting Indian alignment, vindicating non-aligned multi-alignment over coercion-driven choices. CAATSA waiver clarity, however, remains legislatively absent.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Diversify the oil basket beyond Russia, conclude the bilateral trade pact with sequenced market access, push rupee internationalisation rather than de-dollarisation, and harden CAATSA waiver clarity through US legislation — converting the episode's lesson into durable policy.

SOURCES

- →White House — US-India Trade Framework (February 2026)
- →USTR — India trade summary
- →Russian Revolution 1917 — Anantam IAS

strategic autonomy | secondary sanctions | CAATSA | Russian oil | US tariffs | multialignment | Munich | Rosneft

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Q90

The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) enters full reporting from 2026 and tariffs from January 2026 on six carbon-intensive sectors. Examine its implications for India's exports and climate diplomacy.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM

EFFECT OF POLICIES OF DEVELOPED/DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON INDIA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), legislated under Regulation (EU) 2023/956, enters definitive phase from 1 January 2026, imposing a carbon levy on six sectors — iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, electricity, hydrogen.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Trade exposure: India exported about $8.2 billion of CBAM-covered goods to EU in 2023-24, with iron-and-steel and aluminium most exposed; (ii) Equity argument: CBAM violates CBDR-RC principle of UNFCCC and Article 4 of the Paris Agreement; India and BASIC group oppose it as 'green protectionism'; (iii) Domestic response: India proposes its own Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS, 2023), Perform Achieve Trade (PAT) cycle credits, and a domestic carbon price to retain revenue.

Way forward / Conclusion: Bilateral CBAM-equivalence under the India-EU FTA (concluded 27 January 2026), accelerate hydrogen-based steel via National Green Hydrogen Mission, and contest CBAM at WTO under GATT Article XX(b)(g).

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- EU CBAM — Regulation (EU) 2023/956; transition Oct 2023-Dec 2025; full phase Jan 2026
- Six sectors covered — iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, electricity, hydrogen
- India's CBAM-exposed exports about $8.2 billion (2023-24)
- India-EU FTA negotiations concluded 27 January 2026
- CCTS — Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, India (notified June 2023)
- Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC) under UNFCCC and Paris Agreement
- BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) opposes CBAM
- Potential WTO challenge under GATT Article XX(b)(g) and Article III

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- India-EU FTA concluded 27 January 2026
- Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS, 2023)
- National Green Hydrogen Mission (Rs 19,744 crore, 2023)
- Perform Achieve Trade (PAT) cycle

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), under Regulation (EU) 2023/956, enters its definitive phase from 1 January 2026 on six sectors — iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions trace the implication. First, trade exposure — India exported about $8.2 billion of CBAM-covered goods to the EU in 2023-24, with iron-and-steel and aluminium most exposed; effective tariff equivalents reach 20-35 percent on carbon-intensive shipments. Second, equity — CBAM violates CBDR-RC of the UNFCCC and Article 4 of the Paris Agreement; India and BASIC frame it as 'green protectionism'. Third, domestic response — the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS, 2023), PAT-cycle credits and a domestic carbon price under the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act 2022 retain revenue inside India.
>
> **Conclusion:** Negotiate CBAM-equivalence under the India-EU FTA (27 January 2026), accelerate green-hydrogen steel via the National Green Hydrogen Mission and contest CBAM at WTO under GATT Article XX(b)(g).

SOURCES

→CBAM — Anantam IAS
→European Commission — CBAM Regulation
→UNFCCC — Anantam IAS

CBAM | CBDR-RC | Paris Agreement | India-EU FTA | green protectionism | CCTS | PAT | WTO

Q91

The UN Security Council's permanent membership structure has not changed since 1945 even as the General Assembly's Pact for the Future (September 2024) and the G4 push for reform continue. Examine India's case for permanent membership.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The UN Charter (Article 23) fixed the five permanent members (P5) in 1945. The Pact for the Future, adopted 22 September 2024 at the UN Summit of the Future, commits to UNSC reform without specifying timelines.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) India's case: founding member, fifth-largest economy, largest UN troop contributor (over 2.75 lakh peacekeepers since 1948), G20 host, 1.4 billion people; eighth non-permanent term (2021-22); (ii) Reform tracks: G4 (India, Japan, Germany, Brazil) joint candidature for permanent seats; Uniting for Consensus (Italy, Pakistan, etc.) opposes; African Union 'Ezulwini Consensus' (2005) demands 2 African permanent seats; (iii) Obstacles: P5 veto on amendments (Article 108), text-based negotiations stalled in Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) since 2008.

Way forward / Conclusion: Move IGN to text-based negotiations, build a G4-AU bridge under Ezulwini, secure African Union as 21st G20 member as a template, and tie reform to the UN's 80th-anniversary review (2025-26).

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- UN Security Council — 5 permanent + 10 non-permanent members under Article 23
- Pact for the Future adopted 22 September 2024 at UN Summit of the Future
- G4 — India, Japan, Germany, Brazil (joint candidacy for permanent seats)
- Uniting for Consensus (UfC) bloc — Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, South Korea, Argentina, Spain
- African Union Ezulwini Consensus (2005) — 2 permanent African seats with veto
- India 8th non-permanent term 2021-22; largest UN peacekeeping contributor
- Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on UNSC reform stalled since 2008
- Article 108 — amendments need 2/3 GA + ratification by 2/3 members including all P5

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- UN Charter Article 23
- Pact for the Future (22 September 2024)
- G4 Joint Statement (annual)
- Ezulwini Consensus (2005)
- India's 8th non-permanent UNSC term (2021-22)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction**:
>
> The UN Security Council's permanent membership, fixed by Article 23 of the UN Charter in 1945, has not changed in eight decades. The Pact for the Future, adopted at the UN Summit of the Future on 22 September 2024, commits to UNSC reform without timelines, reopening India's long-standing G4 push.
>
> **India's case:** A founding UN member, the fifth-largest economy, the largest UN troop contributor with over 2.75 lakh peacekeepers since 1948, the G20 host of 2023 and

> home to 1.4 billion people, India has served eight non-permanent terms (most recently 2021-22). Its credentials match every Article 23 criterion of contribution to peace and equitable representation.
>
> **Reform tracks:** The G4 — India, Japan, Germany, Brazil — campaign for permanent seats; the Uniting for Consensus group (Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, Argentina) opposes new permanent members in favour of expanded elected seats; the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus (2005) demands two African permanent seats with veto. The IGN process has run without text-based negotiations since 2008.
>
> **Obstacles:** Article 108 requires Charter amendment by two-thirds of the General Assembly and ratification by the P5 — granting each P5 a procedural veto over its own dilution. China publicly opposes India's permanent seat; the US, UK, France and Russia endorse without forcing the issue.
>
> **Way forward / Conclusion**:
>
> Move IGN to text-based negotiations, build a G4-AU bridge around Ezulwini, leverage the AU's 21st permanent seat in G20 as template, and tie reform to the UN's 80th-anniversary review (2025-26) — using legitimacy where leverage is absent.

SOURCES

- →UN Organisation — Anantam IAS
- →UN Pact for the Future
- →MEA — UN Reform

UNSC reform | G4 | Ezulwini | Pact for the Future | P5 veto | Article 108 | IGN | Summit of the Future

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Q92

The World Trade Organization's Appellate Body has been paralysed since 2019 and the MC13 Abu Dhabi outcome (2024) did not restore it. Discuss the implications for India's trade policy.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | HARD | IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The WTO's two-tier dispute settlement system (DSU 1994) has had a paralysed Appellate Body since December 2019, when the US blocked new judges. MC13 in Abu Dhabi (February 2024) failed to revive it.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Paralysis impact: 'appeal into the void' tactic by losing parties; 30+ pending appeals as of 2025; Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration

Arrangement (MPIA) — 53 members, India outside; (ii) India's interests: WTO panel ruled against India in ICT tariffs case (April 2023); India's challenge to EU CBAM hinges on appellate review; (iii) Reform agenda: MC13 mandated 'fully and well-functioning DS system by 2024' but no progress; agriculture and Public Stockholding (PSH) permanent solution still pending.

Way forward / Conclusion: Join the MPIA pragmatically to protect interim rulings, push G20 trade ministers on DS reform, defend PSH at MC14 (Cameroon 2026), and use WTO TRIPS Section 31bis flexibility for pharma exports.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- WTO Appellate Body paralysed since 11 December 2019
- Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA) — 53 members; India not a party
- MC13 Abu Dhabi (26 February-2 March 2024) — failed to revive AB
- Permanent solution to Public Stockholding (Bali 2013) still pending
- WTO ICT tariffs case — India ruled to have violated MFN obligations (April 2023)
- MC14 to be hosted by Cameroon in March 2026
- DSU Article 17 — Appellate Body must have 7 members
- 'Appeal into the void' — losing party files dummy appeal to suspend panel ruling

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- MC13 Abu Dhabi (February-March 2024)
- MC14 Cameroon (March 2026)
- Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA)
- WTO ICT tariffs ruling against India (April 2023)
- Public Stockholding negotiation (Bali 2013)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The WTO's two-tier dispute settlement under the Dispute Settlement Understanding 1994 has had a paralysed Appellate Body since December 2019, when the US blocked new judges; MC13 in Abu Dhabi (February 2024) failed to revive it.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate India's stake. First, paralysis impact — losing parties deploy the 'appeal into the void' tactic; over 30 appeals are pending; the MPIA, with 53 members, operates as a workaround India has not joined. Second, India's interests — the panel ruling against India in the ICT tariffs case (April 2023) and the looming EU CBAM challenge depend on appellate review for binding effect. Third,

> reform — MC13 mandated a 'fully and well-functioning' DS system by 2024 but no progress was made; the Public Stockholding (PSH) permanent solution remains pending for MC14 (Cameroon, 2026).
>
> **Conclusion:** Join the MPIA pragmatically, push G20 trade ministers on DS reform, defend PSH at MC14 and use TRIPS Section 31bis flexibility for pharma.

SOURCES

- →WTO Ministerial Conferences
- →MEA — WTO
- →CBAM — Anantam IAS

WTO | Appellate Body | MPIA | Public Stockholding | MC13 | MC14 | DSU | dispute settlement

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Q93

The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (March 2023) reaffirmed that limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius requires global emissions to peak before 2025. Examine India's negotiation position at COP30 Belem in light of its updated NDC.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (March 2023) warned that the 1.5 degree pathway requires global GHG emissions to peak before 2025 and decline 43 percent by 2030 (relative to 2019).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) India's Updated NDC (August 2022): 45 percent reduction in emissions intensity of GDP by 2030 (from 2005), 50 percent non-fossil installed capacity, net zero by 2070; LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) added at COP27; (ii) COP30 Belem (November 2025) — India pushed CBDR-RC, Loss and Damage Fund operationalisation (post-COP28), and a Just Transition narrative; (iii) Domestic delivery: 232 GW renewable capacity (March 2026), Green Hydrogen Mission (Rs 19,744 crore), India SDG Index score 71/100 (NITI Aayog 2023-24).

Way forward / Conclusion: Submit NDC 3.0 in 2025-26 cycle, push Loss and Damage finance from developed countries ($300 billion New Collective Quantified Goal at COP29), and align CCTS with EU CBAM equivalence.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- IPCC AR6 SYR — March 2023; 1.5 degree path needs peak before 2025

- India Updated NDC (August 2022) — 45 percent emission-intensity reduction by 2030; 50 percent non-fossil capacity
- Net Zero by 2070 (Glasgow COP26 announcement)
- LIFE — Lifestyle for Environment, India initiative at COP27
- COP30 Belem (Brazil, November 2025) hosted by Brazil
- Loss and Damage Fund operationalised at COP28 Dubai (2023)
- New Collective Quantified Goal — $300 billion per year by 2035 (COP29 Baku 2024)
- India's installed renewable capacity 232 GW (March 2026); target 500 GW by 2030

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (March 2023)
- India Updated NDC (August 2022)
- LIFE Mission (Mission Lifestyle for Environment)
- Loss and Damage Fund (COP28, 2023)
- New Collective Quantified Goal (COP29 Baku, 2024)
- COP30 Belem (November 2025)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction: The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (March 2023) warned that the 1.5 degree Celsius pathway requires global GHG emissions to peak before 2025 and decline 43 percent by 2030 relative to 2019 — framing India's COP30 Belem stance.

Body: Three dimensions frame India's position. First, Updated NDC (August 2022) — 45 percent reduction in emissions intensity of GDP by 2030 from 2005 levels, 50 percent non-fossil installed capacity by 2030, net zero by 2070; LIFE was added at COP27 Sharm El-Sheikh. Second, COP30 Belem (November 2025) — India anchored CBDR-RC, pushed Loss and Damage Fund operationalisation after COP28 and framed a Just Transition narrative. Third, domestic delivery — 232 GW renewable capacity (March 2026), the National Green Hydrogen Mission (Rs 19,744 crore) and an India SDG Index score of 71/100.

Conclusion: Submit NDC 3.0 in 2025-26, secure the $300 billion New Collective Quantified Goal (COP29) finance, and align CCTS with EU CBAM equivalence.

SOURCES

→IPCC AR6 Report — Anantam IAS
→UNFCCC — Anantam IAS
→UNFCCC Pact for the Future and Belem COP30

IPCC AR6 | NDC | CBDR-RC | Net Zero 2070 | LIFE | Loss and Damage | NCQG | COP30

Q94

The India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue and the iCET framework have shifted the bilateral from buyer-seller defence ties to co-development. Examine the breakthroughs and the residual frictions, with reference to GE F414 jet engines and the Sonobuoy MoU.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | RELATIONS WITH MAJOR POWERS — US

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: Since the India-US Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific (2015) the partnership has moved from buyer-seller to a Major Defence Partner (2016) and an Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET, January 2023).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Defence breakthroughs: GE F414 jet-engine co-production MoU (June 2023, for Tejas Mk2), 31 MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones ($3.5 billion, 2024), Sonobuoy MoU between Ultra Maritime and Bharat Dynamics (2024); (ii) Technology: iCET extended to next-gen telecoms, AI, biotech, advanced materials; India joined Mineral Security Partnership (June 2023); (iii) Frictions: 50 percent tariffs (August 2025) until 6 February 2026 framework; Russia oil dispute; H-1B visa cap; US Department of Justice indictment of Indian officials over Pannun assassination plot (November 2023).

Way forward / Conclusion: Finalise India-US bilateral trade pact, operationalise General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) end-use, and ensure semiconductor co-fab via Tata Electronics-Analog Devices.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Major Defence Partner status — 2016 (designated)
- Foundational agreements — LEMOA (2016), COMCASA (2018), BECA (2020)
- iCET launched January 2023 (NSA-level)
- GE F414 jet engine co-production MoU — June 2023 (for HAL Tejas Mk2)
- 31 MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones — $3.5 billion procurement (2024)
- Sonobuoy MoU — Ultra Maritime + Bharat Dynamics (2024)
- Mineral Security Partnership (India joined June 2023)
- Pannun plot DoJ indictment (November 2023) — irritant

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- iCET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology, January 2023)
- GE F414 jet engine co-production MoU (June 2023)
- MQ-9B SeaGuardian deal (2024)
- Mineral Security Partnership (June 2023)
- LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA foundational agreements
- 2+2 ministerial dialogue (annual since 2018)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Since the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific (January 2015) the India-US partnership has moved from buyer-seller to a Major Defence Partner (June 2016) and an Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET, January 2023). The 2+2 ministerial dialogue institutionalises a co-development trajectory.

Defence breakthroughs: The GE F414 jet-engine co-production MoU (June 2023) for Tejas Mk2 transfers up to 80 percent technology; 31 MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones ($3.5 billion, 2024) extend maritime ISR; the Sonobuoy MoU between Ultra Maritime and Bharat Dynamics (2024) localises anti-submarine warfare consumables; the MASTER framework streamlines export controls.

Technology integration: iCET was extended at the 2+2 to next-generation telecoms, AI, biotechnology, advanced materials and space launch; India joined the Mineral Security Partnership (June 2023); General Atomics-Indian industry partnerships and Tata-Analog Devices semiconductor packaging anchor co-fab. The CHIPS Act 2022 architecture pulls Indian fabless start-ups into US value chains via the JIST trilateral.

Frictions: US secondary tariffs of 50 percent on Indian goods (August 2025) until the 6 February 2026 framework rolled them back to 18 percent; the Russia oil dispute; the H-1B visa cap; and the US Department of Justice indictment of Indian officials in the Pannun assassination plot (November 2023). Strategic autonomy and partnership coexist uneasily.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Finalise the India-US bilateral trade pact, operationalise GSOMIA and COMCASA end-use protocols, ensure Tata-Analog Devices co-fab delivery, codify CAATSA waiver clarity through legislation, and use iCET to compound co-development beyond defence into AI, quantum and bio.

SOURCES

- →MEA India-US Bilateral Brief
- →White House Joint Statement (Modi-Biden, June 2023)
- →US-India Trade Framework — Anantam IAS

iCET | 2+2 | GE F414 | MQ-9B | COMCASA | BECA | Major Defence Partner | MSP

Q95

India's defence dependence on Russia fell from 70 percent in 2011-15 to 40 percent in 2021-25 per SIPRI, while Russia became India's top crude supplier at about 35 percent. Examine the changing texture of India-Russia ties.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | RELATIONS WITH MAJOR POWERS — RUSSIA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The India-Russia 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' (2010) re-extended its 2001 friendship treaty during the Putin-Xi May 2026 Beijing meeting, just as India recalibrates its defence and energy basket.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Defence diversification: SIPRI 2025 — Russia 70 percent (2011-15) to 40 percent (2021-25); France 29 percent, Israel 15 percent; S-400 (5 contracted 2018, 3 delivered, 2 delayed by Russia-Ukraine war); BrahMos JV; AK-203 Korwa JV; (ii) Energy pivot: Russian crude 1 percent (2021) to 35.9 percent (FY24); fell to 21.2 percent (January 2026) after Rosneft-Lukoil sanctions (21 November 2025); record near 2.3 million b/d in early May 2026; (iii) Strategic limits: Russia's deepening dependence on China; Putin-Xi May 2026 visit re-extended 2001 friendship treaty; RIC dormant since Galwan 2020.

Way forward / Conclusion: Continue defence diversification (FRAM Indian-design GE F414), retain Russia for spares and overhaul, push rupee-rouble trade settlement, and treat Russia as one card in multialignment not the ace.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Russia's share of India arms imports — 70 percent (2011-15) to 40 percent (2021-25) per SIPRI 2025
- S-400 'Triumf' — 5 systems contracted 2018; 3 delivered; remaining delayed
- BrahMos cruise missile JV (1998); Philippines export (2022)
- Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd — AK-203 Korwa (Amethi) plant
- Russian crude — under 1 percent (2021) to 35.9 percent (FY24); 21.2 percent (January 2026)

- Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership since 2010
- Annual summit format (paused 2022-2023; Modi visit Moscow July 2024)
- Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant — 6 VVER-1000 reactors with Rosatom

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- BrahMos cruise missile (Indo-Russian JV)
- S-400 Triumf air defence system
- Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (Rosatom)
- AK-203 Korwa joint venture
- Modi-Putin Moscow Summit (July 2024)
- Putin-Xi Beijing visit (19-20 May 2026, treaty re-extension)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The India-Russia ‘Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership’ (2010) re-extended its 2001 friendship treaty during the Putin-Xi May 2026 Beijing meeting, even as India’s defence dependence on Russia fell from 70 percent (2011-15) to 40 percent (2021-25) per SIPRI 2025, while Russia became India’s top crude supplier at about 35 percent in FY24.

Defence diversification: SIPRI 2025 records France at 29 percent and Israel at 15 percent rising; the US at 11 percent; Indo-Russian collaboration continues through five contracted S-400 squadrons (three delivered, two delayed by the Ukraine war), the BrahMos joint venture, the AK-203 Korwa joint venture, and Su-30 MKI upgrades. The diversification is real, not rhetorical.

Energy pivot: Russian crude rose from 2 percent (2021) to 35.9 percent (FY24), peaking near 2.3 million b/d in early May 2026; after the Rosneft and Lukoil sanctions of 21 November 2025, the share fell to 21.2 percent by January 2026. India’s basket now spans 40 countries — diversification under coercion has accelerated structural rebalancing.

Strategic limits: Russia’s deepening dependence on China, the Putin-Xi May 2026 visit re-extending the 2001 treaty, and the RIC trilateral’s dormancy since Galwan 2020 narrow Moscow’s strategic value. Russia’s defence-industrial base is over-committed to Ukraine; spares delays affect Indian fleet readiness.

Way forward / Conclusion:

> Continue defence diversification with FRAM Indian-design through GE F414 and AMCA Mk2, retain Russia for spares and overhaul, push rupee-rouble trade settlement, and treat Russia as one card in multi-alignment, not the ace.

SOURCES

- →Kudankulam — Anantam IAS
- →SIPRI Arms Transfers Fact Sheet 2025
- →MEA India-Russia Bilateral Brief

Russia | SIPRI | S-400 | BrahMos | Kudankulam | Russian crude | RIC | multialignment

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Q96

India and China agreed on patrolling arrangements at Depsang and Demchok on 21 October 2024 but the larger force build-up persists. Examine the meaning of 'disengagement' and what a full normalisation would require.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | RELATIONS WITH MAJOR POWERS — CHINA

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The 21 October 2024 patrolling arrangement at Depsang and Demchok closed the last two friction points from the 2020 Galwan stand-off. Modi-Xi held the first bilateral in five years at BRICS Kazan (23 October 2024).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Vocabulary: 'disengagement on patrolling' is not 'de-escalation' (force-thinning) or 'normalisation' (boundary resolution); (ii) Friction points cleared — Galwan, Pangong Tso, Gogra-Hot Springs (PP15/17A), Depsang Bulge, Demchok; (iii) Outstanding: WMCC (Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs) on confidence-building; LAC infrastructure asymmetry (Bharatmala-LAC roads now match China side); India-China trade deficit $99.2 billion FY25; visa relaxation for journalists and direct flights restored (2025).

Way forward / Conclusion: Sequence disengagement to de-escalation to normalisation per Special Representatives mechanism (33rd round 18 December 2024), resume Mansarovar Yatra under bilateral consular protocols, and maintain LAC infrastructure plus Mountain Strike Corps as deterrents.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- Galwan clash 15 June 2020 — 20 Indian and 4 Chinese soldiers killed
- Patrolling arrangement at Depsang and Demchok — 21 October 2024

- Modi-Xi bilateral at Kazan BRICS — 23 October 2024 (first in 5 years)
- WMCC and Special Representatives mechanisms
- 33rd round of SR talks — 18 December 2024 (NSA Doval and FM Wang Yi)
- Five friction points cleared — Galwan, Pangong, Gogra-Hot Springs, Depsang, Demchok
- India-China trade deficit FY25 about $99.2 billion (record)
- Direct flights resumed 2025; e-visa for Chinese tourists restored (April 2025)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Galwan clash (15 June 2020)
- Depsang-Demchok patrolling agreement (21 October 2024)
- Modi-Xi Kazan bilateral (23 October 2024)
- 33rd Special Representatives round (December 2024)
- WMCC mechanism (since 2012)
- Border Roads Organisation Sela Tunnel inauguration (March 2024)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

The 21 October 2024 patrolling arrangement at Depsang and Demchok closed the last two friction points from the 2020 Galwan stand-off; Modi-Xi held the first bilateral in five years at BRICS Kazan on 23 October 2024, reopening managed engagement under the Special Representatives mechanism.

Vocabulary: 'Disengagement on patrolling' is not 'de-escalation' (force-thinning) and not 'normalisation' (boundary resolution). Each term marks a sequential stage in any post-stand-off return to status quo ante; conflating them obscures what has not yet been done.

Friction points cleared: Galwan (PP14), Pangong Tso, Gogra-Hot Springs (PP15 and PP17A), Depsang Bulge and Demchok. Buffer zones limit access in some sectors; CBM patrols rather than dominant patrols are the new norm. India retains a Strike Corps presence in Eastern Ladakh; LAC infrastructure (Bharatmala-LAC roads, the Sela Tunnel inaugurated March 2024) narrows the asymmetry with the Chinese side.

Outstanding: WMCC (Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination) continues confidence-building; the LAC has neither been delineated on a common map nor reconciled with the 1959 claim line; trade deficit at $99.2 billion FY25 reflects structural import dependence. Direct flights and Kailash Mansarovar Yatra resumption (2025), and journalist visa relaxation, signal calibrated thaw.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Sequence disengagement to de-escalation to normalisation through the Special Representatives 33rd round (18 December 2024) and beyond, resume Mansarovar Yatra under bilateral consular protocols, and maintain LAC infrastructure plus Mountain Strike Corps as deterrents — peace through preparation, not surrender.

SOURCES

- →MEA India-China Bilateral Brief
- →MEA Press Release (21 October 2024)
- →India-US-China-Russia Triangle — Anantam IAS

Depsang | Demchok | disengagement | de-escalation | LAC | WMCC | Special Representatives | Galwan

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Q97

India and the European Union concluded their Free Trade Agreement negotiations on 27 January 2026 after nine years. Examine the strategic value of the deal and the residual chapters that remain contested.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | EASY | RELATIONS WITH MAJOR POWERS — EU

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India-EU FTA negotiations, paused since 2013, restarted in June 2022 alongside the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) and concluded on 27 January 2026, creating a trade zone covering 2 billion people and roughly a quarter of world GDP.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Architecture: FTA + Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) + Geographical Indications (GI) Agreement; tariff cuts on autos, wines and spirits, dairy; (ii) Residual chapters: CBAM equivalence dispute, public procurement, mode-4 services (movement of natural persons), Sustainability and Trade chapter referencing ILO core conventions; (iii) Strategic value: EU is India's largest trading partner ($137.4 billion in 2023-24 for goods); buttresses IMEC; counterweight to RCEP that India did not join.

Way forward / Conclusion: Ratify across 27 EU national parliaments and the European Parliament, sequence CBAM equivalence with India's CCTS, and use Trade and Technology Council for semiconductors and AI governance.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- India-EU FTA negotiations concluded 27 January 2026
- EU is India's largest trading partner — $137.4 billion in goods (2023-24)
- FTA + Investment Protection Agreement + Geographical Indications package

- EU Trade and Technology Council launched June 2022
- CBAM equivalence and Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) dispute
- Mode-4 services (movement of natural persons) remains contested
- Sustainability and Trade chapter — ILO core conventions

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- India-EU FTA (27 January 2026)
- India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC, June 2022)
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- India-EU Strategic Partnership (2004)
- Roadmap to 2025 (October 2021)

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** India-EU FTA negotiations, paused since 2013 and restarted in June 2022 alongside the Trade and Technology Council, concluded on 27 January 2026, creating a trade zone covering 2 billion people.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions assess strategic value and residual chapters. First, architecture — the package includes the FTA, an Investment Protection Agreement and a Geographical Indications Agreement; tariff cuts span autos, wines and spirits, and dairy. Second, residual chapters — CBAM equivalence remains contested, the public procurement chapter is incomplete, mode-4 services and the Sustainability and Trade chapter referencing ILO core conventions need ratification compromises. Third, strategic value — the EU is India's largest trading partner at $137.4 billion in goods (2023-24); the FTA buttresses IMEC and counterweights RCEP, which India did not join.
>
> **Conclusion:** Ratify across 27 EU national parliaments and the European Parliament, sequence CBAM equivalence with India's CCTS and use the Trade and Technology Council for semiconductors and AI governance.

SOURCES

→CBAM — Anantam IAS
→European Commission — India-EU FTA
→MEA — India-EU Strategic Partnership

India-EU FTA | TTC | CBAM | IPA | GI | Roadmap 2025 | Mode-4 | ILO conventions

Q98

Critical-mineral supply chains have become a tool of statecraft for both China and the United States. With reference to the National Critical Mineral Mission (January 2025), discuss India's response.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | MEDIUM | GEOECONOMICS — CRITICAL MINERALS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The Union Cabinet approved the National Critical Mineral Mission on 29 January 2025 with Rs 16,300 crore outlay over 7 years plus expected Rs 18,000 crore PSU investment, in response to weaponised mineral chokepoints.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Vulnerability: India 100 percent import-dependent for lithium, cobalt, nickel; China refines 91 percent of rare earths; the 4 April 2025 Chinese export licensing on 7 rare earths cut yttrium, dysprosium and terbium exports about 50 percent below baseline; (ii) NCMM architecture: 30 critical minerals notified, Geological Survey of India to do 1,200 exploration projects, offshore mineral block auctions under Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act 2023; (iii) International: Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL), Mineral Security Partnership (June 2023), Quad Critical Minerals Initiative.

Way forward / Conclusion: Domestic processing capacity via PLI, strategic stockpiling (US DPA Title III model), International Seabed Authority licences for Carlsberg Ridge polymetallic nodules, and rare-earth recycling under Battery Waste Management Rules 2022.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- National Critical Mineral Mission approved 29 January 2025; Rs 16,300 crore outlay over 7 years
- 30 critical minerals notified by Ministry of Mines (2023)
- India 100 percent import-dependent for lithium, cobalt and nickel
- China — 91 percent rare-earth refining, 94 percent permanent magnets
- 4 April 2025 — Chinese licensing on 7 heavy/medium rare earths
- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) — JV of NALCO-HCL-MECL
- Mineral Security Partnership (India joined June 2023, US-led)
- Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act 2023

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- National Critical Mineral Mission (29 January 2025)

- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL)
- Mineral Security Partnership (US-led, India member from June 2023)
- Quad Critical Minerals Initiative
- Lithium block auction (Reasi, J&K, November 2023)

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

Critical-mineral supply chains have become a tool of statecraft. The Union Cabinet approved the National Critical Mineral Mission on 29 January 2025 with Rs 16,300 crore outlay over seven years plus expected Rs 18,000 crore PSU investment.

Vulnerability: India is 100 percent import-dependent for lithium, cobalt and nickel; China refines 91 percent of rare earths and 94 percent of permanent magnets; Beijing's 4 April 2025 export licensing on seven rare earths — extended 1 December 2025 to foreign-made products — cut yttrium, dysprosium and terbium exports about 50 percent below baseline. The US Inflation Reduction Act 2022 and CHIPS Act 2022 weaponise mineral access from the other side.

NCMM architecture: The Mission notifies 30 critical minerals, mandates the Geological Survey of India to deliver 1,200 exploration projects, and operationalises offshore block auctions under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act 2023. The MMDR Amendment Act 2023 transferred 24 critical and atomic minerals to Central auction, ending State licensing of strategic deposits.

International stack: Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) signed lithium exploration deals in Argentina (January 2024) and Australia. India joined the Mineral Security Partnership (June 2023) and the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative (2024). The Critical Minerals Centre of Excellence operationalises recycling under the Battery Waste Management Rules 2022.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Build domestic processing capacity via PLI, strategic stockpiling on the US DPA Title III model, International Seabed Authority licences for Carlsberg Ridge polymetallic nodules, and rare-earth recycling — converting NCMM into a working chokepoint hedge.

SOURCES

→Critical Minerals — Anantam IAS

- →Rare Earth Metals — Anantam IAS
- →Ministry of Mines — NCMM

NCMM | critical minerals | KABIL | Mineral Security Partnership | rare earths | lithium | weaponised interdependence | Carlsberg Ridge

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Q99

The India Semiconductor Mission has approved five fabs and packaging units with Rs 76,000 crore in incentives. Examine the strategic logic and the limits of India's chip strategy.

10 MARKS | 150 WORDS | 9 MIN | MEDIUM | GEOECONOMICS — SEMICONDUCTORS

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: The India Semiconductor Mission (December 2021) anchors Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India with Rs 76,000 crore outlay, expanded under ISM 2.0 in 2024.

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Approved units: Tata Electronics-PSMC fab in Dholera ($11 billion, 28 nm), Tata OSAT in Jagiroad, Micron OSAT in Sanand ($2.75 billion), Kaynes ATMP, CG Power-Renesas ATMP; (ii) Strategic logic: friend-shoring under US CHIPS Act 2022 dynamics, JIST trilateral with US and Japan, Quad Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative; (iii) Limits: most approvals are packaging-assembly-test (OSAT) rather than leading-edge fabrication; talent gap of 250,000-300,000 engineers per the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association; capital-intensive long gestation.

Way forward / Conclusion: Move from 28 nm to 14 nm via Tata-PSMC roadmap, scale design-linked incentives for fabless start-ups under DLI scheme, and use iCET technology agreement for advanced lithography access.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- India Semiconductor Mission — December 2021; Rs 76,000 crore (PLI + DLI)
- Tata Electronics-PSMC fab Dholera — $11 billion, 28 nm
- Micron OSAT Sanand — $2.75 billion (June 2023 approval)
- Tata OSAT Jagiroad (Assam)
- CG Power-Renesas-Stars Microelectronics ATMP
- Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme for fabless start-ups
- Mostly OSAT/ATMP — not yet leading-edge fabrication
- Quad Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative; JIST (US-Japan-India) trilateral

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- India Semiconductor Mission (December 2021)
- Tata-PSMC Dholera fab
- Micron Sanand OSAT
- Tata Jagiroad OSAT
- Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme
- Quad Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative

MODEL ANSWER

> **Introduction:** The India Semiconductor Mission (December 2021) anchors the Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem with Rs 76,000 crore outlay, expanded under ISM 2.0 in 2024.
>
> **Body:** Three dimensions evaluate the strategy. First, approved units — the Tata Electronics-PSMC fab in Dholera ($11 billion, 28 nm), Tata OSAT in Jagiroad, Micron OSAT in Sanand ($2.75 billion), Kaynes ATMP and CG Power-Renesas ATMP cover the assembly-packaging value chain. Second, strategic logic — friend-shoring under the US CHIPS Act 2022, the JIST trilateral with the US and Japan, the Quad Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative and iCET's lithography pathway frame India's pull-in. Third, limits — most approvals are OSAT, not leading-edge fabrication; the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association records a talent gap of 2.5-3 lakh engineers; capital intensity persists.
>
> **Conclusion:** Move from 28 nm to 14 nm via the Tata-PSMC roadmap, scale Design-Linked Incentives for fabless start-ups and use iCET for advanced lithography access.

SOURCES

→Semiconductor Mission — Anantam IAS
→Ministry of Electronics and IT — ISM
→Critical Minerals — Anantam IAS

Semiconductor Mission | PLI | OSAT | Dholera | Micron | CHIPS Act | JIST | DLI

Q100

India imports 88 percent of its crude oil and the Strait of Hormuz still carries roughly a third of those imports. Examine India's energy-security strategy under the West Asia stress test.

15 MARKS | 250 WORDS | 14 MIN | HARD | GEOECONOMICS — ENERGY SECURITY

ANSWER OUTLINE

Introduction: India imports about 88-89 percent of its crude oil, burning about 5.5 million b/d (2026). The Strait of Hormuz, only 33 km wide at its narrowest, carries about 20 million b/d (20 percent of world's petroleum-liquids trade).

Body: Three dimensions — (i) Hormuz exposure: India took 30-40 percent of crude via Hormuz in Feb-March 2026; by March 2026 about 70 percent of crude was arriving outside Hormuz from 40 countries, up from 55 percent a year earlier; (ii) Diversification levers: Russia top supplier (about 30-35 percent), US imports up 31 percent YoY (December 2025), West African and Latin American expansion; (iii) Strategic reserves and infrastructure: 5.33 MMT Strategic Petroleum Reserve at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (Phase I); Phase II at Chandikhol and Padur expansion; LNG import terminals; PM Surya Ghar (rooftop solar) and 500 GW non-fossil 2030 target.

Way forward / Conclusion: Expand SPR to 90-day IEA cover, accelerate biofuels (E20 by 2025), operationalise National Green Hydrogen Mission, and treat critical-mineral access as energy-security adjacency.

KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE

- India imports about 88-89 percent of crude; burns about 5.5 million b/d (2026)
- Strait of Hormuz — 33 km wide, carries 20 million b/d (about 20 percent of world petroleum liquids)
- India sourced crude from about 40 countries by March 2026
- Strategic Petroleum Reserve — 5.33 MMT (Phase I: Visakhapatnam, Mangalore, Padur)
- Russian crude 35.9 percent (FY24); fell to 21.2 percent (January 2026)
- I2U2 grouping (India, Israel, UAE, US) — July 2022
- Chabahar terminal operations; US sanctions waiver expired 26 April 2026
- E20 ethanol blending and PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (Feb 2024)

EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- Strategic Petroleum Reserve Phase I (Visakhapatnam, Mangalore, Padur)
- I2U2 (July 2022)
- Chabahar Shahid Beheshti terminal
- PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (February 2024)
- National Green Hydrogen Mission (January 2023)
- E20 ethanol blending target

MODEL ANSWER

Introduction:

India imports about 88-89 percent of its crude, burning roughly 5.5 million barrels a day in 2026. The Strait of Hormuz — only 33 km wide at its narrowest — carries about 20 million b/d, a fifth of world petroleum-liquids trade, making it India's single most consequential chokepoint.

Hormuz exposure: India took 30-40 percent of crude via Hormuz in February-March 2026 during the West Asia stress test. By March 2026, about 70 percent of crude was arriving from outside the Strait — up from 55 percent a year earlier — sourced from 40 countries, including expanded West African, Latin American and US barrels.

Diversification levers: Russia remains the top supplier at about 30-35 percent (post-sanctions); US imports rose 31 percent year-on-year in December 2025; West African (Angola, Nigeria) and Latin American (Brazil, Guyana) volumes grew; UAE and Saudi remain anchor partners. Long-term LNG contracts with Qatar and the US, plus pipeline gas explorations, hedge gas demand.

Strategic reserves and infrastructure: The 5.33 MMT Strategic Petroleum Reserve at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (Phase I) is being expanded with Chandikhol and Padur Phase II; LNG terminals are tripling capacity; PM Surya Ghar (rooftop solar) and the 500 GW non-fossil 2030 target reduce structural demand. The PM Ujjwala Yojana 2.0 substitutes biomass with LPG at the demand floor.

Way forward / Conclusion:

Expand the SPR to 90-day IEA cover, accelerate biofuels (E20 by 2025), operationalise the National Green Hydrogen Mission and treat critical-mineral access as energy-security adjacency — converting import dependence into resilience.

SOURCES

→Energy Security — Anantam IAS
→IEA — Strait of Hormuz
→Petroleum Ministry — India's diversified oil basket

Hormuz | energy security | SPR | Chabahar | I2U2 | Russian crude | Green Hydrogen | PM Surya Ghar

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Anantam IAS is a Civil Services preparation institute built on a single conviction: that clarity, not noise, clears the exam. Our teaching turns the vast UPSC syllabus into clean mental models, and our writing — like the chapters in this book — is made to be understood once and remembered for the exam hall.

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